



## **Chapter 12**

# ***Sabbath Issues & The Unpardonable Sin***

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Matthew 12 is the end of an important section; it ends the presentation of the kingdom to Israel. The rejection of Jesus Christ did not begin at the cross, but in Chapter 12. Note that Jesus will “shift gears” dramatically after Chapter 13 with the Seven Kingdom Parables in Chapter 13.

**McGee Introduction:** Again let me call your attention to the movement in the Gospel of Matthew. If you miss it, you miss the message that is here. Matthew is not trying to give a biography of the life of Jesus, nor is he recording the events in chronological order. He presents Christ as King—He was born a King and gave what we call the Sermon on the Mount, which was the ethic of the kingdom, the manifesto of the King. He demonstrated that He had the dynamic in the miracles He performed, then He sent out His apostles. The reaction was rejection! And then the King pronounced judgment on the cities.

Now there breaks out into the open a conflict between the Lord Jesus and the religious rulers of that day—the Pharisees in particular. Apparently, they were friendly to Him at first, but now they break with Him over the question of the Sabbath day.

We will see the Sabbath question in two places: on the outside in the field, then again on the inside in the synagogue.<sup>1</sup>

This chapter may easily be divided into three sections, each introduced by the notice of Yeshua’s travels: “At that time Yeshua went through the grainfields” introduces vv. 1-8; “Departing from there...” introduces vv. 9-14; and “But Yeshua... withdrew from there” introduces vv. 15-49. The first two sub-sections deal with controversies over the Shabbat, while the third sub-section offers a short summary of Yeshua’s activities and contains a long quote from Is 42:1-4, 9.

### **Matthew 12:1**

**At that time Jesus went on the sabbath day through the corn; and his disciples were an hungered, and began to pluck the ears of corn, and to eat.**

The disciples were not stealing: There were laws under which strangers passing by could pick the grain that they needed for hunger (Deut 23:25). Thus, the disciples’ ostensible crime was not that they were stealing the grain, but rather that they were doing this on the Sabbath day. (The Law of gleaning which comes into play in the Book of Ruth also plays an important role here. For an in-depth study read the Book of Ruth,)

Jesus was on His way to the synagogue (Matthew 12:9). There were lawful paths through the fields and rights to eat if hungry (Deut. 23:24-25).

**[corn]** Wheat, not Indian corn as we know it (John 12:24, Psalm 65:13).<sup>2</sup>

*Through the corn.* Through the *barley*, or *wheat*. The word *corn*, as used in our translation of the Bible, has no reference to *maize*, or *Indian corn*, as it has with us.

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<sup>1</sup>McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (4:66). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>2</sup> Dake Study Notes, Dake’s Study Bible

Indian corn was unknown till the discovery of America, and it is scarcely probable that the translators knew anything of it. The word was applied, as it is still in England, to wheat, rye, oats, and barley. This explains the circumstance that *they rubbed it in their hands* Luke 6:1 to separate the grain from the chaff.<sup>3</sup>

**McGee:** We will see in this episode that Jesus asserts that He is Lord of the Sabbath day. But before we get involved in the sabbatic argument (which has been raging ever since!), let's look at the *reason* the disciples were pulling off and eating the grain. Why were they doing it? Because they were hungry. Why were they hungry? Because they were following Jesus. You remember that He had said to the young man who wanted to follow Him, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head" (Matt. 8:20). And at this time, they were hungry. This is another reminder of the poverty that our Lord bore. And we will see Him defend His disciples' actions. This is where the break with the religious rulers came.<sup>4</sup>

**Shabbat.** The Hebrew word has entered English as "Sabbath." The biblical concept of a weekly day for resting from workaday purposes has no close parallel in the ancient world. The fourth commandment (Exodus 20:8–11, Deuteronomy 5:12–14) connects *Shabbat* with the fact that God rested after the six days of creation (Genesis 2:1–3); makes it a day of equality in which all, high and low alike, are entitled to rest; and sets it aside as a day which is holy, on which God is to be honored.<sup>5</sup>

**pluck heads of grain.** The edges of a field were not normally harvested, so that the poor and hungry, foreigners, orphans, and widows could gather food for themselves (see Lev. 19:9; 23:22). This law showed the compassion of God for those in need.<sup>6</sup>

## **Matthew 12:2**

**But when the Pharisees saw *it*, they said unto him, Behold, thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the sabbath day.**

[**saw it**] They were always seeing something wrong with Him and His teaching, so as to accuse Him.

[**that which is not lawful to do upon the sabbath day**] Innumerable restrictions were imposed upon men for conduct of life under the law. Great principles were lost in the mass of petty details (Matthew 23:23). There were 39 classes of laws on the sabbath alone. All life was subjected to the sabbath as if man was made a servant to the sabbath. Christ put personal needs above it, incurring the enmity of the religious leaders.

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<sup>3</sup> Barnes' Notes

<sup>4</sup> McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (4:66). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>5</sup> Stern, D. H. (1996, c1992). *Jewish New Testament Commentary : A companion volume to the Jewish New Testament* (electronic ed.) (Mt 12:1). Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications.

<sup>6</sup> ESV Study Bible

**Clark: Thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do**—The Jews were so superstitious, concerning the observance of the Sabbath, that in their wars with Antiochus Epiphanes, and the Romans, they thought it a crime even to attempt to defend themselves on the Sabbath: when their enemies observed this, they deterred their operations to that day. It was through this, that Pompey was enabled to take Jerusalem. Dion. Cass. lib. xxxvi.

Those who know not the spirit and design of the divine law are often superstitious to inhumanity, and indulgent to impiety. An intolerant and censorious spirit in religion is one of the greatest curses a man can well fall under.<sup>7</sup>

The Pharisees had established 39 categories of actions forbidden on the Sabbath, based on interpretations of God's law and on Jewish custom. Harvesting was one of those forbidden actions. By picking wheat and rubbing it in their hands, the disciples were technically harvesting, according to the religious leaders. Jesus and the disciples were picking grain because they were hungry, not because they wanted to harvest the grain for a profit. They were not working on the Sabbath. The Pharisees, however, could not (and did not want to) see beyond their law's technicalities. They had no room for compassion, and they were determined to accuse Jesus of wrongdoing.<sup>8</sup>

**Violating *Shabbat*.** The Greek text says, literally, “doing what is unlawful on *Shabbat*,” that is, doing something the *P.rushim* considered to be against the *Torah*. The argument was not over whether it was permitted to pick grain by hand from someone else's field, for that is expressly allowed by Deuteronomy 23:26(25), but whether it could be done on *Shabbat*. At issue behind this seemingly minor matter is whether the Pharisaic tradition—which evolved into what rabbinic Judaism calls the Oral *Torah*, later committed to writing in the Mishna, Gemara and other works—is God's revelation to man and binding on all Jews. The question is explored further at 18:18–20&N and Mk 7:5–13&N. According to the Oral *Torah* as we have it now in the Mishna (Shabbat 7:2) thirty-nine categories of *m.lakhah* (work) are prohibited on *Shabbat*, namely, those prohibited on *Shabbat* while the Tabernacle was being built. One of these was reaping, another threshing. At v. 1 we are told the *talmidim* were reaping; in the parallel passage at Lk 6:1 they were also rubbing the heads of grain together in their hands, which would be defined as threshing. This is the content of the accusation the *P.rushim* were making against them and by implication against Yeshua, responsible as their teacher for their behavior.<sup>9</sup>

**Yashanet:** One of the concepts lost upon the modern reader of the Bible (unfamiliar with the Jewishness of the Scriptures), is that Yeshua and the Pharisees were not arguing from vastly different backgrounds. Yeshua Himself taught as a Pharisee and His dialogue with these religious leaders can very well be considered a "family argument." Had Yeshua been coming from some new non-Pharisaical viewpoint, the Pharisees would have had little concern for what He was saying. However, He was arguing within the family, and

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<sup>7</sup> Adam Clarke's Commentary

<sup>8</sup> Life Application Notes

<sup>9</sup> Stern, D. H. (1996, c1992). *Jewish New Testament Commentary : A companion volume to the Jewish New Testament* (electronic ed.) (Mt 12:2). Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications.

beginning to convince people that many of the Pharisees were both hypocritical and wrong in their opinion about him. (See 12:23 in the next section.)

The section from 12:1-12:8 has to do with an accusation made by certain Pharisees regarding some of Yeshua's disciples, picking and eating grain in a field during the Sabbath. The verses shown above are the key ones in this passage. The Torah does prohibit "work" on Shabbat, and the oral Law of the time would support the Pharisees claim.

Yeshua responds to this in a fourfold manner:

- He makes comparison to two accounts from scripture
- He tells them that He is greater than the Temple
- He reminds about what He told them to learn earlier (Matthew 9:13)
- He says that He is Lord of the sabbath day<sup>10</sup>

One would have thought that it was surely permissible to relieve hunger on the Sabbath; but the Pharisees made it out to be an act of harvesting, and even of threshing when they saw them rub the ears in their hands. Some men are great at making much ado about nothing.<sup>11</sup>

### **Matthew 12:3**

**But he said unto them, Have ye not read what David did, when he was an hungered, and they that were with him;**

*But he said unto them, etc.* To vindicate his disciples, he referred them to a similar case, recorded in the Old Testament, and therefore one with which they *ought* to have been acquainted. This was the case of David. The law commanded that twelve loaves of bread should be laid on the table in the holy place in the tabernacle, to remain a week, and then to be eaten by the *priests only*. Their place was supplied then by *fresh bread*. This was called the shew-bread, Leviticus 24:5-9. David, fleeing before Saul, weary and hungry, had come to Ahimelech the priest; had found only this bread; had asked it of him, and had eaten it, contrary to the *letter* of the law, 1 Samuel 21:1-7. David, among the Jews, had high authority. This act had passed uncondemned. It proved that *in cases of necessity the laws did not bind a man*: a principle which all laws admit. So the *necessity* of the disciples justified them in doing on the sabbath what would have been otherwise unlawful.<sup>12</sup>

**McGee:** We find the record of this in 1 Samuel 21:1–6. It was during the days of David's rejection as king while Saul was ruling. Likewise, the Lord Jesus was being rejected as King; His messianic claim had not been acknowledged. Now He takes care of His men—regardless of the Sabbath day observance. And David took care of his men although it meant breaking the Mosaic Law.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Yashanet.com

<sup>11</sup> Spurgeon Devotional Commentary

<sup>12</sup> Barnes' Notes

<sup>13</sup> McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (4:66). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

## **Matthew 12:4**

**How he entered into the house of God, and did eat the showbread, which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the priests?**

### **Missler: David's Flight from Saul**

In 1 Sam 21, David is in flight from Saul. They are fugitives; they are running for their lives. The ark itself rested at Kiriath Jearim after the capture of the ark in 1104 B.C. (1 Sam 7:2; 2 Sam 6:3-4). Currently it was at Nob, the “city of priests,” halfway between Jerusalem and Gibeah, where David fled after he made his final break with Saul. The Tabernacle was a secure area for the priests only, from the tribe of Levi. David, although anointed King, was of the tribe of Judah.

*(1 Samuel 21:1-3) Then came David to Nob to Ahimelech the priest: and Ahimelech was afraid at the meeting of David, and said unto him, Why art thou alone, and no man with thee? And David said unto Ahimelech the priest, The king hath commanded me a business, and hath said unto me, Let no man know any thing of the business whereabout I send thee, and what I have commanded thee: and I have appointed my servants to such and such a place.*

*(1 Samuel 15:4,5) And the priest answered David, and said, There is no common bread under mine hand, but there is hallowed bread; if the young men have kept themselves at least from women. And David answered the priest, and said unto him, Of a truth women have been kept from us about these three days, since I came out, and the vessels of the young men are holy, and the bread is in a manner common, yea, though it were sanctified this day in the vessel.*

Hungry from his flight, David asked the priest at Nob for bread. There was no ordinary bread, but only the holy showbread which had been desacralized by being replaced with fresh bread (Lev 24:5-9). This could be eaten, but ordinarily only by the priests and certainly only by those who were ceremonially pure (Lev 15:18).

*( 1 Samuel 21:6) So the priest gave him hallowed bread: for there was no bread there but the shewbread, that was taken from before the LORD, to put hot bread in the day when it was taken away.*

David's eating illustrated a concession that the Law permitted—life is more holy than bread.<sup>14</sup>

**[the house of God]** Exodus 25:30; Leviticus 24:5; note, Mark 2:26.

**[priests]** There were more sacrifices on the sabbath than any other day (Numbers 28:9-10). Jews circumcised and did other necessary things on the sabbath (John 7:22-23; Luke 13:15).

