Matthew 12 Commentary

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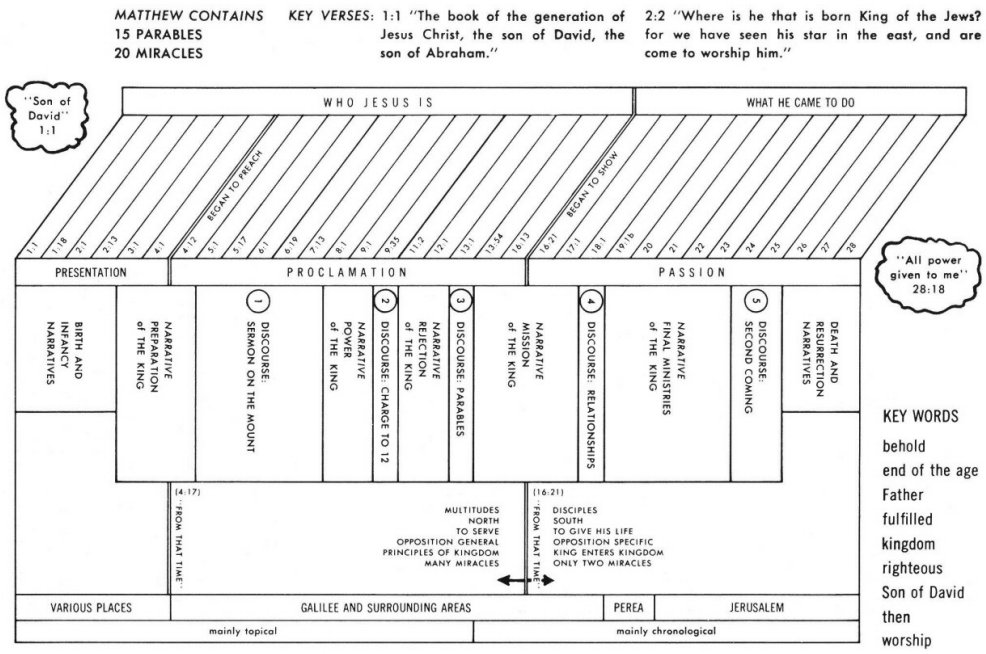

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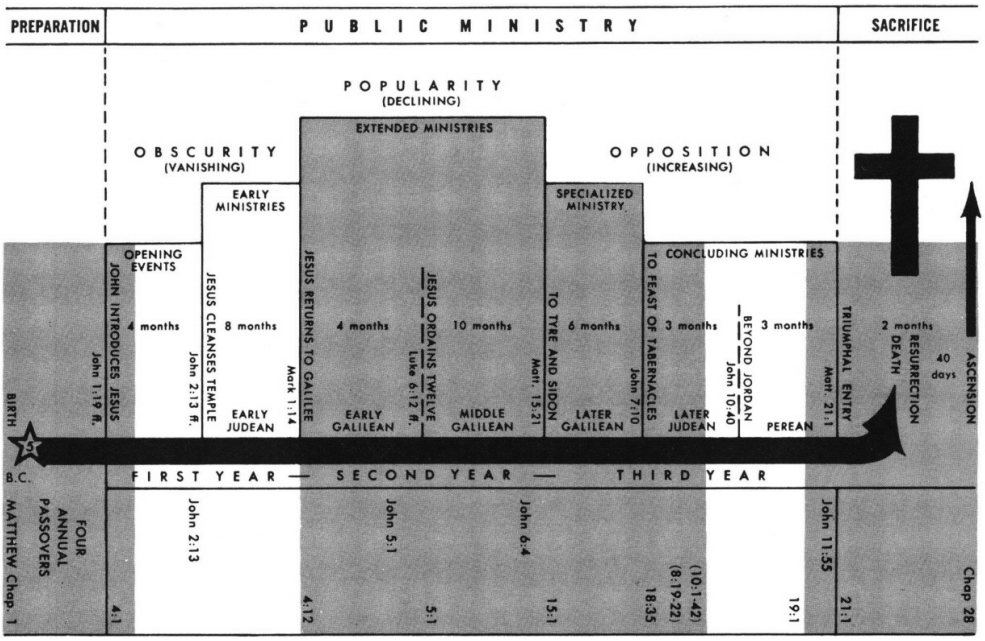
Charts from Jensen's Survey of the NT - used by permission
Another Chart from Swindoll

THE LIFE OF JESUS AS COVERED BY MATTHEW (shaded area)



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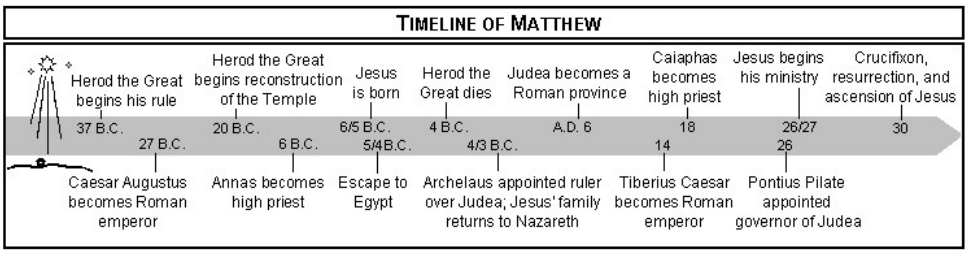

Source: Ryrie Study Bible

Matthew 12:1 At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath, and His disciples became hungry and began to pick the heads of grain and eat.

NET Matthew 12:1 At that time Jesus went through the grain fields on a Sabbath. His disciples were hungry, and they began to pick heads of wheat and eat them.

GNT Matthew 12:1 ν κε ν τ καιρ πορε θη ησο ς το ς σ ββασιν δι τ ν σπορ μων· ο δ μαθηταί α το πε νασαν κα ρξαντο τ λλειν στ χυας κα σθ ειν.

NLT Matthew 12:1 At about that time Jesus was walking through some grainfields on the Sabbath. His disciples were hungry, so they began breaking off some heads of grain and eating them.

KJV Matthew 12:1 At that time Jesus went on the sabbath day through the corn; and his disciples were an hungred, and began to pluck the ears of corn, and to eat.

ESV Matthew 12:1 At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath. His disciples were hungry, and they began to pluck heads of grain and to eat.

NIV Matthew 12:1 At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath. His disciples were hungry and began to pick some heads of grain and eat them.

ASV Matthew 12:1 At that season Jesus went on the sabbath day through the grainfields; and his disciples were hungry and began to pluck ears and to eat.

CSB Matthew 12:1 At that time Jesus passed through the grainfields on the Sabbath. His disciples were hungry and began to pick and eat some heads of grain.

NKJ Matthew 12:1 At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath. And His disciples were hungry, and began to pluck heads of grain and to eat.

NRS Matthew 12:1 At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the sabbath; his disciples were hungry, and they began to pluck heads of grain and to eat.

YLT Matthew 12:1 At that time did Jesus go on the sabbaths through the corn, and his disciples were hungry, and they began to pluck ears, and to eat,

- **At that time Jesus went through the grainfields** Mk 2:23-28 Lu 6:1-5
- **began to pick the heads of grain**: De 23:25
- Matthew 12 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Parallel Passages: Mark 2:23-28 Luke 6:1-5, Matthew 12:1-8

Mark 2:23+ And it happened that He was passing through the grainfields on the Sabbath, and His disciples began to make their way along while picking the heads of grain.

Luke 6:1+ Now it happened that He was passing through some grainfields on a Sabbath; and His disciples were picking the heads of grain, rubbing them in their hands, and eating the grain.

Fruiting Heads of Wheat

INTENSIFICATION OF THE SABBATH CONFLICT

William MacDonald introduces Matthew 12 - This chapter records the mounting crisis of rejection. The rising malice and animosity of the Pharisees are now ready to spill over. The issue that opens the floodgates is the Sabbath question. (BBC)

Carson sets the stage writing that "Opposition to Jesus had already surfaced (Mt 9:3, 11, 14, 34; 10:25; 11:19). Now it erupts in a concrete issue that generates enough hatred to lead Jesus' enemies to contemplate murder (Mt 12:14)." (EBC)

Bob Utley has an interesting note - The Talmud taught that any journey over 2,000 paces on the Sabbath was considered work and therefore not permitted. It is interesting that the crowds, along with the Pharisees and the Scribes, were following Jesus on the Sabbath; therefore, they also were guilty of breaking this Sabbath law.

If one examines Matthew's context the verses (Remember there were no chapter breaks in the original manuscripts to separate the flow of thought) immediately preceding this example of heavy Sabbath burdens immediately follows Jesus' famous invitation to...

Come (aorist imperative) to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. 29**Take** (aorist imperative) My yoke upon you and **learn** (aorist imperative) from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and

YOU WILL FIND **REST** FOR YOUR SOULS. 30 For My yoke is easy and My burden is light. (Mt 11:28-30+)

And now Matthew presents an incident describing the Sabbath day which God had given to the Jews to be a day of **REST**! As discussed below, by the time of Jesus, the Sabbath had become anything but a day of **REST**. What should have been a **BLESSING** became a **BURDEN**! It is almost as if Matthew is using this story to expound on what Jesus meant when He invited "**all who are weary and heavy-laden!**" Jesus invited them to come to Him for the true Sabbath REST, for He alone is Lord of the Sabbath, and only in Him can one find REST for your souls. Dear reader, are you still working to try to merit God's favor? Are you burdened? Then you need to come to Jesus and enter His **REST**! And this applies to non-believers and believers, for even believers can become trapped in legalism and blunt the work of grace in their lives (See Stedman's superb message on Legalism). We have no difficulty accepting the truth that we are initially saved by grace through faith (Eph 2:8-9). The difficulty often arises when fail to comprehend that the way we were saved the first time is also the way we are saved day by day! (see Three Tenses of Salvation) Fallen flesh continually seeks to coerce us into performing works intended to please God or merit His favor. **But works never work**! We must live daily by faith in Jesus' **Rest** and allow His Spirit to daily transform us from glory to glory into the image of Jesus (2 Cor 3:18+). Paul's rhetorical question should be "tattooed" into our frontal lobe (so to speak) "**Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit** (regeneration - past tense salvation)**, are you now being perfected by the flesh?**" (Gal 3:3+). Answer? Of course not!

> **THOUGHT - J. H. Jowett** - The fatal mistake for the believer is to seek to bear life's load in a **single collar.** God never intended a man to carry his burden alone. Christ therefore deals only in yokes! A **yoke** is a neck harness for two, and the Lord Himself pleads to be One of the two. He wants to share the labor of any galling task. The secret of peace and victory in the Christian life is found in putting off the taxing collar of "self" and accepting the Master's relaxing "yoke." (**ED**: AND WE DO SO BY JETTISONING SELF-RELIANCE AND RELYING HOLY ON THE HOLY SPIRIT, JESUS' GIFT TO US TO ENABLE US TO BEAR THE BURDEN. See the "Paradoxical Principle of 100% Dependent and 100% Responsible" 100/100)

At that time - As noted above, this phrase could tie in with the preceding related passage. This passage begins exactly like Mt 11:25 and Mt 14:1 "**At that time** (kairos)." "At that season." And since there was ripe grain, this would place this in the general period of spring to mid-summer. Where this occurs is not stated. Luke writes **now it happened** and Webster's first entry says the verb happen means "to occur by chance." We commonly hear the phrase "it just so happened." Here our English mindset gives us an incorrect meaning of what the Scripture means when it says something happened. In God's economy things do not just happen by chance. The invisible, omniscient God is behind the scenes and controls the scenes He is behind! Not one thing Jesus did was by accident or by chance and this Sabbath Day confrontation with the Pharisees was no exception. It was a divinely ordained "clash of the titans," a clash of the **traditions** of the pseudo-pious Pharisees and the **Truth** of the Lord of the Sabbath! Matthew uses the Greek word kairos for **time** which speaks of a definite and fixed time, an opportune time, much like our phrase a "window of opportunity." In other words, if you miss this **time ,** you miss the "opportunity." (cf Paul's exhortation to all believers to Redeem the Time). Jesus knew His time was limited and all He did was in the shadow of the Cross. He was the proverbial Man on mission and so He did not miss **divinely ordained opportunities**.

> The word **OPPORTUNITY** is derived from the Latin "**ob portu**." In ancient times before modern harbors, ships had to wait for the timing of the tide before they could make it safely to port. Thus "OB PORTU," described the ship waiting "FOR PORT," ready to seize the crucial moment when it could ride the tide into safe harbor. The captain knew that if he missed the passing tide, the ship would have to wait for another tide to come in. God gives each of us many "ob portu's", but we must be spiritually wise and Spirit filled in order to see and seize them. As Charles Swindoll said "We are all faced with a series of great opportunities (ob portu's) brilliantly disguised as impossible situations." Shakespeare's famous line from Julius Caesar conveys the same thought: "There is a tide in the affairs of men (an "ob portu"), Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune; Omitted, all the voyage of their life Is bound in shallows and in miseries. On such a full sea are we now afloat; And we must take the current when it serves, Or lose our ventures." In short, KAIROS conveys the sense of an "opportune time," a "window of opportunity".
>
> > **THOUGHT** - Believers are called (actually commanded) to "**imitate Jesus**" for Paul wrote "**B e** (present imperative - see note on our Need for the Holy Spirit to obey) imitators (mimetes) of me, just as I also am of Christ. (1 Cor 11:1+, see also 1 Jn 2:6+ = "ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked," 1 Pe 2:21+ = "follow in His steps"). And so just as Jesus was always alert and ever ready to **seize the moment** (He lived with a "**carpe diem**" mentality - which interestingly is more literally "*pluck the day*!"), so we too must always be on "high alert" for those **divine opportunities** in our lives, so that we do not miss them! In a similar sense we need to be alert to those "**good works**, which God prepared beforehand, so that we would walk in them" (Eph 2:10+), so that we might accomplish **HIS** works (fruit), not **OUR** works which will not **remain** (will not endure eternally - Jn 15:16). The old adage "Opportunity only knocks

once," should be foremost in our mind every day. Have you seen any divine opportunities this week? They may have been there and yet you failed to see them, because you were walking fleshly and not walking in the Spirit (Gal 5:16+), and so were not supernaturally enabled to see spiritual opportunities. For more on this vitally important truth see the topic Walking Like Jesus Walked! May our Father in Heaven grant each of us His amazing grace and Spirit enabled vision to see and grasp the divine kairos moments He gives us each day, for the glory of the Lord. In Jesus' Mighty Name. Amen.

Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath, and His disciples became hungry (peinao) **and began to pick the heads** *of grain* **and eat** - Only Matthew states that they **became hungry**. Luke adds that the disciples were "**Rubbing them in their hands**" which to these strict legalists would be **tantamount** to performing the work of **threshing** on the Sabbath! How ridiculous can one be! **Plummer** states that in the evil eyes of the Pharisees that based on their "Rabbinical notions (THEIR "TRADITIONS"), (JESUS' DISCIPLES WERE) reaping, threshing, winnowing, and preparing food all at once." One might even add that they were preparing food with ceremonially unclean hands! The phrase **on a Sabbath** is found in Matt. 12:2; Matt. 24:20; Lk. 6:1; Lk. 14:5+. (Click here for discussion of the Sabbath in the commentary on Leviticus 23:3).

Sabbath (4521)(**sabbaton** from **shabath** - 07673 = to cease from work, intermission - see note on **shabath**) in this context refers to the seventh day of the week, held sacred by the Jews (Mt 12:8; Mk 2:27f; Lk 6:7, 9; Jn 5:9f, 18; Acts 1:12; 13:27, 44)

See **word study** on the Hebrew word for **Sabbath** (07676) which is **sabbat** which derives from the verb **shabath** (07673) meaning to desist (from exertion), cease (see this use of the verb in Ge 8:22, Jer 31:36+), rest (first used of God resting in Creation - Ge 2:2-3), repose, cease from labor. So here the noun form **sabbat** means intermission, the Sabbath (day), the day of rest, the holy seventh day; a week, the sacred 7th year, a sabbatical year.

Warren Wiersbe on the **Sabbath** - The sanctity of the seventh day was a distinctive part of the Jewish faith. God gave Israel the Sabbath law at Sinai (Neh. 9:13-14) and made it a sign between Him and the nation (Ex. 20:8-11; 31:12-17). The word ***Sabbath*** means "rest" and is linked with God's cessation of work after the six days of Creation (Ge 2:2-3). Some of the rabbis taught that Messiah could not come until Israel had perfectly kept the Sabbath (ED: ACTUALLY TWO SABBATHS), so obeying this law was very important both personally and nationally....By their strict and oppressive rules, the Pharisees and scribes had turned the Sabbath Day into a burden instead of the blessing God meant it to be, and Jesus challenged both their doctrine and their authority. He had announced a new "Year of Jubilee" (Luke 4:19+), and now He would declare a new Sabbath (HIMSELF!). (Bible Exposition Commentary)

Craig Blomberg points out that "Sabbath observance was in fact one of the three most important and distinctive **badges** of Jewish life, along with circumcision and the dietary laws." (NAC - Matthew)

Pick (5089)(**tillo**) means to pluck, to pull, to pull out commonly used to describe the action of picking or plucking something such as grass or heads of grain. Tillo was used in medicine to pull out hairs. This verb is incorporated in the name of a disorder known as trichotillomania in which people compulsively pull out their hair. Uses only in the synoptic accounts in Matt. 12:1; Mk. 2:23; Lk. 6:1 for plucking grain. Three times in the Septuagint - Ezra 9:3 ("pulled some of the hair from my head and my beard" - in great distress), Isa 18:7, Da 7:4.

Heads (of grain)(4719)(**stachus**) describes the fruiting spike of a cereal grain, head or ear (of grain). **Louw-Nida** says **stachus** refers to "the dense spiky cluster in which the seeds of grain such as wheat and barley grow (restricted in NT contexts to references to wheat)" It is used in the Septuagint translation of Dt 23:25 "When you enter your neighbor's standing **grain**, then you may pluck the heads with your hand, but you shall not wield a sickle in your neighbor's standing grain." **Stachus** NT uses - Matt. 12:1; Mk. 2:23; Mk 4:28 (twice), Lk. 6:1, Ro 16:9

Spurgeon - We incidentally learn from this story that our Lord and his disciples were poor, and that he who fed the multitudes did not use his miraculous power to feed his own followers, but left them till they did what poor men are forced to do to supply a little stay for their stomachs.

Related Resources on Sabbath:

- American Church Dictionary Sabbath
- American Tract Society Sabbath
- Bridgeway Bible Dictionary Sabbath

- Baker Evangelical Dictionary Sabbath
- Charles Buck Dictionary Sabbath
- Easton's Bible Dictionary Sabbath Day's Journey Sabbath
- Fausset Bible Dictionary Sabbath
- Holman Bible Dictionary Sabbath Sabbath Day's Journey Second Sabbath
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible Sabbath Day's Journey Sabbath
- Hastings' Dictionary of the NT Sabbath Sabbath Sabbath Day's Journey
- Smith Bible Dictionary Sabbath
- Vines' Expository Dictionary Sabbath
- Wilson's Bible Types Sabbath
- Watson's Theological Dictionary Sabbath
- Condensed Biblical Cyclopedia Sabbath and Feasts
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia
- Kitto Biblical Cyclopedia Sabbath
- McClintock - Sabbath
- Sabbath - Multiple Dictionaries, Naves and ISBE
- What is the Sabbath day? from "Got Questions?"
- How is Jesus our Sabbath Rest?
- How can we enter into God's rest?
- Rest in the Bible - a detailed discussion
- Does God require Sabbath-keeping of Christians?
- What day is the Sabbath, Saturday or Sunday?
- Do Christians have to obey the Old Testament law?
- What does it mean to remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy?

Norman Geisler - MATTHEW 12:1–5—Did Jesus' disciples break the Jewish Sabbath law?

PROBLEM: Jesus said, "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill" (Matt. 5:17). Yet Jesus' disciples deliberately and knowingly picked grain on the Sabbath, thus arousing the ire of the Pharisees by doing "what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath" (Matt. 12:2).

SOLUTION: Jesus kept the OT law perfectly (see Mt 5:17–18). By eating grain on the Sabbath when hungry, Jesus' disciples did not break God's law. However, it did violate the Pharisees' law. Jesus often rebuked the Pharisees for adding their "traditions" (cf. Matt. 5:43 and 15:6) to God's laws. Deeds of mercy and necessity were permitted on the OT Sabbath. Jesus' disciples were not harvesting bushels full of grain on the Sabbath. They were merely eating handfuls of it as they passed through the field, which was permitted by OT law (see Deut. 23:25). Further, as Jesus noted on this occasion, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath" (Mark 2:27). He also pointed out that "the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath" (Matt. 12:8). In short, the Sabbath law was not the highest law, for there were "weightier matters" (cf. Matt. 23:23), such as justice and mercy. Jesus, as the Messiah and the Son of God, was not the servant of the Sabbath—He was Lord of it. He made it! And He could (and later did) change it, if He so desired (see comments on Matt. 5:17–18). (When Critics Ask)

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m. Šabbat 7.2 This passage from the Mishnah, if at all representative of the kinds of prohibitions in Jesus' day, reveals the strictness with which the commandment "to keep the Sabbath holy" was understood.

A. The generative categories of acts of labor [prohibited on the Sabbath] are forty less one:
B. (1) he who sews, (2) ploughs, (3) reaps, (4) binds sheaves, (5) threshes, (6) winnows, (7) selects [fit from unfit produce or crops], (8) grinds, (9) sifts, (10) kneads, (11) bakes;
C. (12) who shears wool, (13) washes it, (14) beats it, (15) dyes it;
D. (16) spins, (17) weaves,
E. (18) makes two loops, (19) weaves two threads, (20) separates two threads;
F. (21) ties, (22) unties,
G. (23) sews two stitches, (24) tears in order to sew two stitches;
H. (25) he who traps a deer, (26) slaughters it, (27) flays it, (28) salts it, (29) curds its hide, (30) scrapes it, and (31) cuts it up;
I. (32) he who writes two letters, (33) erases two letters in order to write two letters;
J. (34) he who builds, (35) tears down;
K. (36) he who puts out a fire, (37) kindles a fire;

L. (38) he who hits with a hammer; (39) he who transports an object from one domain to another—
M. lo, these are the forty generative acts of labor less one.

THOUGHT: The Pharisees as usual were "**splitting hairs**." Stated another way the Pharisees were **straining out gnats and swallowing camels** as Jesus accused them of in Mt 23:24 declaring "**You blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel**!" Jesus was saying that the Pharisees picked out the smallest and least points to focus on (which in fact were not even God's commandments but men's additions - see the "addition" in "B.(1)" above), while completely ignoring the most important matters, like **compassion** (they could care less that Jesus' disciples were hungry!). Jesus uses **hyperbole** imagining someone about to take a drink of water from a cup, noticing that there is a tiny **gnat** (pix) in it, and straining the water to remove the gnat and then drinks the water, never noticing that there was a **camel** floating in the cup (so to speak of course!) Jesus makes the point rather dramatically that the religious leaders were focusing on lesser matters written by fallen men, while completely ignoring the more important matters of the holy God! Isn't that what our **flesh** is so prone to do! We all have a bit of "Pharisee" in us from time to time. Lord, deliver us by Your Spirit and the Law of the LORD which is perfect reviving our souls. In Jesus Name. Amen (Ps 19:7+).

Matthew 12:2 But when the Pharisees saw this, they said to Him, "Look, Your disciples do what is not lawful to do on a Sabbath."

NET Matthew 12:2 But when the Pharisees saw this they said to him, "Look, your disciples are doing what is against the law to do on the Sabbath."

GNT Matthew 12:2 ο δ Φαρισα οι δ ντες ε παν α τ , δο ο μαθητα σου ποιο σιν ο κ ξεστιν ποιε ν ν σαββ τ .

NLT Matthew 12:2 But some Pharisees saw them do it and protested, "Look, your disciples are breaking the law by harvesting grain on the Sabbath."

KJV 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.

ESV Matthew 12:2 But when the Pharisees saw it, they said to him, "Look, your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath."

NIV Matthew 12:2 When the Pharisees saw this, they said to him, "Look! Your disciples are doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath."

ASV Matthew 12:2 But the Pharisees, when they saw it, said unto him, Behold, thy disciples do that which it is not lawful to do upon the sabbath.

CSB Matthew 12:2 But when the Pharisees saw it, they said to Him, "Look, Your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath!"

NKJ Matthew 12:2 And when the Pharisees saw it, they said to Him, "Look, Your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath!"

NRS Matthew 12:2 When the Pharisees saw it, they said to him, "Look, your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the sabbath."

YLT Matthew 12:2 and the Pharisees having seen, said to him, 'Lo, thy disciples do that which it is not lawful to do on a sabbath.'

- **Look (behold)**: Mt 12:10 Ex 20:9-11 23:12 31:15-17 35:2 Nu 15:32-36 Isa 58:13 Mk 3:2-5 Lu 6:6-11 13:10-17 23:56 Joh 5:9-11,16,17 7:21-24 Joh 9:14-16
- Matthew 12 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Parallel Passages: Mark 2:23-28 Luke 6:1-5, Matthew 12:1-8

Mark 2:24+ The Pharisees were saying to Him, "Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath?"

Luke 6:2+ But some of the Pharisees said, "Why do you do what is not lawful on the Sabbath?"

PHARISEES POUNCE
ON PLUCKERS OF PRODUCE

One could subtitle this passage something like "legal nitpickers begin to pick on the pickers."

But when the Pharisees saw this, they said to Him - See their hostile attitude toward Jesus in Mt 9:11+, Mt 9:34+. Their hatred of Jesus is growing and festering in their evil hearts and will soon bear the rotten fruit of a desire to murder Him (Mt 12:14)! These legalistic hairsplitting Pharisees were filled with envy and were always lurking and looking, looking for Jesus to make a "slip up," which would not be difficult because little did they know that Jesus the Lord of the Sabbath had come wage war against the "traditional" religion that was so highly esteemed by the Pharisees and so highly displeasing in the eyes of Jehovah! As the prophet Samuel told David's father Jesse, God does not look at the external appearance (the Pharisees were **peerless perfectionists**! cf Mt 5:20+), but God looks at the heart. (1 Sa 16:7). That has always been God's way, for when He takes the measure of a man, He does not put a tape measure (so to speak) around his head to see how much he knows (the Pharisee were the "*knowers*" **par excellence**), but He puts it around His heart to see how much He obeys (not legalistically but from the heart). As David wrote "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; A broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise." (Ps 51:17+) God's "standards" have not changed!

> **Pharisees** (5330)(**pharisaios**) is transliterated from Hebrew **parash** (06567 - to separate) which is from an Aramaic word **peras** (06537) ("Peres" in Da 5:28-note), signifying to separate, owing to a different manner of life from that of the general public. After the resettling of the Jewish people in Judea on their return from the Babylonian captivity, there were two religious groups among them. One party contented themselves with following only what was written in the Law of Moses. These were called **Zadikim**, the (so-called) "righteous one." The other group added the constitutions and traditions of the elders, as well as other rigorous observances, to the Law and voluntarily complied with them. They were called **Chasidim** or the pious, who beyond the legal requirements of ritual and ethical Jewish observance in daily life. From the Zadikim the sects of the **Sadducees** and **Karaites** were derived. From the Chasidim were derived the **Pharisees** and the **Essenes**. In 1 Macc 2:42RSV, among the persons who joined Mattathias against Antiochus IV (Epiphanes), about 167 b.c., are named the Asideans (Asidaíoi), who are described as voluntarily devoted to the law. The Asideans are mentioned also in 1 Macc 7:13RSV; 2 Macc14:6RSV. In the time of our Lord, the **Pharisees** were the separatists of their day, as well as the principal sect among the Jews. The Pharisees considered themselves much holier than the common people (Lk 18:11, 12+). They wore special garments to distinguish themselves from others (See Edersheim's description). **PRINCIPLE TENETS OF PHARISEES**: In opposition to the Sadducees, the Pharisees maintained the existence of angels and spirits and the doctrine of the resurrection (Acts 23:8+), which the Sadducees denied (Mt 22:23; Mk 12:18; Lu 20:27+). The Pharisees made everything dependent upon God and fate (see Josephus, The Jewish Wars, ii.8.14 - scroll down). However, they did not deny the role of the human will in affecting events (see Josephus, Antiquities, xviii.1.3). They prided themselves on their **ZEAL FOR TRADITION**: The Pharisees distinguished themselves with their zeal for the traditions of the elders, which they erroneously taught was derived from the same fountain as the written Word itself (LIKE SOME RELIGIONS DO TODAY PLACING PRONOUNCEMENTS OF MERE MEN ON THE SAME PEDESTAL AS PROCLAMATIONS OF THE HOLY GOD!), claiming both to have been delivered to Moses on Mount Sinai (Mt 15:1-6; Mk 7:3-5). See also **paradosis** (3862), tradition, and éntalma (1778), a religious precept versus **entole** (1785), commandment. (See more detailed notes from William Barclay) Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology has an excellent summary of Pharisees.
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> > **Pharisees in the Gospel of Matthew** - Matt. 3:7; Matt. 5:20; Matt. 9:11; Matt. 9:14; Matt. 9:34; Matt. 12:2; Matt. 12:14; Matt. 12:24; Matt. 12:38; Matt. 15:1; Matt. 15:12; Matt. 16:1; Matt. 16:6; Matt. 16:11; Matt. 16:12; Matt. 19:3; Matt. 21:45; Matt. 22:15; Matt. 22:34; Matt. 22:41; Matt. 23:2; Matt. 23:13; Matt. 23:14; Matt. 23:15; Matt. 23:23; Matt. 23:25; Matt. 23:26; Matt. 23:27; Matt. 23:29; Matt. 27:62;

Look, Your disciples (mathetes - learners) **do what is not lawful to do on a Sabbath**- **Look** is a the verb idou which is a command in the aorist imperative and in this context has a touch of rebuke! **Pay attention** Jesus! Here these upstarts are commanding to Jesus to "Look" as if He is not already fully aware! **Not** (ou) signifies absolute negation. There was absolutely no room in the heart of the Pharisees for making an exception if someone was starving! The legalists had made their own rules many of which were utterly ridiculous but all of which made keeping them a great burden. It is fascinating that men's rules were far more difficult and detailed than God's rules! See MacArthur's description (below) of some of their outlandish rules! If the Pharisees' were alive today, their theme song would likely be Tevye's "Tradition" in Fiddler on the Roof, a good song but a bad practice. In effect the Pharisees were accusing Jesus' disciples of **reaping** (picking the grain, one of 39 kinds of work forbidden on the Sabbath), **threshing** (rubbing the husks together to separate the chaff from the grain), and **winnowing** (throwing the husks away),

and thus preparing food! Is this not absurd?

