

It is important to ensure fellowship with God before the study of the Word.

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9).

Isaiah 55:11 So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; it will not return to Me empty, without accomplishing what I desire, and without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it.

This is a pivotal moment in the Lord's ministry at this time.

- He has been rejected by the Pharisees. His miracles have been attributed to the power of our adversary, the devil. They have rejected the Father's witness of the Son and His witness of Himself – His claims to be Messiah and the miracles that validated the fact that He was the Messiah.
- They have also rejected John the Herald's witness – preparing the way for Messiah to arrive and identifying Him as Messiah.
- They have rejected the Holy Spirit's witness because He was doing these things by the Spirit of God.

The focus of the ministry of the Lord shifted to those who have believed His message and those who would believe.

- The Lord is located in Capernaum with the 12 disciples and the ladies who are facilitating the ministry.
- We noted from **Luke 8:1-3** that many ladies were contributing out of their own private means to facilitate the Lord's work – this enabled Him to focus on the work that the Father wanted Him to do.
- He has just healed a demon possessed man who was blind and mute in front of an entire crowd at Peter's house; therefore, the Pharisees could not deny that the miracle occurred (**Matt 12:22**).
- So the Pharisees launch a personal attack at Him in **Matt 12:24**, claiming He is demon possessed and that "He casts out the demons by the ruler of the demons."

The Lord then, in **Matthew 12:25-29**, shuts them down with four arguments:

1. **1st Argument** Satan's kingdom is not a divided kingdom; therefore, if Satan were in the business of casting out demons, his kingdom would fall (**vv. 25-26**).
 - **CONCLUSION** that people were supposed to make was that the Lord is not possessed by a demon nor casting out demons by the ruler of demons because this is counterproductive to Satan's plan.
2. **2nd Argument** (**vs. 27**) – If He was in league with Satan to cast out demons, who were the Pharisaical exorcists in league with to cast out demons? Their doctrine on exorcism stated they relied on fallen angels to reveal the oath that needed to be proclaimed to cast out demons.
3. **3rd Argument** (**vs. 28**), He is casting out demons by the Holy Spirit; therefore, the kingdom of God has come upon them.
 - The kingdom of God is greater than the kingdom of Satan.
 - Satan's kingdom must retreat in the face of the kingdom of God.
 - That's why the demons shudder in His presence and are forced to obey His commands.
 - Being God, He has authority over them and they are forced to obey His commands.

4. **4th Argument:** Argument of the Strong Man's House (vs. 29)

- If Satan or his demons occupy a house (body), to cast them out requires greater power than that of Satan.
- Therefore, Christ is not casting out demons by the ruler of the demons.

The only conclusion one can draw with positive volition is that He is the Christ, the Son of God - the promised Messiah-King.

This is the point at which He accomplishes a few more things in **vv. 30-37**.

1. Forces the people to make a decision to either stand with Him in light of the miracle which validated He was their Messiah or stand with the Pharisees and their unforgivable sin – attributing that miracle to the power of Satan.



30 “He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me scatters.”

2. Communicates that the sin of blaspheming God the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven. The Pharisees had just committed this sin because they attributed the miracle, which was the work of God the Holy Spirit, to Satan.
3. Speaks about good trees and bad trees, and the Pharisees and those who stand with them are bad trees. Bad trees produce bad fruit from the heart in the form of words – blasphemy against God the Holy Spirit.

vs. 36 They are all going to be judged and their words (blasphemies of the Spirit) will condemn them at the Great White Throne Judgment (**Rev. 20:11-15**).

36 “But I tell you that every careless word that people speak [rejection of Christ despite the Holy Spirit's witness], they shall give an accounting for it in the Day of Judgment.”

Four Witnesses to who Christ was:

1. God the Father's (**Matt 3:17 & Luke 9:35**)
2. God the Son's (**Luke 4:17-21**)

Luke 4:17-21 And the book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him. And He opened the book and found the place where it was written, ¹⁸ "THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME, BECAUSE HE ANOINTED ME TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THE POOR. HE HAS SENT ME TO PROCLAIM RELEASE TO THE CAPTIVES, AND RECOVERY OF SIGHT TO THE BLIND,

TO SET FREE THOSE WHO ARE OPPRESSED,¹⁹ TO PROCLAIM THE FAVORABLE YEAR OF THE LORD."²⁰ And He closed the book, gave it back to the attendant and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on Him.²¹ And He began to say to them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

3. God the Holy Spirit's (Matt 3:16 cf. John 1:33; Matt 12:22 cf. 28)
4. John the Herald's (John 1:19 – 36)

A person could reject John's witness and accept the Father's and be saved.

A person could reject John's witness and the Father's witness but accept the Son's witness and be saved.

A person could reject John's witness, the Father's witness, and the Son's witness and accept the Spirit's witness through the miracles and be saved!

If they rejected the Spirit's witness, they were done with because blaspheming God the Holy Spirit was an unforgivable sin.

- We know from Mark 3:20-21 that the crowd was so great in Capernaum at this time that the Lord and the disciples were unable to eat.
- Mary and His brothers thought that He had lost His mind – He had become too zealous, so they are on their way to intervene.
- Now the religious leaders demand a sign despite the fact that He just gave them one in healing the demon possessed man.

Matthew 12:38-45 Then some of the scribes and Pharisees said to Him, "Teacher we want . . .

- **Teacher** – Διδάσκαλε - They were willing to recognize Him as a teacher not their promised Messiah.
- . . . [**we are wishing**] to see a sign from You."
- **Sign** - σημεῖον – SEMEION - a miracle that only God can do to validate His claims of Messiahship

³⁹ But He answered and said to them, "An evil and adulterous generation craves for a sign; and yet no sign will be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet; ⁴⁰ for just as JONAH WAS THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS IN THE BELLY OF THE SEA MONSTER [**HUGE FISH**], so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

The sign that the evil and adulterous generation is going to receive is the resurrection of Christ.