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<sup>14</sup> Chuck Missler, Notes on Matthew, khouse.org

This story is recorded in 1 Samuel 21:1-6. The bread of the Presence was replaced every week, and the old loaves were eaten by the priests. The loaves given to David were the old loaves that had just been replaced with fresh ones. Although the priests were the only ones allowed to eat this bread, God did not punish David because his need for food was more important than the priestly regulations. Jesus was saying, “If you condemn me, you must also condemn David,” something the religious leaders could never do without causing a great uproar among the people. Jesus was not condoning disobedience to God’s laws. Instead he was emphasizing discernment and compassion in enforcing the laws.<sup>15</sup>

**JFB:** No example could be more apposite than this. The man after God’s own heart, of whom the Jews ever boasted, when suffering in God’s cause and straitened for provisions, asked and obtained from the high priest what, according to the law, it was illegal for anyone save the priests to touch. Mark (Mk 2:26) says this occurred “in the days of Abiathar the high priest.” But this means not during his high priesthood—for it was under that of his father Ahimelech—but simply, in his time. Ahimelech was soon succeeded by Abiathar, whose connection with David, and prominence during his reign, may account for his name, rather than his father’s, being here introduced. Yet there is not a little confusion in what is said of these priests in different parts of the Old Testament. Thus he is called both the son of the father of Ahimelech (1Sa 22:20; 2Sa 8:17); and Ahimelech is called Ahiah (1Sa 14:3), and Abimelech (1Ch 18:16).<sup>16</sup>

**ate the bread of the Presence.** Twelve loaves of bread, representing God's covenant with the 12 tribes of Israel, were to be baked and placed in the tabernacle on each Sabbath as an offering. The bread was only to be eaten by **the priests** (Lev. 24:5–9), but Scripture does not condemn David for eating the bread during his escape from Saul. The law was intended to serve God's people, rather than God's people being intended to serve the law (cf. Mark 2:27).<sup>17</sup>

Necessity has no law. It was never intended that men should die of hunger in order to preserve the sanctity of a day.<sup>18</sup>

### **Matthew 12:5**

**Or have ye not read in the law, how that on the sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are blameless?**

**[profane the sabbath, and are blameless]** Treat it as a common day (Acts 24:6). Self-interest removes all scruples.

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<sup>15</sup> Life Application Notes

<sup>16</sup> Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., Fausset, A. R., Brown, D., & Brown, D. (1997). *A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments*. On spine: Critical and explanatory commentary. (Mt 12:4). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

<sup>17</sup> ESV Study Bible

<sup>18</sup> Spurgeon Devotional Commentary

**Profane the sabbath.** He referred them to the conduct of the priests also. On the sabbath days they were engaged, as well as on other days, in killing beasts for sacrifice, Numbers 28:9,10. Two lambs were killed on the sabbath, in addition to the daily sacrifice. The priests must be engaged in slaying them, and making fires to burn them in sacrifice; whereas to kindle a fire was expressly forbidden the Jews on the sabbath, (Exodus 35:3) they were obliged to skin them, prepare them for sacrifice, and burn them, They did that which, for other persons to do, would have been *profaning* the sabbath. Yet they were blameless. They did what was necessary and commanded. This was done in the *very temple*, too, the place of holiness, where the law should be most strictly observed.<sup>19</sup>

The Ten Commandments prohibit work on the Sabbath (Exodus 20:8-11). That was the *letter* of the law. But because the *purpose* of the Sabbath is to rest and to worship God, the priests were allowed to work by performing sacrifices and conducting worship services. This “Sabbath work” was serving and worshiping God. Jesus always emphasized the intent of the law, the meaning behind the letter. The Pharisees had lost the spirit of the law and were rigidly demanding that the letter (and their interpretation of it) be obeyed.<sup>20</sup>

**JFB:** The double offerings required on the sabbath day (Nu 28:9) could not be presented, and the new-baked showbread (Le 24:5; 1Ch 9:32) could not be prepared and presented every sabbath morning, without a good deal of servile work on the part of the priests; not to speak of circumcision, which, when the child’s eighth day happened to fall on a sabbath, had to be performed by the priests on that day.<sup>21</sup>

The *Torah* itself specifies that some *mitzvot* are more important than others (see Yn 5:22–23&N, Ga 2:12bN). Keeping *Shabbat* is important, but the animal sacrifices required by Numbers 28:1–10 are more so, so that the *cohanim* work on *Shabbat* in order to offer them. (“Temple service takes precedence over *Shabbat*,” Shabbat 132b.)<sup>22</sup>

**Yashanet:** The first Scripture Yeshua quotes is of David eating of the “bread of the Face,” something that was reserved for the priests to eat (from 1 Samuel 21:6), followed by how the Torah allows for priests to do certain type of work on the Sabbath, as part of their Temple service (Leviticus 24:5-9). His point in quoting these, is to establish the principle that within the framework of the Torah is a *hierarchy of principles*.

The Pharisees recognized this fact, as in the Talmud makes it clear that both the commands of circumcision and Temple sacrificial service, take precedence over the command not to do work on the Sabbath:

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<sup>19</sup> Barnes’ Notes

<sup>20</sup> Life Application Notes

<sup>21</sup> Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., Fausset, A. R., Brown, D., & Brown, D. (1997). *A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments*. On spine: Critical and explanatory commentary. (Mt 12:5). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

<sup>22</sup> Stern, D. H. (1996, c1992). *Jewish New Testament Commentary : A companion volume to the Jewish New Testament* (electronic ed.) (Mt 12:5). Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications.

**Talmud - Mas. Shabbath 132b** - whilst the sacrificial service supersedes the Sabbath, yet circumcision supersedes it: then the Sabbath, which is superseded by the sacrificial service, surely circumcision supersedes it.<sup>23</sup>

## **Matthew 12:6**

**But I say unto you, That in this place is *one* greater than the temple.**

[**greater than the temple**] Referring to Himself, as in Matthew 12:41-42.

[**one greater than the Temple**] This is important because it comes up in His trial, and is what they ultimately accuse Him of.

**Clarke: In this place is one greater than the temple**—Does not our Lord refer here to Malachi 3:1? Compare this with Hebrews 3:3. The Jews esteemed nothing greater than the temple, except that God who was worshipped in it. Christ, by asserting he was greater than the temple, asserts that he was God; and this he does, in still more direct terms, Matthew 12:8, The Son of man is Lord of the Sabbath—is Institutor and Governor of it. Compare this with Genesis 2:3 (note), and see the notes there.<sup>24</sup>

Mark adds, Mark 2:27 "the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath." That is, the Sabbath was intended for the welfare of man; designed to promote his happiness; and not to produce misery, by harsh, unfeeling requirements. It is not to be so interpreted as to produce suffering, by making the necessary supply of wants unlawful. Man was not made for the Sabbath. Man was created first, and then the Sabbath was appointed for his happiness, Genesis 2:1-3. *His necessities*, his *real* comforts and wants, are not to bend to that which was made *for him*. The laws are to be interpreted favourably to his real wants and comforts. This authorizes works only of *real* necessity, not of imaginary wants, or amusement, or *common* business, and worldly employments.<sup>25</sup>

The Pharisees were so concerned about religious rituals that they missed the whole purpose of the temple—to bring people to God. And because Jesus Christ is even greater than the temple, how much better can he bring people to God. God is far more important than the created instruments of worship. If we become more concerned with the means of worship than with the One we worship, we will miss God even as we think we are worshipping him.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Yashanet.com

<sup>24</sup> Adam Clarke's Commentary

<sup>25</sup> Barnes' Notes

<sup>26</sup> Life Application Notes

**McGee:** The Lord Jesus here claimed superiority over the most holy center of their religious life, which was the temple. As far as the Pharisees were concerned, He had blasphemed. Not only had He broken the Sabbath, but He had blasphemed.<sup>27</sup>

**Yashanet:** Having reminded these Pharisees of the recognized oral Torah, he now announced that He is greater than the Temple (therefore the same hierarchy of principles should apply to Him and His disciples). Yeshua was the Temple of God while on earth. Once again, John's Gospel (the one) makes the connection for us:

**John 2:19-21** - *Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? But he spake of the temple of his body.*

Yeshua is alluding to what the prophet Isaiah spoke about the relationship between God and His Temple:

**Isaiah 66:1** - *Thus saith the LORD, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest?*

The same passage in Isaiah, also says what the Lord is looking for in man. These words mirror those of Hosea 6:6, which Yeshua quotes in verse 7 below:

**Isaiah 66:1** - *For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.*

Works done for God are commendable on the Sabbath, and if the Lord himself was present, and had not blamed his disciples, it was not for others to complain.<sup>28</sup>

### **Matthew 12:7**

**But if ye had known what *this* meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless.**

**(Hosea 6:6)** *For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.*

**[known]** Greek: *ginosko* (GSN-1097), to know by experience or effort.

Jesus repeated to the Pharisees words the Jewish people had heard time and again throughout their history (1 Samuel 15:22-23; Psalm 40:6-8; Isaiah 1:11-17; Jeremiah 7:21-23; Hosea 6:6). Our heart attitude toward God comes first. Only then can we properly obey and observe religious regulations and rituals.

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<sup>27</sup> McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (4:66). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>28</sup> Spurgeon Devotional Commentary

Our Lord defends His men by saying that they did not break the Sabbath day.

**Yashanet:** Yeshua repeats his quote from Hosea 6:5, that He said earlier in Matthew 9:13. If these Pharisees had truly been seeking God's righteousness, and not their own, they would have recognized Him as the Messiah. They made themselves "blind" through their legalistic observance of the commands of God, seeking their own righteousness over His (i.e., Romans 10:3).

If they had recognized Him as Messiah, then by both the written and oral Torah, they would have no cause to be critical of any work being done by those serving the one who is greater than the Temple.<sup>29</sup>

## **Matthew 12:8**

**For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day.**

### **Sabbatical Conflicts**

- Plucking grain on the Sabbath (Mt 12:1-4; Mk 2:23-26; Lk 6:1-4. He also reminded His critics that the priests in the Temple worked on Sabbath (Mt 12:5). He referred to circumcising a male on the Sabbath day (Lev 12:3; Jn 7:22, 23). Jesus asserted His lordship over the Sabbath (Mt 12:8; Mk 2:28; Lk 6:5).
- The healing of the withered hand (Mt 12:8-14; Mk 3:1-5).
- The healing a woman who had a spirit of infirmity for 18 years (Lk 13:10-17).

### **Seven Healings on the Sabbath**

- Demonic, in Capernaum Mk 1:21-27
- Peter's mother-in-law Mk 1:29-31
- Impotent Man Jn 5:1-9
- Man with withered hand Mk 3:1-6; Mt 12:8-14
- Woman bowed together Lk 13:10-17
- Man with Dropsy Lk 14:1-6
- Man born blind Jn 9:1-14

*Not all healings were on the Sabbath: healing on Sunday (Mk 1:32). In all of these instances, Jesus showed that He placed human need above mere external ceremonial observance of the Sabbath. He never did or said anything to suggest that He intended to take away from man the privileges afforded by such a day of rest, the Sabbath.*

**(Genesis 2:3)** *And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.*

**(Exodus 20:8)** *Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy.*

Written in stone by the finger of God Himself!

### **Prophetic Implications**

- Sabbaths will continue as a basis for worship in the Millennium (Isa 66:22, 23).
- The gate to the inner court of the Millennial Temple will be opened only on the Sabbath

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<sup>29</sup> Yashanet.com

and the day of the new moon (Ezek 46:1ff).

- This would seem to refute a permanent substitution of Sunday for the Saturday *Sabbath*.

When Jesus said he was Lord of the Sabbath, he claimed to be greater than the law and above the law. To the Pharisees, this was heresy. They did not realize that Jesus, the divine Son of God, had created the Sabbath. The Creator is always greater than the creation; thus Jesus had the authority to overrule their traditions and regulations.<sup>30</sup>

**McGee:** Believe me, He put His hand on the most sacred observance they had when He said that He was Lord of the Sabbath day. In the eyes of the Pharisees, He could make no greater claim. It certainly engendered their bitterness and their hatred.

Now we leave the fields where this encounter took place, and we go into the synagogue—but we are still faced with the same Sabbath question.<sup>31</sup>

**JFB:** In what sense now is the Son of man Lord of the sabbath day? Not surely to abolish it—that surely were a strange lordship, especially just after saying that it was made or instituted for MAN—but to *own* it, to *interpret* it, to *preside over* it, and to *ennoble* it, by merging it in the “Lord’s Day” (Rev 1:10), breathing into it an air of liberty and love necessarily unknown before, and thus making it the nearest resemblance to the eternal sabbatism.<sup>32</sup>

**BKC:** As Jesus and His disciples were going through the grainfields on the Sabbath, His disciples began to pick the wheat and eat the grain. The Pharisees immediately jumped on this “violation” of the Law (Ex. 20:8-11) and accused the disciples of working on the Sabbath. According to the Pharisees, plucking wheat from its stem is reaping, rubbing the wheat heads between one’s palms is threshing, and blowing away the chaff is winnowing!

Jesus, however, disputed the Pharisees’ claim, using three illustrations. First, he cited an event in the life of David (Matt. 12:3-4). As he fled from Saul, David was given the consecrated bread which had been removed from the tabernacle (1 Sam. 21:1-6), and was normally reserved for the priests alone (Lev. 24:9). David believed that preserving his life was more important than observing a technicality. Second, the priests in the temple were involved in work on the Sabbath (Matt. 12:5; cf. Num. 28:9-10, 18-19), yet they were considered blameless. Third, Jesus argued that He Himself was greater than the temple (Matt. 12:6; cf. “One greater” in vv. 41-42), for He is Lord of the Sabbath, that is, He controls what can be done on it, and He did not condemn the disciples (the innocent) for their action. The Pharisees were splitting hairs with their technicalities about reaping,

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<sup>30</sup> Life Application Notes

<sup>31</sup> McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (4:66). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>32</sup> Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., Fausset, A. R., Brown, D., & Brown, D. (1997). *A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments*. On spine: Critical and explanatory commentary. (Mt 12:8). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

cf. *confer*, compare

vv. verses

threshing, and winnowing. They failed to understand compassion for people's basic needs (in this case, the disciples' hunger; cf. Deut. 23:24-25), but were intense in their concern for the sacrifices. Jesus reminded them of the words in Hosea 6:6, I desire mercy, not sacrifice, that is, inner spiritual vitality, not mere external formality.<sup>33</sup>

**Yashanet:** Just as the priority was not to fast during Yeshua's presence on earth (Matthew 9:14-17), so to does this affect other priorities of the Torah (as mentioned above). The Messiah's presence on earth was not to invalidate any of Torah (Matthew 5:17-21). Any "messiah" that declared an end to Torah would be a false one.

Rather, according to the correct Hebrew understanding of the Scriptures (at that time and now), Messiah is to come and explain the deeper meanings of the Torah. Because of this better understanding He gives, when we study and perform the commands of the Torah (Romans 2:13, James 1:22), we can grow in our relationship with God, enjoying life more abundantly (John 10:10).