Is it not absurd how far legalism will go when it veers from what is stated clearly in the Word of God? In fact what the **disciples** were doing was permitted by the Law, for Moses stated only one Sabbath restriction and that was that one could not fill a vessel or use a harvesting implement! "When you enter your neighbor's vineyard, then you may eat grapes until you are fully satisfied, but you shall not put any in your basket. "When you enter your neighbor's standing grain, then **you may pluck the heads with your hand**, but you shall not wield a sickle in your neighbor's standing grain." (Dt. 23:24-25)

Think for a moment of what it must have been like to be a Jew ever in the watchful eyes of the Pharisees who served as "legalistic police!" For law-keeping Jews, there was a frantic need to know a mountain of traditional regulations concerning it and a constant dread lest some minor infraction of an unknown rule might bring divine disfavour on their heads. They had even prescribed the amount that could be plucked and eaten on the Sabbath and it need be no larger than the size of a dried fig, hardly enough to satisfy ones hunger but large enough to convict a sabbath-breaker should they gather more than a fig-sized portion! This was a law of the rabbis, not a law of Moses, the law of God. **God cared** for men and had made allowance for hungry travelers (Dt 23:25), but the Pharisees could **care less**!

Guzik points out that "Jesus never violated God's command to observe the Sabbath or approved of His disciples violating God's Sabbath command, but He often broke man's legalistic additions to that law and He sometimes seems to have deliberately broken those human additions." (Enduring Word)

Edersheim on why it was **not lawful on the Sabbath** - On any ordinary day this would have been lawful; but on the Sabbath it involved, according to the Rabbinic statutes, at least two sins, viz., plucking the ears, which was reaping, and rubbing them in their hands (Luke 6:1), which was sifting, grinding, or fanning. The Talmud says: 'In case a woman rolls wheat to remove the husks, it is considered as sifting; if she rubs the heads of wheat, it is regarded as threshing; if she cleans off the side-adherencies, it is sifting out fruit; if she bruises the ears, it is grinding; if she throws them up in her hand, it is winnowing'" (Life and Times of Jesus)

John MacArthur has an excellent discussion on the endless number of ridiculous Sabbath rules - "The **Talmud devotes twenty-four chapters to Sabbath regulations**, describing in painfully exhaustive detail what was and was not permitted to be done. The result was a ridiculously complex system of external behavior restraints—so much so that one rabbi spent two and a half years studying just one of the twenty-four chapters! For example, traveling more than 3,000 feet from home was forbidden. But if one had placed food at the 3,000 foot point before the Sabbath, that point would then be considered a home, since there was food there, and allow another 3,000 feet of travel. Similarly, a piece of wood or a rope placed across the end of a narrow street or alley constituted a doorway. That could then be considered the front door of one's house, and permit the 3,000 feet of travel to begin there. There were also regulations about carrying items. Something lifted up in a public place could only be set down in a private place, and vice versa. An object tossed into the air could be caught with the same hand, but if it was caught with the other hand, it would be a Sabbath violation. If a person had reached out to pick up food when the Sabbath began, the food had to be dropped; to bring the arm back while holding the food would be to carry a burden on the Sabbath. It was forbidden to carry anything heavier than a dried fig (though something weighing half as much could be carried two times). A tailor could not carry his needle, a scribe his pen, or a student his books. Only enough ink to write two letters (of the alphabet) could be carried. A letter could not be sent, not even with a non-Jew. Clothes could not be examined or shaken out before being put on because an insect might be killed in the process, which would be work. No fire could be lit, or put out. Cold water could be poured into warm water, but not warm into cold. An egg could not be cooked, not even by placing it in hot sand during the summer. Nothing could be sold or bought. Bathing was forbidden, lest water be spilled on the floor and wash it. Moving a chair was not allowed, since it might make a rut in a dirt floor, which was too much like plowing. Women were forbidden to look in a mirror, since if they saw a white hair, they might be tempted to pull it out. Other forbidden things included sowing, plowing, reaping, binding sheaves, threshing, winnowing, grinding, kneading, baking, shearing, washing, beating, dyeing, or spinning wool, tying or untying a knot, catching, killing, or skinning a deer, salting its meat, or preparing its skin....It was to people crushed by the unbearable burden (Matt. 23:4; Luke 11:46; Acts 15:10) of manmade, legalistic regulations that the Lord Jesus Christ said, "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light" (Matt. 11:28-30-note). (MacArthur New Testament Commentary – Luke 6-10)

Adam Clarke - "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."

Matthew 12:3 But He said to them, "Have you not read what David did when he became hungry, he and his companions,

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GNT Matthew 12:3 δ ε πεν α το ς, Ο κ ν γνωτε τ πο ησεν Δαυ δ τε πε νασεν κα ο μετ α το ,

NLT Matthew 12:3 Jesus said to them, "Haven't you read in the Scriptures what David did when he and his companions were hungry?

KJV Matthew 12:3 But he said unto them, Have ye not read what David did, when he was an hungred, and they that were with him;

ESV Matthew 12:3 He said to them, "Have you not read what David did when he was hungry, and those who were with him:

NIV Matthew 12:3 He answered, "Haven't you read what David did when he and his companions were hungry?

ASV Matthew 12:3 But he said unto them, Have ye not read what David did, when he was hungry, and they that were with him;

CSB Matthew 12:3 He said to them, "Haven't you read what David did when he and those who were with him were hungry--

NKJ Matthew 12:3 But He said to them, "Have you not read what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him:

NRS Matthew 12:3 He said to them, "Have you not read what David did when he and his companions were hungry?

YLT Matthew 12:3 And he said to them, 'Did ye not read what David did, when he was hungry, himself and those with him --

- **Have you not read** : Mt 12:5 19:4 21:16 22:31 Mk 12:10,26 Lu 6:3 10:26
- **what David did when he became hungry**: 1Sa 21:3-6 Mk 2:25,26
- Matthew 12 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Parallel Passages: Mark 2:23-28 Luke 6:1-5, Matthew 12:1-8

Mark 2:25+ And He *said to them, “Have you never read what David did when he was in need and he and his companions became hungry;

Luke 6:3+ And Jesus answering them said, “Have you not even read what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him,

JESUS' COUNTERQUESTION TO HIS "INQUISITORS"

Webster says **counterquestion** is **"**a question asked in response to another question." **Counterquestioning** was a frequently used technique in rabbinic debates. Jesus raises it to another level of course (Mt 12:5; Mt 19:4; Mt 21:16, 42; Mt 22:31)!

But He said to them - Jesus is the ultimate "**apologist**," and often addresses His adversaries by asking them a question which is often **rhetorical**.

Have you not read what David did when he became hungry, he and his companions - Jesus knows that they had **read** about their most famous king in Israel and the episode when he and his men had become hungry. The fact that He questions their knowledge of the Old Testament must had caused their blood pressure to rise a few points! "How dare this rabble rouser question us Torah experts!" As the story unfolds, it is clear Jesus was not questioning their intellect but their heart. He was not questioning what they knew, but how they behaved in light of what they knew. Isn't that the ultimate purpose of the Bible, to inform our intellect, so that our heart is transformed to respond more and more like Jesus would respond? These self-righteous fakers were reading the Word to impress others, not to truly edify them and stimulate in them a desire to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord.

What David did - The context is that David had fled from King Saul who had tried to kill him (1 Sa 20:31–33). David went into hiding as a fugitive, taking a few men with him and while in the wilderness, they became hungry. One fact that is not in the following account is that the priest Ahimelech sought the Lord's approval as we learn from the spy Doeg the Edomite's account in 1 Sa 22:10 stating that Ahimelech "inquired of the LORD for him, gave him provisions, and gave him the sword of Goliath the Philistine.” Ahimelech came to understand that the preservation of David's life was more important than the ceremonial regulations concerning consecrated bread! In short, the priest discerned the spirit of the law, not just the letter of the law! He is a good example for all us to

emulate. Here is the story to which Jesus refers...

> Then David came to Nob to Ahimelech the priest (THIS TEXT DOES NOT SAY SPECIFICALLY IT WAS THE SABBATH); and Ahimelech came trembling to meet David and said to him, “Why are you alone and no one with you?” 2 David said to Ahimelech the priest, “The king has commissioned me with a matter and has said to me, ‘Let no one know anything about the matter on which I am sending you and with which I have commissioned you; and I have directed the young men to a certain place.’ (NOTE THAT DAVID ACTUALLY DECEIVES AHIMELECH LYING ABOUT HIS MISSION FOR IN FACT HE HAD NOT BEEN COMMISSIONED BY SAUL BUT WAS BEING HUNTED BY SAUL! - AND HIS LIE ULTIMATELY LED TO THE DEATH OF THE PRIESTS - 1 Sa 22:9-18!) 3 “Now therefore, what do you have on hand? Give me five loaves of bread, or whatever can be found.” 4 The priest answered David and said, “There is no ordinary bread on hand, but there is consecrated bread; if only the young men have kept themselves from women.” 5 David answered the priest and said to him, “Surely women have been kept from us as previously when I set out and the vessels of the young men were holy, though it was an ordinary journey; how much more then today will their vessels be holy?” 6 So the priest gave him consecrated bread; for there was no bread there but the bread of the Presence which was removed from before the LORD, in order to put hot bread in its place when it was taken away (See Leviticus 24:5-9+, cf Ex. 25:23-30). (1 Sa 21:1-6)
>
> > **Comment** - Notice that David broke a definite law given by Moses, for the consecrated bread was meant to be eaten only by the priests (Lev. 24:5-9), but Jesus' disciples had violated only a **man-made** rule!

Matthew 12:4 how he entered the house of God, and they ate the consecrated bread, which was not lawful for him to eat nor for those with him, but for the priests alone?

> NET Matthew 12:4 how he entered the house of God and they ate the sacred bread, which was against the law for him or his companions to eat, but only for the priests?
>
> GNT Matthew 12:4 π ς ε σ λθεν ε ς τ ν ο κον το θεο κα το ς ρτους τ ς προθ σεως φαγον, ο κ ξ ν ν α τ φαγε ν ο δ το ς μετ α το ε μ το ς ερε σιν μ νοις;
>
> NLT Matthew 12:4 He went into the house of God, and they broke the law by eating the sacred loaves of bread that only the priests are allowed to eat.
>
> KJV Matthew 12:4 How he entered into the house of God, and did eat the shewbread, which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the priests?
>
> ESV Matthew 12:4 how he entered the house of God and ate the bread of the Presence, which it was not lawful for him to eat nor for those who were with him, but only for the priests?
>
> NIV Matthew 12:4 He entered the house of God, and he and his companions ate the consecrated bread--which was not lawful for them to do, but only for the priests.
>
> ASV Matthew 12:4 how he entered into the house of God, and ate the showbread, which it was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them that were with him, but only for the priests?
>
> CSB Matthew 12:4 how he entered the house of God, and they ate the sacred bread, which is not lawful for him or for those with him to eat, but only for the priests?
>
> NKJ Matthew 12:4 "how he entered the house of God and ate the showbread which was not lawful for him to eat, nor for those who were with him, but only for the priests?
>
> NRS Matthew 12:4 He entered the house of God and ate the bread of the Presence, which it was not lawful for him or his companions to eat, but only for the priests.
>
> YLT Matthew 12:4 how he went into the house of God, and the loaves of the presentation did eat, which it is not lawful to him to eat, nor to those with him, except to the priests alone?

- **they ate the consecrated brea**, Ex 25:30 Lev 24:5-9
- **but for the priests alone**: Ex 29:32,33 Lev 8:31 24:9
- Matthew 12 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Parallel Passages: Mark 2:23-28 Luke 6:1-5, Matthew 12:1-8

Mark 2:26+ how he entered the house of God in the time of Abiathar the high priest, and ate the consecrated bread, which is not lawful for anyone to eat except the priests, and he also gave it to those who were with him?"

Luke 6:4+ how he entered the house of God, and took and ate the consecrated bread which is not lawful for any to eat except the priest alone, and gave it to his companions?"

Priests Changing Showbread each Sabbath

DAVID'S NECESSITY TRUMPED CEREMONIAL LAW

The drawing depicts the priests removing the old consecrated bread and replacing with the new consecrated bread on the Sabbath. The priests were then allowed to eat the old consecrated bread.

Jesus sets up the confrontation of David and his men's hunger versus the ceremonial law governing the eating of the consecrated bread.

How he entered the house of God - At this time in Israel's history the **house of God** was still the mobile Tabernacle, not the Temple.

And they ate the consecrated bread - This **bread** was in the Holy Place (the room that led through the veil into the Holy of holies, where the Shekinah Glory was abiding indicating God's presence) and the priests were allowed to eat the **bread** when they replaced it with new **bread**.

> **Consecrated** (shewbread, showbread) (4286)(**prothesis** from **protithemai** = set before oneself to be looked at) is literally placing before and so it describes the setting forth of something in view, in this context obviously referring to the bread to be placed in the Holy Place. And so it refers to the **shewbread** ("loaves of presentation") in the Tabernacle and later the Temple which is as it were "exposed before God". The bread before the **Presence** of the Lord consisted of twelve loaves of wheat bread offered every Sabbath (12 = number of the tribes of Israel) and arranged in two rows on the table before the Holy of Holies and to remain there for seven days. This bread was changed for fresh loaves every sabbath. The old loaves were eaten by the priests (Ex 25:30; 1 Sa 21:6). **Kistemaker** adds that the **Bread of the Presence** "symbolized the constant fellowship of the people with their God, receiving their bread from him, eating with him, being consecrated to him, and gratefully acknowledging their indebtedness to him by means of this offering." (BNTC-Mt) (**Related**: What was the bread of the Presence)

Which was not lawful for him to eat nor for those with him, but for the priests alone- Jesus is clearly saying that David did what was ostensibly unlawful. And yet Jesus says that David had a right to ignore a divinely ordained ceremonial provision when necessity of hunger demanded. In a similar way, Jesus' disciples were hungry and had a need. To accuse His disciples would be to accuse their beloved king David of breaking the law. Not to mention that in the case of Jesus' disciples, they were not even breaking a ceremonial law of God, but a purely rabbinical regulation regarding the Sabbath.

Matthew 12:5 "Or have you not read in the Law, that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple break the Sabbath and are innocent?

NET Matthew 12:5 Or have you not read in the law that the priests in the temple desecrate the Sabbath and yet are not guilty?

GNT Matthew 12:5 ο κ ν γνωτε ν τ ν μ τι το ς σ ββασιν ο ερε ς ν τ ερ τ σ ββατον βεβηλο σιν κα να τιο ε σιν;

NLT Matthew 12:5 And haven't you read in the law of Moses that the priests on duty in the Temple may work on the Sabbath?

KJV 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?

ESV Matthew 12:5 Or have you not read in the Law how on the Sabbath the priests in the temple profane the

Sabbath and are guiltless?

NIV Matthew 12:5 Or haven't you read in the Law that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple desecrate the day and yet are innocent?

ASV Matthew 12:5 Or have ye not read in the law, that on the sabbath day the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are guiltless?

CSB Matthew 12:5 Or haven't you read in the Law that on Sabbath days the priests in the temple violate the Sabbath and are innocent?

NKJ Matthew 12:5 "Or have you not read in the law that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath, and are blameless?

NRS Matthew 12:5 Or have you not read in the law that on the sabbath the priests in the temple break the sabbath and yet are guiltless?

YLT Matthew 12:5 'Or did ye not read in the Law, that on the sabbaths the priests in the temple do profane the sabbath, and are blameless?

- **on the Sabbath**: Nu 28:9,10 Joh 7:22,23
- **break the Sabbath** Ne 13:17 Eze 24:21
- Matthew 12 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Parallel Passages: Matthew 12:1-8 No parallel passages in Mark 2:23-28 Luke 6:1-5

THE EXAMPLE OF WORK OF THE PRIESTS ON THE SABBATH

Or have you not read in the Law, that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple break the Sabbath and are innocent (anaitios)**?** - This argument to defend His disciples' action is found only in Matthew.

For background recall the Torah stated clearly that "the seventh day is a**Sabbath** of the LORD your God; in it **you shall not do any work,** you or your son or your daughter, your male or your female servant or your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you." (Ex 20:10, cf Dt 5:14). And yet the Pharisees knew that on the Sabbath the priests were kept very busy (Lev. 24:8, 9; Nu. 28:9, 10; 1 Chr. 9:32; 23:31; 2 Chr. 8:12–14; 23:4; 31:2, 3)! Indeed, they worked very hard on the Sabbath to make possible the proper worship of God. For example, **Moses** records "Then on the sabbath day two male lambs one year old without defect, and two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering, and its drink offering: 'This is the burnt offering of every sabbath in addition to the continual burnt offering and its drink offering.: (Nu 28:9,10)

Barclay adds "The Temple ritual always involved work—the kindling of fires, the slaughter and the preparation of animals, the lifting of them on to the altar, and a host of other things. This work was actually doubled on the Sabbath, for on the Sabbath the offerings were doubled (cp. e.g. Numbers 28:9)."

So once again Jesus confronts the Pharisees with another **counterquestion**. And for the second time He refers to the Scriptures, for He knew they had read these things. So what is Jesus saying here? His point is that on the Sabbath in order to carry on the Temple worship the priests had to do work by killing and sacrificing animals which equates to breaking the Sabbath. And despite this, Jesus says the are **innocent**.

Matthew 12:6 "But I say to you that something greater than the temple is here.

NET Matthew 12:6 I tell you that something greater than the temple is here.

GNT Matthew 12:6 λ γω δ μ ν τι το ερο με ζ ν στιν δε.

NLT Matthew 12:6 I tell you, there is one here who is even greater than the Temple!

KJV Matthew 12:6 But I say unto you, That in this place is one greater than the temple.

ESV Matthew 12:6 I tell you, something greater than the temple is here.

NIV Matthew 12:6 I tell you that one greater than the temple is here.

ASV Matthew 12:6 But I say unto you, that one greater than the temple is here.

CSB Matthew 12:6 But I tell you that something greater than the temple is here!

NKJ Matthew 12:6 "Yet I say to you that in this place there is One greater than the temple.

NRS Matthew 12:6 I tell you, something greater than the temple is here.

YLT Matthew 12:6 and I say to you, that a greater than the temple is here;

- Mt 12:41,42 23:17-21 2Ch 6:18 Hag 2:7-9 Mal 3:1 Joh 2:19-21 Eph 2:20-22 Col 2:9 1Pe 2:4,5
- Matthew 12 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Parallel Passages: Matthew 12:1-8 **No parallel passages** in Mark 2:23-28 Luke 6:1-5

THE SABBATH POINTS TO CHRIST

But I say to you that something greater than the temple is here - The Pharisees would have been forced to acknowledge that the Temple in a sense "sanctified" certain types of work by the priests on the Sabbath. The word Jesus uses for **Temple** is **hieron** which refers to the total structure of the Temple which would include the **naos**, the inner sanctuary. Jesus is greater than the **Temple**, for it is only a building. But in John "Jesus answered them, "Destroy this **temple**, and in three days I will raise it up." The Jews then said, "It took forty-six years to build this **temple**, and will You raise it up in three days?" But He was speaking of the **temple** of His body." (John 2:19-21+)

Guzik - Jesus was indeed greater than the temple. Considering how highly the temple was regarded in the days of Jesus, this was a shocking statement. Yet the temple as it stood in Jesus' day did not have the ark of the covenant, that important demonstration of the throne and presence of God. Yet Jesus was a much greater demonstration of the presence of God—He was God made flesh! The temple also lacked the Shekinah, the Urim and Thummim, and the sacred fire from heaven. Yet Jesus is all these things to us; He is surely greater than the temple.

Zodhiates - Jesus had referred to His body as a temple (naón) in John 2:19, so in this sense-the incarnation of God-He was the true inner sanctuary (naós),"greater" than the physical temple (hierós) before them. When He was sacrificed on the cross, therefore, the lamb, the inner sanctuary, and the altar were all rendered permanently ineffective (lúsate, the aorist imperative of lúō GreekStrongs:G3089 , to loose, to release; John 2:19). This ended the old covenant's sacrificial system (Heb. 9:25-28). Correlatively, when Christ was raised from the dead and ascended to the right hand of the Father, the naós-His body-ascended with Him. This is why the apostle John saw both the inner sanctuary (naós) and the ark (kibōtós GreekStrongs:G2787) of the covenant in heaven in his vision (Rev. 11:19). Since Christ's naós was sacrificed outside Jerusalem (Heb. 13:11-13), the true temple moved without the gates of the city, leaving Jerusalem and its physical temple "desolate" (Luke 13:35) but opening the only way to all peoples and nations. By elevating His authority to a level higher than the temple that sanctified the work of priestly preparations on the Sabbath, Jesus readied the Pharisees for a conclusion they would not want to hear (see v. 8).

Matthew 12:7 "But if you had known what this means, 'I DESIRE COMPASSION, AND NOT A SACRIFICE,' you would not have condemned the innocent.

NET Matthew 12:7 If you had known what this means: 'I want mercy and not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the innocent.

GNT Matthew 12:7 ε δ γν κειτε τ στιν, λεος θ λω κα ο θυσ αν, ο κ ν κατεδικ σατε το ς ναιτ ους.

NLT Matthew 12:7 But you would not have condemned my innocent disciples if you knew the meaning of this Scripture: 'I want you to show mercy, not offer sacrifices.'

KJV 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.

ESV Matthew 12:7 And if you had known what this means, 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the guiltless.

NIV Matthew 12:7 If you had known what these words mean, 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice,' you would not

have condemned the innocent.

ASV Matthew 12:7 But if ye had known what this meaneth, I desire mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless.

CSB Matthew 12:7 If you had known what this means: I desire mercy and not sacrifice, you would not have condemned the innocent.

NKJ Matthew 12:7 "But if you had known what this means,`I desire mercy and not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the guiltless.

NRS Matthew 12:7 But if you had known what this means, 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the guiltless.

YLT Matthew 12:7 and if ye had known what is: Kindness I will, and not sacrifice -- ye had not condemned the blameless,

- **if you had known what this means**: Mt 9:13 22:29 Ac 13:27
- **I DESIRE COMPASSION**. Isa 1:11-17 Ho 6:6 Mic 6:6-8
- **you would not have condemned the innocent**: Job 32:3 Ps 94:21 109:31 Pr 17:15 Jas 5:6
- Matthew 12 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

JESUS QUOTES HOSEA
IN DEFENSE OF HIS DISCIPLES

Parallel Passages: Matthew 12:1-8 No parallel passages in Mark 2:23-28 Luke 6:1-5.

Mark alone writes "Jesus said to them, “The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath." (Mk 2:27)

But if you had known what this means - If introduces a second class conditional statement so the idea is something like this - “If you had known (but you did not), then you would not have condemned the innocent (but you did).” As noted above this defense by Jesus is found only in the Gospel of Matthew. **Known** is **ginosko** which means to know by experience. Jesus' implication is clear that they had failed to practice the truth. O yes, they might have (in fact probably had) read these words in Hosea 6 but their hearts were so deceived and hardened that they failed to see the spirit behind the passage. And of course when one does not see God's intent in a passage, it follows that he will not be likely to practice that which pleases God. In short, the Pharisees knew intellectually, but not experientially, for they failed to practice the truth. Jesus' half-brother would have said it this way to the Pharisees "**prove** (present imperative) yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude (paralogizomai) themselves." (James 1:22+). The Pharisees had deluded themselves!

The Jews were reminded by the prophet Micah of God's desire for them, of how He wanted them to walk...

> With what shall I come to the LORD And bow myself before the God on high? Shall I come to Him with burnt offerings, With yearling calves? 7 Does the LORD take delight in thousands of rams, In ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I present my firstborn for my rebellious acts, The fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? 8 **He has told you, O man, what is good; And what does the LORD require of you But to do justice, to love kindness, And to walk humbly with your God?** (Micah 6:6-8+)

I DESIRE (thelo) **COMPASSION** (see eleos)**, AND NOT A SACRIFICE** (thusia) - Jesus was saying these legalistic hypocrites lacked pity! The hunger in the disciples failed to kindle a spark of kindness in the hearts of the Pharisees! (See related commentary on this passage from Hosea in notes on Mt 9:13) The Pharisees used their traditions to justify elevating things like sacrifice above things like compassion, when God would have them do just the opposite.

This is Jesus second time to quote Hosea 6:6, the first being in Mt 9:13+.

> **THOUGHT** - We often hear the question "What is the will of God for my life?" And as we always say, the will of God is found in the Word of God. And here we see the will of God, not just for the Pharisees, but for everyone who claims to know God. His will is that we show compassion. Don't tell me how many times you've served as usher, how many verses you memorize each week, how many times you've read through the Bible, how many souls you've led to Christ, etc, etc. Don't tell me about your sacrifices. Show me your compassion! Are you as convicted as I am?

I love etymology or the origin of words as this background often adds "color" to the word in a given usage. In this case here is the entry for compassion from the Online Etymology Dictionary:

COMPASSION - "feeling of sorrow or pity excited by the sufferings or misfortunes of another," mid-14c., **compassioun**, literally "a suffering with another," from Old French **compassion** "sympathy, pity" (12c.), from Late Latin **compassionem** (nominative compassio) "sympathy," noun of state from past participle stem o f **compati** "to feel pity," from **c o m** "with, together" (see com-) + **p a t i** "to suffer" (see passion). Latin **compassio** is an ecclesiastical loan-translation of Greek sympatheia (see sympathy). Sometimes in Middle English it meant a literal sharing of affliction or suffering with another.

From that note on **etymology of compassion**, what Jesus is accusing these accusers of is failure to feel sorrow or pity by the suffering (hunger) of the disciples. The bitter irony is that the accusers in fact were the ones who were actually guilty of breaking the law in the eyes of God (and of course Jesus is God as He states in the next passage)!

You would not have condemned the innocent - Jesus is saying His disciples are **innocent** of any violation of God's law. The Pharisees were standing in the place of God and served and judge and jury declaring the disciples "Guilty!" Jesus is saying that if the Pharisee really knew God's heart and practiced His precepts like they claimed to do, they would have had practiced **compassion**, not pronounced **condemnation**!

Condemned (2613)(**katadikazo** from **k a t a** = + against + **d i k á z ō** = to judge, pronounce sentence from **díkē** = judgment) means to give judgment against a person, recognize the evidence against him, pass sentence, condemn. According to Vine it fundamentally means "to exercise right or law against" someone, or "to pronounce judgment against," which is what the Pharisees were doing.

James uses this verb in his strong statement "You (THE RICH - see Jas 5:1-5+) **have condemned** (katadikazo) and put to death the righteous man; he does not resist you." (James 5:6+)

Jesus also gave a strong warning using this verb '**Do not judge** (present imperative with a negative), and you will not be judged; and **do not condemn** (katadikazo - present imperative with a negative), and you will not be condemned; **pardon** (present imperative), and you will be pardoned." (Lk 6:37+)

Innocent (338)(**anaitios** from **a** = negative + **aitios** = causative of, responsible for or **aitia** = a crime) means guiltless, not a criminal, innocent. Not guilty of any wrongdoing. Only used in Mt 12:5,7. Used in Septuagint - Deut. 19:10; Deut. 19:13; Deut. 21:8; Deut. 21:9;

So we could summarize Jesus' defense of His disciples picking grain on the Sabbath by showing that Sabbath law was overridden by 3 priorities (1) genuine human need, in this case hunger supersedes ritual (1Sa 21:1-6); (2) worship and the activities prescribed for worship (Num 28:9-10); and (3) acts of compassion do not fall into the class of ordinary work forbidden on the Sabbath (Hos 6:6).

Matthew 12:8 "For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath."

NET Matthew 12:8 For the Son of Man is lord of the Sabbath."

GNT Matthew 12:8 κ ριος γ ρ στιν το σαββ του υ ς το νθρ που.

NLT Matthew 12:8 For the Son of Man is Lord, even over the Sabbath!"

KJV Matthew 12:8 For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day.

ESV Matthew 12:8 For the Son of Man is lord of the Sabbath."

NIV Matthew 12:8 For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath."

ASV Matthew 12:8 For the Son of man is lord of the sabbath.

CSB Matthew 12:8 For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath."

