

VII. THE PLACE WHICH ISRAEL GAVE TO THE KING AND THE CONFRONTATIONS THAT FOLLOWED

(Matthew 12)

by Pastor Richard H. Jones

A. INSTEAD OF RECEIVING JESUS AS THE KING, THE JEWISH LEADERS CONFRONTED HIM OVER HIS DISCIPLES PLUCKING GRAIN ON THE SABBATH (Matt. 12:1-8).

Here Matthew records how the Pharisees charged Jesus' disciples with breaking the Sabbath because they plucked grain and ate it on the Sabbath. Jesus responded by reminding them of how David and his followers had eaten the showbread, which according to the law, was only for the priests (I Sam. 21:6). Jesus also mentions how the priests carry on their work for God on the Sabbath, yet they were blameless (Num. 28:9,10). Jesus then rebuked them for condemning the guiltless. The Pharisees put the letter of the law before compassion and failed to see that God's laws were never intended to put a hardship on God's people. Finally, Jesus proclaimed that He was the Lord of the Sabbath. In other words, He, who had instituted the law to begin with, was the one who could rightly interpret the things concerning it (Matt. 12:8).

B. INSTEAD OF RECEIVING JESUS AS THE KING, THE JEWISH LEADERS CONFRONTED HIM OVER HIS HEALING ON THE SABBATH (Matt. 12:9-21)

Matthew says Jesus went from the grain field and entered into the synagogue where there was a man who had a withered hand. The Pharisees, no doubt, thought they could use this man's condition to find fault with the Lord Jesus. So they questioned Jesus about healing this man. The Lord Jesus answered them by asking, if they would help one of their sheep on the Sabbath, if it had fallen into a pit. He declared to them that a man was worth more than a sheep and therefore it was all right to show mercy and to heal at any time. Jesus then commanded the man to stretch out his hand and Jesus healed his hand (Matt. 12:9-13). After this the Pharisees went out and held a council on how they might destroy Jesus (Matt. 12:14). Then Jesus went from there healing others and proclaiming how He would be the One in whom the Gentiles would trust (Matt. 12:15-21).

C. INSTEAD OF RECEIVING JESUS AS THE KING, THE JEWISH LEADERS BLASPHEMED THE HOLY SPIRIT AND COMMITTED THE UNPARDONABLE SIN (Matt. 12:22-32).

Matthew records here how that Jesus healed a demon-possessed man who could neither see nor speak. When the people witnessed this miraculous healing they began to acknowledge even more that Jesus was the promised Messiah. But when the Pharisees heard what was said they charged Jesus as being demon-empowered by Beelzebub, another name for the devil. Jesus answered their charge by asking them a question which showed how absurd and self-defeating it would be for Satan to work against himself (Matt. 12:22-26). Then, Jesus asked the Pharisees a second question. If He was casting out demons by the power of Satan, then by what power were some of the Pharisees, known as exorcists, casting them out? In other words, if they were doing the same thing He was doing then they were doing so by the same power. On the other hand, Jesus said if He was casting out demons by the power of the Spirit of God, then the Kingdom of God had come to them (Matt. 12:27,28). Notice how blind the Pharisees were. God's Kingdom had come to them in the person and power of their Messiah and they didn't even recognize it.

Jesus then spoke a parable which illustrated how He Himself was the binder of Satan and not in league with him. After that, Jesus pointed out to the Pharisees that if they were not with Him they were against Him (Matt. 12:29,30).

The Lord Jesus then accused the Pharisees of committing the unpardonable sin. They had charged that He was doing His miraculous works by the power of Satan, in other words, calling the Holy Spirit Beelzebub. As a result, those who would do that during Jesus' public ministry on the earth, or in the millennial age to come, would not be forgiven (Matt. 12:31,32).

D. AS A RESULT OF REJECTING HIM AS KING, JESUS CONDEMNED THE HYPOCRISY OF THE JEWISH LEADERS (Matt. 12:33-37).

Here Jesus exposed the inconsistency of the Pharisees by using the analogy of a tree and its fruits. A tree was either good, producing good fruits, or else it was corrupt producing corrupt fruits. A tree is known by its fruits. Jesus Himself had produced good fruits in His ministry. Jesus then addressed the Pharisees as a generation of vipers. Because their hearts were evil, they had attacked Him with venomous words and that revealed that those words had come forth out of the treasuries, or the things stored up, in an evil heart. Finally, Jesus pointed out to them that men are accountable for what they say, and since the words which men say are a reflection of what's in their hearts, they will be either condemned or justified by their words.