The Torah was given to man for a variety of reasons, all of which have to do with the principle of *tikkun*, ("spiritual repair"). Torah does this by showing us what the meaning of life is, namely:

- To be conformed to the image of God
- To grow in intimacy in our relationship with Him

Messiah fulfills the same role, as He is the *goal of the Torah* (Romans 10:4, when properly translated). Isaiah writes that by His suffering and death, Messiah brings spiritual healing (*tikkun*) between us and God:

**Isaiah 53:5-6** - *But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.*

The above verse has been misused to by some as having something to do with physical healing. It does not in Isaiah's context, nor when Peter cites the verse and reiterates that this healing has to do with our being made righteous:

**1 Peter 2: 24-25** - *Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.*<sup>34</sup>

Here is an example of where the true meaning of Sabbath had been lost and the prioritization of God's commandments placed out of order. The Pharisees had developed a teaching that healing on the Sabbath was "work" and therefore not allowed. Yeshua continues to teach that the purpose of the Sabbath is that of *tikkun* (circumcision). Refusing to do good (to heal someone in this case) would not be doing anything to advance the Kingdom of God. For instance, circumcision is an important part of *tikkun*, and is commanded to be done on the eighth day - whether or not this falls on a Sabbath.

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<sup>33</sup>Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-c1985). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (2:45). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

<sup>34</sup>Yashanet.com

God has not intended the fourth commandment to be used cruelly, so as to forbid the doing of that which is absolutely needful. The institution of the Sabbath is under the power of Jesus, the Lord of love, and is not a burden, but a delight.<sup>35</sup>

### **Matthew 12:9**

**And when he was departed thence, he went into their synagogue:**

Notice that “he went into their synagogue”—not *ours* but *theirs*. He said something similar regarding the temple. At first it was *God’s* temple, but He finally said, “*Your* house is left unto you desolate.”

### **Matthew 12:10**

**And, behold, there was a man which had *his* hand withered. And they asked him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath days? that they might accuse him.**

**[behold]** The 25th of 60 times in Mt.; 222 times in the New Testament; 1104 times in the Old Testament.

**[Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath days?]** Jews were devoid of understanding of the purpose of the Sabbath (Matthew 12:12; Mark 2:27; Mark 3:4).

As they pointed to the man with the shriveled hand, the Pharisees tried to trick Jesus by asking him if it was legal to heal on the Sabbath. Their Sabbath rules said that people could be helped on the Sabbath only if their lives were in danger. Jesus healed on the Sabbath several times, and none of those healings were in response to emergencies. If Jesus had waited until another day, he would have been submitting to the Pharisees’ authority, showing that their petty rules were equal to God’s law. If he healed the man on the Sabbath, the Pharisees could claim that because Jesus broke their rules, his power was not from God. But Jesus made it clear how ridiculous and petty their rules were. God is a God of people, not rules. The best time to reach out to someone is when he or she needs help.

**JFB:** disabled by paralysis (as in 1Ki 13:4). It was his right hand, as Luke (Lu 6:6) graphically notes. And they asked him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath days? that they might accuse him—Mark and Luke (Mk 3:2; Lu 6:7) say they “watched Him whether He would heal on the sabbath day.” They were now come to the length of dogging His steps, to collect materials for a charge of impiety against Him. It is probable

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<sup>35</sup> Spurgeon Devotional commentary

that it was to their *thoughts* rather than their words that Jesus addressed Himself in what follows.<sup>36</sup>

### **Matthew 12:11**

**And he said unto them, What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out?**

**Missler:** Sheep were not pets, they were an economic unit. If one waited to deliver it until after the Sabbath it may die or be stolen, so it is practical to get it out. It is one thing to ordain the Sabbath so it has reverence and respect, but it is another to ignore the pragmatics of the situation.<sup>37</sup>

**McGee:** Was this man with the withered hand “planted” there, deliberately, by the Pharisees to trap Jesus into healing him? If so, then there are two important admissions on the part of the enemies of Jesus:

1. They admitted He had power to heal the sick. As we have seen, the enemies of Jesus never questioned His ability to perform miracles. You have to be two thousand years away from it and working in a musty library on a master’s or doctor’s degree before you can question His miracles. The Pharisees freely admitted that He had power to heal the sick. This is why they planted this man with the withered hand.

2. They acknowledged that when a helpless man was placed in His pathway, He was moved by compassion to heal him, even on the Sabbath day. What an admission!

Their question about the legality of healing on the Sabbath day was designed to trap Him. But Jesus actually trapped His enemies. They conceded that a sheep should be rescued on the Sabbath day—in fact, the Mosaic Law made allowances for that.<sup>38</sup>

### **Matthew 12:12**

**How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the sabbath days.**

**Clarke: How much then is a man better than a sheep?**—Our Lord’s argument is what is called *argumentum ad hominem*, they are taken on their own ground, and confuted on their own maxims and conduct. There are many persons who call themselves Christians, who do more for a beast of burden or pleasure than they do for a man for whom Christ died! Many spend that on coursers, spaniels, and hounds, of which

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<sup>36</sup>Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., Fausset, A. R., Brown, D., & Brown, D. (1997). *A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments*. On spine: Critical and explanatory commentary. (Mt 12:9). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

<sup>37</sup>Chuck Missler, Notes on Matthew, khouse.org

<sup>38</sup>McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (4:67). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

multitudes of the followers of Christ are destitute:—but this also shall come to judgment.<sup>39</sup>

**JFB:** Resistless appeal! “A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast” (Pr 12:10), and would instinctively rescue it from death or suffering on the sabbath day; how much more his nobler fellow man! But the reasoning, as given in the other two Gospels, is singularly striking: “But He knew their thoughts, and said to the man which had the withered hand, Rise up, and stand forth in the midst. And he arose and stood forth. Then said Jesus unto them, I will ask you one thing: Is it lawful on the sabbath days to do good, or to do evil? to save life or to destroy it?” (Lu 6:8, 9), or as in Mark (Mk 3:4), “to kill?” He thus shuts them up to this startling alternative: “Not to do good, when it is in the power of our hand to do it, is to do evil; not to save life, when we can, is to kill”—and must the letter of the sabbath rest be kept at this expense? This unexpected thrust shut their mouths. By this great ethical principle our Lord, we see, held Himself bound, as man. But here we must turn to Mark, whose graphic details make the second Gospel so exceedingly precious. “When He had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, He saith unto the man” (Mk 3:5). This is one of the very few passages in the Gospel history which reveal our Lord’s *feelings*. How holy this anger was appears from the “grief” which mingled with it at “the hardness of their hearts.”<sup>40</sup>

This is the crux of the whole matter: Should He do good on the Sabbath day? Regardless of their answer—

### **Matthew 12:13**

**Then saith he to the man, *Stretch forth thine hand*. And he stretched *it* forth; and it was restored whole, like as the other.**

**Clarke: Stretch forth thine hand**—The bare command of God is a sufficient reason of obedience. This man might have reasoned thus: “Lord, my hand is withered; how then can I stretch it out? Make it whole first, and afterwards I will do as thou commandest.” This may appear reasonable, but in his case it would have been foolishness. At the command of the Lord he made the effort, and in making it the cure was effected! Faith disregards apparent impossibilities, where there is a command and promise of God. The effort to believe is, often, that faith by which the soul is healed.

A little before (vv. 6, 8) Jesus Christ had asserted his Godhead, in this verse he proves it. What but the omnipotence of the living God could have, in a moment, restored this withered hand? There could be no collusion here; the man who had a real disease was instantaneously and therefore miraculously cured; and the mercy and power of God were both amply manifested in this business.

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<sup>39</sup> Adam Clarke’s Commentary

<sup>40</sup> Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., Fausset, A. R., Brown, D., & Brown, D. (1997). *A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments*. On spine: Critical and explanatory commentary. (Mt 12:12). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

It is worthy of remark, that as the man was healed with a word, without even a touch, the Sabbath was unbroken, even according to their most rigid interpretation of the letter of the law.<sup>41</sup>

**McGee:** Jesus healed the man on the Sabbath day. Did He break the Law? What is your answer? My answer is that He did *not* break the Law.<sup>42</sup>

the power to obey going forth with the word of command.

### **Matthew 12:14**

**Then the Pharisees went out, and held a council against him, how they might destroy him.**

[council against him, how they might destroy him] Counseled with the Herodians (Mark 3:6; cp. Matthew 26:3, refs.).

**(Matthew 10:17-18)** <sup>17</sup>*But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues;* <sup>18</sup>*And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles.*

The Pharisees plotted Jesus' death because they were outraged. Jesus had overruled their authority (Luke 6:11) and had exposed their evil attitudes in front of the entire crowd in the synagogue. Jesus had showed that the Pharisees were more loyal to their religious system than to God.

This marks the break between the religious rulers and Jesus. Here is where they made the decision to destroy Him.

**McGee:** Up to this point the Pharisees had been friendly. They had wanted to hitch their wagon to His star and go with Him. But the Lord refused to go along with them, and they became His enemies. The break is made over the question of the Sabbath day, and the conflict comes out in the open. From here on these bloodhounds of hate get on His trail and never let up until they fold their arms beneath His cross. They begin now to plot His death, and they undoubtedly want to arrest Him at this time, but they are afraid of the crowds.<sup>43</sup>

**JFB:** This is the first explicit mention of their murderous designs against our Lord. Luke (Lu 6:11) says, they were filled with madness, and communed one with another what they might do to Jesus." But their doubt was not, *whether* to get rid of Him, but *how* to

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<sup>41</sup> Adam Clarke's Commentary

<sup>42</sup> McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (4:67). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>43</sup> McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (4:67). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

compass it. Mark (Mk 3:6), as usual, is more definite: “The Pharisees went forth, and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against Him, how they might destroy Him.” These Herodians were supporters of Herod’s dynasty, created by Caesar—a political rather than religious party. The Pharisees regarded them as untrue to their religion and country. But here we see them combining together against Christ as a common enemy. So on a subsequent occasion (Mt 22:15, 16).<sup>44</sup>

**BKC:** The first controversy (vv. 1-8) was barely over when Jesus arrived in the synagogue. Since it was the Sabbath Day, one would expect Jesus to be in the synagogue. A man with a shriveled hand was there. Since the Pharisees were continually looking for some way to accuse Jesus, they undoubtedly planted this man in the synagogue to create an incident. The Pharisees raised the question, Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath? Jesus answered their question, as He often did, with another question. If one’s sheep would fall into a pit on the Sabbath, would he not . . . lift the sheep out of the pit, even though this might be construed as work? An act of mercy toward an animal was perfectly in order. Since people are much more valuable than animals, mercy should be extended toward them even on Sabbath Days. Jesus thus removed any possible objection to what He was going to do, for Scripture did not forbid it and His logic was flawless. His healing the man, however, did not prompt faith in the Pharisees for they went out and plotted how they might kill Jesus.<sup>45</sup>

### **Matthew 12:15**

**But when Jesus knew *it*, he withdrew himself from thence: and great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all;**

[withdrew himself from thence] Not from cowardice, but to save trouble with the nation He came to save.

**Clarke: Jesus—w withdrew himself from thence—**It is the part of prudence and Christian charity not to provoke, if possible, the blind and the hardened; and to take from them the occasion of sin. A man of God is not afraid of persecution; but, as his aim is only to do good, by proclaiming every where the grace of the Lord Jesus, he departs from any place when he finds the obstacles to the accomplishment of his end are, humanly speaking, invincible, and that he can not do good without being the means of much evil. Yield to the stream when you cannot stem it.

**Great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all—**The rejection of the Gospel in one place has often been the means of sending it to and establishing it in another. Jesus healed all that followed him, i.e. all who had need of healing, and who desired to be healed; for thus the passage must be understood:—and is he not still the same? No soul

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<sup>44</sup>Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., Fausset, A. R., Brown, D., & Brown, D. (1997). *A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments*. On spine: Critical and explanatory commentary. (Mt 12:14). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

vv. verses

<sup>45</sup>Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-c1985). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (2:45). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

shall ever implore his healing power in vain; but let it be remembered, that only those who follow Christ, and apply to him, are healed of their spiritual maladies.<sup>46</sup>

Up to this point, Jesus had been aggressively confronting the Pharisees' hypocrisy. Here he decided to withdraw from the synagogue before a major confrontation developed because it was not time for him to die. Jesus had many lessons still to teach his disciples and the people.

**McGee:** The action of the Pharisees led Jesus to withdraw temporarily because His hour had not yet come. They will not touch Him until the appointed time. It is interesting to note in this verse that Jesus did not heal only a few in the crowd—He healed them *all*. We cannot even conceive of the impression that this made in that day. It was something absolutely astounding. They had to accept or reject Him; it was impossible to be neutral.

He is still controversial today. The enemy is still after Him. New dirty plays and dirty books are blaspheming Him. You will either be His friend or His enemy. He will be your Savior or your Judge. You cannot get rid of Jesus Christ.

He healed the multitudes—<sup>47</sup>

**JFB: and great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all**—Mark gives the following interesting details: “A great multitude from Galilee followed Him, and from Judea and from Jerusalem, and from Idumea, and from beyond Jordan; and they about Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, when they had heard what great things He did, came unto Him. And He spake to His disciples, that a small ship should wait on Him because of the multitude, lest they should throng Him. For He had healed many; insomuch that they pressed upon Him for to touch Him, as many as had plagues. And unclean spirits, when they saw Him, fell down before Him, and cried, saying, Thou art the Son of God. And He straitly charged them that they should not make Him known” (Mk 3:7–12). How glorious this extorted homage to the Son of God! But as this was not the time, so neither were they the fitting preachers, as BENGEL says. (See on Mk 1:25, and compare Jam 2:19). Coming back now to our Evangelist: after saying, “He healed them all,” he continues:<sup>48</sup>

**Bible Exposition Commentary:** It was lawful to satisfy your hunger from your neighbor's field (Deut. 23:24–25). But to do it on the Sabbath was a breach of the Law according to the traditions of the scribes and Pharisees; for it meant doing work. Jesus gave a threefold reply to their accusation.

*He appealed to a king (vv. 3–4).* The consecrated bread was to be eaten only by the priests, yet David and his soldiers ate it. Certainly the Son of David had a right to eat His Father's grain from the field! And if David broke the law and was not condemned, surely Jesus could break man's traditions and be guiltless (see 1 Sam. 21:1ff).