NKJ Matthew 12:8 "For the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath."

NRS Matthew 12:8 For the Son of Man is lord of the sabbath."

YLT Matthew 12:8 for the son of man is lord even of the sabbath.'

- Mt 9:6 Mk 2:28 9:4-7 Lu 6:5 Joh 5:17-23 1Co 9:21 16:2 Rev 1:10
- Matthew 12 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Parallel Passages: Matthew 12:1-8 Mark 2:23-28 Luke 6:1-5

Mark 2:28 “So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.”

Luke 6:5 And He was saying to them, “The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.”

JESUS IS LORD
OF THE SABBATH

For (gar) is a term of explanation. What is Jesus explaining? The following statement would give the grounds for Jesus' authority in making the previous statements (either v7 or all of what He had stated in vv3-7, I favor the latter).

The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath - Notice that the word **Lord** is the first word in the Greek sentence which gives strong emphasis to His Lordship. **Son of Man** is clearly a Messianic title. He had used this same Name in Matthew 9 where He had first forgiven the lame man's sins and then authentical His authority to forgive sins by healing him declaring "But so that you may know that the **Son of Man** has authority on earth to forgive sins”–then He said to the paralytic, “Get up, pick up your bed and go home.” (Mt 9:6+). In that passage He left no doubt that He was not just claiming to be God, but that He was in fact God, for no mere man could heal a lame man. So the Pharisees were aware of the significance of His use of the term **Son of Man** in this passage. He was saying in essence "I am God and I am the Lord of the Sabbath!" And because of Who Jesus is He could determine what the rules for Sabbath observance should be! The implication also is that as the One Who instituted the Sabbath, He knows the correct meaning of the Sabbath.

> **John MacArthur** - “He declared Himself to be **Lord of the Sabbath.**” That is a shocking statement, shocking, beyond comprehension to the Jews. God ordained the Sabbath, Genesis 2:3. God demanded Sabbath observance, Exodus 20:8-11 in the Ten Commandments. If He says He’s **Lord of the Sabbath**, He’s saying He’s God. And He backed it up by miraculous power over disease, demons and death, and even over sin. Jesus is Lord over the Sabbath, and He abolished the Sabbath. After His death and resurrection, there is no more Sabbath....The seventh day of the week disappears from all religious calendars. We now meet on the first day of the week, celebrating the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Sabbath was a shadow (Col 2:16,17+). We have the reality in Christ. Hebrews 3 and Hebrews 4 (cf Hebrews 4:9, 10, 11+) says Christ is our Rest. We have entered into the **rest the Sabbath** portrayed, a rest to come. Christ is that rest. We don’t need the shadow. The substance is here. And so Colossians 2:16-17+ says "Therefore no one is to act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day– things which are a mere shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ." “Don’t let anybody hold you to a Sabbath.” The **Lord of the Sabbath** has nullified the Sabbath, it’s gone."" (Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath, Part 2)

In summary, it would have been impossible for the Pharisees to miss Jesus' clear declaration of divinity and His declaration as the One having authority over the Sabbath! Why because He is Lord of the Sabbath!

Why is Jesus making this statement which is found in each synoptic account? Remember He is still addressing the accusation of the Pharisees that His disciples broke the Sabbath law. Since Jesus is the **Lord of the Sabbath**, He alone has the authority to interpret the law. He is saying that He is Sovereign Ruler over the Sabbath day. He is the Master of this day for He as Creator made it (Ge 2:1-3). His Lordship trumps the man-made rules of the Jews! We do not have to guess whether the Pharisees "caught" Jesus' allusion to the fact that He was God! Their violent rage-filled response and desire to destroy Him (Lk 6:11+, cf Mt 12:14+, Mark 3:6+) made it clear that they understood what Jesus was teaching about Himself!

> **Son of Man** - this name is used of Jesus in Daniel 7:13+ and is used repeatedly by Matthew - Matt. 11:19; Matt. 12:8; Matt. 12:32; Matt. 12:40; Matt. 13:37; Matt. 13:41; Matt. 16:13; Matt. 16:27; Matt. 16:28; Matt. 17:9; Matt. 17:12; Matt. 17:22; Matt. 18:11; Matt. 19:28; Matt. 20:18; Matt. 20:28; Matt. 24:27; Matt. 24:30; Matt. 24:37; Matt. 24:39; Matt. 24:44; Matt. 25:31; Matt. 26:2; Matt. 26:24; Matt. 26:45; Matt. 26:64; (**Related**: What does it mean that Jesus is the Son of Man?, What does it mean that Jesus is the Lord of the Sabbath?)
>
> **Lord (master, owner)**(2962)(**kurios** from **kuros** = might or power, related to **kuroo** = to give authority) primarily means the possessor, owner, master, the supreme one, the one who is sovereign over the Sabbath, so revered by the religious Jews. The tragic irony is that the Jews venerated the Day and violated the "Day Star" (2 Pe 1:19KJV+) the very One Who at His return will be recognized even by those who pierced Him (Rev 1:7+) as the "bright and morning star" (Rev 2:28+; Rev 22:16+)!

Matthew 12:1-14
The Lord Of The Sabbath

After the arrest of John the Baptist, the tide begins to turn against Jesus. The opposition, that is, the leaders of the Jews, step up their criticisms and their plans to destroy Him. And so in chapter 12 we discover first the accusation that Jesus and His disciples were violating the Sabbath (1-14), and then the accusation that Jesus did His miracles by the power of Satan (Mt 12:22-37), and then the demand for a sign from Jesus to prove who He was (Mt 12:38-45). In the first case Jesus refutes their accusation rather easily, but then withdraws to escape their plans to kill Him (Mt 12:15-21). In the second case Jesus powerfully destroys their argument and declares that they are condemning themselves. And then after they demand a sign, Jesus refuses, except for the sign of Jonah, which will be too late for what they want, for by then they will already be guilty of putting Him to death. The chapter ends with a strange episode in which Jesus appears to be rejecting His family (Mt 12:46-49); actually, He uses their visit to show that He is turning to people who believe in Him instead of the Jews who are His people. He came to His own, but His own did not receive Him; and so to those who would receive Him He gave power to become the children of God.

You should read through chapter 12 to get the flow of where these episodes are going. But this study will focus on the first 14 verses of the chapter.

Observations on the Text - Mt 12:1-14

First it will be helpful to lay out the structure of the material. We basically have two incidents, the grain field and the synagogue, Mt 12:1-8 and Mt 12:9-13 respectively. Mt 12:14 is the Pharisees' response to both. In the first incident we have the report of the issue with the accusation (1,2), followed by Jesus' lengthy answer (Mt 12:3-8). In the second incident we have the report of the issue and the challenging question (Mt 12:9,10), followed by Jesus' answer and miracle (Mt 12:11-13). In both incidents the Pharisees were trying to catch Jesus in a violation of the Law in order to discredit Him. But in both cases Jesus demonstrated His superior knowledge of Scripture and His power. They could not argue with these, and so they sought to kill Him-legally of course.

Second, we should note that again the speeches are central to the meaning of the passage. The Pharisees speak twice, first in verse 2 to accuse Jesus' disciples of breaking the Law, and again in Mt 12:10 to challenge Jesus' view of the Sabbath laws. They were put down by Jesus' answer in the first case, and so they were cautious about confronting Him again and instead set Him up and asked what He would do.

Jesus' speeches are, of course, the heart of this passage's revelation. His first reply to the accusation is with questions, designed to show their failure to understand the Law. He then rebukes them for not understanding what Scripture meant about showing mercy. And finally he claimed to be LORD of the Sabbath. The way these different sayings build on one another shows that as LORD of the Sabbath He alone understands the laws about the Sabbath.

In Jesus' second reply Jesus does not appeal to Scripture, but to their own customs which were written in their teachings. He uses a common Jewish way of reasoning, from the lesser to the greater-if it is true of the lesser, it is certainly true of the greater. The argument is worded with "How much more . . . ." We will look at this more, but for now it is worth noting that He uses their own "laws" against them.

Jesus final speech is the simple command to the man to stretch out his hand. Here Jesus shows His authority as the Creator, and if the Creator, then the LORD of the Sabbath.

Third, the contrasts in the use of the Law are interesting. In the first place the disciples are hungry and so eat from the wheat fields. The legalists want them condemned for violating a law. In the end of the passage Jesus restores full life to the man, and the legalists want to put Him to death. In both cases the enemies of Christ show that they do not desire mercy, and that they have missed the spirit of the Law which is life. They are spiritual frauds who seek power over the people-and over Christ.

And fourth, we should not miss the fact that these events followed on the end of chapter 11 pretty closely. Jesus had just then called on people to abandon the teaching authority of the scribes and Pharisees and follow His teachings, because He alone could give them rest for their souls. His charge would continue to be that the Pharisees laid burdens on people that they could not handle. So in this chapter the Pharisees are challenging His authority as a teacher in Israel. If they can show that He violates the Law, then He is discredited. But in the process, they are discredited. But this chapter shows the disciples how they should learn of Christ, and not from the Pharisees.

Background to the Text

There are other things that may be observed as well, such as Jesus' use of the Old Testament, and of their laws. But these we will discuss in the analysis of the text.

The study of a passage like this also calls for a bit of study of the Sabbath day laws. You can read about this in a good Bible

dictionary, or in a good biblical theology. The Law simply said that Israel was to remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy (set apart to God and His service). They could do their ordinary labor for six days, but on the Sabbath they were to stop. In fact, the Hebrew word shabat means “to cease” more than it does “to rest.” The idea of “rest” is more like coming to rest, stopping. The observance was for Israel the sign of the covenant made at Sinai with the LORD the Creator. Since He worked for six days and “rested” the seventh, they were to pattern their life after that. Obviously, God did not “rest” in the sense of needing to restore His strength; it was a celebration of all His work of creation.

As an aside, it is important for Christians to know that the Sabbath was the sign of the Old Covenant, not the New Covenant (or Testaments as we call them). The covenants are very different, and the signs indicate that. The Old Covenant was the Law, and it was based on the Creator. The sign looked back to creation’s Sabbath. The New Covenant is the fulfillment of the Old Covenant, and it looks forward to eternal redemption. Its sign is the cup of the New Covenant which Jesus institutionalized in the upper room. Because Jesus fulfilled the Law in His life and His death, all Old Testament laws have to be interpreted through His fulfillment. Sacrifices and ritual and holy days--all change with Christ. So believers today are not bound to keep the Sabbath Day because we have a New Covenant. The Sabbath for us is interpreted through the Christ event--when we believe in Jesus, we enter into the rest He promised (Matt. 11:28), which is the eternal Sabbath. Every day is to be sanctified to the Lord as a day of spiritual rest; the whole life is a Sabbath fulfillment. And in the age to come there will be a restoration of the whole Sabbath with the removal of the curse. Paul teaches that the Christian is not to observe holy days in a legalistic way. They are helpful for instruction and meditation, but not legally binding. But the Christian is to live out the spirit of the Law, what those regulations were intended to convey. And so a sanctified life given to the Lord and lived out in salvation’s rest from anxious toil and spiritual works is what should characterize the believer who has entered into the Sabbath rest (see Hebrews 3, 4). A simplistic and legalistic observance of a “Christian Sabbath” is not the way to sanctification.

Analysis of the Text

I. In response to legalistic criticism, Jesus declares that He is LORD of the Sabbath (Mt 12:1-8). This is the essence of the first incident in the chapter, and the main point of the whole section.

First, there is the incident (Mt 12:1,2). The act that triggered the whole discussion was a simple one--they were walking through the field and the disciples snacked on some of the heads of grain because they were hungry. On the surface it would appear no more a work than sitting at a table and eating.

But the legalistic Pharisees were bent on discrediting Jesus, and so they accused them of violating the Sabbath day. How was this a violation of the Sabbath Law? If you look at the Ten Commandments, this hardly seems like the labor they were to cease to set the day apart for God. Well, the only way it could be considered a violation is that the Jewish teachers had made lists of things that would be helpful in determining what the works were that should stop. Whenever the text of Scripture seems unclear, it may be for a purpose, that God expects people to act by faith and determine the application. But there are always religious teachers who cannot abide by that, and they make the detailed applications. That would be fine, except those applications often get elevated to the status of authoritative Scripture. For the Sabbath the religious teachers had come up with a list of things that should not be done on the holy days; they were later recorded in the Mishnah (tractate “Shabbath”) as thirty-eight forbidden works. One of them was reaping the harvest. So apparently taking the heads of the grain off the stocks was considered a work, and so a violation of the Law.

But it was only a violation of the law as they interpreted it-not as God had written it. Jesus’ answer will get to the spirit of the Law, which they had completely missed in their effort to make legal clarifications. To be fair, not all religious leaders in Jesus’ day would have agreed with the interpretation of these Pharisees, but they held the leadership and so spoke for the group. Later, this particular activity was allowed on the Sabbath, but that was much later, and perhaps influenced by Christianity.

So second, we have Jesus’ response (Mt 12:3-8). In this response there are several different arguments being used. The immediate one is the case of David’s eating the bread in the sanctuary. You will have to go back and read the story in all its details. The story is in 1 Samuel 21:1-6; and the references for the bread in the tabernacle are in Exodus 25:30 and Leviticus 24:5-9. The twelve loaves of bread were placed on the table inside the tent of the tabernacle, in the holy place, and were only to be eaten by the sanctified priests. But David and his men, running from Saul, stopped at the sanctuary when it was in Nob and ate the bread, perhaps reasoning that they were on a holy mission, or that it was a matter of life and death.

In referring to this incident Jesus is not trying to argue the case for or against David by saying there were rules but David was permitted to break the rules. His point is that Scripture nowhere condemns David for doing this. If David could break the laws of holiness and eat from the holy food in the sanctuary and Scripture not condemn him, then why should His disciples not be allowed to eat from the grain on a Saturday?

Jesus is not justifying the disciples’ act, for it is not obvious that they broke any law in the Law. Rather, Jesus is dealing with the Pharisees interpretation of the Law in general, showing that He is the more knowledgeable teacher and that people should come to

Him.

In the story in Samuel, the regulations of the Law were set aside for David and his companions. Jesus is building the case that He is greater than David, and so regulations (legitimate or not) can be set aside for Him and His companions too.

Jesus' second argument is from the Law in general (Num. 28:9-10); technically, the priests violated the Law every Sabbath by the work that they did. Of course the priests were not guilty, because the same Law that ruled on the Sabbath made them priests. Since the Law established their duties, the Law established the right of the priests to break the Law and to do some pretty hard work at the altar.

Jesus uses this to argue from the lesser to the greater by analogy: if that was permitted for the priests, how much more for someone greater than the priests, or the temple itself. His analogy works only because He actually is greater than the temple and the priests. And the argument of the gospel is that Jesus and His kingdom are greater than the temple and all the priests and prophets and kings of the past. The point that Jesus makes then, is that in the Old Testament the laws of Sabbath were superseded by the duties of the priests, and so in His day the laws of the Sabbath were superseded by His duties as the Messiah and Redeemer. It shows there is a greater authority present than the ordinary leaders. Because the Son of Man was present, the Law would be superceded. He temple represented the presence of God with His people; but the presence of Jesus meant that God was with them in mortal flesh.

And so Jesus rebukes the Pharisees for missing the point of the Law, which is mercy (see Hos. 6:6). The spirit of the Law was life and peace with God, and at the heart of that was mercy. But they were so worked up over the cultic ritual laws that they missed the spirit of the Law. They really did not understand the Law because they were so busy looking at details, mostly prohibitions in this case. But now as accusers they stood accused. And the accused, the disciples, were declared innocent because the one greater than the Temple was there.

To refer to Himself as the LORD of the Sabbath means that He can handle the Sabbath laws any way that He wants, or can supercede them in the same way that the temple service of priests superseded Sabbath observance. As LORD of the Sabbath Jesus is the Son of Man, the divine Creator, the covenant God. And as LORD of the Sabbath Jesus the Messiah has authority over the temple too.

II. In response to the challenge from the Pharisees, Jesus healed on the Sabbath and demonstrated the importance of mercy (Mt 12:9-13). The second part could be taken as a separate Bible study, but since it overlaps so much the two can be taken together. Luke 6:6-11 indicates it was on another Sabbath; but Matthew has combined the two to make his point.

First, the incident (Mt 12:9, 10). Jesus went into the synagogue and there was a man there with a shriveled hand. Matthew says that the leaders were looking for a way to accuse Jesus, and so they asked Him if it was lawful to heal on the Sabbath. The focus now will be on Him and not the disciples; on something He would actually do, and in some detail on the enemies' opposition.

Second, we have Jesus' answer (Mt 12:11-13) The early Jews discussed at great length the question that they asked Jesus now. In general, it was fine to cure on the Sabbath Day if it was not an emergency. Their question was whether it was lawful to heal on the Sabbath; and Jesus argued that it was lawful, not that it was required. According to Jewish teaching while healing was permitted in some cases on the Sabbath, the patient had to be dying, or the situation life threatening. And that does not seem to be the case here, unless one were to argue that it was a matter of life and death, and that by healing him Jesus was rescuing his soul as well. But Jesus makes the analogy that if they had a sheep that fell into a pit they would lift it out on a Sabbath day--how much more a human in trouble. Neither the man with the withered hand, nor the sheep in the pit, were in danger of losing their life. So it was a matter of doing a good deed on the holy day. He knew that in principle they practiced that, but now were simply trying to accuse Him of violating their law.

Then Jesus healed the man. The healing comes after Jesus' bold words about Himself and about His authority over the Sabbath day. But the miracle authenticates His powerful words, and in Matthew's presentation of the order it also authenticates His prior claim of being LORD of the Sabbath.

III. The Pharisees plot to kill Jesus (Mt 12:14). Finally, the outcome of the exchange is that the Pharisees wanted to put Jesus to death (Mt 12:14). A lot of scholars do not think the Pharisees would have done this over a different interpretation of legal teaching, and that instead of "kill" it meant banish from the synagogue. But the point, of course, is that it is not merely a dispute over interpretation, but over the identity and authority of who Jesus is. The text is clear that Jesus claimed to be the Messiah, and claimed to have authority, and demonstrated it by His powerful works. And in the process He showed that He cared not for the numerous, detailed rulings that the Jewish teachings put in place--they were an added burden to what the Law had originally had in place. The disagreement over the Sabbath did not cause them to plot His death; it was the occasion for it based on His claims to be the Lord of the Sabbath. They were opposed to Him personally.

Central Theme

The point that the passage is making is best expressed by Jesus' own claim that He is the LORD of the Sabbath. That means that He is the one who instituted it and He is the one who rules over it. He of all people would then know what the intent of the Sabbath day was--mercy, and not simply a day to avoid work. He never intended it to be subjected to a myriad of legalistic rulings. It was a day for celebration and refreshment and communion with the LORD.

But as LORD of the Sabbath Jesus had authority over all creation, including al people. He demonstrated that authority with His claims, and authenticated it with His mighty works, here the healing of the man with the withered hand. They understand His claim; they saw His mighty works. They either had to submit to His authority, or try to get rid of Him. Unfortunately for them they pursued the latter.

Correlation with Scripture

We have already noted the passages in Samuel, and Exodus and Hosea that were brought into the discussion.

There are a number of other passages in the Gospels which record Jesus' conflict with the Jewish leaders over the Sabbath day. It looks very much like He is pushing them on the matter, choosing to do things on the holy day that violated their rulings, but not the Law of God. These passages should be read and compared to get the whole picture of Christ is doing.

Perhaps the best New Testament passage that captures this passage's message, and those other conflicts as well, is the one that comes in Jesus' rebuke of the hypocrisy of the Pharisees. In Matthew 23:23 he tells how legalistic they were in the way they tithed meticulously, but in so doing they had neglected the weightier matters of the Law--justice, mercy and faithfulness. It is one thing for people to try to live obediently to the word of God, but it is quite another if they pour all their energy into that and fail to do positive acts of justice, mercy and faithfulness. Jesus said that God desired mercy, and not sacrifice. Actually, He wants both, but the ritual without mercy misses the whole point.

And if the Sabbath day was designed as a day of mercy from God, a time of rest and restoration, of celebration and service for God, then feeding the hungry, rescuing a sheep, healing a man would all be harmonious with that day.
Applications
There are probably a number of applications that have begun to form in your mind already. Here are a few major ones to consider:

1. Commitment to the authority of Christ. These passages are all designed to reveal the person and work of Jesus, here as Lord of Sabbath, i.e., the sovereign creator and sustainer of life. When studying these kinds of passages the believer should renew his or her own faith in Christ. It should be an inspiration to greater allegiance and greater faith, that is, to praise and adoration of Him, and to obedience and prayer to Him.

2. Avoidance of legalism. Legalism is not simply keeping laws, but is a self-righteous attitude. The legalist thinks he is righteous, and so anyone who does not conform with his idea of what righteousness is must be a guilty sinner. Legalism usually plays out with interpretations of Scripture, not actual Scripture. For example, some legalists today define what worldliness is, although they list things that the Bible does not mention; and whoever does not abide by their understanding is in sin.

Now be careful here, because where the Bible is clear on a sin or particular sins the Christian is to try to avoid such things and is to warn others with love and concern. Obeying Scripture is not legalism. God demands it. But there will always be some libertarians who will call you a legalist if you remind them what Scripture says. But that is not what we mean here by self-righteous legalism (of course, that warning can be given with a self-righteous spirit, so be careful).

Here the Pharisees had a whole list of "laws" they had made based generally on Scripture. And those became the test or righteousness. Paul deals with this in a lot of his epistles--judging others with respect to holy days, eating various foods, and other practices. Christians are to try to live obediently to Christ; if they find others who are doing the same but take a different application from some Scripture, they must be careful to acknowledge their faith and convictions (again, I am not talking about another interpretation of Scripture that seeks to do away with a passage or redefine it in order to license sin--that is not the same).

3. Doing acts of mercy. What a contrast: the Pharisees are there criticizing and challenging Jesus, and eventually plotting to kill Him. That is obviously a terrible religious state to be in, for it opposes what is good and merciful. The point that Jesus makes is that that attitude nullifies any sacrifice or ritual they had made. His instruction is from Hosea: God desires mercy. People should be looking for objects of mercy, not objects to criticize. If they were busy with that, the Church would be a much better place.

And if there is a doubtful thing, and you are not sure if you should or should not do something (it is a matter of personal conviction), say, for example, like helping someone move on a Sunday (which would be offensive to a lot of Christians), the guideline here seems to say it would be better to "err" (if that is what it looks like) on the side of mercy, not self-righteous legalism.

Matthew 12:9 Departing from there, He went into their synagogue.

- **he went**: Mk 3:1-5 Lu 6:6-11
- Matthew 12 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Parallel Passages: Mark 3:1-6, Matthew 12:9-14, Luke 6:6-11

Mark 3:1+ He entered again into a synagogue; and a man was there whose hand was withered.

Luke 6:6+ On another Sabbath He entered the synagogue and was teaching; and there was a man there whose right hand was withered.

SAVIOR IN THE SYNAGOGUE
ON THE SABBATH

Departing (metabaino) **from there He went into their synagogue** - This passage emphasizes the itinerant (traveling from place to place - cf Mt 4:23) nature of Jesus ministry The text says "**He**" with no mention of the disciples in any of the synoptic accounts. One has to surmise that they were following Him, because the word disciple means learner and the best way for them to learn was by His example. Luke adds that He **was teaching** (Lk 6:6+) which would support the premise that His "*learners*" were listening. As we see throughout the Gospels it was Jesus' custom to attend the synagogue service on the Sabbath. Was this the **synagogue** at Capernaum? We cannot be sure from the text (or comparing the other synoptic accounts).

Synagogue (4864)(**sunagoge** from **sunágo** = lead together, assemble or bring together) refers to a group of people "going with one another" (**sunago**) literally describes a bringing together or congregating in one place.

Matthew 12:10 And a man was there whose hand was withered. And they questioned Jesus, asking, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?"–so that they might accuse Him.

NET Matthew 12:10 A man was there who had a withered hand. And they asked Jesus, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?" so that they could accuse him.

GNT Matthew 12:10 κα δο νθρωπος χε ρα χων ξηρ ν. κα πηρ τησαν α τ ν λ γοντες, Ε ξεστιν το ς σ ββασιν θεραπε σαι; να κατηγορ σωσιν α το .

NLT Matthew 12:10 where he noticed a man with a deformed hand. The Pharisees asked Jesus, "Does the law permit a person to work by healing on the Sabbath?" (They were hoping he would say yes, so they could bring charges against him.)

KJV 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.

ESV Matthew 12:10 And a man was there with a withered hand. And they asked him, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?"-- so that they might accuse him.

NIV Matthew 12:10 and a man with a shriveled hand was there. Looking for a reason to accuse Jesus, they asked him, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?"

ASV Matthew 12:10 and behold, a man having a withered hand. And they asked him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath day? that they might accuse him.

CSB Matthew 12:10 There He saw a man who had a paralyzed hand. And in order to accuse Him they asked Him, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?"

NKJ Matthew 12:10 And behold, there was a man who had a withered hand. And they asked Him, saying, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?"-- that they might accuse Him.

NRS Matthew 12:10 a man was there with a withered hand, and they asked him, "Is it lawful to cure on the sabbath?" so that they might accuse him.

YLT Matthew 12:10 and lo, there was a man having the hand withered, and they questioned him, saying, 'Is it lawful to heal on the sabbaths?' that they might accuse him.

NAB Matthew 12:10 And behold, there was a man there who had a withered hand. They questioned him, "Is it lawful to cure on the sabbath?" so that they might accuse him.

NJB Matthew 12:10 now a man was there with a withered hand. They asked him, 'Is it permitted to cure somebody on the Sabbath day?' hoping for something to charge him with.

GWN Matthew 12:10 A man with a paralyzed hand was there. The people asked Jesus whether it was right to heal on a day of worship so that they could accuse him of doing something wrong.

BBE Matthew 12:10 And there was a man with a dead hand. And they put a question to him, saying, Is it right to make a man well on the Sabbath day? so that they might have something against him.

- **who**: 1Ki 13:4-6 Zec 11:17 Joh 5:3
- **Is it**: Mt 19:3 22:17,18 Lu 13:14 14:3-6 20:22 Joh 5:10 9:16
- **so that**: Isa 32:6 59:4,13 Lu 6:6,7 11:54 23:2,14 Joh 8:6
- Matthew 12 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Parallel Passages: Mark 3:1-6, Matthew 12:9-14, Luke 6:6-11

Mark 3:1+ He entered again into a synagogue; and a man was there whose hand was withered. 2 They were watching Him to see if He would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse Him.

Luke 6:6+ On another Sabbath He entered the synagogue and was teaching; and there was a man there whose right hand was withered. 7 The scribes and the Pharisees were watching Him closely to see if He healed on the Sabbath, so that they might find reason to accuse Him.

ANOTHER SABBATH COLLISION BETWEEN JESUS AND JEWISH LEADERS

KJV is more accurate - "**And**, **behold** (idou)." For some reason the NAS and other modern translations (ESV, NET, NIV, et al) often leave out this "attention getting" word. I think it should always be translated, for the Spirit intended it to convey some aspect of truth. The Greek demonstrative particle **idou** is used by the Biblical writers to (1) prompt or arouse the reader's attention (introducing something new or unusual), (2) to mark a strong emphasis ("Indeed!" Lk 13:16) and (3) to call the reader to pay close attention (very similar to #1) so that one will listen, remember or consider. **Spurgeon** adds that "**Behold** is a word of wonder; it is intended to excite admiration. Wherever you see it hung out in Scripture, it is like an ancient sign-board, signifying that there are rich wares within, or like the hands which solid readers have observed in the margin of the older Puritanic books, drawing attention to something particularly worthy of observation." I would add, **behold** is like a divine highlighter, a divine underlining of an especially striking or important text. It says in effect "Listen up, all ye who would be wise in the ways of Jehovah!" Here Jesus is saying to pay attention as He points out the gross, inexcusable indifference of the legalistic person when there is a person in need.

And a man was there whose hand was withered (cf OT example 1 Ki 13:1-6 where a withered hand was temporary divine judgment) - Some think this man was a "plant" (contrivance) orchestrated by the sinister, surreptitious Pharisees who knew Jesus liked to show compassion by healing illness of various kinds. While this is a possibility, it is conjecture. What is not conjecture is that God "set it up" in His providence that there would be a Sabbath day collision between His Son and the religious legalists. Nothing happened by accident in Jesus' life and the same is true of your life dear child of God. God is in control and still on the throne of the universe even in a world that appears to be rapidly spinning out of control morally and ethically! (See The Providence of God) **Withered** was a word used of plants that were shriveled, shrunken and dried up because of lack of moisture and/or nutrients and in the same way this man's hand was atrophied from disuse (see disuse atrophy), muscles having been reduced to bare strings of tissue, skin wrinkled by the shrinking of the underlying tissues. This was clearly a long-standing problem and not a life-threatening emergency, which is significant as even the rabbis had made provision for healing in cases which were life-threatening. Jesus is about to miraculously reverse this process with His spoken word (cf effect of His Word in Heb 11:3+, Col 1:16+)! Matthew does not record what is described by both Mark and Luke, the fact that the Pharisees **were watching** Jesus (Mk 3:2+, Lk 6:6+). This was not a casual watching but intensive observance, sinister scrutiny if you will! These self-proclaimed "protectors" or guardians of the Sabbath were looking for a reason to accuse Jesus of violating the Sabbath.