E. AT THAT TIME OF REJECTION, JESUS RESPONDED TO A CERTAIN QUESTION ASKED BY THE JEWISH LEADERS (Matt. 12:38-42).

Certain ones of the Scribes and Pharisees asked Jesus to give them a sign. Despite all the miraculous works which Jesus had done, they still wanted Him to do something else to prove that He was Israel's Messiah. Jesus responded that the only sign their evil and adulterous generation would receive was that of the prophet Jonah. He used that to refer to His own, death, burial, and resurrection (Matt. 12:38-40). Then Jesus used two examples to point out the guilt of the leaders of Israel. The people of Nineveh would rise up and condemn them because they repented at Jonah's preaching believing his word. Also, the queen of Sheba would rise up and condemn them for she had come a great distance to hear the wisdom of Solomon. The Pharisees had been privileged to see and hear the words and wisdom of the very Son of God and yet they had rejected Him (Matt. 12:41,42).

F. AFTER JESUS WAS REJECTED AS KING, HE SPOKE A PARABLE TO CONDEMN THE SPIRITUAL STATE OF THE JEWISH LEADERS (Matt. 12:43-45).

To show their spiritual state, Jesus spoke of how a demon-possessed man, who housed a demon, would be if he tried to clean up his life. More demons would return and the man's last state would be worse than before. This identified Israel's spiritual state of affairs. Despite all the self-righteous efforts of the Pharisees, that generation was worse than better.

G. AFTER JESUS WAS REJECTED AS KING, HE USED AN EARTHLY RELATIONSHIP TO POINT OUT A CHANGE AND A NEW RELATIONSHIP (Matt. 12:46-50).

Here, we are told when Jesus' mother and brethren came desiring to speak with Him, He asked a question that marked the end of His dealings with the lost sheep or the lost of Israel. Mary and her sons represented Jesus' blood relations, but from then on His relationship would be those who did the Father's will.

EXPOSITORY NOTES

Matthew 12:31,32:

Many people have been taught by false teachers and led to believe that they may have committed the unpardonable sin. They worry that they have done something for which they cannot be forgiven. Some think because they have rejected the Lord as Saviour, or gotten in some backslidden condition, as a believer, that they have crossed the line and now there is no hope or forgiveness for them, no matter what they might do.

Notice, first of all, that blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is the unpardonable sin of which Jesus spoke. This is what the Pharisees committed when they charged that Jesus had cast out demons by the power of Beelzebub, or calling the Holy spirit the prince of the demons (Matt. 12:24). In doing so, they were denying that the miraculous works which Jesus had done were done by the power of God.

It should be understood that this sin is not a sin which can be committed in our day. First of all, Jesus is not bodily present and performing miraculous works which authenticate His ministry and confirm Him to be the Messiah. Secondly, when Jesus said "in this world or in the world to come" the word "world" is "age" and He was speaking of the age of His public ministry and "in the age to come" of the millennial kingdom. Jesus, no doubt, mentioned there would be no forgiveness for them in the coming millennial age, because when He returns and judges the Jews at His Second Coming, those blasphemers of the Holy Spirit would not be raised and would not enter into the Kingdom of heaven, meaning His millennial reign.

A closer look at this sin, which the Pharisees committed, reveals that it involved several steps. First, they had said that Jesus was "beside Himself" or crazy (Mk 3:21). Secondly, they said Jesus was possessed by Beelzebub the prince of the demons and was casting out demons by his power (Mk 3:22). Then, thirdly, they said that Jesus had a "unclean Spirit" (Mk 3:30), calling the Holy Spirit unclean. This was the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.

QUESTIONS WE MAY APPLY TO OUR LIVES

1. What lessons can we learn from the mistake of the Pharisees in verses 1-12 of this chapter?

2. What did the blasphemy of the Holy spirit involve in verses 24-32? _____

3. Why is this sin not committable in our day? _____

4. According to Matt. 12:36,37 why is it important for us to watch what we say?

5. What lesson can we learn from the parable Jesus gave in Matt. 12:43-45?

6. What evidence is there in Matt. 12:46 that Mary was not a perpetual virgin as declared by Roman Catholicism? _____

7. What evidence is there that Mary held no special privileges in spiritual matters?