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<sup>46</sup> Adam Clarke's Commentary

<sup>47</sup> McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (4:67). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>48</sup> Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., Fausset, A. R., Brown, D., & Brown, D. (1997). *A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments*. On spine: Critical and explanatory commentary. (Mt 12:15). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

***He appealed to the priests (vv. 5–6).*** The priests had to offer a given number of sacrifices on the Sabbath (Num. 28:9–10) and yet were not condemned. In fact, their service was in obedience to the Law given by God. This suggests that man’s traditions about the Sabbath were wrong, for they contradicted God’s own Law.

***He appealed to a prophet (v. 7).*** The quotation is from Hosea 6:6, one that Jesus had already quoted (Matt. 9:13). The Sabbath law was given to Israel as a mark of her relationship to God (Ex. 20:9–11; 31:13–17; Neh. 9:12–15). But it was also an act of mercy for both man and beast, to give them needed rest each week. Any religious law that is contrary to mercy and the care of nature should be looked on with suspicion. God wants mercy, not religious sacrifice. He wants love, not legalism. The Pharisees who sacrificed to obey their Sabbath laws thought they were serving God. When they accused Christ and His disciples, they thought they were defending God. How like religious legalists today!

Note that Jesus appealed to prophet, priest, and king; for He is Prophet, Priest, and King. Note too the three “greater” statements that He made: as the *Priest*, He is “greater than the temple” (Matt. 12:6); as *Prophet*, He is “greater than Jonah” (Matt. 12:41); and as *King*, He is “greater than Solomon” (Matt. 12:42).

In declaring Himself “Lord of the Sabbath,” Jesus was actually affirming equality with God; for God had established the Sabbath (Gen. 2:1–3). He then proved this claim by healing the man with the paralyzed hand. It is sad that the religious leaders used this man and his handicap as a weapon to fight against Jesus. But the Lord was not afraid of their threats. Not doing good on the Sabbath Day (or any other day) is the same as doing evil. Jesus argued that if a farmer could care for his animals on the Sabbath, shouldn’t we care for man, made in the image of God?

They responded to this deliberate challenge by plotting to kill Him. They had accused Him of blasphemy when He healed the paralytic (Matt. 9:1–8), and of lack of separation when He ate with Matthew’s friends (Matt. 9:11–13). But this deed was even worse. He had deliberately violated the law of God! He had *worked* on the Sabbath by harvesting grain and healing a man.

Our Lord’s response to their hatred was withdrawal. He did not openly fight His enemies, but fulfilled the prophecy in Isaiah 42:1–4. His enemies were but broken reeds and smoking flax. Note the double mention of the Gentiles, another hint from Matthew that Israel would reject her King and the kingdom would go to the Gentiles.

The Lord’s withdrawal at this point is an anticipation of His “retirement” described in Matthew 14–20. During that time, Jesus avoided direct conflict with His enemies that He might stay on the “divine timetable” and be crucified on schedule. Also, during that time, He taught His disciples and prepared them for His crucifixion.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>49</sup>Wiersbe, W. W. (1996, c1989). *The Bible exposition commentary*. "An exposition of the New Testament comprising the entire 'BE' series"--Jkt. (Mt 12:1). Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books.

## **Matthew 12:16**

**And charged them that they should not make him known:**

Jesus did not want those he healed to tell others about his miracles because he didn't want the people coming to him for the wrong reasons. That would hinder his teaching ministry and arouse false hopes about an earthly kingdom. But the news of Jesus' miracles spread, and many came to see for themselves (see Mark 3:7-8).

The Lord did not come to this earth as a thaumaturgist, that is, a wonder worker. He came to present His claims as Messiah. When He was rejected, He continued on His course toward the cross to become the Savior of the world. His miracles caused crowds to press in upon Him so that He could not carry on His ministry as He wished.

## **Matthew 12:17**

**That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying,**

[**Esaias**] Greek form of Isaiah (Matthew 3:3). 21 times in New Testament (Matthew 3:3; Matthew 4:14; Matthew 8:17; Matthew 12:17; Matthew 13:14; Matthew 15:7; Luke 3:4; Luke 4:17; John 1:23; John 12:38-41; Acts 8:28-30; Acts 28:25; Romans 9:27-29; Romans 10:16,20; Romans 15:12).

*That it might be fulfilled*, etc. Matthew here quotes a passage from Isaiah 43:1-4, to show the *reason why he thus retired from his enemies, and sought concealment*. The Jews, and the disciples also, at first, expected that the Messiah would be a conqueror, and vindicate himself from all his enemies. When they saw him retiring before them, and instead of subduing them by force, seeking a place of concealment, it was contrary to all their previous notions of the Messiah. Matthew, by this quotation, shows that *their* conceptions of him had been wrong. Instead of a warrior and an earthly conqueror, he was predicted under a totally different character. Instead of shouting for battle, lifting up his voice in the streets, oppressing the feeble- *breaking bruised reeds, and quenching smoking flax*, as a conqueror-he would be peaceful, retiring, and strengthening the feeble, and cherishing the faintest desires of holiness. This appears to be the general meaning of this quotation here. Comp. Isaiah 42:1 and following.<sup>50</sup>

## **Matthew 12:18**

**Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall show judgment to the Gentiles.**

[**my servant**] Seven prophecies of the Messiah fulfilled:

1. God's servant (Matthew 12:18)
2. Chosen of God (Matthew 12:18)

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<sup>50</sup> Barnes' Notes

3. Beloved of God (Matthew 12:18)
4. Anointed of God (Matthew 12:18)
5. A just judge (Matthew 12:18)
6. No anarchist (Matthew 12:19)
7. Successful mission (Matthew 12:20-21)

The *Torah* itself specifies that some *mitzvot* are more important than others (see Yn 5:22–23&N, Ga 2:12bN). Keeping *Shabbat* is important, but the animal sacrifices required by Numbers 28:1–10 are more so, so that the *cohanim* work on *Shabbat* in order to offer them. (“Temple service takes precedence over *Shabbat*,” Shabbat 132b.)<sup>51</sup>

### **Matthew 12:19**

**He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets.**

**[strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets]** Contend, make an outcry, or raise His voice in the streets to cause a mob spirit or rebellion to take hold of the people to defend Himself against His enemies.

### **Matthew 12:20**

**A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory.**

**[A bruised reed shall he not break]** A reference to a musical instrument made of a reed that was easily broken and crushed under the feet. The shepherd would often prefer to repair the pipe instead of making another one, so he would not crush it under his feet until all hope of repairing it was past.

**[smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory]** A reference to a wick floating in an open lamp. When the oil is used up, the wick smokes and is of no further value unless the oil is replenished. So here, Christ will not use His power to destroy His enemies until it becomes necessary. He will not fail nor be discouraged until He fulfills His mission.

**McGee:** “A bruised reed shall he not break”—no, He will instead bind up that “reed” who will let Him do so. “And smoking flax shall he not quench”—no, if that one continues to reject Him, the smoking flax will break out into the fire of judgment. The Lord won’t quench it because man has a free will.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Stern, D. H. (1996, c1992). *Jewish New Testament Commentary : A companion volume to the Jewish New Testament* (electronic ed.) (Mt 12:5). Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications.

<sup>52</sup> McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (4:68). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

## **Matthew 12:21**

**And in his name shall the Gentiles trust.**

Verses 18-21 are actually from **Isa 42:1-4**.

*Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law.*

The people expected the Messiah to be a king. This quotation from Isaiah's prophecy (Isaiah 42:1-4) showed that the Messiah was indeed a king, but it illustrated what *kind* of king—a quiet, gentle ruler who brings justice to the nations. Like the crowd in Jesus' day, we may want Christ to rule as a king and bring great and visible victories in our lives. But often Christ's work is quiet, and it happens according to *his* perfect timing, not ours.

**McGee:** In our day, friend, there is a definite moving out—not only toward the fulfillment of prophecy in general, but for the fulfillment of prophecy concerning the Gentiles. They are to be saved. Christ's rejection by His own people led to His gracious offer to the Gentiles. In the Book of Acts we read that He commissioned Paul to be a missionary to the Gentiles: "To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me" (Acts 26:18).<sup>53</sup>

## **Matthew 12:22**

**Then was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb: and he healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw.**

In Judaism, there were procedures for exorcism, but in the procedures they required the demon to identify himself. Thus, if it was the type of demon that had struck this guy dumb, there was no way to exorcize him (as one could not get him to identify himself). In this case, this exorcism was recognized as unusual.

## **Matthew 12:23**

**And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the son of David?**

**[Is not this the son of David?]** Third of 9 times used of Christ in Matthew (Matthew 1:1).

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<sup>53</sup>McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (4:68). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

**[Is not this the Son of David?]** That is, is not this the promised *descendant* of David, the Messiah? They were acquainted with the prophecy in Isaiah 35:5, "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped;" and they inferred that he must be the promised Messiah Who should be able to do this. This inference was drawn by the common people, and not by the proud and haughty Pharisees. It is not uncommon that men of plain common sense, though unlearned, see the true beauty and meaning of the Bible, while those who are filled with pride and science, falsely so called, are blinded.<sup>54</sup>

**JFB: And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the son of David?**—The form of the interrogative requires this to be rendered, "Is this the Son of David?" And as questions put in this form (in *Greek*) suppose doubt, and expect rather a negative answer, the meaning is, "Can it possibly be?"—the people thus indicating their secret impression that this must be He; yet saving themselves from the wrath of the ecclesiastics, which a direct assertion of it would have brought upon them. (On a similar question, see on Jn 4:29; and on the phrase, "Son of David," see on Mt 9:27).<sup>55</sup>

While there were Jewish exorcists (v. 27, Ac 19:13), casting out a blind, deaf and dumb demon was a major miracle only the Messiah could be expected to perform (see 8:1–4N), because, unlike the legion of demons (Mk 5:1–20), one couldn't talk with it. Compare Yeshua's answer to Yochanan's disciples (above, 11:5), "the blind are seeing ... the deaf are hearing."<sup>56</sup>

The miracles Yeshua had been performing in God's name were beginning to have an effect on the minds of the people. Many of them were now considering that He was the Messiah. (The term "son of David" was a euphemism for the Messiah.)<sup>57</sup>

### **Matthew 12:24**

**But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils.**

Second time they have attributed His works to Beelzebub. This ties to the unpardonable sin. Jesus knew their thoughts. Only God can know one's thoughts.

**[Beelzebub]** The Philistine god of flies (2 Kings 1:2). Jews changed it to Beelzebub, the dung god, or lord of the dunghill—a most contemptuous and vile idol. It was identified as prince of demons (Matthew 12:24-32; Mark 3:22; Luke 11:15-19).

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<sup>54</sup> Barnes' Notes

<sup>55</sup> Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., Fausset, A. R., Brown, D., & Brown, D. (1997). *A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments*. On spine: Critical and explanatory commentary. (Mt 12:23). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

<sup>56</sup> Stern, D. H. (1996, c1992). *Jewish New Testament Commentary : A companion volume to the Jewish New Testament* (electronic ed.) (Mt 12:22). Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications.

<sup>57</sup> Yashanet.com

The Pharisees had already accused Jesus of being in league with the prince of demons (Matthew 9:34). They were trying to discredit him by using an emotional argument. Refusing to believe that Jesus came from God, they said he was in league with Satan. Jesus easily exposed the foolishness of their argument.<sup>58</sup>

**JFB:** Two things are here implied—first, that the bitterest enemies of our Lord were unable to deny the reality of His miracles; and next, that they believed in an *organized internal kingdom of evil*, under one chief. This belief would be of small consequence, had not our Lord set His seal to it; but this He immediately does. Stung by the unsophisticated testimony of “all the people,” they had no way of holding out against His claims but the desperate shift of ascribing His miracles to Satan.<sup>59</sup>

**BKC:** Though the text does not state who brought this demon-possessed man to Jesus . . . they (v. 22) may refer to the Pharisees (cf. v. 14). Probably the Pharisees discovered this man and realized the difficult nature of his case. He was both blind and mute, so communication with him was almost impossible. The man could not see what someone might want him to do, and while he could hear instructions, he would not be able to respond. Jesus immediately healed him by removing the demon, and the man both spoke and saw. The people (lit., “all the crowds”) were astonished (*existanto*, “were beside themselves”; cf. comments on 7:28 on other words for amazement) and asked, “Could this be the Son of David? In other words, “Is not this the promised Messiah, David’s Descendant (cf. 2 Sam. 7:14-16) who has come to rule over us and bring healing to our nation?” While the people were asking this question, the Pharisees were concluding that Jesus’ power must be attributed to Beelzebul, the prince of demons (cf. Matt. 9:34; on the meaning of “Beelzebul” see comments on 10:25; Mark 3:22).<sup>60</sup>

## **Matthew 12:25**

**And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand:**

**[knew their thoughts]** An example of the gifts of knowledge and discernment (1 Cor. 12:10; Acts 5:1-11; John 2:25; Matthew 9:4).

*And Jesus knew their thoughts*, etc. To know the thoughts of the heart belongs only to God, Psalms 139:2, Jeremiah 17:10.

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<sup>58</sup> Life Application Notes

<sup>59</sup> Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., Fausset, A. R., Brown, D., & Brown, D. (1997). *A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments*. On spine: Critical and explanatory commentary. (Mt 12:24). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

v. verse

cf. *confer*, compare

lit. literal, literally

<sup>60</sup> Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-c1985). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (2:46). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

In the incarnation, Jesus gave up the complete and unlimited use of his supernatural abilities. But he still had profound insight into human nature. His discernment stopped the religious leaders' attempts to trick him. The resurrected Christ knows all our thoughts. This can be comforting because he knows what we really mean when we speak to him. It can be threatening because we cannot hide from him, and he knows our selfish motives.

**Yashanet:** Whose thoughts? When closely examined, the text indicates He is considering the thoughts of the people (in verse 23), not the Pharisees. His ensuing comments are directed toward them more than their leaders.