⁴¹ "The men of Nineveh will stand up with this generation at the judgment, and will condemn it because they repented [*change of mind*] at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, something greater than Jonah is here.

The Lord and His words and works are present which are far greater than Jonah, yet they reject Him.

⁴² "The Queen of the South [*reference Queen of Sheba*] will rise up with this generation at the judgment and will condemn it, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, something greater than Solomon is here. ⁴³ Now when the unclean spirit goes out of a man, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, and does not find it.

- The unclean spirit is a demon; a fallen angel.

- Here we have a man that is delivered from demonic possession without being born again through faith in Christ.
- Reference the Pharisaical exorcists

⁴⁴ “Then it says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came’; and when it comes, it finds *it unoccupied, swept, and put in order.*”

- Once the man has been delivered from demon possession he puts his life back in order.
- Note: the house is unoccupied by God; therefore, the demon who was cast out can return to the man’s body.
- The house is unoccupied by God because spiritual regeneration did not occur - no faith in Christ.
- The man sweeps his house and puts it in order – sweeping the house and putting it in order are tantamount to religious works.

POD: The righteous deeds of the unbeliever are worthless, because they do not protect them from demonic attack.

Works are worthless apart from faith alone in Jesus Christ.

⁴⁵ “Then it goes and takes along with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there; and the last state of that man becomes worse than the first.”

Then Jesus Christ equates this deliverance from demon possession, this putting one’s house in order through religious works and demonic re-possession, to Israel!

That is the way it will also be with this evil generation.”

- John came heralding Messiah and things began to get cleaned up with his message, “Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”
- Yet the people were shy of faith which would result in spiritual regeneration.
- Then Jesus arrives and they reject Him as Messiah, despite the miracles which validated that He was their Messiah.

The family interruption -

Matthew 12:46-50 While **He was still speaking** to the crowds, behold, His mother and brothers were standing outside, seeking to speak to Him. ⁴⁷ Someone said to Him, “Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside seeking to speak to You.” ⁴⁸ But Jesus answered the one who was telling Him and said, “**Who is My mother and who are My brothers?**” ⁴⁹ And stretching out His hand toward His disciples, He said, “**Behold My mother and My brothers!**”

Jesus Christ communicates that one’s spiritual family is of higher priority than one’s earthly family.

- His half-brothers did not become believers until after the resurrection.
- **John 7:5** “**For not even His brothers were believing in Him.**”

One’s relationship with God and the family of God must take precedence over one’s earthly family.

⁵⁰ “**For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven,**

The will of the Father is that all would believe in His son!

... he is My brother and sister and mother.”

POD: Family [*believers or unbelievers*] can be a distraction to fulfilling God’s plan for your life.

- Mary was a believer – she just didn’t understand what He was doing; she was a concerned mother.
- Brothers were unbelievers at this time, they were probably the ones who spoke to mom about her Son being out of His mind.

POD: Family serve as a distraction because they are not in tune with what the Lord is doing in your life.

This can happen because they have rejected doctrine that you have been illuminated to.

The principle for believers who reject doctrine is “the last state of that man becomes worse than the first.”

POD: When family members serve as a distraction, the believer must subordinate his distracting family to that of his spiritual or facilitating family.

- Without shirking responsibilities to either
- If your parents are unbelievers or are not in tune with what the Lord is doing in your life, you still honor your mother and father without allowing them to distract you from advancing in the spiritual life.

Matthew 10:34-35 “Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. ³⁵“For I came to SET A MAN AGAINST HIS FATHER, AND A DAUGHTER AGAINST HER MOTHER, AND A DAUGHTER-IN-LAW AGAINST HER MOTHER-IN-LAW;”

- Faith in Christ divides family members just as a sword splits open a body.
- Bible doctrine also divides.
- Your loyalty to Jesus Christ and His word must be maintained despite the attacks from family members.

This is the point at which everything takes a turn in Christ’s ministry.

- He has been rejected by the nation despite the four witnesses.
- The kingdom is no longer going to be offered to Israel at all!

The kingdom He speaks about is the spiritual kingdom composed of those who have and will believe in Him.

He is going to exclude those who have rejected Him from the truth that He teaches by teaching in parables.

Matthew 13:10-17 And the disciples came and said to Him, “Why do You speak to them in parables?” ¹¹ Jesus answered them, “To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted. ¹² For whoever has, to him *more* shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him. ¹³ Therefore I speak to them in parables; because while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. ¹⁴ In their case the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, which says, ‘YOU WILL KEEP ON HEARING, BUT WILL NOT UNDERSTAND; YOU WILL KEEP ON SEEING, BUT WILL NOT PERCEIVE; ¹⁵ FOR THE HEART OF THIS PEOPLE HAS BECOME DULL, WITH THEIR EARS THEY SCARCELY HEAR, AND THEY HAVE CLOSED THEIR EYES, OTHERWISE THEY WOULD SEE WITH THEIR EYES, HEAR WITH THEIR EARS, AND UNDERSTAND WITH THEIR HEART AND RETURN, AND I WOULD HEAL THEM.’ ¹⁶ But blessed are your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear. ¹⁷ For truly I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see *it*, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear *it*.”

- He has been rejected and this rejection will culminate in His crucifixion.
- He shifts His effort and priority to His spiritual family – those who believe in Him.
- He has some challenges to face along the way because His spiritual family wants Him to establish the Davidic kingdom and that is not going to happen for quite some time.

All Scriptures quoted are from New American Standard unless otherwise noted.