Withered (dry) (3583)(**xeraino** from **xeros** = dry) means to become dry, to dry up and figuratively describes the whole body of a demon possessed boy that became stiffened and rigid (Mk 9.18). In Mark 3:1 it describes a limb which is shriveled, withered and has become useless. As plants are killed by drought, so the human body is damaged by certain harmful things. 15x in NT - Matt. 13:6; Matt. 21:19; Matt. 21:20; Mk. 3:1; Mk. 4:6; Mk. 5:29; Mk. 9:18; Mk. 11:20; Mk. 11:21; Lk. 8:6; Jn. 15:6; Jas. 1:11; 1 Pet. 1:24; Rev. 14:15; Rev.

16:12

And they questioned Jesus, asking, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?"–so that they might accuse Him- **Leon Morris** says their question "makes it clear that this was not so much a genuine search after information as the first shot in a battle." (PNTC) The sequence of events as determined from the synoptic accounts would seem to be that first Jesus asked the man to take "center stage" in the synagogue. You can see the Pharisees jostling, elbowing each other and getting ready like a wild animal to pouch on their prey! Luke tells us that Jesus way not a "prey" Who would be caught off guard and thus surprised by their attack for **He knew what they were thinking**. (aka omniscience! - Lk 6:8+). Now the frontrow Pharisees sensed what Jesus was about to do and so they spring their question which they think will trap Him once and for all - **"Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?"** What they were not prepared for was Jesus' counterattack with an incisive, convicting **counterquestion** "**Is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the Sabbath, to save a life or to kill?**", a question which "shut their mouths" (Mk 3:4+)! And then as to add icing on the cake, Jesus gives a convicting illustration (only found in Matthew's version) in Matthew 12:11-12 (see below) which in effect backed the Pharisees into a corner placing them so to speak on **horns of a dilemma**! Don't you love Jesus! He is so good, but as Mark's version tells us He is "good and mad," Mark recording **looking around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart** (Mk 3:5+). So He was righteously angry and righteously grieved! He was mad and good! Hard hearts break the heart of God! Is your heart hard? Now after the verbal jousting had completed, Jesus completely healed the withered hand with a word, a command "Stretch out" (Mt 12:13, Mk 3:5+, Lk 6:10+)!

Lawful (permitted)(1832)(**exesti** from from **ek** = out + **eimí** = to be) is an impersonal verb, signifying "it is permitted, it is lawful" (or interrogatively, "is it lawful?"). **Exesti** occurs most frequently in the synoptic Gospels and the Acts (see list below) especially in Jesus' conflicts with the Pharisees over His actions (and those of His disciples) on the Sabbath. All uses of **exesti** - Mt. 12:2; Mt. 12:4; Mt. 12:10; Mt. 12:12; Mt. 14:4; Mt. 19:3; Mt. 20:15; Mt. 22:17; Mt. 27:6; Mk. 2:24; Mk. 2:26; Mk. 3:4; Mk. 6:18; Mk. 10:2; Mk. 12:14; Lk. 6:2; Lk. 6:4; Lk. 6:9; Lk. 14:3; Lk. 20:22; Jn. 5:10; Jn. 18:31; Acts 2:29; Acts 8:37; Acts 16:21; Acts 21:37; Acts 22:25; 1 Co. 6:12; 1 Co. 10:23; 2 Co. 12:4

David Turner - The Pharisees' question about whether it is lawful to heal on the Sabbath does not stem from a sincere desire to discuss halakah but from their wish to have something with which to accuse Jesus. (BECNT-Mt)

Heal (cure)(2323)(**therapeuo** from **therapon** = an attendant, servant) means to care for or wait upon and has two main senses in the NT, one speaking of rendering service (Acts 17:25) but more commonly in a medical sense, such as to take care of the sick, to heal, to cure, to heal miraculously (Mt. 4:23, 24; 10:1, 8; Acts 4:14). As noted the rabbis allowed healing on the Sabbath but only if the sick person's life was in danger.

Sabbath (4521)(**sabbaton** from **shabath** - 07673 = to cease from work, intermission - see note on **shabath**) in this context refers to the seventh day of the week, held sacred by the Jews (Mt 12:8; Mk 2:27f; Lk 6:7, 9; Jn 5:9f, 18; Acts 1:12; 13:27, 44). God instituted the Sabbath in Ge 2:3 "Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made." Then He set it apart for the Jews in Ex 20:8 "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy." And then He gave them one stipulation in Ex 31:15 "For six days work may be done, but on the seventh day there is a sabbath of complete rest, holy to the LORD; whoever does any work on the sabbath day shall surely be put to death." The Jews came up with a plethora of rules and regulations about what constituted "work" and now the Pharisees, the "gatekeepers" of all the legalistic rules, were watching Jesus to see if He did a work on the Sabbath so they could not just accuse Him but kill Him as specified in Exodus 31:15! What is fascinating is that Jesus would in fact heal the man, not with a "work" but with a "Word!" Even from a technical standpoint Jesus was not guilty, but that is not how the legalists interpreted it! (See John MacArthur's discussion of some of these ridiculous rules).

John MacArthur explains that the rabbis had "overlaid laws upon laws, upon laws, upon laws, upon rituals, routines, rules, restrictions, restraints that made the **Sabbath Day** anything but rest (see Mt 23:4, Lk 11:46+), it was the most difficult, limiting, wearying day of the week! And in Matthew 11:28+ when Jesus said, "**Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest**" He was talking about the weariness under which those people lived in the constraint of a self-righteous system such as manifested itself on the **Sabbath**. (ED: IRONICALLY) **It was the worst day of the week**! And Jesus, in order to attack their religious system, had to attack their **Sabbath**. In order to expose their spiritual bankruptcy and error of that system, He had to assault the corrupted **Sabbath**, and that is exactly what He does. They hated Him because He shined light on their darkness. And theirs was a religious darkness....These people had seen the light, Jesus is the light that lights every man that comes into the world (Jn 8:12, Jn 9:5, Jn 12:35, 36, cf Lk 1:78, 79+, Lk 2:32+). They had seen the light. The light was manifested in staggering ways through what He said and, of course, the miracles that He did. But they so

loved the darkness that they ran from the light because their deeds were evil (Jn 3:19, 20+). Religious people run from the true Gospel. They run from the true light of the glory of the Gospel of God shining in the face of Jesus." ("For God, Who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One Who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ." 2 Cor 4:6) (Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath, Part 2)

Might accuse (2723)(**kategoreo** from **kata** = against + **agora** = assembly, place of public speaking. Prefix **kata**- implies animosity!) means to speak against a person before a public tribunal, bring an accusation in court or to bring a charge publicly. The idea is to speak openly against (kata-), and so to accuse and condemn in a legal sense. The cognate word kategoria was a legal technical term that referred to the content of the accusation or charge made against someone. All of the Gospel uses of kategoreo involve accusing Jesus (except Jn 5:45)! All 22 uses - Mt. 12:10; Mt. 27:12; Mk. 3:2; Mk. 15:3; Mk. 15:4; Lk. 6:7; Lk. 23:2; Lk. 23:10; Lk. 23:14; Jn. 5:45; Jn. 8:6; Acts 22:30; Acts 24:2; Acts 24:8; Acts 24:13; Acts 24:19; Acts 25:5; Acts 25:11; Acts 25:16; Acts 28:19; Ro 2:15; Rev. 12:10. As the context shows the Pharisees did not just want to accuse Him but to kill Him, Lk 6:11+ describing them as **filled with rage**, out of their mind with anger causing them to begin to conspire as to how they might destroy Him! Presumably they were thinking of Ex 31:15 that stated that "**whoever does any work on the sabbath day shall surely be put to death**" This Greek verb gives us our English categorize which means to place in a particular class, and in our present passage, the Pharisees seek to categorize Jesus as a breaker of Sabbath law!

EXAMPLES OF SABBATH REGULATIONS RELATED TO HEALING

m. Šabbat 22.6*

According to this rabbinic tradition, a person was not even allowed to set a broken bone on the Sabbath.

E.… And they do not straighten [the limb of] a child or set a broken limb.
m. ʻEduyyot 2.5*

This passage from the Mishnah reveals restrictions placed on medical treatment and healing on the Sabbath. See also m. Šabbat 14.4 and 19.2 below.

A. Three matters did they say about before R. Ishmael, and he did not rule concerning them either to prohibit or to permit, and R. Joshua b. Matya worked them out.
I B. He who cuts open an abscess on the Sabbath—
C. if it is to make an opening for it, he is liable.
D. But if it is to draw out the pus from it, he is exempt.
II E. And concerning him who traps a snake on the Sabbath—
F. if he got involved with it so that it would not bite him, he is exempt.
G. But if it was for purposes of healing, he is liable.…

m. Šabbat 14.4*

A. He who is concerned about his teeth may not suck vinegar through them.
B. But he dunks [his bread] in the normal way,
C. and if he is healed, he is healed.
D. He who is concerned about his loins [which give him pain], he may not anoint them with wine or vinegar.
E. But he anoints with oil—
F. not with rose oil.
G. Princes [on the Sabbath], anoint themselves with rose oil on their wounds, since it is their way to do so on ordinary days.
H. R. Simeon says, "All Israelites are princes."

m. Šabbat 19.2*

For the text of 19.2, see m. Šabbat 19.1–2 in section 13.12 below.
t. Šabbat 16.22*

According to this passage from the Tosefta, Shammai did not permit prayer for the sick on the Sabbath, but Hillel did allow it.

A. And so did Rabban Simeon b. Gamaliel say, "The House of Shammai say, ʻThey do not distribute charity to the poor on the Sabbath in the house of assembly—

B. " 'even funds to marry an orphan boy and an orphan girl.
C. " 'And they do not make a match between a man and his mate.
D. " 'And they do not pray for a sick person on the Sabbath.'
E. "And the House of Hillel permit."

Matthew 12:11 And He said to them, "What man is there among you who has a sheep, and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will he not take hold of it and lift it out?

NET Matthew 12:11 He said to them, "Would not any one of you, if he had one sheep that fell into a pit on the Sabbath, take hold of it and lift it out?

GNT Matthew 12:11 δ ε πεν α το ς, Τ ς σται ξ μ ν νθρωπος ς ξει πρ βατον ν κα ν μπ σ το το το ς σ ββασιν ε ς β θυνον, ο χ κρατ σει α τ κα γερε ;

NLT Matthew 12:11 And he answered, "If you had a sheep that fell into a well on the Sabbath, wouldn't you work to pull it out? Of course you would.

KJV 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?

ESV Matthew 12:11 He said to them, "Which one of you who has a sheep, if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not take hold of it and lift it out?

NIV Matthew 12:11 He said to them, "If any of you has a sheep and it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will you not take hold of it and lift it out?

ASV Matthew 12:11 And he said unto them, What man shall there be of you, that shall have one sheep, and if this fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out?

CSB Matthew 12:11 But He said to them, "What man among you, if he had a sheep that fell into a pit on the Sabbath, wouldn't take hold of it and lift it out?

NKJ Matthew 12:11 Then He said to them, "What man is there among you who has one sheep, and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not lay hold of it and lift it out?

NRS Matthew 12:11 He said to them, "Suppose one of you has only one sheep and it falls into a pit on the sabbath; will you not lay hold of it and lift it out?

YLT Matthew 12:11 And he said to them, 'What man shall be of you, who shall have one sheep, and if this may fall on the sabbaths into a ditch, will not lay hold on it and raise it?

NAB Matthew 12:11 He said to them, "Which one of you who has a sheep that falls into a pit on the sabbath will not take hold of it and lift it out?

NJB Matthew 12:11 But he said to them, 'If any one of you here had only one sheep and it fell down a hole on the Sabbath day, would he not get hold of it and lift it out?

GWN Matthew 12:11 Jesus said to them, "Suppose one of you has a sheep. If it falls into a pit on a day of worship, wouldn't you take hold of it and lift it out?

BBE Matthew 12:11 And he said to them, Which of you, having a sheep, if it gets into a hole on the Sabbath day, will not put out a helping hand and get it back?

- **What man is there among you who has a sheep**: This was an {argumentum ad hominem.} The Jews held that such things were lawful on the sabbath day, and our Saviour very properly appealed to their canons in vindication of his intention to heal the distressed man. Lu 13:15-17 14:5
- **and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath**: Ex 23:4,5 De 22:4
- Matthew 12 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Parallel Passages: Mark 3:1-6, Matthew 12:9-14, Luke 6:6-11

Mark 3:4+ And He said to them, "Is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the Sabbath, to save a life or to kill?" But they kept silent (siopao from siope = silence, a hush)

Luke 6:8+ But He knew what they were thinking, and He said to the man with the withered hand, “Get up and come forward!” And he got up and came forward. 9 And Jesus said to them, “I ask you, is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the Sabbath, to save a life or to destroy it?”

And He - Most translation either do not translate the coordinating conjunction (de) or only translate it with the word "and," but some such as CSB and NJB translate it with "**But He**," which would seem in context to be more accurate as it more clearly sets Jesus over against His opponents as He offers a "counterquestion" of His own.

Said to them, “What man is there among you who has a sheep (probaton), **and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will he not take hold of** (krateo) **it and lift it out?** (cf. De. 22:4; Pr 12:10) - The "**IF**" speaks of a condition which is probable. This is clearly rhetorical for the answer was obvious and assumed. The Greek adverb **ouchi** (interrogative in questions that expect an affirmative answer = *not* Mt 5:46; 6:25; 10:29; Lk 6:39; 12:6; 17:8; J 11:9; Ro 3:29) emphatically placed stresses the certainty and expects a positive answer. No man would not rescue his sheep on the Sabbath! As Jesus is illustrating rescuing a man on the Sabbath was an entirely different matter in the eyes of these religious legalists.

Lift out (1453)(**egeiro**) was used literally to raise up or lift up a person either sitting or lying down, in this case a sheep. Mk 1:31 uses it describing when Jesus **raised up** Peter's mother and her fever left. In Mk 2:9 (Mk 2:11, 12, Lk 5:23) Jesus told the paralytic "**Get up**, and pick up your pallet and walk’?"

Leon Morris notes that "The Jews in general showed great care for their animals and would take whatever action was necessary to deliver them from such a plight as the one Jesus outlines." (PNTC)

John MacArthur has an interesting comment "No Pharisee would have contended that sheep were as valuable as men, who they knew were created in God's image. But in practice, the Pharisees treated other men with less respect than they treated their animals, because in their hearts they did not respect, much less love, their fellow men, including their fellow Jews. They contemptuously subjugated human life and welfare to religious tradition. One of the most obvious tragedies of Hinduism is its disregard for human welfare in the name of human welfare. A beggar is not given food because it would interfere with his karma and prevent him from suffering his way to the next highest level of existence. A fly is not killed because it is the reincarnation of some unfortunate human being of past ages. Rats are not killed for the same reason and are allowed to eat and contaminate food supplies without any interference. Cows are considered sacred and are given what food is available, while human beings are allowed to starve. In a similar way the Pharisees despised other human beings, showing more compassion for **a sheep** than for a crippled **man** who was even a fellow Jew." (MacArthur New Testament Commentary – Matthew 8-15)

Matthew 12:12 “How much more valuable then is a man than a sheep! So then, it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.”

GNT Matthew 12:12 π σ ο ν διαφ ρει νθρωπος προβ του. στε ξεστιν το ς σ ββασιν καλ ς ποιε ν.

NLT Matthew 12:12 And how much more valuable is a person than a sheep! Yes, the law permits a person to do good on the Sabbath."

KJV Matthew 12:12 How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the sabbath days.

ESV Matthew 12:12 Of how much more value is a man than a sheep! So it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath."

NIV Matthew 12:12 How much more valuable is a man than a sheep! Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath."

ASV Matthew 12:12 How much then is a man of more value than a sheep! Wherefore it is lawful to do good on the sabbath day.

CSB Matthew 12:12 A man is worth far more than a sheep, so it is lawful to do what is good on the Sabbath."

NKJ Matthew 12:12 "Of how much more value then is a man than a sheep? Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath."

NRS Matthew 12:12 How much more valuable is a human being than a sheep! So it is lawful to do good on the sabbath."

YLT Matthew 12:12 How much better, therefore, is a man than a sheep? -- so that it is lawful on the sabbaths

to do good.'

NAB Matthew 12:12 How much more valuable a person is than a sheep. So it is lawful to do good on the sabbath."

NJB Matthew 12:12 Now a man is far more important than a sheep, so it follows that it is permitted on the Sabbath day to do good.'

GWN Matthew 12:12 Certainly, a human is more valuable than a sheep! So it is right to do good on the day of worship."

BBE Matthew 12:12 Of how much more value is a man than a sheep! For this reason it is right to do good on the Sabbath day.

- **is a**: Mt 6:26 Lu 12:24
- **it is**: Mk 3:4 Lu 6:9 Isa 1:17
- Matthew 12 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Parallel Passages: Mark 3:1-6, Matthew 12:9-14, Luke 6:6-11

Mark 3:4+ And He said to them, "Is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the Sabbath, to save a life or to kill?" But they kept silent.

Luke 6:9+ And Jesus said to them, "I ask you, is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the Sabbath, to save a life or to destroy it?"

How much more valuable (diaphero) **then is a man than a sheep!** - Jesus' point is that if one does good on the Sabbath by rescuing his sheep then surely it is right to help a human being who is much more valuable in the eyes of God than a sheep! Jesus is employing the technique of arguing from the minor to the major (cf. Mt. 6:26–30; Mt 7:11; Mt 10:31), the minor being sheep rescue on the Sabbath which surely makes it permissible to "rescue" a person made in the image of God on the Sabbath. **Robertson** calls Jesus question an a fortiori argument and adds "“By how much does a human being differ from a sheep? That is the question which Christian civilization has not even yet adequately answered” (Bruce). The poor pettifogging Pharisees are left in the pit."

Valuable (worth more) (1308)(**diaphero**) means literally "carry through," "carry...through" (as in Mk 11:16), from which it comes to mean "differ" and, since when things differ one is normally better than the other, it comes to mean "excel," as here.

So then - This is a term of conclusion. Based on the value God places on the lives of human beings, it is lawful to help a man in need on the Sabbath.

it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath- Jesus' statement is equivalent to His earlier statement when He quoted God's declaration in Hosea 6:6 "I desire compassion and not sacrifice." (Mt 12:7+). The Pharisees definitely had a "compassion deficiency" so to speak! There is never a law from God that negates doing good. You can scan the entire OT and you will find not one statement about not helping people in need on the Sabbath. Yes God's did say do not work, referring to one's normal work. He NEVER said "Don't do anything!" Think about this. They still had to eat on the Sabbath and even if they prepared it the night before, there was still work involved is serving the food, etc. Recall that in Mt 5:17+ He did not come to abolish the Law but to fulfill it and here He is saying that it is fulfilled by treating others the same way you ant them to treat you (Mt 7:12+). Similarly, **to do good on the Sabbath** to one in need is to fulfill the second great commandment to "love your neighbor as yourself" (Mt 22:39 - read Mt 22:40). In sum, Jesus was not a Sabbath breaker in doing good!

Constable observes that "This is the third time in Matthew that Jesus argued for the superiority of human life over animal life (cf. Mt 6:26; Mt 10:31). His argument presupposed the special creation of man (Genesis 1–2). Jesus assumed, apparently with good reason, that the Pharisees would lift a sheep out of a pit on the Sabbath. His argument was again **qal wahomer** (see below)(from the light to the heavy, cf. Mt 12:5–6). Neither the sheep in the illustration nor the man in the synagogue was in mortal danger. Jesus cut through the Pharisaic distinctions about how much help one could give to the more basic issue of doing good. (Expository Notes)

Jesus' interpretation of Scripture and his teaching style share affinities with some of the rabbinic rules of biblical interpretation codified in later rabbinic literature (cf. t. Sanhedrin 7.11; 'Abot deRabbi Natan 37.10). One of the so-called "seven middoth [i.e., measurements] of Hillel" is as follows:

Qal wa-homer (literally "light and heavy"). According to this rule, what is true or applicable in a "light" (or less important) instance is surely true or applicable in a "heavy" (or more important) instance (cf. m. Qiddushin 4:14 and Matt. 6:26 = Luke 12:24).

Matthew 12:13 Then He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand!" He stretched it out, and it was restored to normal, like the other.

NET Matthew 12:13 Then he said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out and it was restored, as healthy as the other.

GNT Matthew 12:13 τ τε λ γει τ νθρ π , κτειν ν σου τ ν χε ρα. κα ξ τεινεν κα πεκατεστ θη γι ς ς λλη.

NLT Matthew 12:13 Then he said to the man, "Hold out your hand." So the man held out his hand, and it was restored, just like the other one!

KJV 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.

ESV Matthew 12:13 Then he said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And the man stretched it out, and it was restored, healthy like the other.

NIV Matthew 12:13 Then he said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." So he stretched it out and it was completely restored, just as sound as the other.

ASV Matthew 12:13 Then saith he to the man, Stretch forth thy hand. And he stretched it forth; and it was restored whole, as the other.

CSB Matthew 12:13 Then He told the man, "Stretch out your hand." So he stretched it out, and it was restored, as good as the other.

NKJ Matthew 12:13 Then He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And he stretched it out, and it was restored as whole as the other.

NRS Matthew 12:13 Then he said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and it was restored, as sound as the other.

YLT Matthew 12:13 Then saith he to the man, 'Stretch forth thy hand,' and he stretched it forth, and it was restored whole as the other.

NAB Matthew 12:13 Then he said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and it was restored as sound as the other.

NJB Matthew 12:13 Then he said to the man, 'Stretch out your hand.' He stretched it out and his hand was restored, as sound as the other one.

GWN Matthew 12:13 Then he said to the man, "Hold out your hand." The man held it out, and it became normal again, as healthy as the other.

BBE Matthew 12:13 Then said he to the man, Put out your hand. And he put it out, and it was made as well as the other.

- **and it was restored to normal**: Lu 13:13 Ac 3:7,8
- Matthew 12 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Parallel Passages: Mark 3:1-6, Matthew 12:9-14, Luke 6:6-11

Mark 3:5+ **After looking around at them with anger**, **grieved at their hardness of heart,** He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And he stretched it out, and his hand was restored.

Luke 6:8+ But He knew what they were thinking, and He said to the man with the withered hand, "Get up and come forward!" And he got up and came forward. 9 And Jesus said to them, "I ask you, is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the Sabbath, to save a life or to destroy it?" 10 After looking around at them all, He said to him, "Stretch out your hand!" And he did so; and his hand was restored.

JESUS HEALS WITH
A WORD NOT A WORK!

In Mt 9:1-8 Jesus had healed with a word. When He created the universe, Jesus the Living Word spoke the Word (Heb 11:3). His speaking of the Word to bring healing shows He had creative power and should have been clear evidence to all that He was God's Messenger!

Then He *said to the man, "Stretch out your hand!" - Now think about this question. His hand was withered, atrophic, paralyzed and Jesus asked him to do the impossible. What does the man have to do? Simply believe! He has to believe that God is able to carry out what He commands. However belief is not genuine and efficacious unless it acts. Genuine faith obeys. This man had genuine faith. Jesus is directly challenging what He knew the Pharisees would deem as unlawful and He knew this would only escalate their antagonism toward Him to the point of **rage** (Lk 6:11+).

He stretched it out, and it was restored to normal, like the other- When he acts in faith, the miracle transpires immediately. The stretching out and the restoring miraculously occur at the same time and apparently immediately. **Like the other** indicates perfect symmetry. And one can only hope that when he actually stretched forth his hand it was point straight at the wicked watching Pharisees! That would be **poetic justice** for sure! This healing confirmed again that Jesus was indeed Lord of the Sabbath (Mt 12:8).

> **Stretch...stretched** (1614)(**ekteino** from **ek** = out + **teino** = to stretch) means stretch out literally, as a gesture with one's hand stretched out. Jesus' stretched His hands out "toward His disciples" (Mt 12:49), to Peter drowning (Mt 14:31), to the leper (Mk 1:41, Mt 8:3, Lk 5:13, cf healing in Acts 4:30). **Ekteino** is used of the stretching out of Paul's hand as he prepared to offer his verbal defense (Acts 26:1). **Ekteino** is used in all three synoptic accounts of Jesus telling the lame man to **stretch out his hand** (Mt 12:13, Mk 3:5, Lk 6:10).
>
> **Restored** (600)(**apokathistemi** from **apo** = from + **kathistemi** = to set in order, appoint) means literally to restore to an earlier condition. **Apokathistemi** in secular Greek was a medical technical term for restoring to health (to cure) (Mt 12:13+, Mk 3:5, Mk 8:5, Lk 6:10). This verb is used in the Septuagint to describe restoration of Nebuchadnezzar's reason (Da 4:36+) Note that restored is in the passive voice which in this context is a so-called 'divine passive" indicating it was God Who did the miraculous restoration. Has Jehovah Rapha, the Great Physician, performed a miraculous "restoration" in your life or are you still "spiritually sick" and dead in your trespasses and sins (Eph 2:1+)?
>
> **Normal** (5199)(**hugies** gives us English "hygiene") means healthy, pertaining to being physically well, sound or whole. This Greek word makes it clear that the man's hand was completely healed! This detail is is not found in the synoptic accounts in Mark or Luke. All NT uses - Matt. 12:13; Matt. 15:31; Mk. 5:34; Jn. 5:4; Jn. 5:6; Jn. 5:9; Jn. 5:11; Jn. 5:14; Jn. 5:15; Jn. 7:23; Acts 4:10; Titus 2:8 = good health(1), healed(1), normal(1), restored(1), sound(1), well(7).

Steven Cole discusses this nameless paralyzed man's faith - The man with the withered hand pictures how we should respond when Jesus stomps on our toes. He could have refused to do what Jesus asked because of fear of the Pharisees. They easily could take out their anger on him: "You know what our law states. Why didn't you wait and come back tomorrow for healing? This upstart Jesus is just undermining our heritage and way of life! You shouldn't have gone along with Him!" But the man wanted to be healed even if it meant enduring the wrath of the Pharisees. He could have refused to obey Jesus out of embarrassment, as I've already said. When Jesus asked him to stretch out his hand, he could have thought, "Is He mocking me? He knows that my problem is precisely that I cannot stretch out my hand!" He could have thought of a lot of excuses why he couldn't do what Jesus asked him to do. But instead, recognizing his own impotence and need, **he believed and obeyed Jesus. He was instantly healed.**

There were several elements in his **obedient faith** that we must follow.

> **First**, he recognized and admitted his need and inability. He didn't angrily say, "Why are you singling me out? I'm no different than anyone else here." He didn't deny or camouflage his problem. He didn't offer to go fifty-fifty in helping Jesus solve the problem. If you want Jesus to heal your soul, you must admit, "I am a hopeless, helpless sinner. My thoughts, my attitudes, my words, and my deeds have continually violated Your holy Word. I cannot save myself. Lord, I need Your powerful Word to save me."
>
> **Second**, he believed in Christ's ability to heal him. This isn't stated, but it's implicitly behind his action. Probably he had heard how Jesus had healed the paralytic. He knew how Jesus had healed everyone who gathered at Peter's door one evening. He had just heard Jesus teach. Now Jesus was looking directly at him. He knew and believed that Jesus had the power from God to heal him. Even so, we must look at the records of Jesus' life and ministry and come to the conclusion that He is who He claimed to be. He is God in human flesh, the only Mediator between sinners and a holy God. He is able to save my soul.
>
> **Third**, he acted in obedience to Christ's command. Jesus commanded him to do something impossible:

"Stretch out your hand!" But with the command, Jesus imparted the power and ability to obey it. The man obeyed and was instantly healed. Jesus commands sinners to do something impossible: Repent and believe in the gospel (Mk 1:15). If you will look to Him and cry out, "Lord, I cannot repent and believe by my ability, but grant me repentance and faith by Your grace," He will do it and you will be instantly saved.

Although the text does not say so, I agree with **G. Campbell Morgan's insight** (The Westminster Pulpit [Baker], 1:294) that Jesus didn't heal this man so that he could wrap his healed hand in a bandage and protect it, but so that he could use it. By exercising and using it, he would maintain the new strength. Even so, when the Lord has delivered us from our sins, He expects us to use our healed lives in service for His glory.

Conclusion - Morgan also points out that the only man in the synagogue that Jesus sought out was the man with the greatest need. If you have a problem, it does not exclude you from Jesus. Rather, it makes you the target of His gracious call. You may have an embarrassing problem that you would rather not face up to and you certainly don't want to expose it in public. But Jesus says to you, "Arise and stand in the midst! Admit that you have a sin problem." He just kinda sorta stomps on your aorta! But if you will respond in obedient faith, He will say, "Stretch out your hand!" He will impart the power of His salvation, and you will be changed in your heart to the praise of the glory of His saving grace. When Jesus stomps on your toes, don't resist Him. Respond with obedient faith and He will save you and use you for His glory. (Luke 6:6-11 When Jesus Stomps on Your Toes)

Matthew 12:14 But the Pharisees went out and conspired against Him, as to how they might destroy Him.

NET Matthew 12:14 But the Pharisees went out and plotted against him, as to how they could assassinate him.

GNT Matthew 12:14 ξελθ ντες δ ο Φαρισα οι συμβο λιον λαβον κατ α το πως α τ ν πολ σωσιν.

NLT Matthew 12:14 Then the Pharisees called a meeting to plot how to kill Jesus.

KJV Matthew 12:14 Then the Pharisees went out, and held a council against him, how they might destroy him.