### **Matthew 12:26**

**And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand?**

**[Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself]** Satan, who causes sicknesses by demon oppression (Acts 10:38; Luke 13:11-16), can take off what he puts on without opposing himself or casting himself out. When he can damn a soul by getting a person to deny the essentials of the Bible that will save the soul, then it is to his advantage to deceive by taking away the sickness. Many accept false religions that promise healing and other benefits. Satan cooperates with these religions, which he himself has founded to deceive men. He heals people without their faith in Jesus Christ and His work on the cross. Such people naturally think that they are in the true religion. They reject Christ and see no need of getting saved from sin or following Christianity. They will be damned for doing so, Satan having won their souls. Demons can go out and come back into a person of their own accord (Matthew 12:43-45). Satan in the last days will thus deceive men by giving them power (Matthew 24:24; 2 Thes. 2:8-12; Rev. 13:2; Rev. 16:13-16; Rev. 19:20).<sup>61</sup>

### **Matthew 12:27**

**And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast *them* out? therefore they shall be your judges.**

Jesus is referring to they, the other Jewish followers, who did have demonstrated power to cast out demons. Acts 19:13ff.

**[children cast them out]** Disciples. Josephus says that Pharisees practiced exorcism (Antiquities, Book 8, 2:5; cp. Acts 19:13). Jesus named their practice to disprove their accusation about Him. If you and your disciples cast out demons, then it proves that you are also of the devil (Matthew 12:27-28).

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<sup>61</sup> Dake Study Notes, Dake's Study Bible

**Clarke: By whom do your children cast them out?**—Children, or sons of the prophets, means the disciples of the prophets; and children or sons of the Pharisees, disciples of the Pharisees. From Acts 19:13, 14, it is evident there were exorcists among the Jews, and, from our Lord's saying here, it is also evident that the disciples of the Pharisees did cast out demons, or, at least, those who educated them wished to have it believed that they had such a power. Our Lord's argument here is extremely conclusive: If the man who casts out demons proves himself thereby to be in league with and influenced by Satan, then your disciples, and you who taught them, are all of you in league with the devil: ye must either give up your assertion, that I cast out demons by Beelzebul, or else admit this conclusion, in its fullest force and latitude, that ye are all children of the devil, and leagued with him against God.

Envy causes persons often to condemn in one, what they approve in another.<sup>62</sup>

**[By whom do your children]** Christ was not satisfied by showing them the intrinsic absurdity of their argument. He showed them that it might as well be applied to them as to him. *Your* disciples, taught by you, and encouraged by you, pretend to cast out devils. If your argument be true that a man who casts out devils must be in league with the devil, then your disciples have made a covenant with him also. You must therefore either give up this argument, or admit that the working of miracles is proof of the assistance of God.

The words of Christ, here, do not prove that they had actually the power of casting out devils, but only that they *claimed* it, and practised magic or jugglery. See Acts 19:13.<sup>63</sup>

**JFB: And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children**—“your sons,” meaning here the “disciples” or pupils of the Pharisees, who were so termed after the familiar language of the Old Testament in speaking of the sons of the prophets (1Ki 20:35; 2Ki 2:3, &c.). Our Lord here seems to admit that such works were wrought by them; in which case the Pharisees stood self-condemned, as expressed in Luke (Lu 11:19), “Therefore shall they be your judges.”<sup>64</sup>

**By whom do your people expel them?** The implied answer is: Also by the Adversary. Satanic healings and miracles are possible, and many are led astray by them (Exodus 7:22, 8:7; below, 24:24&N). Those involved in the occult and in false religions because of the miracles and healings they see have found the broad road that leads to destruction, not the narrow gate and hard road that lead to life (7:13–14).<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Adam Clarke's Commentary

<sup>63</sup> Barnes' Notes

<sup>64</sup> Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., Fausset, A. R., Brown, D., & Brown, D. (1997). *A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments*. On spine: Critical and explanatory commentary. (Mt 12:27). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

<sup>65</sup> Stern, D. H. (1996, c1992). *Jewish New Testament Commentary : A companion volume to the Jewish New Testament* (electronic ed.) (Mt 12:27). Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications.

## **Matthew 12:28**

**But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you.**

**Yashanet:** Again, the direct connection is made between the miracles He is doing and their specific purpose, to declare to them that the Kingdom of God is being offered. There is no argument as to the validity of these being "real miracles." The discussion at hand is by whose authority these miracles are being done. If by God, then this was there opportunity to usher in His Kingdom on earth. It is interesting that Scripture tells us that many of the physical problems people were experiencing at that time, were directly attributed to the work of Satan or a demon.

The Hebrew Zohar shows that the clash between God's Kingdom being established over Satan's, is what spiritual warfare is all about. This section also testifies to what Paul wrote about Satan being the god of this world, and also to the gospel account of Satan being able to tempt Yeshua with the kingdoms of this world.

**Soncino Zohar, Bereshith, Section 1, Page 204b** - *God thus admonished Israel to sanctify themselves, in the words: "Ye shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy" (Lev. XIX, 2). The term Ani (I) here signifies the kingdom of heaven. Confronting this is the kingdom of idolatry, which is termed "another" (aher), regarding which it is written: "For thou shalt bow down to no other god, for the Lord whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God" (Ex. XXXIV, 14). Ani (I) is sovereign over this world and of the world to come, all being dependent on it, whereas the other one (aher), the side of impurity, the other side, has rule only in this world and none at all in the other world; and hence, whoever cleaves to that Ani (I) has a portion in this world and in the world to come; but he who cleaves to that aher (the other one) perishes from this world and has no portion in the world to come. He has, however, a portion in the world of impurity, as that other kingdom, the kingdom of idolatry, possesses innumerable emissaries through whom it exercises dominion over this world.*

The Zohar makes it clear that the Kingdom of God is in a struggle to be established:

**Soncino Zohar, Bereshith, Section 1, Page 210b** - *Now, seeing that the holy kingdom, the kingdom of heaven, has been overthrown and the wicked kingdom has prevailed, it behoves man to mourn with it and to abase himself with it, so that when it will be raised again and joy will be restored to the world, he may rejoice with it. Scripture thus says: "Rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her" (Is. LXVI, 10).'*

The time period of the Kingdom offer extended for a brief while after Yeshua's death. Peter reiterated the offer to his kinsmen. Peter let them know that if they were to accept the message of Yeshua, He would immediately return and usher in the Kingdom:

**Acts 3:18-21** - *But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled. Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord. And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you:*

*Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.*

NOTE: One of the criticisms of the "New Testament" until recent times, has been the great mention of demonic activity within its pages, in light of the fact that there was little other historical evidence that witnessed to such things in the Second Temple period. This changed with the Dead Sea Scrolls. Among the parchments (dated about 100 years prior to Yeshua), are found detailed instructions on casting away demons, using either chants or the placing of an amulet upon the body. Many of these demons were directly connected to physical ailments. (Scrolls 4Q560 and 11Q11.)<sup>66</sup>

### **Matthew 12:29**

**Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house.**

The Strong man's house - Rev 6 - 19 where the strong man's house is the Planet Earth!

**[Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man?]** Question 53. Next is in Matthew 12:34. Note the three arguments of Jesus to prove that He was casting out devils by God:

1. Satan's kingdom is not divided, so if I am destroying his kingdom I must be of God, not of Satan (Matthew 12:25-26).
2. The disciples of you Pharisees who claim to cast out demons by God will judge you if you say that those who cast out demons do so by Satan (Matthew 12:27).
3. Satan would not permit a weaker one to defeat him, so since he is helpless before Me, it proves that I am from God and am stronger than he is (Matthew 12:28-29).

*Or else*, etc. He takes a new illustration to confute the Pharisees, drawn from breaking into a house. A man could not break into the house of a strong man, and take his property, unless he had rendered the man himself helpless. If he had taken his goods, it would therefore be sufficient proof that he had bound the man. So I, says he, have taken *this property-this possessed person*-from the dominion of Satan. It is clear proof that I have subdued *Satan* himself, the strong being that had him in possession. The words of *else*, mean *or how*. *How*, or *in what way*, can one, etc.

*Spoil his goods*. The word *spoil* commonly means now, to corrupt, injure, or destroy. Here it means to plunder, to take with violence, as it commonly does in the Bible. See Colossians 2:8,15, Exodus 3:22.<sup>67</sup>

At Jesus' birth, Satan's power and control were disrupted. In the desert Jesus overcame the devil's temptations, and at the resurrection he defeated Satan's ultimate weapon, death. Eventually Satan will be constrained forever (Rev. 20:10), and evil will no longer pervade the earth. Jesus has complete power and authority over Satan and all his forces.

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<sup>66</sup> Yashanet.com

<sup>67</sup> Barnes' Notes

**BKC:** Knowing what the Pharisees were thinking, Jesus defended His authority. This was one of the few times He did so, but the issue was clear. Jesus gave three arguments to answer the claim that He was working by Satan's power. First, He said if He were casting out a demon by Satan's power, then Satan would be working against himself (vv. 25-26). Why would Satan let Jesus cast out a demon and free a man who was already under his control? To do so would divide Satan's kingdom and bring it to destruction.

Second, Jesus asked them about contemporary Jewish exorcists, those who were able to cast out demons by the power of God (v. 27). The apostles had been given that authority (10:1) and others were thought to possess such power. Jesus was saying in essence, "If you believe exorcists work by the power of God in casting out demons, why do you not think I have that same divine power?"

Third, by driving out demons, He was proving He was greater than Satan. He was able to go into Satan's realm (the strong man's house), the demonic world, and come away with the spoils of victory (12:29). Since He could do this, He was able to institute the kingdom of God among them (v. 28). If He were driving out demons by Satan's power, He certainly could not be offering the people God's kingdom. That would be contradictory. The fact that He was coming to establish the kingdom clearly showed that He worked by the power of the Spirit of God, not by Satan's power.<sup>68</sup>

**Yashanet:** The idea of binding a spiritual enemy being, before accomplishing an earthly deed, is found both in Scripture (see study on [Daniel 10](#)) as well as in Midrash:

**Midrash Rabbah - Deuteronomy I:22 - BEHOLD, I HAVE BEGUN.** *etc.* This bears out what Scripture says, To bind their kings with chains (Ps. CXLIX, 8). And what is meant by 'their kings'? R. Tanhuma said: Literally their kings. And their nobles with fetters of iron (ib.): these are their guardian angels [in heaven] above; for God does not exact punishment of any nation before he first exacts punishment of its guardian angel. How? Before God drowned Pharaoh and all the Egyptians in the sea he first drowned their guardian angel. How is this to be inferred from the Scripture? The Rabbis say: It is not written, 'horses and their riders,' but The horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea (Ex. XV, 1); this refers to their guardian angel. And when the Egyptians came out in pursuit of the Israelites the Israelites lifted up their eyes and saw the guardian angel of the Egyptians hovering in the air. Whence this? R. Isaac said: Because it is written, Behold, Egypt was marching after them (Ex. XIV, 10); that is, their guardian angel. This is the force of the words, 'To bind their kings with chains, etc.' **BEHOLD, I HAVE BEGUN.** *etc.* This bears out what Scripture says, To bind their kings with chains (Ps. CXLIX, 8). And what is meant by 'their kings'? R. Tanhuma said: Literally their kings. And their nobles with fetters of iron (ib.): these are their guardian

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vv. verses

v. verse

<sup>68</sup>Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-c1985). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (2:46). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

*angels [in heaven] above; for God does not exact punishment of any nation before he first exacts punishment of its guardian angel. How? Before God drowned Pharaoh and all the Egyptians in the sea he first drowned their guardian angel. How is this to be inferred from the Scripture? The Rabbis say: It is not written, 'horses and their riders,' but The horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea (Ex. XV, 1); this refers to their guardian angel. And when the Egyptians came out in pursuit of the Israelites the Israelites lifted up their eyes and saw the guardian angel of the Egyptians hovering in the air. Whence this? R. Isaac said: Because it is written, Behold, Egypt was marching after them (Ex. XIV, 10); that is, their guardian angel. This is the force of the words, 'To bind their kings with chains, etc.'*

**Midrash Rabbah - The Song of Songs VIII:19 - The Holy One, blessed be He, does not punish a nation on earth till He has cast down its guardian angel from heaven. This is borne out by five Scriptural verses. One, the verse, And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord will punish the host of the high heaven on high-that first, and then-and the kings of the earth upon the earth (Isa. XXIV, 21). The second is: How art thou fallen from heaven, O day-star, son of the morning! after which we read, How art thou cut down to the ground (ib. XIV, 12). The third is: For My sword hath drunk its fill in heaven; and then, Behold, it shall come down upon Edom (ib. XXXIV, 5). The fourth: To bind their kings with chains, and then, and their nobles with fetters of iron (Ps. CXLIX, 8), explaining which R. Tanhuma said: 'To bind their kings with chains': this refers to the heavenly princes. 'And their nobles with fetters of iron': this refers to the earthly rulers.**

## **Matthew 12:30**

**He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.**

### **The Unpardonable Sin**

- The ministry of the Holy Spirit is to convict you of sin, and your need for a savior, while Satan tries to condemn you for your sins.
- Remember Rom 8:1:
  - How does one tell if it is conviction from the Holy Spirit or condemnation from Satan?
  - Is what is happening drawing you closer to or away from God?
  - If your feeling of remorse for your sin is drawing you into God's Word, than that is the Holy Spirit.
  - If the feelings, attitudes, thoughts and doubts over the issue cause you to shun the Word, that is Satan trying to get you on a guilt trip.

**[He that is not with me is against me]** A true test of discipleship (note, Matthew 10:37). God and Satan cannot be reconciled and there is no possibility of loving and serving God and Satan at the same time (Matthew 6:24; Romans 6:16-23).

*He that is not with me*, etc. In addition to his other arguments, he urges this general principle that there could be but two parties in the universe. If any one did not act with him, he was against him. If he gathered not with him, he scattered. This is taken from the practice of persons in harvest, he that did not gather with him, or *aid* him, scattered abroad, or opposed him. The application of this was, "As I have not united with Satan, but opposed him, there can be no league between us." The charge, therefore, is a false one.<sup>69</sup>

**[scattereth abroad]** Anyone who does not seek to help gather the flock only desires to scatter them that he might steal or destroy them for personal gain (Matthew 7:15-20; Acts 20:28-30; Romans 16:17; Galatians 1:6-9; Phil. 1:14-18; Phil. 3:17-19; 2 Peter 2).

It is impossible to be neutral about Christ. Anyone who is not actively following him has chosen to reject him. Any person who tries to remain neutral in the struggle of good against evil is choosing to be separated from God, who alone is good. To refuse to follow Christ is to choose to be on Satan's team.

Let this always be remembered, and let each one ask himself, "Am I with Christ?" If not, remember you are against him. Can you bear this?<sup>70</sup>

### **Matthew 12:31**

**Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.**

If you are worried about having committed the unpardonable sin, chances are you haven't done it!

**[manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost]** Every kind and every single sin and blasphemy can be forgiven, but one. (Matthew 1:21; Matthew 12:31; 1 John 1:7-9; 1 John 3:5).

**[sin]** Greek: *hamartia* (GSN-266) (John 1:29). (properly abstract) :- offence, sin (-ful).

**[blasphemy]** Greek: *blasphemia* (GSN-988), from *blasphemos* (GSN-989), to:

1. Speak evil of (Jude 1:8; Ephes. 4:31)
2. Rail (1 Tim. 6:4; 2 Peter 2:11)
3. Revile (Matthew 27:39)
4. Defame (1 Cor. 4:13)
5. Slander (Romans 3:8)
6. Insult by blasphemy (Matthew 12:31)

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<sup>69</sup> Barnes' Notes

<sup>70</sup> Sprugeon Devotional Commentary

**Clarke: But the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost**—Even personal reproaches, revilings, persecutions against Christ, were remissible; but blasphemy, or impious speaking against the Holy Spirit was to have no forgiveness: i.e. when the person obstinately attributed those works to the devil, which he had the fullest evidence could be wrought only by the Spirit of God. That this, and nothing else, is the sin against the Holy Spirit, is evident from the connection in this place, and more particularly from Mark 3:28-30. “All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme; but he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation; BECAUSE they said, He hath an unclean spirit.”

Here the matter is made clear beyond the smallest doubt—the unpardonable sin, as some term it, is neither less nor more than ascribing the miracles Christ wrought, by the power of God, to the spirit of the devil. Many sincere people have been grievously troubled with apprehensions that they had committed the unpardonable sin; but let it be observed that no man who believes the Divine mission of Jesus Christ, ever can commit this sin: therefore let no man’s heart fail because of it, from henceforth and for ever, Amen.<sup>71</sup>

### **Matthew 12:32**

**And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the *world* to come.**

Blasphemy against the Son of Man is not the problem (while it is still a sin). It’s blasphemy against the Holy Spirit that is unforgivable.

**[speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him]** Explaining what blasphemy is. It is any insulting remark or curse, even attributing to Satan the works of the Holy Spirit. It is unforgivable if it is done maliciously and knowingly, as here and in Hebrews 6:4-9; Hebrews 10:26-31; 1 Tim. 1:13

**[world]** Greek: *aion* (GSN-165), a period of time whether long or short. This age refers to the period between the first and second comings (Matthew 24:14,29-31; Rev. 19:11-21). The age to come refers to the Millennium following the second coming (Rev. 19:11-20:15; Zech. 14; Daniel 2:44-45; Daniel 7:13-27; Ephes. 1:10).

In this place, and in Mark 3:28-30, Jesus states the awful nature of the sin of which they had been guilty. That sin was the sin against the Holy Ghost. It consisted in charging Jesus with being in league with the devil, or accusing him with working his miracles, not by the *spirit* or *power* of God, but by the aid of the prince of the devils. It was therefore a direct insult, abuse, or evil speaking, against the Holy Ghost—the Spirit by which Jesus worked his miracles. That this was what he intended by this sin, at that time, is clear from

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<sup>71</sup> Adam Clarke’s Commentary

Mark 3:30, "Because they said he had an unclean spirit." All other sins—all speaking against the Saviour himself—might be remitted. But this sin was clearly against the Holy One; it was alleging that the highest displays of God's mercy and power were the work of the devil; and it argued, therefore, the highest depravity of mind. The sin of which he speaks is, then, clearly stated. It was accusing him of working miracles by the aid of the devil—thus dishonouring the Holy Ghost.<sup>72</sup>

**[A word against the Son of man.]** The Jews were offended at the humble life and appearance of the Saviour. They reproached him as being a Nazarene—sprung from Nazareth, a place from which no good was expected to proceed; with being a Galilean, from Galilee, a place from which no prophet came, John 7:52. Jesus says that reproaches of this kind could be pardoned. Reflections on his poverty, his humble birth, and the lowliness of his human nature, might be forgiven. But for those which affected his Divine nature, accusing him of being in league with the devil, denying his divinity, and attributing the power which manifestly *implied* divinity, to the prince of fallen spirits, there could be no pardon. This sin was a very different thing from what is now often supposed to be the sin against the Holy Ghost. It was a wanton and blasphemous attack on the Divine power and nature of Christ. Such a sin God would not forgive.<sup>73</sup>

The Pharisees had blasphemed against the Spirit by attributing the power by which Christ did miracles to Satan (Matthew 12:24) instead of the Holy Spirit. The unpardonable sin is the deliberate refusal to acknowledge God's power in Christ. It indicates a deliberate and irreversible hardness of heart. Sometimes believers worry that they have accidentally committed this unforgivable sin. But only those who have turned their backs on God and rejected all faith have any need to worry. Jesus said they can't be forgiven—not because their sin is worse than any other, but because they will never ask for forgiveness. Whoever rejects the prompting of the Holy Spirit removes himself or herself from the only force that can lead him or her to repentance and restoration to God.<sup>74</sup>

**McGee:** There is no sin committed yesterday that the Lord would not forgive today because He died for *all* sin. The Holy Spirit came into the world to make real the salvation of Christ to the hearts of men. If you resist the working of the Spirit of God when He speaks to you, my friend, there is no forgiveness, of course. There is no forgiveness because you have rejected salvation made real to you by the Holy Spirit. And it is the work of the Spirit of God to regenerate you.

In Mark 3 the Lord amplifies the matter of the unpardonable sin by saying that it attributes the Spirit's work to Satan, that Christ had performed these miracles by Beelzebub when actually He was doing them by the power of the Spirit of God. You see, they were rejecting the witness of Himself and of the Holy Spirit.

In our day that particular sin cannot be committed because it could only be committed when Jesus was here upon the earth. There is no act of sin that you could commit for which there is no forgiveness. Of course, if you resist the Holy Spirit, there is no forgiveness because He is *bringing* forgiveness. It is like the man who is dying from a

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<sup>72</sup> Barnes' Notes

<sup>73</sup> Barnes' Notes

<sup>74</sup> Life Application Notes

certain disease, and the doctor tells him there is a remedy for it. The man refuses to take the remedy and dies, not from the disease but from refusing to take the remedy. There is a remedy for the disease of sin, and the Holy Spirit applies it; but if you resist it, there is no remedy. That is the only way sin can be unpardonable today.<sup>75</sup>

**JFB:** In Mark the language is awfully strong, “hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation”—or rather, according to what appears to be the preferable though very unusual reading, “in danger of eternal guilt”—a guilt which he will underlie for ever. Mark has the important addition (Mk 3:30), “Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit.” (See on Mt 10:25). What, then, is this sin against the Holy Ghost—the unpardonable sin? One thing is clear: Its unpardonableness cannot arise from anything in the nature of sin itself; for that would be a naked contradiction to the emphatic declaration of Mt 12:31, that all manner of sin is pardonable. And what is this but the fundamental truth of the Gospel? (See Ac 13:38, 39; Ac 13:38, 39, Ro 3:22, 24; 1Jn 1:7, &c.). Then, again when it is said (Mt 12:32), that to speak against or blaspheme the Son of man is pardonable, but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost is not pardonable, it is not to be conceived that this arises from any greater sanctity in the one blessed Person than the other. These remarks so narrow the question that the true sense of our Lord’s words seem to disclose themselves at once. It is a contrast between slandering “the Son of man” *in His veiled condition and unfinished work*—which might be done “ignorantly, in unbelief” (1Ti 1:13), and slandering the same blessed Person after the blaze of glory which *the Holy Ghost* was soon to throw around His claims, and in the full knowledge of all that. This would be to slander Him with eyes open, or to do it “presumptuously.” To blaspheme Christ in the former condition—when even the apostles stumbled at many things—left them still open to conviction on fuller light: but to blaspheme Him in the latter condition would be to hate the light the clearer it became, and resolutely to shut it out; which, of course, precludes salvation. (See on Heb 10:26–29). The Pharisees had not as yet done this; but in charging Jesus with being in league with hell they were displaying beforehand a malignant determination to shut their eyes to all evidence, and so, *bordering upon, and in spirit* committing, the unpardonable sin.<sup>76</sup>

**BKC:** Though Jesus had just performed a significant sign-miracle, the religious leaders asked for a miraculous sign (cf. Matt. 16:1). Their statement implied that they rejected the many signs given so far. In effect they were saying, “We would just like to see *one* good sign from You.” The Lord suggested that signs should not be necessary for faith, even though He had given them many signs. Only a wicked and adulterous generation asked for signs (cf. 16:4). (“Adulterous” [*moichalis*] suggests that Israel was spiritually unfaithful to God by its religious formality and its rejection of the Messiah.)

But no more signs would be given to that generation except the sign of the Prophet Jonah (cf. 16:4). As Jonah was . . . in the belly of a huge fish for three days and three

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<sup>75</sup>McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (4:68). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>76</sup>Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., Fausset, A. R., Brown, D., & Brown, D. (1997). *A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments*. On spine: Critical and explanatory commentary. (Mt 12:32). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.  
cf. *confer*, compare

nights . . . the Son of Man would be in the heart of the earth for three days and three nights. (Since the Jews reckoned part of a day as a full day, the “three days and three nights” could permit a Friday crucifixion.) Of course, by giving this sign Jesus was demonstrating that they had already decided to reject Him. For Him to fulfill this sign, He would have to be rejected, die, and be buried. By the time this sign would be accomplished, it would be too late for them to accept His right to rule over the nation as King.

The generation He addressed had an unusual privilege, afforded to no previous generation. The men of Nineveh . . . repented at the preaching of a mere man, Jonah. The Queen of the South (i.e., the Queen of Sheba; 1 Kings 10:1-13) came . . . to listen to the wisdom of a man, Solomon. The response of the Ninevites and of the Queen was commendable. But One greater than Jonah and Solomon (cf. Matt. 12:6) was with this generation, and instead of accepting Him, they were rejecting Him. (The words One greater than should be trans. “something greater than,” referring to the kingdom, for the word *pleion* [“greater than”] is neuter, not masc.) Their judgment will be certain when they stand before the Judge in the final day. Again pagan peoples were more responsive than the Jewish nation itself (cf. 11:20-24).<sup>77</sup>

**Blaspheming** (that is, insulting) **the *Ruach HaKodesh*** consists in either (1) wilfully continuing to deny the Gospel when the Holy Spirit has made clear to you that it is true, or (2) attributing the works of the Holy Spirit to the Adversary (Satan); in the present context these amount to about the same thing (other interpretations have been offered).<sup>78</sup>

### **Matthew 12:33**

**Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit.**

Repeating a former doctrine of good and bad trees, of fruit and how to detect false teachers (Matthew 7:16).

Tree is known by its fruit. What is the fruit of Jesus Christ? Calls for a clear distinction between good and evil.

*Either make*, etc. The fact asserted in this verse is, that a tree is known not by its leaves, or bark, or form, but by its fruit. The application to the argument is this: "You are to judge of man's being in league with Satan by his works. If my doctrines and works be properly the works of Satan, then I am corrupt; if not, then your charge is blasphemy. So,

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i.e. *id est*, that is  
trans. translation, translator, translated  
masc. masculine

<sup>77</sup>Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-c1985). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (2:47). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

<sup>78</sup>Stern, D. H. (1996, c1992). *Jewish New Testament Commentary : A companion volume to the Jewish New Testament* (electronic ed.) (Mt 12:31). Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications.

on the other hand, if, notwithstanding your professions, your works are the works of the devil, and your doctrines be such as he would teach, it would prove respecting you that which you charge on me." In this indirect but powerful manner, he advances to the charge against them, which he urges in the following verses.<sup>79</sup>

### **Matthew 12:34**

**O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.**

**[generation of vipers]** Brood of poisonous vipers (note, Matthew 3:7; Matthew 23:33; Luke 3:7).

**[abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh]** Full and overflowing heart of evil.

*O generation of vipers.* Christ here applies the argument which he had suggested in the previous verse. They were a wicked race; like poisonous reptiles, with a corrupt and evil nature. They could not be *expected* to speak good things—that is, to speak favourably of *him* and his works. As the bad fruit of a tree was the proper effect of its *nature*, so were their *words* about him and his works the proper effects of *their* nature. The *abundance* or fulness of the heart produced the words of the lips.

*Vipers.* These are a poisonous kind of serpents, not often a yard long, and about an inch thick, having a flat head. The males have two large teeth, through which a most deadly poison is thrown into the wound made by the bite. They are an emblem of malignity and mischief. These were strong expressions to be used by the *meek and lowly Jesus*; but they were not the effect of anger and malice; they were a declaration of the true character of the men with whom he was conversing—a declaration most justly deserved. Matthew 3:7.<sup>80</sup>

“O generation of vipers”—you may remember that John the Baptist had called them the same thing.

### **Matthew 12:35**

**A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.**

Two kinds of men contrasted.