ESV Matthew 12:14 But the Pharisees went out and conspired against him, how to destroy him.

NIV Matthew 12:14 But the Pharisees went out and plotted how they might kill Jesus.

ASV Matthew 12:14 But the Pharisees went out, and took counsel against him, how they might destroy him.

CSB Matthew 12:14 But the Pharisees went out and plotted against Him, how they might destroy Him.

NKJ Matthew 12:14 Then the Pharisees went out and plotted against Him, how they might destroy Him.

NRS Matthew 12:14 But the Pharisees went out and conspired against him, how to destroy him.

YLT Matthew 12:14 And the Pharisees having gone forth, held a consultation against him, how they might destroy him,

NAB Matthew 12:14 But the Pharisees went out and took counsel against him to put him to death.

NJB Matthew 12:14 At this the Pharisees went out and began to plot against him, discussing how to destroy him.

GWN Matthew 12:14 The Pharisees left and plotted to kill Jesus.

BBE Matthew 12:14 But the Pharisees went out and made designs against him, how they might put him to death.

- **went**: Mt 27:1 Mk 3:6 Lu 6:11 Joh 5:18 10:39 11:53,57
- Matthew 12 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Parallel Passages: Mark 3:1-6, Matthew 12:9-14, Luke 6:6-11

Mark 3:6+ The Pharisees went out and immediately began conspiring with the Herodians against Him, as to how they might destroy Him.

Luke 6:11+ But they themselves were filled with rage, and discussed together what they might do to Jesus.

COLLUSION AND CONSPIRACY

Collusion means a secret agreement or cooperation especially for an illegal or deceitful purpose. These men are the prototype of the most evil collusion and conspiracy in the history of the world!

But (de) can be rendered a contrast or as a marker of sequence (then - NLT, KJV, NKJV), and in context is best seen as an adversative, because it highlights the contrast between Jesus and His intractable adversaries, the Pharisees!

The Pharisees went out - So at least they carried their unholy conspiracy outside of the synagogue. Mark 3:6+ adds that the Pharisees **began conspiring with the Herodians against Him** giving us a living example of the ancient proverb "**the enemy of my enemy is my friend**" in which two opposing parties (Pharisees and Herodians) choose to work together against their common enemy Jesus Christ! **Robertson** suggests that "This incident marks a crisis in the hatred of the Pharisees toward Jesus. They bolted out of the synagogue and actually conspired with their hated rivals, the Herodians, how to put Jesus to death."

And conspired against Him, as to how they might destroy Him - Luke 6:11+ tells us the state of their hearts was that their hearts were filled with rage and as we know from study of the filling of the Spirit (Eph 5:18+), what fills a person gains control over the will and thoughts of that person. In this case their murderous thoughts were stirred by their rage (**anoia** = void of understanding, these men lost their minds and went into a "paroxysm of psychopathic rage" so to speak, their venom directed at the Jesus, the Lord of the Sabbath!). Don't miss the tragic irony that the Lord's purpose to heal motivated the Pharisees purpose to destroy. These hypocrites regarded Jesus' healing on the Sabbath as a horrible crime, but had no qualms about plotting murder of the Lord of the Sabbath on the Sabbath. It is amazing what people will do when they are deceived and in a rage of madness! **Plummer** notes that the phrase conspired against Him "means to come to a conclusion, rather than to deliberate whether or not.

John Broadus - Their pretended reason for plotting his destruction was that he violated the Sabbath, and so was condemned to death by the law (Ex. 31:14; 25:2); the true reason seems to have been their jealousy of his growing credit among the people, and fear that he would impair their own influence. What a reproach upon human nature, to see men maintaining that it was a mortal sin to heal disease on the Sabbath, and yet foully plotting on that same sacred day, how they might destroy the innocent Teacher and Healer. (Matthew 11 Commentary)

Knox Chamblin adds "It is horrifying to contemplate the judgment in store for these 'wise and intelligent' people (Mt. 11:25) who, having witnessed yet another miracle of grace (cf. Mt 11:20–24), not only refuse to trust Jesus but actively seek to destroy Him!" (Matthew 12:1-14 Matthew 12:15-37)

> **Conspired** (plotted together)(4824) (**sumboulion** from **sún** = together + **boulé**= counsel) to engage in joint planning so as to devise a course of common action, often one with a harmful or evil purpose."
>
> > **Turner** points out that "Their conspiracy to kill Jesus does not surprise the attentive reader of Matthew (cf. Mt 3:7; Mt 9:11, 34; Mt 12:24; Mt 15:7, 12; Mt 16:6, 21; Mt 17:9, 12, 22; Mt 20:18; Mt 21:38, 46; Mt 22:15, 34; Mt 23:30–32; Mt 26:2–5, 14–16). This passage reinforces the basic impasse that is evident in 12:1–8. Jesus and the Pharisees are at loggerheads over the relationship of Sabbath law to compassionate deeds. The Pharisees' strict tradition evidently makes little exception for instances of compassion such as Jesus's healings. But the Pharisees' approach is inconsistent. It is assumed that they have no problem with a sheep's being rescued from a pit on the Sabbath, yet they condemn Jesus for healing a person....As the ultimate interpreter of Torah (Mt 5:17–48), Jesus properly relates Sabbath law and human need. The written Torah is not violated by this healing.(Ibid)
>
> **Might destroy** (622)(**apollumi** from **apo** = away from or wholly + **olethros** = state of utter ruin <> **ollumi** = to destroy) means to destroy utterly, to kill. **Apollumi** was the verb Matthew used earlier to describe Herod's searching "**for the Child** (INFANT JESUS) **to destroy Him**." (Mt 2:13+). So the irony is that what Herod could not accomplish, these wicked followers of Herod, the Herodians along with the "separatist" Pharisees would eventually finish on the Cross! Let us not miss the irony here, for as the legalistic Pharisees are accusing Jesus of breaking the law to keep the Sabbath holy, they themselves are breaking the law "You shall not murder!" (cf Mt 5:21, 22+)!

Matthew 12:15 But Jesus, aware of this, withdrew from there. Many followed Him, and He healed them all,

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GNT Matthew 12:15 δ ησο ς γνο ς νεχ ρησεν κε θεν. κα κολο θησαν α τ [χλοι] πολλο , κα θερ πευσεν

α το ς π ντας

NLT Matthew 12:15 But Jesus knew what they were planning. So he left that area, and many people followed him. He healed all the sick among them,

KJV Matthew 12:15 But when Jesus knew it, he withdrew himself from thence: and great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all;

ESV Matthew 12:15 Jesus, aware of this, withdrew from there. And many followed him, and he healed them all

NIV Matthew 12:15 Aware of this, Jesus withdrew from that place. Many followed him, and he healed all their sick,

ASV Matthew 12:15 And Jesus perceiving it withdrew from thence: and many followed him; and he healed them all,

CSB Matthew 12:15 When Jesus became aware of this, He withdrew from there. Huge crowds followed Him, and He healed them all.

NKJ Matthew 12:15 But when Jesus knew it, He withdrew from there. And great multitudes followed Him, and He healed them all.

NRS Matthew 12:15 When Jesus became aware of this, he departed. Many crowds followed him, and he cured all of them,

YLT Matthew 12:15 and Jesus having known, withdrew thence, and there followed him great multitudes, and he healed them all,

NAB Matthew 12:15 When Jesus realized this, he withdrew from that place. Many (people) followed him, and he cured them all,

NJB Matthew 12:15 Jesus knew this and withdrew from the district. Many followed him and he cured them all

GWN Matthew 12:15 He knew about this, so he left that place. Many people followed him, and he cured all of them.

BBE Matthew 12:15 And Jesus, having knowledge of this, went away from there, and a great number went after him; and he made them all well,

- **He withdrew**: Mt 10:23 Lu 6:12 Joh 7:1 10:40-42 11:54
- **Many**: Mt 4:24,25 19:2 Mk 3:7-12 6:56 Lu 6:17-19 Joh 9:4 Ga 6:9 1Pe 2:21
- Matthew 12 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Craig Evans points out that "Matthew reduces Mark 3:7–12 to two verses (Matt. 12:15–16) and then introduces and quotes Isa. 42:1–4 (Matt. 12:17–21), the longest quotation of Old Testament Scripture in the Gospels. The Matthean evangelist has done this, in order to explain to his readers the meaning of the various injunctions to silence that we find especially in Mark's gospel (e.g., Mk 1:25, 34, 44; and esp. in the parallel to the present passage at Mk 3:12)." (BKBC-Mt-Lk)

But Jesus, aware of this - Jesus was aware that the Pharisees **conspired** to **destroy Him** (Mt 12:14). While it is not stated how Jesus became aware, based on passages like John 2:23-25+, it was almost certainly supernatural knowledge (omniscience). **Phillips** comments "Prudently, the Lord removed Himself from this vicinity, where plots against His life were being hatched. The multitudes followed Him. From that time, the Capernaum clerics had the synagogues, but Jesus had the crowds." (Exploring Mark)

Some think because Matthew uses **ginosko** rather than **oida** (intuitive knowledge), it suggest He received a report, but that is not a valid argument because Luke 5:22 uses **epiginosko** to describe Jesus "aware of" the reasonings of the scribes and Pharisees (Lk 5:21)

Withdrew from there - For a much fuller description of Jesus' withdrawal see Mark 3:7-12+. Prompted by the rising opposition Jesus **withdrew**. This recalls Mt 4:12+ describing "when Jesus heard that John had been taken into custody, He withdrew (anachoreo) into Galilee." Mark's parallel does not describe the reason for His withdrawal (Mk 3:7).

Withdrew (departed)(402)(**anachoreo** from **ana** = back again or emphatic + **choreo** = depart, make room) means to depart from a location. **Anachoreō** is used several times in Matthew to describe a strategic withdrawal in the face of danger (Mt 2:12–14, 22; 4:12; 12:15; 14:13; 15:21) but Jesus going to Galilee was not out of fear of Herod, for Jesus feared no man! **Anachoreo** describes the magi who after being warned by

God "**left** for their own country by another way." (Mt 2:12). Joseph was also warned and "**left** for Egypt" (Mt 2:14) and then later "left for the regions of Galilee." (Mt 2:22) In Mt 12:15 Jesus withdrew, retreating to a secluded place (cf Jn 6:15).

Many followed Him, and He healed them all - **Many followed** indicates Jesus' popularity/reputation. Note the word **all** which means **all** (all who were ill) without exception. There was not a sick person remaining in the group that **followed Him**. Jesus turned no one away! Not one person was left without His help! And as glorious as this sounds at first reading, in the final analysis it is actually a very sad commentary because it refers to sick souls seeking Jesus for physical healing, but unfortunately not seeking Him for their greater need for spiritual healing of their sin sick souls (cf Jn 1:11+). I fear many today come to Jesus for what they can GET from Him!

Healed (cure)(2323)(**therapeuo**) means to cause someone to recover health, often with the implication of having taken care of such a person.

Matthew 12:16 and warned them not to tell who He was.

NET Matthew 12:16 But he sternly warned them not to make him known.

GNT Matthew 12:16 κα πετ μησεν α το ς να μ φανερ ν α τ ν ποι σωσιν,

NLT Matthew 12:16 but he warned them not to reveal who he was.

KJV Matthew 12:16 And charged them that they should not make him known:

ESV Matthew 12:16 and ordered them not to make him known.

NIV Matthew 12:16 warning them not to tell who he was.

ASV Matthew 12:16 and charged them that they should not make him known:

CSB Matthew 12:16 He warned them not to make Him known,

NKJ Matthew 12:16 Yet He warned them not to make Him known,

NRS Matthew 12:16 and he ordered them not to make him known.

YLT Matthew 12:16 and did charge them that they might not make him manifest,

NAB Matthew 12:16 but he warned them not to make him known.

NJB Matthew 12:16 but warned them not to make him known.

GWN Matthew 12:16 He also ordered them not to tell people who he was.

BBE Matthew 12:16 Ordering them not to give people word of him:

- Mt 9:30 17:9 Mk 7:36 Lu 5:14,15
- Matthew 12 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

JESUS ESCHEWS EXCESSIVE PUBLICITY

Eschew means to avoid and stay away from deliberately; to stay clear of. This would be a challenge given the large crowds that were following Him.

And warned them not to tell who He was - Who is them? In this context it is the multitude following Him, including those who had been healed. Jesus ' point is that He did not want undue publicity. Of course a large crowd by itself conveyed a certain degree of publicity, but He sought to minimize this effect by warning them not to tell others who He was. Jesus was no publicity seeker does not want His healings to be "publicity stunts" (unlike so many of the false TV evangelists of our day)! Literally "they might not make Him **manifest** (phanerós)" that in effect they might not be His "publicists!" The adjective **phanerós** conveys the idea of making visible that which previously had been hidden, which is certainly true of the Messiah. **Phaneros** is used in Ro 1:19+ by Paul describing "that which is known about God is **evident** (phaneros) within them; for God made it evident (phaneroo) to them." Given the recent Sabbath confrontations, Jesus did not want His miraculous works to aggravate His opponents the Pharisees more than they were already stirred. Obviously His enemies could easily find Him but just following the crowds. Note that Matthew records five occasions on which Jesus commanded silence (Mt 8:4; 9:30; 12:16; 16:20; 17:9).

Warned (2008)(**epitimao** from **epi** = upon + **timao** = to honor) means literally to put honor upon and then to mete out due measure and so then to find fault with, to censure severely, to rebuke, to express strong disapproval of, or to denounce. **Wuest** adds that **epitimao** "In classical Greek its predominating sense is that of severe, strenuous reproach for unworthy deeds or acts. In this sense, the word carries at bottom, a suggestion of a charge under penalty."

Matthew 12:17 This was to fulfill what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet:

NET Matthew 12:17 This fulfilled what was spoken by Isaiah the prophet:

GNT Matthew 12:17 να πληρωθ τ ηθ ν δι σα ου το προφ του λ γοντος,

NLT Matthew 12:17 This fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah concerning him:

KJV Matthew 12:17 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying,

ESV Matthew 12:17 This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah:

NIV Matthew 12:17 This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah:

ASV Matthew 12:17 that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through Isaiah the prophet, saying,

CSB Matthew 12:17 so that what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled:

NKJ Matthew 12:17 that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying:

NRS Matthew 12:17 This was to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah:

YLT Matthew 12:17 that it might be fulfilled that was spoken through Isaiah the prophet, saying,

NAB Matthew 12:17 This was to fulfill what had been spoken through Isaiah the prophet:

NJB Matthew 12:17 This was to fulfil what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah:

GWN Matthew 12:17 So what the prophet Isaiah had said came true:

BBE Matthew 12:17 So that what was said by Isaiah the prophet might come true,

- **This was to fulfill**: Mt 8:17 13:35 21:4 Isa 41:22,23 42:9 44:26 Lu 21:22 24:44 Joh 10:35 12:38 19:28 Ac 13:27
- **was spoken through Isaiah**: Isa 42:1-4
- Matthew 12 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

This was to fulfill what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet - Isaiah spoke it but God through His Spirit was the primary "Spokesman." Indeed, when the Bible speaks, God speaks! Indeed, "no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God." (2 Pe 1:17+) F F Bruce writes that Matthew's quotation of Isaiah 42:1–4 is “a very free reproduction of the Hebrew with occasional side glances at the Septuagint." **Leon Morris** makes the point that "It is characteristic of Matthew to appeal to prophecy and to see in it a fulfilment of what God had said long ago." (PNTC-Mt)

Fulfill (complete) (4137)(pleroo) means to **be** filled (passive voice) to the brim (a net, Mt 13:48, a building, Jn 12:3, Acts 2:2, a city, Acts 5:28, needs Phil 4:19). In the present context of course the idea is fulfill a prophecy to make complete in every particular, to cause to abound, to furnish or supply liberally, to flood, to diffuse throughout, to pervade, to take possession of and so to ultimately to control.

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 PROCLAIM JUSTICE TO THE GENTILES.

NET Matthew 12:18 "Here is my servant whom I have chosen, the one I love, in whom I take great delight. I will put my Spirit on him, and he will proclaim justice to the nations.

GNT Matthew 12:18 δο πα ς μου ν ρ τισα, γαπητ ς μου ε ς ν ε δ κησεν ψυχ μου· θ σω τ πνε μ μου π α τ ν, κα κρ σιν το ς θνεσιν παγγελε .

NLT Matthew 12:18 "Look at my Servant, whom I have chosen. He is my Beloved, who pleases me. I will put my Spirit upon him, and he will proclaim justice to the nations.

KJV 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 shew judgment to the Gentiles.

ESV Matthew 12:18 "Behold, my servant whom I have chosen, my beloved with whom my soul is well pleased. I will put my Spirit upon him, and he will proclaim justice to the Gentiles.

NIV Matthew 12:18 "Here is my servant whom I have chosen, the one I love, in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him, and he will proclaim justice to the nations.

ASV 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 declare judgment to the Gentiles.

CSB Matthew 12:18 Here is My Servant whom I have chosen, My beloved in whom My soul delights; I will put My Spirit on Him, and He will proclaim justice to the nations.

NKJ 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 will declare justice to the Gentiles.

NRS Matthew 12:18 "Here is my servant, whom I have chosen, my beloved, with whom my soul is well pleased. I will put my Spirit upon him, and he will proclaim justice to the Gentiles.

YLT Matthew 12:18 'Lo, My servant, whom I did choose, My beloved, in whom My soul did delight, I will put My Spirit upon him, and judgment to the nations he shall declare,

NAB Matthew 12:18 "Behold, my servant whom I have chosen, my beloved in whom I delight; I shall place my spirit upon him, and he will proclaim justice to the Gentiles.

NJB Matthew 12:18 Look! My servant whom I have chosen, my beloved, in whom my soul delights, I will send my Spirit upon him, and he will present judgement to the nations;

GWN Matthew 12:18 "Here is my servant whom I have chosen, whom I love, and in whom I delight. I will put my Spirit on him, and he will announce justice to the nations.

BBE Matthew 12:18 See my servant, the man of my selection, my loved one in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my Spirit on him, and he will make my decision clear to the Gentiles.

- **my servant**: Isa 49:5,6 52:13 53:11 Zec 3:8 Php 2:6,7
- **whom I**: Ps 89:19 Isa 49:1-3 Lu 23:35 1Pe 2:4
- **my beloved**: Mt 3:17 17:5 Mk 1:11 Mk 9:7 Lu 9:35 Eph 1:6 Col 1:1,13 2Pe 1:17
- **I will**: Mt 3:16 Isa 11:2 Isa 59:20,21 Isa 61:1-3 Lu 3:22 Lk 4:18 Joh 1:32-34 Jn 3:34 Acts 10:38
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Old Testament Quotation -

Isaiah 42:1-4 "**Behold**, My (GOD THE FATHER) Servant (MESSIAH), Whom I uphold; My chosen one in Whom My soul delights. I have put My Spirit (DON'T MISS THE "**TRINITY**" IN THIS OT VERSE!) upon Him (cf Isa 61:1+, Lk 4:18+, Isaiah 11:1-2+); He will bring forth justice to the nations. 2 "He will not cry out or raise His voice, Nor make His voice heard in the street. 3 "A bruised reed He will not break And a dimly burning wick He will not extinguish; He will faithfully bring forth justice. 4 "He will not be disheartened or crushed Until (INDICATES IT WILL COME TO PASS) He has established justice in the earth (AT HIS RETURN Rev 19:11-16 AND SETTING UP HIS MILLENNIAL KINGDOM ON EARTH); And the coastlands will wait expectantly for His law."

BEHOLD, MY SERVANT WHOM I HAVE CHOSEN - Quoting Isaiah 42:1 (see above) **Torrey** writes that "This prophecy is expressly referred to the Messiah by the Targumist, who renders, "Behold my servant the Messiah."

MY BELOVED IN WHOM MY SOUL is WELL-PLEASED-

I WILL PUT MY SPIRIT UPON HIM - This promise was made in Isaiah 11:2 "The Spirit of the LORD will rest on Him, The spirit of wisdom and understanding, The spirit of counsel and strength, The spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD." (cf also Isaiah 59:20, Isa 61:1-3 this latter quoted in Lk 4:18+) We see this promise of the Father fulfilled at Jesus' baptism Matthew records the Spirit of God was "descending as a dove and lighting on Him" (Mt 3:16+, Lk 3:22+). John the Baptist "testified saying, "I have seen

the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven, and He remained upon Him. “I did not recognize Him, but He who sent me to baptize in water said to me, ‘He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, this is the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.’“I myself have seen, and have testified that this is the Son of God.” (John 1:32-34+) Luke subsequently records that "Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led around by the Spirit in the wilderness." (Lk 4:1+) Luke says that after the wilderness temptation "Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about Him spread through all the surrounding district." (Lk 4:14+) In His message in the synagogue at Nazareth, Jesus declared "“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." (Lk 4:18+)

AND HE SHALL PROCLAIM JUSTICE TO THE GENTILES

Matthew 12:19 “HE WILL NOT QUARREL, NOR CRY OUT; NOR WILL ANYONE HEAR HIS VOICE IN THE STREETS.

NET Matthew 12:19 He will not quarrel or cry out, nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets.

GNT Matthew 12:19 ο κ ρ σει ο δ κραυγ σει, ο δ κο σει τις ν τα ς πλατε αις τ ν φων ν α το .

NLT Matthew 12:19 He will not fight or shout or raise his voice in public.

KJV Matthew 12:19 He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets.

ESV Matthew 12:19 He will not quarrel or cry aloud, nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets;

NIV Matthew 12:19 He will not quarrel or cry out; no one will hear his voice in the streets.

ASV Matthew 12:19 He shall not strive, nor cry aloud; Neither shall any one hear his voice in the streets.

CSB Matthew 12:19 He will not argue or shout, and no one will hear His voice in the streets.

NKJ Matthew 12:19 He will not quarrel nor cry out, Nor will anyone hear His voice in the streets.

NRS Matthew 12:19 He will not wrangle or cry aloud, nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets.

YLT Matthew 12:19 he shall not strive nor cry, nor shall any hear in the broad places his voice,

NAB Matthew 12:19 He will not contend or cry out, nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets.

NJB Matthew 12:19 he will not brawl or cry out, his voice is not heard in the streets,

GWN Matthew 12:19 He will not quarrel or shout, and no one will hear his voice in the streets.

BBE Matthew 12:19 His coming will not be with fighting or loud cries; and his voice will not be lifted up in the streets.

- Mt 11:29 Zec 9:9 Lu 17:20 Joh 18:36-38 2Co 10:1 2Ti 2:24,25
- Matthew 12 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

HE WILL NOT QUARREL, NOR CRY OUT; NOR WILL ANYONE HEAR HIS VOICE IN THE STREET -

Matthew 12:20 “A BATTERED REED HE WILL NOT BREAK OFF, AND A SMOLDERING WICK HE WILL NOT PUT OUT, UNTIL HE LEADS JUSTICE TO VICTORY.

NET Matthew 12:20 He will not break a bruised reed or extinguish a smoldering wick, until he brings justice to victory.

GNT Matthew 12:20 κ λαμον συντετριμμ νον ο κατε ξει κα λ νον τυφ μενον ο σβ σει, ως ν κβ λ ε ς ν κος τ ν κρ σιν.

NLT Matthew 12:20 He will not crush the weakest reed or put out a flickering candle. Finally he will cause justice to be victorious.

KJV Matthew 12:20 A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory.

ESV Matthew 12:20 a bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not quench, until he brings justice to victory;

NIV Matthew 12:20 A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out, till he leads justice to victory.

ASV Matthew 12:20 A bruised reed shall he not break, And smoking flax shall he not quench, Till he send forth judgment unto victory.

CSB Matthew 12:20 He will not break a bruised reed, and He will not put out a smoldering wick, until He has led justice to victory.

NKJ Matthew 12:20 A bruised reed He will not break, And smoking flax He will not quench, Till He sends forth justice to victory;

NRS Matthew 12:20 He will not break a bruised reed or quench a smoldering wick until he brings justice to victory.

YLT Matthew 12:20 a bruised reed he shall not break, and smoking flax he shall not quench, till he may put forth judgment to victory,

NAB Matthew 12:20 A bruised reed he will not break, a smoldering wick he will not quench, until he brings justice to victory.

NJB Matthew 12:20 he will not break the crushed reed, or snuff the faltering wick,

GWN Matthew 12:20 He will not break off a damaged cattail. He will not even put out a smoking wick until he has made justice victorious.

BBE Matthew 12:20 The crushed stem will not be broken by him; and the feebly burning light will he not put out, till he has made righteousness overcome all.

- bruised (KJV): Mt 11:28 2Ki 18:21 Ps 51:17 147:3 Isa 40:11 57:15 61:1-3 La 3:31-34 Eze 34:16 Lu 4:18 2Co 2:7 Heb 12:12,13
- till (KJV): Ps 98:1-3 Isa 42:3,4 Ro 15:17-19 2Co 2:14 10:3-5 Rev 6:2 Rev 19:11-21
- Matthew 12 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

A BATTERED REED HE WILL NOT BREAK OFF, AND A SMOLDERING WICK HE WILL NOT PUT OUT, UNTIL HE LEADS JUSTICE TO VICTORY.

Matthew 12:21 "AND IN HIS NAME THE GENTILES WILL HOPE."

NET Matthew 12:21 And in his name the Gentiles will hope."

GNT Matthew 12:21 κα τ ν ματι α το θνη λπιο σιν.

NLT Matthew 12:21 And his name will be the hope of all the world."

KJV Matthew 12:21 And in his name shall the Gentiles trust.

ESV Matthew 12:21 and in his name the Gentiles will hope."

NIV Matthew 12:21 In his name the nations will put their hope."

ASV Matthew 12:21 And in his name shall the Gentiles hope.

CSB Matthew 12:21 The nations will put their hope in His name.

NKJ Matthew 12:21 And in His name Gentiles will trust."

NRS Matthew 12:21 And in his name the Gentiles will hope."

YLT Matthew 12:21 and in his name shall nations hope.'

NAB Matthew 12:21 And in his name the Gentiles will hope."

NJB Matthew 12:21 until he has made judgement victorious; in him the nations will put their hope.

GWN Matthew 12:21 The nations will have hope because of him."

BBE Matthew 12:21 And in his name will the Gentiles put their hope.

- Isa 11:10 Ro 15:12,13 Eph 1:12,13 Col 1:27
- Matthew 12 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

AND IN HIS NAME THE GENTILES WILL HOPE - This reiterates the prophecy in Isaiah "Then in that day The **nations** (GENTILES) will resort (SEEK, INQUIRE; Lxx = elpizo = in the sense of counting on something) to the root of Jesse, Who will stand as a signal for the peoples; And His resting place will be glorious." (Isaiah 11:10+).

Matthew 12:22 Then a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute was brought to Jesus, and He healed him, so that the mute man spoke and saw.

NET Matthew 12:22 Then they brought to him a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute. Jesus healed him so that he could speak and see.

GNT Matthew 12:22 Τ τε προσην χθη α τ δαιμονιζ μενος τυφλ ς κα κωφ ς, κα θερ πευσεν α τ ν, στε τ ν κωφ ν λαλε ν κα βλ πειν.

NLT Matthew 12:22 Then a demon-possessed man, who was blind and couldn't speak, was brought to Jesus. He healed the man so that he could both speak and see.

KJV 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.

ESV Matthew 12:22 Then a demon-oppressed man who was blind and mute was brought to him, and he healed him, so that the man spoke and saw.

NIV Matthew 12:22 Then they brought him a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute, and Jesus healed him, so that he could both talk and see.

ASV Matthew 12:22 Then was brought unto him one possessed with a demon, blind and dumb: and he healed him, insomuch that the dumb man spake and saw.

CSB Matthew 12:22 Then a demon-possessed man who was blind and unable to speak was brought to Him. He healed him, so that the man could both speak and see.

NKJ Matthew 12:22 Then one was brought to Him who was demon-possessed, blind and mute; and He healed him, so that the blind and mute man both spoke and saw.

NRS Matthew 12:22 Then they brought to him a demoniac who was blind and mute; and he cured him, so that the one who had been mute could speak and see.

YLT Matthew 12:22 Then was brought to him a demoniac, blind and dumb, and he healed him, so that the blind and dumb both spake and saw.

NAB Matthew 12:22 Then they brought to him a demoniac who was blind and mute. He cured the mute person so that he could speak and see.

NJB Matthew 12:22 Then they brought to him a blind and dumb demoniac; and he cured him, so that the dumb man could speak and see.

GWN Matthew 12:22 Then some people brought Jesus a man possessed by a demon. The demon made the man blind and unable to talk. Jesus cured him so that he could talk and see.

BBE Matthew 12:22 Then they took to him one with an evil spirit, who was blind and had no power of talking: and he made him well so that he had the power of talking and seeing.

- **was blind and mute**: Mt 9:32 Mk 3:11 Lu 11:14
- **He healed him**: Mk 7:35-37 9:17-26
- **blind**: Ps 51:15 Isa 29:18 32:3,4 35:5,6 Ac 26:18
- Matthew 12 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

THE MIRACLE LEADING TO THE CONFRONTATION

For Mt 12:22–32 cf. Mark 3:19–30; Luke 11:14–23; Luke 12:10.