**McGee:** “What is in the well of the heart will come out through the bucket of the mouth,” someone has said. This scathing denunciation of the religious rulers by Jesus reveals that

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<sup>79</sup> Barnes' Notes

<sup>80</sup> Barnes' Notes

He has rejected them. Had they committed the unpardonable sin? At least the break with these enemies is final and the wound will not be healed.<sup>81</sup>

### **Matthew 12:36**

**But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.**

[idle] Greek: argos (GSN-692), unprofitable, useless. Translated idle (Matthew 12:36; Matthew 20:3,6; 1 Tim. 5:13); slow (Titus 1:12); and barren (2 Peter 1:8).

“Idle word” means blasphemies.

[day of judgment] Acts 17:31; Rev. 20:11-15.

Jesus reminds us that what we say reveals what is in our hearts. What kinds of words come from your mouth? That is an indication of what your heart is really like. You can't solve your heart problem, however, just by cleaning up your speech. You must allow the Holy Spirit to fill you with new attitudes and motives; then your speech will be cleansed at its source.

### **Matthew 12:37**

**For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.**

[words] Greek: *logos* (GSN-3056) (Acts 1:1). This shows how important words are. They will either reward or damn (James 3:2).

*By thy words thou shalt be justified*, etc. That is, *words* shall be the indication of the true principles of the heart; by *words* the heart shall be known, as the tree is by its fruit. If they are true, proper, chaste, instructive, pious, they will prove that the heart is right. If false, envious, malignant, and impious, they will prove that the heart is *wrong*, and will therefore be among the causes of condemnation. It is not meant that words will be the *only thing* that will condemn man; but that they will be all important *part* of the things for which he shall be condemned. See James 3:3-12.<sup>82</sup>

You will be “condemned” because you are speaking the thing which is in your heart.

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<sup>81</sup> McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (4:69). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>82</sup> Barnes' Notes

### **Matthew 12:38**

**Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee.**

They have just seen a leper healed, two blind men, a demoniac, etc. all healed! And they still want a sign!

**[sign from thee]** First of six times signs are asked for (Matthew 12:38; Matthew 16:1; Matthew 24:3; Luke 11:16; John 2:18; John 6:30). In each case signs are given. *We would see a sign from thee.* See Luke 11:16, 29-32. A *sign* commonly signifies a miracle; that is, a *sign* that God was with the person, or had sent him. Comp. Isaiah 7:11. Luke adds that this was done *tempting him* trying him, doubting if he had the power to do it. If these persons had been present with him for any considerable time, they had already seen sufficient proofs that he was what he pretended. They might have been, however, those who had recently come; and then the emphasis must be laid on "*we*." *We*, as well as the others, would see a proof that thou art the Christ. In either case it was a temptation. If they had not seen him work a miracle, yet they should have believed it by testimony. Comp. John 20:29. Perhaps the emphasis is to be laid on the words *from heaven*. They might profess not to doubt that his miracles were real, but they were not quite satisfactory. They were desirous of seeing something, therefore, that should clear up their doubts, where there could be no opportunity for dispute. A comet, or lightning, or thunder, or sudden darkness, or the gift of food raining upon them, they supposed would be decisive. Perhaps they referred in this to Moses. *He* had been with God amidst thunders and lightnings; and he had given them manna-bread from heaven- to eat. They wished Jesus to show some miracle equally undoubted.<sup>83</sup>

The scribes and Pharisees now use another subtle approach to Him. They appear to fall in step with His program by asking for a sign. They have no intention of believing because of a sign. They are trying to trap Him.

### **Matthew 12:39**

**But he answered and said unto them, *An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas:***

**[An evil and adulterous generation.]** The relation of the Jews to God was often represented as a marriage contract;-God as the husband, and the Jewish people as the wife. See Isaiah 57:3, Hosea 3:1 Ezekiel 16:15. Hence their apostasy and idolatry are often represented as adultery. This is the meaning, probably, here. They were evil, and unfaithful to the covenant or to the commandments of God-an apostate and corrupt people. There is, however, evidence that they were literally an adulterous people.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Barnes' Notes

<sup>84</sup> Barnes' Notes

## **Matthew 12:40**

**For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.**

Authentication of the Book of Jonah! The prophet Jonah wrote the book, and not just a myth, a real story. Christ approved the story of Jonah and the whale (Jonah 1:17).

### **Hades, Sheol, Ghenna?**

- Jesus is referring to the grave and Hades, in the center of the earth
- Hades was temporary place; Ghenna is in the outer darkness, permanent.
- There is a gulf between the good part and bad part of Hades:  
    Luke 16. (The Abusso was probably the center of Hades: The Abusso has no bottom: and the only place on earth with no bottom is the center of the earth.)

**[as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly]** This indicates that Jonah was dead for three days and was resurrected as a true type of Christ. If this is not the case, then he could not be a true sign of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Nothing is said about Jonah being preserved alive in the whale's belly. It would be just as easy to believe one as the other.

**[three days and three nights]** Christ was dead for three full days and for three full nights. He was put in the grave Wednesday just before sunset and was resurrected at the end of Saturday at sunset. Good Friday should be changed to Good Wednesday. No statement says that He was buried Friday at sunset. This would make Him in the grave only one day and one night, proving His own words untrue (Matthew 12:40). The sabbath of John 19:31 was not the regular weekly one, but the special sabbath of the feast.

**[whale's belly]** Some baleen whales are up to 100 feet long and 40 feet around, weighing 300,000 lbs. A Mediterranean fish was caught and exhibited in Beirut which had a head that weighed 6 tons. A man standing on the lower jaw could not reach the upper jaw, the opening being about 8 feet across. The April 4, 1896 Literary Digest gave a story of a Mediterranean whale that demolished a harpoon boat. Two men were lost. One was found alive in the whale's belly a day and a half after it was killed. James Bartley lived with no after effects except his skin was tanned by the gastric juices. A pure fish was caught off the Florida coast that weighed 30,000 lbs. It was 45 feet long and 8 feet thick. It had a 1500 lb. fish in its stomach besides a large octopus. A man could easily stand up in its stomach. It could have swallowed 10 Jonah's!

**[heart of the earth]** The lower parts of the earth (Ephes. 4:7-11) and hell (Psalm 16:10; Acts 2:27; 1 Peter 3:19; Hebrews 2:14-15). Luke 16:23,26.

*Three days and three nights.* It will be seen, in the account of the resurrection of Christ, that he was in the grave but two nights and a part of three days. See Matthew 28:6. This computation is, however, strictly in accordance with the Jewish mode of reckoning. If it had not been, the Jews would have understood it, and would have charged our Saviour as

being a false prophet; for it was well known to them that he had spoken this prophecy, Matthew 27:63. Such a charge, however, was never made; and it is plain, therefore, that what was *meant* by the prediction was accomplished. It was a maxim, also, among the Jews, in computing time, that a part of a day was to be received as the whole. Many instances of this kind occur in both sacred and profane history. See 2 Chronicles 10:5-12, Genesis 42:17,18. Comp. Esther 4:16 with Esther 5:1.<sup>85</sup>

The Pharisees were asking for another miraculous sign, but they were not sincerely seeking to know Jesus. Jesus knew they had already seen enough miraculous proof to convince them that he was the Messiah if they would just open their hearts. But they had already decided not to believe in him, and more miracles would not change that.

Many people have said, “If I could just see a real miracle, then I could really believe in God.” But Jesus’ response to the Pharisees applies to us. We have plenty of evidence—Jesus’ birth, death, resurrection, and ascension, and centuries of his work in believers around the world. Instead of looking for additional evidence or miracles, accept what God has already given and move forward. He may use your life as evidence to reach another person.<sup>86</sup>

**McGee:** The Lord categorically refused to grant them a sign but directed them back to two incidents in the Old Testament. The first incident is the account of the prophet Jonah. Jonah was apparently raised from the dead when he was in the fish. God brought him out of darkness and death into light and life. Jonah’s experience was typical of the coming interment and resurrection of Jesus Christ.<sup>87</sup>

The only sign which Jesus offers to those looking for verification of His claims by astounding miracles is the old story which they knew well, the sign of the prophet Jonah. Two important concepts may be distinguished in the saying: (1) Obviously, Jesus had no doubt concerning the historicity of Jonah or the veracity of Jonah’s encounter with the great fish. If the story were not true, the credibility of Jesus as God in human flesh would certainly be shaken. (2) As in so many other instances, Jesus filled history with new meaning, pointing out that the Jonah episode was more than merely an historical incident. Actually, the remarkable emergence of Jonah from the fish after three days foreshadows Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection on the third day.<sup>88</sup>

### **Matthew 12:41**

**The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here.**

**[greater than Jonas is here]** Christ is greater than:

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<sup>85</sup> Barnes’ Notes

<sup>86</sup> Life Application Notes

<sup>87</sup> McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (4:69). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>88</sup> Believers Study Bible

1. The temple (Matthew 12:6)
2. Jonah (Matthew 12:41; Luke 7:28; Luke 11:32)
3. Solomon (Matthew 12:42; Luke 11:31)

Jonah was a prophet sent to the Assyrian city of Nineveh (see the book of Jonah). Because Assyria was such a cruel and warlike nation, Jonah tried to run from his **assignment and ended up spending three days in the belly of a huge fish. When Jonah got out**, he grudgingly went to Nineveh, preached God's message, and saw the city repent. By contrast, when Jesus came to his people, they refused to repent. Here Jesus is clearly saying that his resurrection will prove he is the Messiah. Three days after his death Jesus will come back to life, just as Jonah was given a new chance at life after three days in the fish.

**McGee:** The Ninevites received Jonah and his preaching after his miraculous deliverance from the big fish, and they repented. The acts of Israel, as a nation, place her in a much worse position because she did not receive her Messiah and did not repent.

The second incident that Jesus referred them to concerns Solomon.<sup>89</sup>

### **Matthew 12:42**

**The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here.**

*The queen of the south.* That is, the queen of Sheba, 1 Kings 10:1. Sheba was probably a city of Arabia, situated to the south of Judea. Comp. Isaiah 60:6.

*From the uttermost parts of the earth.* This means simply from the most distant parts of the hospitable world *then known*. See a similar expression in Deuteronomy 28:49. As the knowledge of geography was limited, the place was in fact by no means in the extreme parts of the earth. It means that she came from a remote country; and she would condemn that generation, for *she came a great distance* to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and the Jews of that age would not listen to the wisdom of One *much greater* than Solomon, *though present with them*.<sup>90</sup>

Jesus was greater than Jonah and greater than Solomon. The queen of Sheba heard of Solomon and traveled from the ends of the earth to hear his wisdom. And the Lord Jesus Christ had come from heaven, but they would not turn to Him.

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<sup>89</sup> McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (4:69). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>90</sup> Barnes' Notes

The queen of Sheba came from far, with great difficulty, running great risks; and yet the mass of mankind are utterly careless about a greater than Solomon, and will scarcely cross the streets to see Jesus, who has power to bless them eternally.<sup>91</sup>

### **Matthew 12:43**

**When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none.**

Of his own accord and returns likewise, and is not cast out, as in Matthew 12:29.

*When the unclean spirit, etc.* The *general sentiment* which our Saviour here teaches is much more easily understood than the illustration which he uses. The Jews had asked a sign *from heaven* that should decisively prove that he was the Messiah, and satisfy their unbelief. He replies, that though he should give them such a sign—a proof conclusive and satisfactory; and though for a time they should profess to believe, and apparently reform—yet such was the obstinacy of their unbelief and wickedness, that they would soon return to them, and become worse and worse. Infidelity and wickedness, like an evil spirit in a possessed man, were appropriately at home in them. If driven out, they would find no other place so comfortable and undisturbed as their bosoms, Everywhere they would be comparatively like an evil spirit going through deserts and lonely places, and finding no place of rest. They would return, therefore, and dwell with them.<sup>92</sup>

*He walketh through dry places.* That is, through *deserts*—regions of country unwatered, sandy, barren, desolate, That our Saviour here speaks according to the ancient opinions of the Jews, that evil spirits had their abodes in those desolate uninhabited regions, there can be no doubt. Nor can there be any doubt that the Bible gives countenance to the opinion. Thus Revelation 18:2: "Babylon is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit;" that is, has become *desolate*—a place where evil spirits appropriately dwell. So Isaiah 13:21: "And satyrs shall dance there;" i.e., according to the ancient Greek translation, "*devils, or demons, shall dance there.*" See also Jeremiah 50:39. Isaiah 34:14. Deuteronomy 32:17.<sup>93</sup>

### **Matthew 12:44**

**Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished.**

Casting out a demon from someone leaves a vacancy. One may cleanse the man of the demon, but one must fill the vacuum left behind.

**McGee:** A man has an unclean spirit, and the unclean spirit leaves him. The man thinks he is all cleaned up. Then what happens? In other words, reformation is no good. My

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<sup>91</sup> Spurgeon Devotional Commentary

<sup>92</sup> Barnes' Notes

<sup>93</sup> Barnes' Notes

friend, you can quit doing many things, but that won't make you a Christian. If everyone in the world would quit sinning right now, there wouldn't be any more Christians in the next minute or in the next day, because quitting sin doesn't make Christians. Reformation is not what we need.<sup>94</sup>

### **Matthew 12:45**

**Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last *state* of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation.**

**[himself, and they enter in and dwell there]** Note the personal pronouns, ten personal acts, choice powers, desires, character, speech, degrees of wickedness, and other facts proving demons to be real and personal beings.

**[Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation]** The 14th New Testament prophecy in Matthew (Matthew 12:45, fulfilled in Acts 2:23; Acts 4:17; Acts 5:17; Acts 7:54; Acts 13:45; Acts 14:19; 1 Thes. 2:13-16). Next, Matthew 13:24. This predicts and illustrates the fact that the Jews would become more wicked after their rejection of Christ. The same is true of a backslider who goes back into sin (2 Peter 2:20-22).

*Even so shall it be with this generation.* This shows the scope and design of this illustration. The state of that man was a representation of that generation of men. Much might be done to cure their unbelief; much to reform them externally; but such was the firm hold which the principles of infidelity and wickedness had taken of their minds *as their proper habitation*, that they would return, after all the means used to reform them, and the people would be worse and worse. And this was literally accomplished. After all the instructions and miracles of the Saviour and his apostles; after all that had been done for them by holy men and prophets, and by the judgments and mercies of God; and after all their external temporary reformation-like the temporary departure of an evil spirit from a man possessed-yet such was their love of wickedness, that the nation became worse and worse. They increased in crime, like the sevenfold misery and wretchedness of the man into whose bosom the seven additional evil spirits came. They rejected God's messengers, abused his mercies, crucified his Son, and God gave their temple, and capital, and nation, into the hands of the Romans, and thousands of the people to destruction.<sup>95</sup>

Jesus was describing the attitude of the nation of Israel and the religious leaders in particular. Just cleaning up one's life without filling it with God leaves plenty of room for Satan to enter. The book of Ezra records how the people rid themselves of idolatry, but failed to replace it with love for God and obedience to him. Ridding our lives of sin is the

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<sup>94</sup> McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (4:70). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>95</sup> Barnes' Notes

first step. We must also take the second step: filling our lives with God's Word and the Holy Spirit. Unfilled and complacent people are easy targets for Satan.

**McGee:** This same situation is with us today. The hardest people in the world are unsaved church members because they think they are all right. They have undergone self-reformation—empty, swept, and garnished. They are like a vacant house, and all the evil spirits have to do is move in. The Devil owns them, and they don't recognize this fact. Reformation means death and destruction. Regeneration means life and liberty.

The final section of this chapter is even more startling, and it belongs with what has immediately preceded. There is a relationship that is greater than mother and son and even blood brothers! This is a relationship which is established with God through Jesus Christ by faith in Him.<sup>96</sup>

**seven.** Linked in Scripture with completion or perfection, here perhaps signifying the completeness of demon possession once the demon returns. If **this evil generation** continues to reject Jesus, even after witnessing his divine authority over demons, their condition will be **worse than** if they had never seen him.<sup>97</sup>

### **Matthew 12:46**

**While he yet talked to the people, behold, *his* mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him.**

*His brethren.* There has been some difference of opinion about the persons who were meant here; some supposing that they were children of Mary his mother, others that they were the children of Mary the wife of Cleophas or Alpheus his *cousins*, and called brethren according to the customs of the Jews. The natural and obvious meaning is, however, that they were the children of Mary his mother. See also Mark 6:3. To this opinion, moreover, there can be no valid objection.<sup>98</sup>

### **Matthew 12:47**

**Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee.**

Four brothers: James, Joses, Simon, and Judas; and at least two sisters: Mt 13:55,56; Mk 6:3.

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<sup>96</sup>McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (4:70). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>97</sup>ESV Study Bible

<sup>98</sup>Barnes' Notes

## **Matthew 12:48**

**But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?**

*Who is my mother?* etc. There was no want of affection or respect in Jesus towards his mother, as is proved by his whole life. See especially Luke 2:51, John 19:25-27. This question was asked merely to *fix the attention* of the hearers, and to prepare them for the answer; that is, to show them who sustained towards him the nearest and most tender relation. To do this he pointed to his disciples: Dear and tender as were the ties which bound him to his mother and brethren, yet those which bound him to his disciples were more tender and sacred. How great was his love for his disciples, when it was more than even that for his mother! And what a bright illustration of his own doctrine, that we ought to forsake father, and mother, and friends, and houses, and lands, to be his followers.<sup>99</sup>

## **Matthew 12:49**

**And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren!**

*(Matthew 25:31-46) <sup>31</sup>When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: <sup>32</sup>And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: <sup>33</sup>And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. <sup>34</sup>Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: <sup>35</sup>For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: <sup>36</sup>Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. <sup>37</sup>Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? <sup>38</sup>When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? <sup>39</sup>Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? <sup>40</sup>And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. <sup>41</sup>Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: <sup>42</sup>For I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: <sup>43</sup>I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. <sup>44</sup>Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? <sup>45</sup>Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to*

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<sup>99</sup> Barnes' Notes

*me.*<sup>46</sup> *And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.*

**McGee:** The Lord is saying that the strongest relationship today is the relationship between Christ and a believer. Friend, if you are a child of God and you have unsaved family members, you are closer to Jesus Christ than you are to your own kin, including the mother that bore you. You are more closely related to other believers than you are to unsaved members of your family. This is tremendous! He is talking about a new relationship.<sup>100</sup>

### **Matthew 12:50**

**For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.**

Jesus was saying that His circle, His allegiance, was to His family of faith. This is a major turning point in Matthew's Gospel. From this point on, **Jesus will only speak to the public in parables.**

**[brother, and sister, and mother]** Used of relatives (Genesis 14:16; Genesis 29:12); neighbors (Deut. 23:7); any Israelite (Leviticus 19:17; Deut. 22:1-4; Jeremiah 34:9); any man (Genesis 9:5; 1 John 3:15); a companion (2 Samuel 1:26). It is a fraternal epithet among Christians (Acts 9:17; Acts 21:20; 1 Cor. 7:12; 2 Cor. 2:13; Hebrews 2:11-12; 1 Peter 1:22).

Jesus was not denying his responsibility to his earthly family. On the contrary, he criticized the religious leaders for not following the Old Testament command to honor their parents (Matthew 15:1-9). He provided for his mother's security as he hung on the cross (John 19:25-27). His mother and brothers were present in the upper room at Pentecost (Acts 1:14). Instead Jesus was pointing out that spiritual relationships are as binding as physical ones, and he was paving the way for a new community of believers (the universal church), our spiritual family.

**JFB:** "There stand here the members of a family transcending and surviving this of earth: Filial subjection to the will of My Father in heaven is the indissoluble bond of union between Me and all its members; and whosoever enters this hallowed circle becomes to Me brother, and sister, and mother!"<sup>101</sup>

This is the first of several incidents in which Yeshua's treatment of his family is considered by some to be disrespectful and cavalier, even though elsewhere he affirmed the fifth commandment (19:19) and even disputed with the *P. rushim* about it (15:4-6).

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<sup>100</sup> McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (4:70). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>101</sup> Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., Fausset, A. R., Brown, D., & Brown, D. (1997). *A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments*. On spine: Critical and explanatory commentary. (Mt 12:50). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

Why did his family wish to see him? We do not know for sure; we do know that his brothers had little understanding of his ministry (Yn 7:2–9), and that his mother, even though she had been given special insight through the angel Gavri’el (Lk 1:26–56) and through Shim’on and Chanah (Lk 2:25–38), was at times puzzled by his actions (e.g., Lk 2:41–51), although upon being reminded by him, she could summon up a measure of trust (Yn 2:3–5). They may have wanted to bring him food and supplies out of concern for his well-being; or, fearing the opposition, they may have wanted to stop or even seize him (as his friends had wanted to, Mk 3:21). Under such circumstances, when busy ministering to a crowd and fielding opposition, Yeshua may have found it best to communicate that even though blood is thicker than water, spiritual family ties supersede physical ones. His remarks do not come from lack of respect but from his desire to point to the Kingdom of God. Eventually his relatives became members of his spiritual family as well (Ac 1:14, Ga 1:19).<sup>102</sup>

### **Barnes’ Remarks on Matthew 12**

(1.) Our Saviour has taught us the right use of the Sabbath, Matthew 12:1-13. His conduct was an explanation of the meaning of the fourth commandment. By his example we may learn what may be done. He himself performed only those works on the Sabbath which were strictly necessary for life, and those which went to benefit the poor, the afflicted, and needy. Whatever work is done on the Sabbath that is not for these ends, must be wrong. All labour that can as well be done on another day; all which is not for the support of life, or to aid the ignorant, poor, and sick, must be wrong. This example justifies teaching the ignorant, supplying the wants of the poor, instructing children in the precepts of religion, teaching those to read in Sabbath-schools who have no other opportunity for learning, and visiting the sick, when we go not for formality, or *to save time on some other day*, but to do them good.

(2.) The Sabbath is of vast service to mankind. It was made for man, not for man to violate or profane, or to be merely idle, but to improve to his spiritual and eternal good. Where men are employed through six days in worldly occupations, it is kind towards them to give them one day particularly to prepare for eternity. Where there is no Sabbath there is no religion. There are no schools for instructing the poor. There are no means of enlightening the ignorant. This truth, from the history of the world, will bear to be recorded in letters of gold, *that the true religion will exist among men only when they strictly observe the Sabbath*. They, therefore, who do most to promote the observance of the Sabbath, are doing most for religion and the welfare of man. In this respect, Sunday-school teachers may do more, perhaps, than all the world besides, for the best interests of the world.

(3.) In the conduct of Christ, Matthew 12:14,15 we have an example of Christian prudence. He did not throw himself needlessly into danger, he did not remain to provoke opposition. He felt that his time was not come, and that his life, by a prudent course, should be preserved. He therefore withdrew. Religion requires us to sacrifice our lives rather than deny the Saviour. To throw our lives away, when with good conscience they might be preserved, is self-murder.

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<sup>102</sup>Stern, D. H. (1996, c1992). *Jewish New Testament Commentary : A companion volume to the Jewish New Testament* (electronic ed.) (Mt 12:48). Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications.

(4.) The rejection of the gospel in one place is often the occasion of its being received elsewhere, Matthew 12:15 Men may reject it to their own destruction; but somewhere it *will* be preached, and will be the power of God unto salvation. The wicked cannot drive it out of the world. They only secure their own ruin, and, against their will, benefit and save others. To reject it is like turning a beautiful and fertilizing stream from a man's own land. He does not, he cannot dry it up. *It will flow somewhere else*. He injures himself, and perhaps benefits multitudes. Men never commit so great foolishness and wickedness, and so completely fail in what they aim at, as in rejecting the gospel. A man, hating the light of the sun, might get into a cave or dungeon, and be in total darkness; but the sun will continue to shine, and millions, in spite of him, will be benefited by it. So it is with the gospel.

(5.) Christ was mild, still, retiring; not clamorous or noisy, Matthew 12:19. So is all religion. There is no piety in noise; if there was, then thunder and artillery would be piety. Confusion and discord are not religion. Loud words and shouting are not religion. Religion is love, reverence, fear, holiness, deep and awful regard for the presence of God, profound apprehensions of the solemnities of eternity, imitation of the Saviour. It is still. It is full of awe—an awe too great to strive, or cry, or lift up the voice in the streets. If men ever should be overawed, and filled with emotions *repressing* noise and clamour, it should be when they approach *the great God*. This great truth is the essence of religion, that we have most of it when we come nearest *in all things* to the Lord Jesus Christ.

(6.) The feeble may trust to Jesus, Matthew 12:20. A child of any age, an ignorant person, the poorest man, may come, and he shall in no wise be cast out. It is a sense of our weakness that Jesus seeks. Where that is, *he* will strengthen us, and we shall not fail.

(7.) Grace shall not be extinguished, Matthew 12:20. Jesus, where he finds it in the feeblest degree, will not destroy it. He will cherish it. He will kindle it to a flame. It shall burn brighter and brighter, till it "glows with the pure spirits above."

(8.) Men are greatly prone to ascribe all religion to the devil, Matthew 12:24. Anything that is unusual, anything that confounds them, anything that troubles their consciences, they ascribe to fanaticism, overheated zeal, and Satan. It has always been so. It is sometimes an easy way to stifle their own convictions, and to bring religion into contempt. *Somehow or other*, like the Pharisees, infidels must account for revivals of religion, for striking instances of conversion, and for the great and undeniable effects which the gospel produces. How easy to *say* that it is *delusion*, and that it is the work of the devil! How easy to show at once the terrible opposition of their own hearts to God, and to boast themselves, in their own wisdom, in having found a *cause* so simple for all the effects which religion produces in the world! How much pains, also, men will take to secure their own perdition, rather, than to admit it to be possible that Christianity should be true!

(9.) We see the danger of blasphemy—the danger of trifling with the influences of the Holy Spirit, Matthew 12:31,32. Even if we do not commit the unpardonable sin, yet we see that *all* trifling with the Holy Ghost is a sin very near to God, and attended with infinite danger. He that *laughs away* the thoughts of death and eternity; he that seeks the society of the gay and trifling, Or of the sensual and profane, for the *express* purpose of driving away these thoughts; and he that struggles directly against his convictions, and is resolved that he *will not* submit to God, may be, for aught he knows, making his

damnation sure. Why should God ever return, when he has once rejected the gospel? Who would be to blame if the sinner is then lost? Assuredly not God. None but himself. Children sometimes do this. Then is the time, the very time, when they should begin to love God and Jesus Christ. Then the Spirit also strives. Many have then given their hearts to him, and become Christians. Many more might have done so, if they had not grieved away the Spirit of God.

(10.) We see the danger of rejecting Christ, Matthew 12:38-42. All past ages, all the wicked and the good, the foolish and the wise, will rise up in the day of judgment, and condemn fit, if we do not believe the gospel. No people, heretofore, have seen so much light as we do in this age. And no people can be so awfully condemned as those who, in a land of light, of Sabbaths, and Sabbath-schools, reject Christ, and go to hell. Among the hundred and twenty thousand children of Nineveh, Jonah 4:11 there was not one single Sunday-school. There was no one to tell them of God and the Saviour. They have died and gone to judgment. Children now living will die also, and go to meet them in the day of judgment. How will they condemn the children of this age, if they do not love the Lord Jesus Christ!

(11.) Sinners, when awakened, if they grieve away the Spirit of God, become worse than before, Matthew 12:43-45. They are never as they were. Their hearts are hard, their consciences are seared, they hate religious men, and they plunge deeper and deeper into sin. Seven devils often dwell where one did; and God gives the man over to blindness of mind and hardness of heart. This shows, also, the great guilt and danger of grieving the Holy Ghost.

(12.) We see the love of Christ for his followers, Matthew 12:46-50. Much as he loved his mother, yet he loved his disciples more. He still loves them. He will always love them. His heart is full of affection for them. And though poor, and despised, and unknown to the rich and mighty, yet to Jesus they are still clearer than mother, and sisters, and brothers.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Barnes' Notes