Then (tote) often signifies next in a sequence but that is not always the case and this is probably such a case. Here**then** probably signifies it simply took place at a later time. D A Carson writes that "The tote ("then") is very loose (see on 2:7; 11:20), and probably this event took place a good deal later." (EBC)

A demon-possessed man who was blind and mute was brought to Jesus - (cf similarity to Mt 9:32-34+ but here with blindness also) Note this poor man had a terrible triad - demon possession, blindness, in ability to speak (the later two possibly secondary to the first but NT writers did not ascribe all illnesses to evil spirits as was common with the pagans. E.g., Mt 4:24+ makes a clear distinction, see also Mt 8:16, Mk 1:34, Mk 6:13, Lk 4:40, 41, Lk 9:1, Lk 13:32). None of the Gospels tell us who **brought** this man. Here was a "**battered reed**" indeed (Mt 12:20)! As an aside, just the fact that a demon possessed man would "allow" himself to come into the presence of the **Holy One of God** (Mk 1:24+) is a miracle of sorts, for the demons knew Who He was and surely knew what their fate would soon be! Blindness and inability to speak were a direct result of demon possession and is the only place in the Gospels where Jesus is said to have healed a person who had both maladies.

> **Demon-possessed** (1139)(**daimonizomai** from **daimonion** = demon) means to be possessed by a demon, to be under the power of a demon, to act under the control of a demon. Those who were "demonized" (i.e., possessed by demons) were often overwhelmed by the evil spirit which took control of their entire personality. At times the demons within the individual controlled both the speech and the actions of the person (e.g., Mk 1:23-26; 5:1-10). The delivering of those who are demon-possessed, i.e., exorcisms, signals that the authority of evil which had enslaved the world (Satan) is broken. Jesus did battle with the enemy and won. These struggles were more than "skirmishes"; they heralded the dawn of the age of salvation. The period of God's rule has begun! Only in the Gospels - Matt. 4:24; Matt. 8:16; Matt. 8:28; Matt. 8:33; Matt. 9:32; Matt. 12:22; Matt. 15:22; Mk. 1:32; Mk. 5:15; Mk. 5:16; Mk. 5:18; Lk. 8:36; Jn. 10:21. "It is not true that demon-possession is simply another name for insanity. The fact is that in only two of the many reported cases of possession does the latter very definitely affect the mind (Matt. 8:28 ff. and parallels; and Acts 19:14–16). Though there is resemblance, it is not true that demon-possession is simply another name for multiple personality or dissociation (for example, Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde; or the young lady who was divided between three distinct personalities: the Saint, the Realist, and Sally). Differences between multiple personality and demon-possession: a. demons are spiritual beings who are able to depart from a man and to enter the swine; b. they are always evil; and c. they are not driven out by psychological treatments applied over a longer or shorter period of time, but by the word and power of Christ, instantly. None of this (a., b. and c.) applies to multiple personality. The term demon-possession describes a condition in which a distinct and evil personality, foreign to the person possessed, has taken control of an individual. This evil personality or demon is able to speak through the mouth of the possessed individual, and to answer when addressed (Mark 5:7–10; Luke 4:41; Acts 16:18; 19:13–15). Demons are the agents of Satan. Jesus came on earth in order to crush the power of Satan. He came to bind "the strong man" (Matt. 12:29; Luke 11:21, 22; cf. Rev. 20:1–3) by means of his victory over him in the desert of temptation, and also by means of demon-expulsions and especially the cross (Col. 2:15). This "binding of the devil" points forward to the latter's ultimate and complete defeat in connection with Christ's second coming (Rev. 20:10; cf. Rom. 16:20)." (Hendriksen - BNTC-Mt)

And He healed him, so that the mute man spoke and saw- The words **spoke and saw** indicate the healing was instantaneous and complete. The text does not say the demon was cast out, but clearly that is the implication. Jesus once again gives clear evidence of His power and authority over the demonic forces. As the story progresses to the scribes this called for action to squelch the "Messianic murmurings" (Mt 12:23). They could not refute the miracles, so they sought to refute the "Miracle Worker" by attributing His power to Satan!

Leon Morris points out that "It is unusual to have a demoniac described as healed (though cf. Mt 17:18; perhaps also we are meant to see a link with Mt 12:15); more commonly the demon is said to be "cast out." (PNTC-Mt)

> **Healed** (2323)(**therapeuo** from **therapon** = an attendant, servant) means primarily to care for, to wait upon, minister to. It never means "to serve" in a secular sense, and only once in Acts 17:25 does it denote worship. The more common use describing medical aspects such as to take care of the sick, to heal, to cure (Matt. 4:24; 12:10; Mark 1:34; Luke 6:7; 10:9), to recover health, to restore. Therapeúō means to heal miraculously in Matt. 4:23, 24; 10:1, 8; Acts 4:14. Providing care to improve a situation. Uses in Matthew - - Matt. 4:23; Matt. 4:24; Matt. 8:7; Matt. 8:16; Matt. 9:35; Matt. 10:1; Matt. 10:8; Matt. 12:10; Matt. 12:15; Matt.

12:22; Matt. 14:14; Matt. 15:30; Matt. 17:16; Matt. 17:18; Matt. 19:2; Matt. 21:14;

R T France comments that "The story here is like that already narrated in Mt 9:32–34, repeated in order to introduce Jesus' response to the Pharisees' accusation, but now with the added complication of blindness It is clear that Jesus was known as an exorcist as well as a physical healer, and Matthew specifically mentions exorcisms in some of his summaries of the ministry of Jesus and his disciples (Mt 4:24; Mt 8:16; Mt 10:1, 8; but not in Mt 9:35; Mt 11:5; Mt 12:15). Specific exorcism stories have been included in Mt 8:28–34 and Mt 9:32–34, and more will follow in Mt 15:21–28 and Mt 17:14–20. The present case is therefore representative of a recognized aspect of Jesus' ministry." (NICNT-Mt)

Matthew 12:23 All the crowds were amazed, and were saying, "This man cannot be the Son of David, can he?"

NET Matthew 12:23 All the crowds were amazed and said, "Could this one be the Son of David?"

GNT Matthew 12:23 κα ξ σταντο π ντες ο χλοι κα λεγον, M τι ο τ ς στιν υ ς Δαυ δ;

NLT Matthew 12:23 The crowd was amazed and asked, "Could it be that Jesus is the Son of David, the Messiah?"

KJV Matthew 12:23 And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the son of David?

ESV Matthew 12:23 And all the people were amazed, and said, "Can this be the Son of David?"

NIV Matthew 12:23 All the people were astonished and said, "Could this be the Son of David?"

ASV Matthew 12:23 And all the multitudes were amazed, and said, Can this be the son of David?

CSB Matthew 12:23 And all the crowds were astounded and said, "Perhaps this is the Son of David!"

NKJ Matthew 12:23 And all the multitudes were amazed and said, "Could this be the Son of David?"

NRS Matthew 12:23 All the crowds were amazed and said, "Can this be the Son of David?"

YLT Matthew 12:23 And all the multitudes were amazed, and said, 'Is this the Son of David?'

NAB Matthew 12:23 All the crowd was astounded, and said, "Could this perhaps be the Son of David?"

NJB Matthew 12:23 All the people were astounded and said, 'Can this be the son of David?'

GWN Matthew 12:23 The crowds were all amazed and said, "Can this man be the Son of David?"

BBE Matthew 12:23 And all the people were surprised and said, Is not this the Son of David?

- **All the crowds** Mt 9:33 15:30,31
- **the Son of David**: Mt 9:27 15:22 21:9 22:42,43 Joh 4:29 7:40-42
- Matthew 12 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

THE FIRST REACTION TO THE MIRACLE

All the crowds were amazed - Don't miss the adjective **all** indicating all without exception were "taken aback!" **Were amazed** is in the imperfect tense vividly depicting the crowd's continued amazement. Leon Morris makes an interesting comment that "This is the one place in his Gospel where Matthew says that Jesus had this effect on the crowds." (PNTC-MT)

> **Were amazed** (astonished, astounded, besides one's self, knocked out of your senses) (1839) (**existemi** from **ek** = out + **hístemi** = to stand) literally means to stand out from or to stand outside oneself (and thus to be beside oneself). It expresses "the feeling of astonishment mingled w[ith] fear, caused by events which are miraculous, extraordinary, or difficult to understand." (BDAG). Existemi used 17x in NT - Matt. 12:23; Mk. 2:12; Mk. 3:21; Mk. 5:42; Mk. 6:51; Lk. 2:47; Lk. 8:56; Lk. 24:22; Acts 2:7; Acts 2:12; Acts 8:9; Acts 8:11; Acts 8:13; Acts 9:21; Acts 10:45; Acts 12:16; 2 Co. 5:13

And were saying - Were amazed is in the imperfect tense vividly picturing this question circulation from one person to another in the crowd. You can see the crowd buzzing!

It is worth noting that healing of blindness was one of the signs of the Messiah -

Isaiah 29:18 On that day the deaf will hear words of a book, And out of their gloom and darkness the eyes of the **blind** will see.

Isaiah 35:5 Then the eyes of the **blind** will be opened And the ears of the deaf will be unstopped.

Isaiah 42:7 To open **blind** eyes, To bring out prisoners from the dungeon And those who dwell in darkness from the prison.

This man cannot be the Son of David, can he? - **NLT** paraphrases it "Could it be that Jesus is the Son of David, the Messiah?" The Greek (interrogative particle "meti") expects the answer "No." (cf similar passages Mt 7:16; Mt 11:23) They are 'in doubt concerning the answer. "The question is worded in such a way as to indicate a measure of perplexity, but also to open the door to an interesting possibility." (Morris) The crowd was not sure (which in a sense speaks to their unbelief), but even that they asked such a question was enough to worry the Pharisees! When the leaders head about the crowds asking if Jesus was the **Son of David** (cf 2 Sa 7:12–16; Ps. 89:3; Isa. 9:6–7), it called for an immediate response to squelch the "Messianic murmurings." They could not refute what the people had seen, so they sought to refute Jesus by attributing the power to Satan! Son of David was the cry of the crowd when Jesus' entered Jerusalem in His so-called "Triumphal Entry" - "The crowds going ahead of Him, and those who followed, were shouting, "Hosanna to the **Son of David**; BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD; Hosanna in the highest!" (Mt. 21:9)

Son of David - Matt. 1:1; Matt. 1:20; Matt. 9:27+; Matt. 12:23; Matt. 15:22; Matt. 20:30; Matt. 20:31; Matt. 21:9; Matt. 21:15; Matt. 22:42; Mk. 10:47; Mk. 10:48; Mk. 12:35; Lk. 3:31; Lk. 18:38; Lk. 18:39

Broadus has an interesting comment - Observe that the miracle suggested the possibility that he was the Messiah; and in Mt 12:38, some of the Pharisees express their wish to see a 'sign' from him, after it had been intimated (Mt 12:28) that he was the Messiah. So **the Jews did expect the Messiah to work miracles**, though **Maimonides** (twelfth century) declares that no miracles are to be expected from the Messiah, perhaps departing from the older view in order to secure an argument against Jesus. (Matthew 12 Commentary)

MacArthur points out that "most of the sin-blinded people remained ambivalent about Jesus' identity and the source of His great power. They knew that miracles would be proof signs of the Messiah; but they also expected Him to come with royal fanfare and with military might. But instead of regal robes, sovereign authority, a throne, trumpets, swords, horses, chariots, and a mighty army, they saw a Man of compassion, gentleness, and humility—with a following of twelve nondescript disciples and a multitude of hangers-on whose loyalty could hardly be counted on. Because Jesus did not appear to be a conqueror or a king by their definition, the people would not accept His being the Messiah. They had chosen to be selective about the Old Testament predictions of the Messiah. His predicted coming in power and glory to defeat the foes of Israel and set His people free was easy for them to be excited about. His predicted coming in meekness and humility was not." (MNTC-Mt)

Constable comments that "The Jews expected Messiah to perform miracles (Mt 12:38), but other things about Jesus, for example His servant characteristics, led them to conclude that He was not the Son of David." (Matthew 12 Commentary)

D A Carson on the question of the crowd - The question does not ask whether Jesus is a magician of the kind attributed by popular superstition to David's son Solomon (contra Loren L. Fisher, "Can This Be the Son of David?" Jesus and the Historian, ed. F.T. Trotter [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1968], pp. 82–97) but whether Jesus is the Messiah (see on Mt 1:1; 9:27; 15:22). The Messiah was expected to perform miracles (cf. Mt 12:38); so the exorcism-healing stood in Jesus' favor. (EBC-Mt-Lk)

Related Resources:

- What does it mean that Jesus is the son of David?
- Why Was Jesus Called the Son of David?

Matthew 12:24 But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, "This man casts out demons only by Beelzebul the ruler of the demons."

NET Matthew 12:24 But when the Pharisees heard this they said, "He does not cast out demons except by the power of Beelzebul, the ruler of demons!"

GNT Matthew 12:24 ο δ Φαρισα οι κο σαντες ε πον, Ο τος ο κ κβ λλει τ δαιμ νια ε μ ν τ Βεελζεβο λ ρχοντι τ ν δαιμον ων.

NLT Matthew 12:24 But when the Pharisees heard about the miracle, they said, "No wonder he can cast out

demons. He gets his power from Satan, the prince of demons."

KJV 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.

ESV Matthew 12:24 But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, "It is only by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, that this man casts out demons."

NIV Matthew 12:24 But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, "It is only by Beelzebub, the prince of demons, that this fellow drives out demons."

ASV Matthew 12:24 But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This man doth not cast out demons, but by Beelzebub the prince of the demons.

CSB Matthew 12:24 When the Pharisees heard this, they said, "The man drives out demons only by Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons."

NKJ Matthew 12:24 Now when the Pharisees heard it they said, "This fellow does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons."

NRS Matthew 12:24 But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, "It is only by Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons, that this fellow casts out the demons."

YLT Matthew 12:24 but the Pharisees having heard, said, 'This one doth not cast out demons, except by Beelzeboul, ruler of the demons.'

NAB Matthew 12:24 But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, "This man drives out demons only by the power of Beelzebul, the prince of demons."

NJB Matthew 12:24 But when the Pharisees heard this they said, 'The man drives out devils only through Beelzebul, the chief of the devils.'

GWN Matthew 12:24 When the Pharisees heard this, they said, "This man can force demons out of people only with the help of Beelzebul, the ruler of demons."

BBE Matthew 12:24 But the Pharisees, hearing of it, said, This man only sends evil spirits out of men by Beelzebub, the ruler of evil spirits.

- **when the Pharisees heard**: Mt 9:34 Mk 3:22 Lu 11:15
- **Casts out demons only by Beelzebul**, Mt 12:27
- Matthew 12 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

THE CONTRASTING REACTION TO THE MIRACLE

But (de) is a term of contrast which in context shows the reaction of the Pharisees in striking contrast to that of the crowds. In this section we see Pharisaic opposition to Jesus come to a head!

When the Pharisees heard this, they said - **Heard this** refers to the testimony of the amazed crowd was sufficient to set them off! The heard the crowd suggest it was "**messianic**" but they said it was "**demonic**!" Mark 3:22+ says the **Pharisees** were scribes that had traveled 90 miles coming "**down from Jerusalem**" (**down** is always the direction when coming from Jerusalem 2474 ft above sea level) because they had heard about this "Miracle Man."

MacArthur notes that "Not all Pharisees were scribes, but the scribes were primarily Pharisees, who were interpreters and teachers of the law of Moses and the traditional rabbinic writings. Their teaching provided the theological framework for the Pharisees' legalistic system of works-righteousness. The scribes were the dominant force in Judaism, not only theologically, but socially. Their views affected every aspect of life, and they also handled all legal matters, including property, estates, and contracts. They were revered, and given the respectful title of Rabbi (Mt. 23:7). That title was sometimes given to Jesus because He was a teacher (cf. John 1:38, 49+; Jn 3:2, 26+; Jn 6:25). It was commonly believed that Moses received the law, then gave it to Joshua, who gave it to the elders, who gave it to the prophets, who gave it to the scribes. (Luke Commentary)

Broadus on the **Pharisees** (scribes) - These men set about their work very vigorously. They saw that if his miracles were recognized the people would believe that he was sent from God (John 3:2+), and then all his

teachings must be received as true, and all his claims admitted as just. They could not question the reality of the healing, nor ascribe it to mere human agency; they therefore resorted to the absurd idea of a league with Satan, though Jesus was really destroying Satan's work. (Matthew 12 Commentary)

Mark interserts a detail not found in Matthew writing " **And He called them to Himself and began speaking to them in parables, "How can Satan cast out Satan?**" (Mark 3:23+) Matthew does not mention that Jesus began speaking in **parables** or His specific question **"How can Satan cast out Satan?**".

Utley notes that "This is the essence of the unpardonable sin, attributing God's work to Satan and calling that which is true, false and that which is light, darkness." (Matthew 12 Commentary)

Hendriksen makes an interesting comment that "The thoroughly shameful character of the charge becomes apparent also from the fact that it regards Beelzebul not as an evil spirit exerting his sinister influence upon Jesus from the outside; no, Satan is regarded as being inside the soul of Jesus. The latter is said to have an unclean spirit (Mark 3:30; cf. John 8:48); in fact, to be himself Beelzebul (Matt. 10:25)." (BNTC-Mt)

Craig Keener has an interesting comment - Convinced that Jesus is not God's agent and annoyed by the popular response to Jesus (12:23; cf. 7:28; 8:27; 9:8), the Pharisees resort to the only other possible explanation for his supernatural power over demons (12:22; cf. 9:32–34): it comes from the devil (12:24). In a lengthy response, Jesus not only refutes their charge, but turns it back on them (12:25–45). People often thought magicians performed their acts through the help of spirit agents (cf. 1 Enoch 65:6; Ps-Philo 34:2–3; Asc. Isa. 2:5; cf. Sib. Or. 1.96; but especially magical papyri, e.g., PGM 1.88–89, 164–66, 181–85, 252–53; 2.52–54),65 hence the charge here is that Jesus was a sorcerer (cf. also Jn 7:20; 8:48; 10:20; Aune 1987: 56). This is no small charge: magic was a capital offense (Meier 1980: 134; cf. 2 Bar. 66:2; p. Ḥag. 2:2, §5; Sanh. 7:13, §2).66 (The Gospel of Matthew- A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary).

Knox Chamblin observes that "the Pharisees' charge is for the crowds' instruction: they spoke upon 'hearing [akousantes] this' (i.e., the question of Mt 12:23). 'Be not deceived,' they say in effect; 'this man is not the Son of David, but a messianic pretender of the worst kind.' Contrast a leading Pharisee's explanation of Jesus' powers in John 3:2+ (Nicodemus at Night said ""Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher; for **no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him**")." (MC-Mt)

This man - ("This fellow") They are using "**this man**" in a contemptuous, derogatory, disparaging, belittling sense. So even opening words of this "brood of vipers" were intentionally offensive, intended to poison the minds of the people and to detract from the greatness of Jesus and the miracle He had just performed. Notice also that they do not address Jesus directly but slander him behind his back. Mt 27:18 reminds us that part of their motivation for such evil slander was "because of envy!" If you think "envy" is a "little" sin, think again! How different from the attitude of John the Baptist who stated "He must increase, but I must decrease." (John 3:30+)

A T Robertson - The Pharisees feel that the excited condition of the crowds and the manifest disposition to believe that Jesus is the Messiah (the Son of David) demand strenuous action on their part. They cannot deny the fact of the miracles for the blind and dumb men both saw and spoke (Mt 12:22). So in desperation they suggest that Jesus works by the power of Beelzebub the prince of the demons. (Word Pictures)

Casts out (ekbállō) demons (daimonion) only by Beelzebul the ruler (archon) of the demons - NLT is a somewhat "free" paraphrase (I like the NLT but always check a more literal version like ESV, NAS, NET, KJV) "No wonder he can cast out demons. He gets his power from Satan, the prince of demons." We should not be surprised at their vitriolic, repulsive accusation for earlier we read "the Pharisees went out and conspired against Him, as to how they might destroy Him." (Mt 12:14+). Their statement is brimming with self-righteous confidence, for they are sure this is they only way such miracles could take place. By Beelzebul in the Greek is literally "**in**" (**en**) which conveys the thought "in connection with" or "in union with Beelzebul." **Broadus** adds in signifies "everywhere denoting intimate union." Imagine their hellish intent of their accusation that Jesus is in union with the spirit of evil! In Jesus' response to their accustion in Mark 3:23+ "How can Satan cast out Satan?" **France** comments that "The Pharisees' accusation amounts to a charge of sorcery, one which continued to be leveled against Jesus in later Jewish polemic." (NICNT-Mt)

The religious leaders had made a similar false accusation against Jesus earlier in Mt 9:34+ where " the Pharisees were saying, "He casts out the demons by the **ruler of the demons**." Then later in speaking with His disciples (Mt 10:5+) Jesus declared "It is enough for the disciple that he become like his teacher, and the slave like his master. If they have called the head of the house (JESUS) **Beelzebul**, how much more will they malign the members of his household! " (Mt 10:25+) There accusation is now more vivid and offensive than that in Mt 9:34 as they use the name of the "ruler of the demons."

MacArthur - The religious leaders were no longer merely skeptical and resentful but had become adamantly hostile to Jesus. It would be over a year before Jesus would be crucified, but the irrevocable decision to destroy Him had already been made (Matt. 12:14)." (Ibid)

Bruce calls Beelzebul "An opprobrious epithet; exact form of the word and meaning of the name have given more trouble to commentators than it is all worth."

> **Beelzebul** (sometimes "Beelzebub")(954)(**beelzeboul**, variant reading Beelzebub after an error in the Latin Vulgate. Transliterated from Hebrew Ba'al Zebub) originally referred to a Philistine deity which in Hebrew meant "Baal (lord) of flies" (2 Ki 1:2, 6), the "fly-baal," or "fly-god," whose office was to protect his worshippers from the torment of the gnats and flies with which that region was infested. In Jesus' day this so-called false god is derisively called Beel-zebul (NIV Beelzebub), "lord of dung." In Jesus' reply to the accusation of the Jews in Mt 12:24 that He cast out demons by Beelzebul, He answers in Mt 12:26 substituting the name Satan which clearly identifies the Jewish references to Beelzebul as another name for Satan."The Jews seem to have applied this appellation to Satan, as being the author of all the pollutions and abominations of idol-worship." (Am Tract Society)
>
> This Greek word is not in the Septuagint. There are 7 NT uses - Matt. 10:25+ = Jesus accused of being the embodiment of Satan!!!; Matt. 12:24+; Matt. 12:27+; Mk. 3:22+; Lk. 11:15+; Lk. 11:18+; Lk. 11:19+. Jesus, rejecting His accuser's false charges, pointed out that the expulsion of demons was Satan's defeat, heralding the arrival of God's kingdom (see Luke 11:20-22+). (See Got Questions entry below) It is interesting that the name Baalzebul also appears in the Ras Shamra tablets, where it is used of a Canaanite deity and seems to have the meaning "lord of the high place" or "lord of the dwelling."
>
> - Baker Evangelical Dictionary Beelzebub
> - Bridgeway Bible Dictionary Beelzebul
> - Fausset Bible Dictionary Beelzebul
> - Hastings' Dictionary of the NT Beelzebub or Beelzebul
> - Kitto Biblical Cyclopedia Beelzebul
> - Holman Bible Dictionary Beelzebub
> - International Standard Bible Encyclopedia Beelzebub
> - McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia Beelzebub (has a picture of an ancient seal thought to be representation of Beelzebul)
> - The Jewish Encyclopedia Beelzebub

Matthew 9:32-34+ records a similar accusation against Jesus

> As they were going out, a mute, demon-possessed man was brought to Him. 33 After the demon was cast out, the mute man spoke; and the crowds were amazed, and were saying, "Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel." 34 But the Pharisees were saying, "**He casts out the demons by the ruler of the demons**"

In Matthew 10:25+ Jesus declared

> "It is enough for the disciple that he become like his teacher, and the slave like his master. If they have called the head of the house **Beelzebul**, how much more will they malign the members of his household!

John Phillips writes "The first time, the Lord ignored them, but warned His disciples against them (Mt 9:34; Mt 10:25). Now the Pharisees were becoming bolder, more contemptuous, more hardened in unbelief. They did not know it, but this time they had crossed the mysterious boundary line between God's mercy and His wrath....The Pharisees' blasphemous lie sealed the eternal doom of those who spoke it and the fate of the nation whose false shepherds they were. Their blasphemy also marked the turning point in the life of the Lord. All events now trended toward Calvary.

Matthew 12:25 And knowing their thoughts Jesus said to them, "Any kingdom divided against itself is laid waste; and any city or house divided against itself will not stand.

> NET Matthew 12:25 Now when Jesus realized what they were thinking, he said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself is destroyed, and no town or house divided against itself will stand.
>
> GNT Matthew 12:25 ε δ ς δ τ ς νθυμ σεις α τ ν ε πεν α το ς, Π σα βασιλε α μερισθε σα καθ αυτ ς ρημο ται κα π σα π λις ο κ α μερισθε σα καθ αυτ ς ο σταθ σεται.
>
> NLT Matthew 12:25 Jesus knew their thoughts and replied, "Any kingdom divided by civil war is doomed. A

town or family splintered by feuding will fall apart.

KJV 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:

ESV Matthew 12:25 Knowing their thoughts, he said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and no city or house divided against itself will stand.

NIV Matthew 12:25 Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and every city or household divided against itself will not stand.

ASV Matthew 12:25 And knowing their thoughts he said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand:

CSB Matthew 12:25 Knowing their thoughts, He told them: "Every kingdom divided against itself is headed for destruction, and no city or house divided against itself will stand.

NKJ Matthew 12:25 But Jesus knew their thoughts, and said to them: "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand.

NRS Matthew 12:25 He knew what they were thinking and said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and no city or house divided against itself will stand.

YLT Matthew 12:25 And Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said to them, 'Every kingdom having been divided against itself is desolated, and no city or house having been divided against itself, doth stand,

NAB Matthew 12:25 But he knew what they were thinking and said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself will be laid waste, and no town or house divided against itself will stand.

NJB Matthew 12:25 Knowing what was in their minds he said to them, 'Every kingdom divided against itself is heading for ruin; and no town, no household divided against itself can last.

GWN Matthew 12:25 Since Jesus knew what they were thinking, he said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself is ruined. And every city or household divided against itself will not last.

BBE Matthew 12:25 And having knowledge of their thoughts he said to them, Every kingdom having division in itself is made waste, and every town or house having division in itself will come to destruction.

- Matthew 12 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

JESUS REFUTES THE SCORNERS

And knowing their thoughts Jesus said to them - "He read their thoughts and He rejected their theory." (Phillips) While Jesus did empty Himself of His divine prerogatives (Php 2:6+), He was still God and as such was omniscient and able to read the minds of the **scribes** and knew "the vicious, blind hatred from which their blasphemy had sprung." (Lenski)(cf John 2:24, 25+, Jn 6:64, Mt 9:4+, Mk 2:8+). It is notable and not surprising that they voiced their accusation to the crowds and did not confront Jesus directly with their accusation! But He directs His comments to them beginning with the statement that their accusation is absurd!

> **Thoughts** (1761)(**enthumesis** from **en** = in + **thumos** = strong feeling, passion, mind, thought) means an inward reasoning or deliberation and conveys the idea of pondering or thinking out. Our English word "reflection" is an accurate translation. Westcott notes that the word refers to the action of the affections and is related to the will. Enthumēsis may refer to thoughts that grow out of or are typical of one's bent of character. Used only 4x - Matt. 9:4+ = "knowing their **thoughts**" (In Mt 9:3 "the scribes said to themselves, "This fellow blasphemes."); Matt. 12:25; Acts 17:29+ = "**thought** of man"; Heb. 4:12 = "the **thoughts** and intentions of the heart."

A T Robertson - The Pharisees now find out what a powerful opponent Jesus is. By parables, by a series of conditions (first class), by sarcasm, by rhetorical question, by merciless logic, he lays bare their hollow insincerity and the futility of their arguments. Satan does not cast out Satan. (Ibid)

Any kingdom divided (**merizo**) **against itself is laid waste** - Note Jesus' use of **kingdom** in essence affirms that Satan did in fact have a kingdom thus affirming the validity of Satan's claim as ruler of the kingdoms of the world (read Luke 4:5-6+, Mt 4:8-9+, cf Jn 12:31, 14:30, 16:11 = "the ruler of this world", 1 Jn 5:19+, 2 Cor 4:4+ = "the god of this world"; Col 1:13+). Their absurd accusation presupposes Satan on one hand would send out demons to possess men and then would turn around and send Jesus to dispossess

the possessed person! Absurdity to the max! He would in effect be destroying His own kingdom! One is reminded of the popular saying "United we stand, divided we fall." A **kingdom** divided against itself is called a **civil war** and it will tear the **kingdom** apart, much as did the American Civil War, from which the nation in the providence of God was allowed to recover!

> **Laid waste** (2049)(**eremoo** from **eremos** = wasteland) means brought to ruin, be laid waste, become desolate, be devastated (Mt 12:25). Of a prosperous city meaning to be ruined or depopulated. **Eremoo** refers to the act which causes a place to become desolate or wasteful. It also expresses the idea of abandonment, desertion, or loneliness. Used 5x in the NT - Matt. 12:25; Lk. 11:17; Rev. 17:16; Rev. 18:17; Rev. 18:19. Over 70x in the Septuagint - Gen. 47:19; Lev. 26:22; Lev. 26:30; Lev. 26:43; Jdg. 16:7; Jdg. 16:8; Jdg. 16:24; 2 Ki. 19:17; Ezr. 4:15; Neh. 2:3; Job 14:11; Ps. 69:25; Ps. 79:7; Isa. 1:7; Isa. 6:11; Isa. 11:15; Isa. 23:13; Isa. 24:1; Isa. 24:10; Isa. 33:8; Isa. 34:10; Isa. 37:18; Isa. 37:25; Isa. 44:27; Isa. 49:17; Isa. 51:10; Isa. 54:3; Isa. 60:12; Jer. 3:2; Jer. 10:25; Jer. 26:9; Jer. 33:10; Jer. 51:36; Lam. 1:1; Ezek. 26:2; Ezek. 26:19; Ezek. 29:12; Ezek. 30:7; Ezek. 32:15; Ezek. 33:24; Ezek. 33:27; Ezek. 33:28; Ezek. 33:29; Ezek. 35:3; Ezek. 35:7; Ezek. 36:10; Ezek. 38:12; Dan. 8:11; Dan. 8:13; Dan. 11:24; Amos 3:11;

And any city or house divided against itself will not stand - NLT = "A town or family splintered by feuding will fall apart." To what does **house** refer? Possibly a reference to the body of the man who was possessed (see Mt 12:43, 44 = "I will return to my **house** from which I came.") Jesus reiterates His refutation of their charges that He was casting out demons by the ruler of the demons by emphasizing that this was illogical, impractical and self-destructive! How foolish would Satan be to fight against himself!

> **Divided** (3307)(**merizo**) means to divide, part, share, separate. **Merizo** - 13x in NT - Matt. 12:25; Matt. 12:26; Mk. 3:24; Mk. 3:25; Mk. 3:26; Mk. 6:41; Lk. 12:13; Rom. 12:3; 1 Co. 1:13; 1 Co. 7:17; 1 Co. 7:34; 2 Co. 10:13; Heb. 7:2

Matthew 12:26 "If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself; how then will his kingdom stand?

NET Matthew 12:26 So if Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand?

GNT Matthew 12:26 κα ε Σαταν ς τ ν Σαταν ν κβ λλει, φ αυτ ν μερ σθη· π ς ο ν σταθ σεται βασιλε α α το ;

NLT Matthew 12:26 And if Satan is casting out Satan, he is divided and fighting against himself. His own kingdom will not survive.

KJV Matthew 12:26 And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand?

ESV Matthew 12:26 And if Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand?

NIV Matthew 12:26 If Satan drives out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then can his kingdom stand?

ASV Matthew 12:26 and if Satan casteth out Satan, he is divided against himself; how then shall his kingdom stand?

CSB Matthew 12:26 If Satan drives out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand?

NKJ Matthew 12:26 "If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand?

NRS Matthew 12:26 If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself; how then will his kingdom stand?

YLT Matthew 12:26 and if the Adversary doth cast out the Adversary, against himself he was divided, how then doth his kingdom stand?

NAB Matthew 12:26 And if Satan drives out Satan, he is divided against himself; how, then, will his kingdom stand?

NJB Matthew 12:26 Now if Satan drives out Satan, he is divided against himself; so how can his kingdom last?

GWN Matthew 12:26 If Satan forces Satan out, he is divided against himself. How, then, can his kingdom last?

BBE Matthew 12:26 And if Satan sends out Satan, he makes war against himself; how then will he keep his kingdom?

- **his**: Joh 12:31 14:30 16:11 2Co 4:4 Col 1:13 1Jn 5:19 Rev 9:11 Rev 12:9 16:10 20:2,3
- Matthew 12 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself; how then will his kingdom stand?- This picks up on His previous statement about a divided Kingdom. The peerless logic leads to the obvious conclusion that Satan's kingdom could not stand if it were divided.

Bruce says 'Satan may be wicked, He says in effect, but he is not a fool."

Spurgeon adds ""Whatever fault the devils have, they are not at strife with each other; that fault is reserved for the servants of a better Master."

In Luke 11:19+ (MacArthur thinks this was a different occasion but others think it is a parallel to Mark and Matthew) Jesus added one other piece of logic not found in the different events recorded by Mark and Matthew (which parallel each other) - "And if I by Beelzebul cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast them out? So they will be your judges." Here Jesus is saying that He was aware of so-called Jewish exorcists.Were His accusing accuse them also?

Matthew 12:27 "If I by Beelzebul cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast them out? For this reason they will be your judges.

NET Matthew 12:27 And if I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons cast them out? For this reason they will be your judges.

GNT Matthew 12:27 κα ε γ ν Βεελζεβο λ κβ λλω τ δαιμ νια, ο υ ο μ ν ν τ νι κβ λλουσιν; δι το το α το κριτα σονται μ ν.

NLT Matthew 12:27 And if I am empowered by Satan, what about your own exorcists? They cast out demons, too, so they will condemn you for what you have said.

KJV 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.

ESV Matthew 12:27 And if I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they will be your judges.

NIV Matthew 12:27 And if I drive out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your people drive them out? So then, they will be your judges.

ASV Matthew 12:27 And if I by Beelzebub cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast them out? therefore shall they be your judges.

CSB Matthew 12:27 And if I drive out demons by Beelzebul, who is it your sons drive them out by? For this reason they will be your judges.

NKJ Matthew 12:27 "And if I cast out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges.

NRS Matthew 12:27 If I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your own exorcists cast them out? Therefore they will be your judges.

YLT Matthew 12:27 'And if I, by Beelzeboul, do cast out the demons, your sons -- by whom do they cast out? because of this they -- they shall be your judges.

NAB Matthew 12:27 And if I drive out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your own people drive them out? Therefore they will be your judges.

NJB Matthew 12:27 And if it is through Beelzebul that I drive devils out, through whom do your own experts drive them out? They shall be your judges, then.

GWN Matthew 12:27 If I force demons out of people with the help of Beelzebul, who helps your followers

force them out? That's why they will be your judges.

BBE Matthew 12:27 And if I by Beelzebub send evil spirits out of men, by whom do your sons send them out? So let them be your judges.

- **Beelzebul**: Mt 12:24
- **by whom**: Mk 9:38,39 Lu 9:49,50 Lk 11:19 Ac 19:13-16
- **they**: Mt 12:41,42 Lu 19:22 Ro 3:19
- Matthew 12 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Parallel Passage:

Luke 11:19+ "And if I by Beelzebul cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast them out? So they will be your judges.

If I by Beelzebul cast out demons - The "**IF**" here is a second class condition which is considered as an unreal case. Jesus did not cast out demons by the ruler of the demons! That would be absurd.

Broadus - Condescending, as he did with reference to the Sabbath (Mt 12:3 f.), to present the argument in a variety of ways, our Lord here gives it a new and startling turn, being what logicians call argumentum ad hominem, an appeal to their own case. (Matthew 12 Commentary)

By whom do your sons cast them out? - Here Jesus takes the offensive! Jesus is addressing His opponents, and so the most natural understanding of **your sons** would be a reference to Jews (unbelieving Jews) who practiced (or attempted to practice) exorcism (some postulate this refers to disciples - see more detailed discussion of this issue in comments on Lk 11:19). On one hand Jesus seems to imply that the so-called Jewish exorcists were successful at making others think that they had truly cast out demons. In fact in Mt 7:22+ Jesus affirms " "Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and **in Your name cast out demon**s, and in Your name perform many miracles?'" (Acts He does not deny). On the other hand Acts 19:13-15+ describes unsuccessful Jewish exorcists who ironically were even attempting to use Jesus' Name to cast out demons (see also the seven sons of Sceva)! Jesus' point is that if He was possessed and/or empowered by Satan to cast out demons then what about the source of power for the Jewish exorcists (whether they were successful or not)?

Phillips notes that Jesus "used no incantations or other common methods that were only indifferently successful. He cast out demons with absolute authority, by direct command, and with convincing power. The Pharisees' disciples did not cast out demons by demonic power, and neither did the Lord." (Exploring Matthew)

Broadus says **your sons** "means those who had been instructed by the Pharisees, like "sons of the prophets" in 2 Kings 2:3; comp. the use of 'father' for a revered teacher in Mt 23:9; 1 Cor. 4:15, and 'disciples' of the Pharisees in Mt 22:16. Exorcists would naturally belong to the Pharisee party, for no Sadducee would profess the expulsion of demons, since that party did not believe in spirits, evil or good. To make 'your sons' mean Christ's own apostles, as Chrys. and other Fathers, and some modern writers do (ED: DARRELL BOCK), seems unwarranted and absurd, leaving the argument without force....It was very common, about the time of our Lord, for Jews to profess to cast out demons. Curious accounts of the methods they employed, such as the use of a remarkable root, with incantations, which they pretended were handed down from Solomon, are given by Josephus, "Ant.," 8, 2, 5, "War.," 7, 6, 3; comp. Tobit 8:2; Justin Martyr, Trypho, ch. 85. In Acts 19:13 we read of strolling Jewish exorcists who thought there must be some magical charm in the name of Jesus which Paul named when working miracles, and tried to use it themselves. (Matthew 12 Commentary)

Lenski - your sons drive out devils by means of devils—how, then, can you object to my using the help of the chief of devils—your own sons will convict you of injustice.

For this reason they will be your judges-**They** is emphatic - they themselves "shall convict you either of being yourselves in league with Beelzebul, or of unreasonable and wicked conduct in accusing another of league with him for doing what they claim to do." (Broadus) **Hendriksen** offers an excellent explanation - "Let the "sons" then judge whether or not what their teachers said about the source of Jesus' power to drive out demons was correct. If these sons should deem the charge to be correct, affirming therefore that he was actually expelling demons by the power of the demons, they would be condemning themselves. On the other hand, if they judge the charge to be false they are condemning their teachers and vindicating Jesus. Either way their verdict would be very embarrassing to Christ's opponents. The slander spread by the adversaries was not a slight deviation from a factual presentation but a wicked obscuration. It was the very opposite of the truth, for not by the power of an evil spirit but by the Spirit of God did Jesus cast out demons. How could it be otherwise?" (BNTC-Mt)

Matthew 12:28 “But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

NET Matthew 12:28 But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has already overtaken you.

GNT Matthew 12:28 ε δ ν πνε ματι θεο γ κβ λλω τ δαιμ νια, ρα φθασεν φ μ ς βασιλε α το θεο .

NLT Matthew 12:28 But if I am casting out demons by the Spirit of God, then the Kingdom of God has arrived among you.

KJV Matthew 12:28 But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you.

ESV Matthew 12:28 But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

NIV Matthew 12:28 But if I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

ASV Matthew 12:28 But if I by the Spirit of God cast out demons, then is the kingdom of God come upon you.

CSB Matthew 12:28 If I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come to you.

NKJ Matthew 12:28 "But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you.

NRS Matthew 12:28 But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come to you.

YLT Matthew 12:28 'But if I, by the Spirit of God, do cast out the demons, then come already unto you did the reign of God.

NAB Matthew 12:28 But if it is by the Spirit of God that I drive out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

NJB Matthew 12:28 But if it is through the Spirit of God that I drive out devils, then be sure that the kingdom of God has caught you unawares.

GWN Matthew 12:28 But if I force demons out with the help of God's Spirit, then the kingdom of God has come to you.

BBE Matthew 12:28 But if I by the Spirit of God send out evil spirits, then is the kingdom of God come on you.

- **I cast:** Mt 12:18 Mk 16:17 Lu 11:20 Ac 10:38
- **then:** Mt 6:33 21:31,43 Isa 9:6,7 Da 2:44 Da 7:14 Mk 1:15 Mk 11:10 Lu 1:32,33 9:2 10:11 11:20 16:16 17:20,21 Ro 14:17 Col 1:13 Heb 12:28
- Matthew 12 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Parallel Passage:

Luke 11:20+ "But if I cast out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

But -This contrast is between two "**IF'S**" - the "**IF**" of Mt 12:27 and the "**IF**" in this passage! Jesus now contrasts the correct view of how He expelled the demons!

If I cast out demons by the Spirit of God- First class conditional, so one could read it "if as is the case" or "since I cast out demons..." There is not even a hint of doubt that Jesus is casting out the demons **by the Spirit of God**. "***Since*** **by the Spirit of God** I cast out demons, ***then*** the kingdom of God has come upon you." Jesus having demolished their scandalous charge that He was empowered by Satan, now gives the true source of His power, the **Spirit of God**. The parallel passage in Luke 11:20+ says "But if I cast out demons by **the finger of God**, then the kingdom of God has come upon you." From this we can conclude conclude that the **Spirit of God** is the same as the **finger of God.** The fact that Jesus was casting out demons by the Spirit of God was evidence indeed that the **kingdom of God** had come upon the people of that generation. The **kingdom** had come in the Person of the King Himself. The very fact that the Lord Jesus was there, performing such miracles, was proof positive that God's anointed Ruler had appeared upon the stage of history.

Hendriksen - The very fact that Satan’s kingdom is being proved vulnerable—for his envoys are being driven out of men’s hearts

and lives—shows that God's kingdom (see Mt 4:23) is making its presence felt. It is in the process of gaining the victory over the realm of Satan. (Ibid)

Lenski - All three divine persons are active in Jesus' work (Mt 3:22; 4:1, 2; 4:18; Matt. 12:18), and it is the third person whose special task it is to build the kingdom on earth. Jesus says "finger" not hand or arm, which indicates that it took only a motion of God's finger to make the demons flee. It is to be noted that in expelling demons Jesus used no more than a word, and every word of his is filled with the Spirit. (ISLG)

Notice once again Jesus' dependence of the power of **the Spirit of God** to fulfill His ministry. So from the very inception of His ministry we see that "Jesus returned to Galilee in **the power of the Spirit** (cf Lk 5:17+) and news about Him spread through all the surrounding district." (Lk 4:14+). Peter declares "you yourselves know the thing which took place throughout all Judea, starting from Galilee, after the baptism which John proclaimed (Mt 3:16-18+). "You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him **with the Holy Spirit and with power,** and how He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him." (Acts 10:37-38+)

> **THOUGHT** - Jesus as a Man ministered in the **power of the Spirit** and in so doing He left us the perfect example of the perfect Man (1 Pe 2:21+) so we as imperfect men might be enabled to live a powerful life in the Spirit. Unlike Him, we will fall and fail from time to time, but we should never be discouraged by our failure but repent, confess, stand up and march out again enabled by the Spirit, shouting "Hallelujah! Thank You Lord." Paul encouraged us (1Cor 11:1+, cf 1 John 2:6+) See Walk Like Jesus Walked.

Then - A strategic marker of time in this context. What the people and Pharisees had just witnessed was a clash of two kingdoms, the Kingdom of darkness headed by Satan and the Kingdom of light headed by King Jesus, and the latter proved beyond doubt that it was (and is forever) superior! Light always exposes and in a sense "defeats" darkness!

> **THOUGHT** - This is a precious truth to all believers, a truth which should motivate us to continually be "giving thanks to the Father, Who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in **Light**, for He (God the Father by His Spirit) rescued us from the domain (the right and the might) of **darkness** (Kingdom of Satan), and transferred us to the **kingdom** of His beloved Son." (Can I hear a '**Hallelujah**!" and an "**Amen**!" (Col 1:12-13+). May God's Spirit continually supernaturally enable us to walk victoriously as **children of light** (Eph 5:8+, 1 Th 5:4-10+, 1 Jn 1:7) for the glory of the Light of the world, King Jesus (Jn 8:12). Amen

Lenski - Jesus means: you should welcome this rule and open your hearts to its grace. Only devilish minds could deny what was so evident and would attempt to oppose that rule.(ISLG)

The Kingdom of God has come upon you - This is Matthew's first use of this great phrase **Kingdom of God**, the very **Kingdom** for which the Jews had been anxiously waiting and looking. We see this sense of Messianic Kingdom expectancy even in the 11 disciples in Acts when they asked the resurrected Jesus "“Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6+) At the beginning of His Jesus proclaimed "The time is fulfilled, and the **kingdom of God** is at hand; **repent** and **believe** in the gospel." (repent and believe are both present imperative only possible as we are enabled to obey by the Holy Spirit) (Mk 1:15+) That **TIME** (kairos = "season" "opportunity") had arrived!

> **THOUGHT** - The preceding truth begs the question "Are you redeeming (buying up) the time, the opportunities in this age as we await our King's return? (Eph 5:16+) Don't be foolish but understand that this is God's will for you (Eph 5:17+). Stop playing with trinkets and toys and order your steps with an eternal perspective, for the night cometh when no man can work! Be filled continually with His Spirit (Eph 5:18+) and you will be ever ready to redeem the precious opportunities your Father provides. This is your chance of a lifetime. Don't waste it! Don't blow it! In Heaven every tear will be wiped away (cf Rev 7:17+, Rev 21:4+), which begs the question "Why are there tears in Heaven?" Could it be that you and I will have a tear when we realize what how we could have spent our life and stored up for ourselves treasure in heaven where moth and rust do not destroy and thief does not break in and steal (Mt 6:19-20+). Remember that where your treasure is, there too is your heart! If your treasure is on earth, so is your heart (Mt 6:21+). May God's Spirit do radical CPR on you today if your heart is tethered to time more than eternity, in Jesus' Mighty Name. Amen. (See Redeem the Time).

> **The Kingdom of God** - One must understand that there are (at least) two phases to the **Kingdom of God.** The first phase is the invisible, internal **Kingdom of God** and which He later described as "**in your midst**" (Lk 17:21+), the Kingdom in which the King reigns in the heart of the person who has accepted Jesus as Messiah. To proclaim the **Kingdom of God** is to preach the Gospel, to proclaim the good news of salvation, explaining how one can enter the **Kingdom of God**. (Jn 3:3-16+) When the King returns on "**the day that the Son of Man is revealed** (apokalupto)," (Lk 17:30+) the heart of every person will also be revealed as

to whether they sought the kingdom of "self" or the kingdom of the Savior! The future phase of the **Kingdom of God** is known as the **Messianic Age** or the **Millennial Kingdom**.(See detailed explanation of Jesus' meaning of the **Kingdom of God** in **notes** on Luke 17:20-21). Jesus knew the Jews were looking for the future aspect of the **Kingdom of God**, (cf Mt 20:21 and Acts 1:6+) but His preaching and that of His disciples was to explain how one could enter the invisible aspect of the **Kingdom of God** in the present and in that way they would be assured of experiencing the visible **Kingdom of God** in the future. All of this talk about the Kingdom begs one question dear reader -- Have you entered the Kingdom of God by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, the King of that Kingdom? If not today could be the best day of your life (2 Cor 6:2).

Bock on **kingdom of God has come** - Jesus says the miracles are evidences of the arrival of God's promised, redemptive rule. They are audiovisual testimony to God's power and rule....The key term in the verse is ephthasen (from phthano), "**has come**."....The miracles trumpet the arrival of God's ruling power in such a way that Satan's display of power on earth is challenged and is in the process of being defeated.To say the kingdom has arrived is not to argue that consummation has come, only that its presence has begun. The process of establishing kingdom authority is a long one, as Jesus will reveal, and it will take his return to bring the full promise of the kingdom to completion....God is breaking peacefully into the creation through Jesus to reclaim humanity from Satan's grip. Jesus overcomes the presence and power of evil in the world. His **power** is greater than that of demons. He is stronger than Satan. His **power** and authority reverse the effect of sin. This exercise of **power** through Jesus is why Paul can call the gospel "**the power of God**" in Romans 1:16–17+. The story of the gospel is the story of how Satan, sin and the flesh are overcome through Jesus' provision of the Spirit (1 Th 1:5+). So Paul calls the kingdom of God a matter of **power** (1 Cor 4:20) as well as justice, peace and joy inspired by the Spirit (Ro 14:17). And Ephesians 1:15–2:10 and Eph 6:10–18+ refer to the battle we have against the forces of evil and note how Jesus has a position of authority over them. **These theological realities are pictured in Jesus' words**." (IVPNTC-Lk) (IN LIGHT OF THESE TRUTHS - Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm." Eph 6:13+)

Has come (aorist tense past tense not is coming, not merely on its way but already in their midst!) (5348) (**phthano**) originally meant to precede someone, to come before or to anticipate (as in 1Th 4:15+). Over time **phthano** begin to lose the idea of priority and to mean simply to come to or to arrive at. The idea is to come to a particular state or to arrive at a goal and so to attain it. In Mt 12:28+ "“But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God **has come** upon you." **Phthano** pictures progress along a road to a certain point. Broadus writes "The idea then is, the kingdom of God, the Messianic Dispensation, has made its appearance in your presence. (Comp. Luke 17:20, 21+)"

Matthew 12:29 “Or how can anyone enter the strong man's house and carry off his property, unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will plunder his house.

NET Matthew 12:29 How else can someone enter a strong man's house and steal his property, unless he first ties up the strong man? Then he can thoroughly plunder the house.

GNT Matthew 12:29 π ς δ νατα τις ε σελθε ν ε ς τ ν ο κ αν το σχυρο κα τ σκε η α το ρπ σαι, ν μ πρ τον δ σ τ ν σχυρ ν; κα τ τε τ ν ο κ αν α το διαρπ σει.

NLT Matthew 12:29 For who is powerful enough to enter the house of a strong man like Satan and plunder his goods? Only someone even stronger-- someone who could tie him up and then plunder his house.

KJV 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.

ESV Matthew 12:29 Or how can someone enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? Then indeed he may plunder his house.

NIV Matthew 12:29 "Or again, how can anyone enter a strong man's house and carry off his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man? Then he can rob his house.

ASV Matthew 12:29 Or how can one enter into the house of the strong man, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house.

CSB Matthew 12:29 How can someone enter a strong man's house and steal his possessions unless he first

ties up the strong man? Then he can rob his house.

NKJ Matthew 12:29 "Or how can one enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will plunder his house.

NRS Matthew 12:29 Or how can one enter a strong man's house and plunder his property, without first tying up the strong man? Then indeed the house can be plundered.

YLT Matthew 12:29 'Or how is one able to go into the house of the strong man, and to plunder his goods, if first he may not bind the strong man? and then his house he will plunder.

NAB Matthew 12:29 How can anyone enter a strong man's house and steal his property, unless he first ties up the strong man? Then he can plunder his house.

NJB Matthew 12:29 'Or again, how can anyone make his way into a strong man's house and plunder his property unless he has first tied up the strong man? Only then can he plunder his house.

GWN Matthew 12:29 How can anyone go into a strong man's house and steal his property? First he must tie up the strong man. Then he can go through his house and steal his property.

BBE Matthew 12:29 Or how may one go into a strong man's house and take his goods, if he does not first put cords round the strong man? and then he may take his goods.

- Isa 49:24 53:12 Mk 3:27 Lu 11:21,22 1Jn 3:8 4:4 Rev 12:7-10 Rev 20:1-3,7-9
- Matthew 12 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Parallel Passages:

Mark 3:27+ “But no one can enter the strong man’s house and plunder his property unless he first binds the strong man, and then he will plunder his house.

Luke 11:21; 22+ “When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own house, his possessions are undisturbed. “But when someone stronger than he attacks him and overpowers him, he takes away from him all his armor on which he had relied and distributes his plunder.

This passage connects with Mt 12:25.

Or how can anyone enter the strong man’s house and carry off his property - So what is the answer? Of course not! Jesus is demolishing the accusations of the scribes with His incisive pristine logic! Who is the **strong man** in context? This is the prince of the power of the air (Eph 2:2+), Satan the ruler of the demons and Kingdom of darkness.

Property (4632)(skeuos) refers to the goods of the strong man. To what does this**property** refer in the context of identification of the **strong man** as Satan? **MacArthur** says Satan's "**property** consists of both the demonic forces and oppressed human beings under his control." (Ibid) Some say it is believers in their unregenerate state were the **property** of Satan and subjects of his kingdom, until God "rescued (rhuomai) us from the domain (exousia) of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption (apolutrosis) (JESUS PAID THE "RANSOM" PRICE TO SET US FREE - THE BLOOD OF JESUS! SEE 1 Pe 1:18-19+), the forgiveness (aphesis)(SENDING AWAY FOREVER) of sins (PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE)." (Col 1:13-14+) Satan continues to cast accusations and charges at us (cf Rev 12:10+, Eph 6:16+) but they won't "stick" because we have been forever clothed in the righteousness of Christ (2 Cor 5:21+, 1 Co 1:30, cf Isa 61:3+).

Unless he first binds the strong man? -A burglar does not saunter into a home and get the owner's help to burgle it! Absurd! First he ties up the owner. The point is that Jesus, the Light of the world, defeats, Satan the king of darkness. And He did it once and for all time on the Cross, the writer of Hebrews assuring us that "since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself (JESUS) likewise also partook of the same, that through death (THE CROSS) He might render powerless (katargeo) him who had the power of death, that is, the devil (diabolos), and might free (apallasso) those who through fear of death were subject (enochos) to slavery (douleia) all their lives." (Heb 2:14-15+) "**Hallelujah**!"

Broadus - This is a general truth, with an obvious application to the matter in hand. Jesus was taking away from Satan a part of his property, in delivering the demoniacs, and this could not be unless he were at variance with Satan, and strong enough to bind him.

Phillips - There seems to have been an unprecedented surge of demonic activity in Palestine during the period of Christ's ministry. Satan had marshaled his forces, but all in vain. (Exploring Matthew)

And then he will plunder his house - A stronger Man (Jesus) enters and plunders the strong man (Satan's) house. **Hendriksen** adds that "Jesus by word and deed is depriving Satan of those values which the evil one regards as his own and over which he has been exercising his sinister control (see Luke 13:16+, 2 Ti 2:26+,cf 2 Cor 4:3-6+). The Lord is casting out Beelzebul's servants, the demons, and is restoring that which through their agency Satan has been doing to men's souls and bodies....Yes, the devil is being, and is progressively going to be, deprived of his "furniture," that is, of the souls and bodies of men, and this not only through healings but also through a mighty missionary program, reaching first the Jews but later on also the nations in general (John 12:31, 32; Rom. 1:16)." (BNTC-Mt)

> **Plunder** (1282)(**diarpazo** from **dia** = intensifies + **harpazo** = seize) means to thoroughly plunder. Plunder, seize as plunder, snatch away from, carry off as plunder. In the Septuagint it is used of looting which occurred in connection with battle (1 Sa 14:36, 22:1, 2 Ki 17:20) even if there was not much of a fight (Ge 34:27, 29, 2 Ki 7:16. Robbery of individuals in (Jer 21:12; 22:3; Ezek 22:29; Mic 2:2). In the end of this age God says "For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city will be captured, the houses **plundered**, the women ravished and half of the city exiled, but the rest of the people will not be cut off from the city." (Zech 14:2+).
>
> Only 2 uses in NT - Mt 12:29, Mk 3:27. There are 31 verses in the Septuagint (some have >2 uses per verse) - Gen. 34:27; Gen. 34:29; Deut. 28:29; Jdg. 9:25; Jdg. 21:23; 1 Sam. 14:36; 1 Sam. 23:1; 2 Ki. 7:16; 2 Ki. 17:20; Est. 3:13; Est. 9:10; Est. 9:15; Est. 9:16; Ps. 35:10; Ps. 44:10; Ps. 89:41; Ps. 109:11; Isa. 5:17; Isa. 42:22; Jer. 21:12; Jer. 22:3; Jer. 50:11; Ezek. 7:21; Ezek. 22:29; Dan. 2:5; Amos 3:11; Mic. 2:2; Nah. 2:9; Zeph. 2:4; Zeph. 2:9; Zech. 14:2

Matthew 12:30 "He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me scatters.

NET Matthew 12:30 Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters.

GNT Matthew 12:30 μ ν μετ μο κατ μο στιν, κα μ συν γων μετ μο σκορπ ζει.

NLT Matthew 12:30 "Anyone who isn't with me opposes me, and anyone who isn't working with me is actually working against me.

KJV Matthew 12:30 He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.

ESV Matthew 12:30 Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters.

NIV Matthew 12:30 "He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters.

ASV Matthew 12:30 He that is not with me is against me, and he that gathereth not with me scattereth.

CSB Matthew 12:30 Anyone who is not with Me is against Me, and anyone who does not gather with Me scatters.

NKJ Matthew 12:30 "He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad.

NRS Matthew 12:30 Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters.

YLT Matthew 12:30 'He who is not with me is against me, and he who is not gathering with me, doth scatter.

NAB Matthew 12:30 Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters.

NJB Matthew 12:30 'Anyone who is not with me is against me, and anyone who does not gather in with me throws away.

GWN Matthew 12:30 "Whoever isn't with me is against me. Whoever doesn't gather with me scatters.

BBE Matthew 12:30 Whoever is not with me is against me; and he who does not take part with me in getting people together, is driving them away.

- **that is**: Mt 6:24 Jos 5:13 24:15 1Ch 12:17,18 Mk 9:40 Lu 9:50 11:23 2Co 6:15,16 1Jn 2:19 Rev 3:15,16
- **gather**: Ge 49:10 Ho 1:11 Joh 11:52
- Matthew 12 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

NEUTRALITY NOT AN OPTION

IN THIS COSMIC WAR!

Similar Passages:

Mark 9:40 "For he who is not against us is for us.

Luke 9:50+ But Jesus said to him, "Do not hinder him; for he who is not against you is for you."

Luke 11:23+ "He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me, scatters.

He who is not with Me is against Me - Jesus demands a response! **With** is the preposition meta which means in company with Jesus. **Against** is kata which speaks of downward movement and speaks of one who is hostile towards another. There are no "Switzerlands" in this war!

The Gospel is of such a nature,
as to its offers and its claims,
that it cannot tolerate indifference.
- Broadus

Broadus - Here again, as in the preceding verses, our Lord speaks in **apophthegms** (Mark 3:23+), each sentence containing a distinct truth, expressed in general terms. It naturally follows that no connection between these is outwardly indicated, and we are left to see for ourselves the internal connection of the thoughts. (Comp. at the beginning of Matthew 7.) The Scribes said that our Lord was in league with Satan, but in reality he is opposing and overthrowing Satan's power, binding him, as it were, and plundering his house. In this great and deadly struggle, there can be no neutrality. No man can be friends with both sides, nor be indifferent to both. It is probable that many of those present were thinking they would not take sides between Jesus and the blaspheming Scribes. To them, in the first place, this saying would come home; but it is general, and applicable to all times, and all varieties of character and conduct. (Matthew 12 Commentary)

And he who does not gather with Me scatters - How are we "**with** Jesus? How do we **gather with** Jesus? We aid in gathering people to be His disciples (Prov. 11:30; Dan. 12:3; Matt. 9:37, 38; Luke 19:10; John 4:35, 36; 1 Cor. 9:22).

Morgan - "Only two forces are at work in the world, the gathering and the scattering. Whoever does the one contradicts the other."

Broadus -The image in the second member is from gathering grain in harvest, as in Mt 3:12; Mt 6:26; John 4:36. Men often fancy that they are by no means opposing Christ's service, though not engaged in it; that they are friendly to religion in others, though not personally religious. But in the nature of the case, this is impossible. Stier: "**Neutrality here is no neutrality, but a remaining on the side of the enemy; indolence here is no mere indolence, but opposition; the merely not believing and not obeying is still resistance and rejection.**" The gospel is of such a nature, as to its offers and its claims, that it cannot tolerate indifference. If it deserves our respect, it deserves our entire and hearty reception. If we are not yielding Christ our whole heart, we are really yielding him nothing. Professed neutrality, with real hostility of heart, may even be more offensive to Him, and is sometimes more injurious in its influence, than avowed opposition.—In Mark 9:40; Luke 9:50+ there is an expression which at first seems to contradict this, viz., '*He that is not against us is for us*.' But so far is this from being the case that both sayings (Alexander) "may be exemplified in the experience of the very same persons. For example, Nicodemus, by refusing to take part with the Sanhedrin against our Lord, although he did not venture to espouse his cause, proved himself to be upon his side (John 7:50 f.); but if he had continued the same course when the crisis had arrived, he would equally have proved himself to be against him." Comp. the apparently contradictory sayings of Prov. 26:4 f.; Gal. 6:2, 5; Rom. 3:28, as related to James 2:24.. (Matthew 12 Commentary)

THOUGHT - This **axiomatic apophthegm** reminds me of the famous scene in the Alamo - "Those who stay, cross over the line (in the sand)." - see "Drawing a Line in the Sand" (Video). The line between the Kingdom of Jesus and the Kingdom of Satan has been clearly drawn in the "eternal sands of time" (so to speak). There is no straddling the middle. Jesus said "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but **whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it.** For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul?" (Mk 8:34-36) Have you lost your life for the sake of Jesus? Have you crossed over the line? There is no straddling this line! To not chose to follow Jesus is a decision against Him!

Gather (4863)(**sunago** from **sun** = with + **ago** = to lead,) means literally to lead together. To gather (in) or gather (up) (Mt 13:47; 25:24, 26; Lk 3:17; 15:13; Jn 6:12f; 15:6). It is the opposite skorpizo (scatter) and merizo (distribute, divide out);

Scatters (present tense - continually)(4650)(**skorpizo**) means scatter or disperse, to cause a group or gathering to go in various directions. It is the opposite sunago (gather). It is used as a metaphor drawn from

seed sowing, for what one does to help those in need distribute, disperse, give generously (2Co 9.9)

Matthew 12:31 "Therefore I say to you, any sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven people, but blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven.

NET Matthew 12:31 For this reason I tell you, people will be forgiven for every sin and blasphemy, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven.

GNT Matthew 12:31 Δι το το λ γω μ ν, π σα μαρτ α κα βλασφημ α φεθ σεται το ς νθρ ποις, δ το πνε ματος βλασφημ α ο κ φεθ σεται.

NLT Matthew 12:31 "Every sin and blasphemy can be forgiven-- except blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, which will never be forgiven.

KJV 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.

ESV Matthew 12:31 Therefore I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven people, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven.

NIV Matthew 12:31 And so I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven.

ASV Matthew 12:31 Therefore I say unto you, Every sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven.

CSB Matthew 12:31 Because of this, I tell you, people will be forgiven every sin and blasphemy, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven.

NKJ Matthew 12:31 "Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven men.

NRS Matthew 12:31 Therefore I tell you, people will be forgiven for every sin and blasphemy, but blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven.

YLT Matthew 12:31 Because of this I say to you, all sin and evil speaking shall be forgiven to men, but the evil speaking of the Spirit shall not be forgiven to men.

NAB Matthew 12:31 Therefore, I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven people, but blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven.

NJB Matthew 12:31 And so I tell you, every human sin and blasphemy will be forgiven, but blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven.

GWN Matthew 12:31 So I can guarantee that people will be forgiven for any sin or cursing. However, cursing the Spirit will not be forgiven.

BBE Matthew 12:31 So I say to you, Every sin and every evil word against God will have forgiveness; but for evil words against the Spirit there will be no forgiveness.

- **Any sin** - Isa 1:18 55:7 Eze 33:11 1Ti 1:13-15 Heb 6:4 *etc: Heb 10:26,29 1Jn 1:9 2:1,2
- **but blasphemy against** Mk 3:28-30 Lu 12:10 Ac 7:51 1Jn 5:16
- Matthew 12 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

THE ULTIMATE ANTITHESIS

Therefore I say to you, any sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven people, but blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven - The word **antithesis** means exact opposite and describes a situation where two opposites are introduced in the same sentence, for contrasting effect. In this passage we have the ultimate antithesis of **sin which is forgivable** and **sin which is unforgivable**! This sentence is the ultimate good news/bad news! The **GOOD NEWS** is that **ANY** (literally the Greek word is all) sin we have committed, no matter how heinous, how depraved, how wicked, how long in duration, etc, is forgivable by God. This is good news for everyone, because it flings the doors of the Kingdom of God open so that anyone may enter through the gates of the

Gospel. He adds **blasphemy** to leave no doubt that it too can be forgiven and will allow Him to more strongly bring out the one exception.

The **BUT** introduces a striking contrast of the **BAD NEWS** of a sin which cannot be forgiven, **blasphemy against the Spirit**. So the question everyone asks is this -- "What is this unforgivable sin against the Spirit?" There is some disagreement among experts regarding this sin, for some say this exact sin cannot be committed in our day. Why do they say that? They say that because they identify this sin specifically was a slanderous accusation against Jesus, specifically accusing Him of performing miracles by the power of Satan rather than by the power of the Holy Spirit. And since Jesus is not physically present and casting out demons and healing lame and curing lepers, etc, then this exact sin cannot be committed because the men who committed it witnessed these miracles.

The question then arises does Jesus' warning having any application to men today? Is there any way a person could blaspheme the Spirit today?

First and foremost, if you are worried that you have committed this sin, then you can be sure you have not! The fact that you have a consciousness (conviction, awareness) of your sin is evidence you have not committed the unpardonable sin!

Second, while the exact sin Jesus describes in context cannot be committed, there is a sin which is **unpardonable** -- Simply stated it is the sin of continually resisting the convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit Who shows us we are sinners and in need of a Savior. For example if an unbelieving person is lying on their deathbed and the family is pleading with them to accept Jesus as Savior before the die and they refuse to the very end of their life, clearly their sins are not pardonable. This sin is not exactly the same as the scribes and Pharisees committed but the effect is the same - eternal death. In a similar manner, if a person is repeatedly offered the Gospel and steadfastly, stubborn continues to refuse it, even disparagingly refuting it, there comes a point in time known only to God when that person is no longer able to be saved. We see this scenario in Hebrews 6

> For in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, 5 and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, 6 and then have fallen away, **it is impossible to renew them again to repentance, since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God and put Him to open shame**. 7 For ground that drinks the rain which often falls on it and brings forth vegetation useful to those for whose sake it is also tilled, receives a blessing from God; 8 but if it yields thorns and thistles, it is worthless and close to being cursed, and it ends up being burned. (Hebrews 6:4-9+)

I realize that Hebrews 6 is a controversial passage but I interpret it as those who were given every opportunity to believe and yet chose to willfully reject the Spirit's wooing them to Jesus to be their Savior, even after clear exposure to and experience of the grace of God, these individuals have crossed a line (which in my opinion ONLY GOD KNOWS) and can no longer receive pardon for their sins. They have in essence become "unpardonable." (See MacArthur's explanation toward the bottom of the page of his sermon The Unforgivable Sin)

Joseph Addison Alexander was a well-respected theologian in the 1800's who penned a poem that alludes to the line a person can cross and which when they pass that line, they are beyond the grace and mercy of God. And to reiterate, if you think you've crossed it, **YOU HAVE NOT**! You have not committed a sin so horrible that Jesus cannot and will not forgive if you accept His payment on the Cross for the sins you have committed. The Gospel door remains open to you. So with that introduction here is the poem

There is a time we know not when,
A place we know not where;
Which marks the destiny of men
To glory or despair.

There is a line, by us unseen,
Which crosses every path;
Which marks the boundary between
God’s mercy and His wrath.

Therefore I say to you, any (ALL) **sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven people** - As alluded to above, Jesus' makes it clear that blasphemy is like any other sin and is forgivable. Paul made that clear in (1 Ti 1:13-14) writing "even though I was formerly a **blasphemer** and a persecutor and a violent aggressor. Yet I was shown mercy because I acted ignorantly in unbelief; and the grace of our Lord was more than abundant, with the faith and love which are found in Christ Jesus." This is GOOD NEWS that the greatest apostle in the history of the church is a **FORGIVEN BLASPHEMER**! As defiant and irreverent as blasphemy against God is, it is

nevertheless forgivable by our merciful, gracious, forgiving God! That is called **AMAZING GRACE**! Recall also that Peter the leading apostle of the 12 disciples blasphemed, denying Christ 3 times and even "began to curse and swear, “I do not know this man you are talking about!” (Mk 14:71, 72) God forgives blasphemers and whether we were as overt as Paul or repetitive as Peter we have all slandered the beautiful Name of Jesus and God and yet He has forgiven us!

As **Hendriksen** says "For anyone who is truly penitent, no matter how shameful his transgressions may have been, there is no reason to despair (Ps. 103:12; Isa. 1:18; 44:22; 55:6, 7; Mic. 7:18–20; 1 John 1:9). On the other hand, there is no excuse for being indifferent, as if the subject of the unpardonable sin is of no concern to the average church member. The blasphemy against the Spirit is the result of **gradual progress in sin**." (**ED COMMENT**: HE SEEMS TO BE REFERRING TO A HEART WHICH GRADUALLY BECOMES MORE AND MORE CALLOUSED AND HARDENED EVERY TIME IT REJECTS THE LIGHT AND RUNS BACK INTO THE DARKNESS - cf "their foolish heart was darkened" IN THE DOWNWARD SPIRITUAL SPIRAL IN Ro 1:21-25+ - NOTE WHAT GOD DID? Ro 1:26+, cf Mt 6:23+) (BNTC-Mt)

The true solution is found in Hebrews 3:7-8+ (quoting Ps. 95:7b, 8a

> "Therefore, just as the **Holy Spirit** says, “TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE, DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS AS WHEN THEY PROVOKED ME, AS IN THE DAY OF TRIAL IN THE WILDERNESS."
>
> > Notice that it is the **Holy Spirit** against Whom they hardened their hearts, which is the essence of the sin of **blasphemy against the Spirit** which Jesus mentions in the next verse. Then in Heb 3:18-4:2 we read the result of hardening their hearts...
>
> And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who were disobedient? So we see that they were not able to enter because of **unbelief**. Therefore, let us fear if, while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you may seem to have come short of it. For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they also; but **the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard**. (Heb 3:18-19+, Heb 4:1-2+)
>
> > Compare two other warning passages in Hebrews (Hebrews 6 was noted earlier)....
>
> How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and **has insulted the Spirit of grace**? (Hebrews 10:29+)
>
> **See to it** that you do not refuse Him who is speaking. For if those did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape who turn away from Him who warns from heaven. (Hebrews 12:25+)
>
> > Earlier in the book of Hebrews the writer ask a solemn, sobering question...
>
> **How will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation**? After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard, God also testifying with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and **by gifts of the Holy Spirit** according to His own will.(Hebrews 2:3-4+)
>
> > Notice again the mention of the **Holy Spirit** as integrally involved in giving the Gospel message to lost souls. To shun Him continually throughout one's life is to shut the door to forgiveness!

But - This is one of the more strategic terms of contrast in the entire Bible! It sets up the dramatic distinction between different destinies! In essence it is the contrast between Heaven and Hell!

Ivor Powell gives us a word of warning regarding interpretation of this passage -- Throughout the history of the church, this has been one of the most difficult texts to interpret. False teaching has thrived on incorrect versions, and often people have become mentally ill, fearing they have committed the unpardonable sin. It must be stressed that the Bible teaches there is only one unforgivable sin, and that is the rejection of Christ. (Matthew's Majestic Gospel)

> **THOUGHT** - As you will see below there are numerous quotes on the unpardonable sin of blasphemy of the Holy Spirit and you will find that there are different thoughts on the interpretation of this difficult passage. So after having read these and prayerfully pondered Jesus' sobering statement let me give you my "summary" thought of what this text means. I approach it from two perspectives, accurate interpretation and appropriate application.
>
> > **Accurate Interpretation** - Many believe this EXACT SIN cannot be committed today because Jesus is not alive performing miracles by the power of the Holy Spirit, miracles which one can attribute to demonic forces rather than to the Holy Spirit, the power of God, the finger of God (Lk 11:20+, Mt 12:28). So this is

a logical, reasonable and (I think) accurate interpretation of the unpardonable sin against the Holy Spirit.

Appropriate Application - Every text has many applications that can be valid. In the case of the unpardonable sin one could commit only in the first century, I think there is a twenty-first century counterpart. Today the Spirit's work is to (1) testify that Jesus is the Son of God (Jn 15:26) and (2) to convict sinners of their sinfulness (Jn 16:8), a conviction I resisted (cf the Jews in Acts 7:51+ - that was me) until I was 39 years old. Had I continued to resist the ministry of the Spirit, while I may not have overtly blasphemed Him as did the Pharisees, the effect would have been the same, for in essence I would have been calling Him a "liar" regarding His testimony about Jesus. And had I continued in a settled sense to reject the Spirit's ministry I would have been guilty of the unpardonable sin. We all know people with whom we have repeated witnessed about their need for placing their faith in Jesus and they repeatedly resist the Gospel, which is the power of God. And finally one day they say if you keep talking about Jesus, then don't come to my house again. There is a "line" that only God knows, that when men have crossed it because of continued rejection and gradually increasing hardness of their heart, there no longer remains the possibility for forgiveness of sins. And let us be careful to remember that ONLY GOD KNOWS THAT LINE! The writer of Hebrews asked the most searching question I have ever heard about avoiding the "modern day" version of the unpardonable sin - "How will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?: (Heb 2:3+) And Paul would add "Behold, now is “THE ACCEPTABLE TIME,” behold, now is “THE DAY OF SALVATION." (2 Cor 6:2) "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved." (Acts 16:31) And you will never have to worry about the unpardonable sin again!

Blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven- In Mark 3:30+ they were saying (imperfect tense = over and over) “He has an unclean spirit.” said So if **blasphemy** is forgivable, what is it about this **blasphemy** which is not forgivable? In short **blasphemy against the Spirit** is an **recalcitrant**, **steadfast**, **unwavering**, **unshakeable**, **stubborn** resistance to the wooing of the Spirit (Jn 16:8), which results in a determined unwillingness to believe in Christ even in the face of sufficient (overwhelming) evidence of the truth of the Gospel of Christ. During His 3 years on earth Jesus repeatedly provided irrefutable proof that He was God and that He was empowered by the Holy Spirit, Who enabled Him to perform countless miracles that were impossible to deny, **incontestable**, and **incontrovertible**. To blatantly, continually deny Jesus was the Christ in view of such a flood of Gospel light from the Spirit of Truth is a sin that cannot be forgiven. The fact is what else could God have done to reveal that Jesus was the (only) Way, the (only) Truth and the (only) Life through Whom one can come to the Father (Jn 14:6). **The unpardonable sin** "reflected seeing the Truth incarnate and then knowingly rejecting Him and condemning Him. It demonstrated an absolute and permanent refusal to believe, which resulted in loss of opportunity ever to be forgiven … **either in this age, or in the age to come**." (MacArthur)

Below are quotes and comments from various sources to give you additional insight and understanding the **unpardonable sin**. Some say this sin can no longer be committed. Others say persistent rejection of the Spirit's wooing while not the exact sin Jesus is describing, nevertheless is unpardonable. Both sides are presented in the quotes below. I particularly identify with **J C Ryle** who wrote "THIS passage of Scripture contains “things hard to be understood.” The sin against the Holy Ghost in particular has never been fully explained by the most learned divines. (**INTERESTING**!) It is not difficult to show from Scripture what the sin is not. It is difficult to show clearly what it is. We must not be surprised. The Bible would not be the book of God, if it had not deep places here and there, which man has no line to fathom. Let us rather thank God that there are lessons of wisdom to be gathered, even out of these verses, which the unlearned may easily understand."

H A Ironside commenting on the parallel truth in Mark 3:28-29+ writes that this passage "was never intended to torment anxious souls honestly desiring to know Christ, but the verses stand out as a blazing beacon warning of the danger of persisting in the rejection of the Spirit’s testimony of Christ until the seared conscience no longer responds to the gospel message." (Mark 3 Commentary)

I like what S Lewis Johnson says about the unpardonable sin - When is this sin committed? Well, we can say this at least. There is only one time in which sin against the Son of Man is blameable and forgivable, while sin against the Holy Spirit is blameable and unforgivable. There is only one time when that situation exists. Now that the Son of Man is glorified and at the right hand of the Father, sin against the Son is sin against the Spirit.So it’s evident that the historical situation which called forth the comment from our Lord, the unpardonable sin can only exist while our Lord is here in our incarnate flesh when he looked as other men looked. So it can only be committed, in my opinion, when the king is personally present – the unpardonable sin. That is, the specific historical sin to which he refers here. And I think this is confirmed by the fact that it is only referred to this one time by our Lord, and never referred to elsewhere by the apostles. It was a particular situation that had its particular interpretation with reference to that particular time.....What is, then, the unpardonable sin? The **unpardonable sin** is blasphemy of the Holy Spirit’s supernatural work of performing miracles prevalent in the days of the supernatural miracles. It may be committed by hardened, impenitent

men. But now having said that, two other things ought to be said. In the first place, there is an **unpardonable sin** today. It is not the unpardonable sin to which our Lord refers, but it is the unpardonable sin of rejecting Jesus Christ. In John 3:18, the Lord Jesus in the continuation of the passage in which he has had his interview with Nicodemus says, ""He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." so that personal faith in Jesus Christ – **if it does not come** – **sin is unpardonable**. There is such a thing as the **unpardonable sin**, historically (REFERRING TO THIS PASSAGE IN MATTHEW), and there is such a thing as an **unpardonable sin throughout this present age**. And **it is possible for us to commit unpardonable sin in that sense** (**ED**: HE IS SPEAKING OF COURSE OF UNBELIEVERS, NOT BELIEVERS) And furthermore, it is possible for there to exist a prolonged rebellion that leads to retributive judgment and hardness of heart. That is still possible today. It is my own opinion that that is what is referred to in Hebrews 6, when we read that it is impossible to bring certain people to repentance, who have had great privilege but have turned away from them. They apostasized from the apperceptive sense of truth that they possessed, and there is no hope. In the Old Testament, we read that God sent the prophets to Israel, and they ministered to them and ministered to them, but they rejected them and rejected them, and then we read "til there was no healing." (**ED**: READ 2 Chronicles 36:15, 16 = "UNTIL THERE WAS NO REMEDY.") Retributive judgment must set in.(Sermon)

J Vernon 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 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**. (Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee)

Hendriksen - The essence of the sin against the Holy Spirit can be condensed into just one word — **impenitence**. If anyone is truly sorry for his sins, he cannot at the same time be guilty of "the sin against the Holy Spirit," "the unpardonable sin," for true sorrow is the work and fruit of the Holy Spirit, and shows that this Spirit is dwelling in the heart of that penitent. (BNTC-Lk)

Darrel Bock commenting on Luke 12:10 writes that "**blasphemy of the Spirit is not so much an act of rejection as it is a persistent and decisive rejection of the Spirit's message and work concerning Jesus.** When a person obstinately rejects and fixedly refuses that message or evidence, that person is not forgiven....The difference between blaspheming the Son of Man and blaspheming the Spirit is that blasphemy of the Son of Man is an instant rejection, while blasphemy of the Spirit is a permanent decision of rejection. Lk 22:65+ and Lk 23:39+ look at instances of rejection, while speeches such as Acts 7:51+ ("You men who are stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears are always resisting the Holy Spirit; you are doing just as your fathers did."), Acts 13:40–49+, and Acts 28:23–28+ show the implications once that rejection is solidified into an attitude. **Once the Spirit's testimony about God's work through Jesus is permanently refused, then nothing can be forgiven, since God's plan has been rejected**. (Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, Luke: 9:51–24:53, p 1141ff).

David Guzik - The Holy Spirit's main ministry is to testify of Jesus (He will testify of Me, John 15:26). When that testimony of Jesus is fully and finally rejected, one has truly blasphemed the Holy Spirit and essentially called Him a liar in respect to His testimony about Jesus. The religious leaders were close to this. To reject Jesus from a distance or with little information is bad; to reject the testimony of the Holy Spirit about Jesus is fatal. It will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come: The eternal consequences of this sin force us to regard it seriously. Therefore, how can one know if they have in fact blasphemed the Holy Spirit? The fact that one desires Jesus at all shows that they are not guilty of this sin. Yet continued rejection of Jesus makes us more hardened against Him and puts us on the path of a full and final rejection of Him. Some people —as a joke or a dare—intentionally say words they suppose commit the sin of blasphemy against the Spirit. They think it a light thing to joke with eternity. Yet true blasphemy against the Spirit is more than a formula of

words; it is a settled disposition of life that rejects the testimony of the Holy Spirit regarding Jesus. Even if someone has intentionally said such things, they can still repent and prevent a settled rejection of Jesus. (Matthew 12 Commentary)

Guzik in a related comment on Lk 12:10 writes "Some people – as a joke or a dare – intentionally say words they suppose commit the sin of blasphemy against the Spirit. They think it a light thing to joke with eternity. Yet true blasphemy against the Spirit is more than a formula of words; it is a settled disposition of life that rejects the testimony of the Holy Spirit regarding Jesus. Even if someone has intentionally said such things, they can still repent and prevent a settled rejection of Jesus. The blasphemy of the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven – not because it is a sin too big for God to forgive, but because it is an attitude of heart that cares nothing for God's forgiveness. It never has forgiveness because it never wants forgiveness God's way. It may want forgiveness on its own terms, but never God's way.. The way to not blaspheme the Holy Spirit is to receive Jesus Christ, and to put one's loving trust upon Him today. It means to stop rejecting the work of the Holy Spirit in bringing us to Jesus. (Luke 12 Commentary)

Disciple's Study Bible - Those who rejected Jesus in his earthly ministry had an opportunity to respond to the Holy Spirit after Pentecost. Those who reject the Spirit's call to faith in Christ have no hope for forgiveness. (CSB Disciple's Study Bible)

Warren Wiersbe (comments on Luke 12:10) - The "blasphemy against the Holy Spirit" has special reference to the Jewish nation that was rejecting the evidence Jesus gave them of who He was and what they needed to do. When they refused the ministry of John the Baptist, they rejected God the Father who sent John; but there was still the witness of the Son. When they rejected Jesus, He prayed for them (Luke 23:34). They still had the witness of the Spirit (Acts 1:8). When they rejected the witness of the Spirit through the church (Acts 2-7), they sinned against the Holy Spirit (Acts 7:51), and there was no further witness left! (Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the New Testament)

Reformation Study Bible (Notes on Mark 3:29) - Jesus' solemn warning about a kind of sin that will not be forgiven, either in this world or the next, is found in three Gospels: Matt. 12:31, 32; Mark 3:28-30; Luke 12:10. It is specifically "blasphemy against the Spirit." This blasphemy is an act performed by speaking, understood as an expression of the thoughts of the heart (Matt. 12:33-37; cf. Rom. 10:9, 10). In the particular context the opponents of Jesus were saying that the Power doing good works among them was not God but the devil. Jesus distinguishes between this blasphemy and other sins, both other sins of speech and other sins in general. As the Bible teaches, God forgave sins of incest, murder, lying, and even Paul's persecution of the church, which Paul did while "breathing threats and murder" against God's people (Acts 9:1). **What makes the unpardonable sin different from others is its relation to the Holy Spirit.** It is the Holy Spirit's work to enlighten the mind of sinners (Eph. 1:17, 18), to reveal and teach the gospel (John 14:26), persuading souls to repent and believe the truth (cf. Acts 7:51). The Spirit not only explains the Word of God, but He opens the mind so that it is perceived (2 Cor. 3:16, 17). When His influence is deliberately and knowingly refused, in opposition to the light, then the irreversible sin can be committed as a voluntary, informed act of malice. In response there is a hardening of the heart from God that rules out repentance and faith (Heb. 3:12, 13). God permits the decision of the human will to be permanent in this case. God does not do this lightly or without cause, but in response to an offense against His love. A person who wants to repent, that is, to reverse the sins they may be guilty of, has not suffered this hardening and has not committed the profound act of hatred that God has determined He will not forgive. Anyone who has been born again will not commit this sin, because the Spirit lives in that person, and God is not divided against Himself (1 John 3:9). The other verses dealing with the unpardonable sin are Heb. 6:4-6; 10:26-29; and 1 John 5:16, 17. These show that the possibility of this sin depends on there being particular enlightenment and understanding from God and that it is not a common, everyday matter. Jesus said "all sins" and "whatever blasphemies" will be forgiven, excepting only this one sin. (The Reformation Study Bible)

Warren Wiersbe (comments on Matthew 12:31-32) Keep these things in mind when you consider the unpardonable sin: A. It is a sin of the heart, not the lips (Mt 12:34-35). The words from the lips are the evidence of the condition of the heart; and evil words indicate an evil heart. B. It is a sin committed in the light of great evidence. These men had seen Christ's miracles and yet hardened their hearts against Him. C. It is the sin of willful, persistent unbelief and final rejection of Jesus Christ. Adultery is not unpardonable (see John 8:1-11), nor is murder (God forgave David). But when a person persists in rejecting Christ and comes to the place where his heart is so calloused he has no concern for his eternal destiny, then it is too late. (Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the New Testament)

John Phillips has an interesting comment - The Bible speaks of three unpardonable sins. Two of them are dispensational and cannot be committed today. Blaspheming the Holy Spirit was the sin of seeing Jesus perform His mighty miracles and then saying that He did it in the power of Satan. Because the Lord is no longer here on earth performing His miracles, we cannot commit this sin. To receive the mark of the Beast in the coming days of the Antichrist is likewise unforgivable (Rev. 13:16-17; 14:9-11; 16:2). The one unpardonable sin that is committed by many people to this very day is the sin of unbelief (John 3:16, 18, 36; Rev. 21:8). The sin of blaspheming the Holy Spirit was a real and terrible sin. It had been committed in the hearing of the disciples a short while before (Rev 11:15). (Exploring the Gospel of Luke: An Expository Commentary)

Douglas O'Donnell - Walvoord's concise definition of the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit is "attributing to Satan what is accomplished by the power of God," basically doing what the Pharisees are doing here. And it involves, if we flesh out that basic definition a bit, the "combination of clear knowledge and deliberate rejection of Christ."11 So there's a certain amount of light in the head—one can see clearly who Jesus is, as plainly as the Pharisees saw his miracles—and yet there is hatred of that light in the heart. Therefore, blasphemy of the Holy Spirit is a knowledge of the light, a hatred of it, and I'll add (and this addition is key) that there is also an earnest and persistent effort to put out the light. With that definition in place, I can safely say that Matthew Henry's long-standing pastoral counsel on these verses is still appropriate. He wrote, "Those who fear they have committed this sin give a good sign that they have not." That is, if you are someone who has committed the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit, you won't care about the state of your soul because you've passed the point of no return (cf. Hebrews 12:17). You are so self-deceived that you've not only stopped believing in Jesus and some Holy Spirit ("that's like fairy tale stories, stuff for little children and ignorant old ladies"), but you have actually thought yourself so wise, so beyond others that you're now earning a nice living writing best-selling books about why Jesus' miracles never happened and how Jesus never said what we once thought he said. Such a person, who at one point may have tasted the truth of the gospel, has now spit it out (cf. Hebrews 6:4–6), and he or she wants others to spit it out as well. For such a person as this there is no chance of forgiveness because there is no chance of a change of heart. That person's heart is so hard it cannot soften. It cannot and will not repent no matter how obvious the evidence, even if a dead man would rise again on the third day. That's the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit and Jesus' warning about it. (Preaching the Word-Matthew)

Broadman Bible Commentary - The sternest warning attributed to Jesus appears in verses 31 f. Blasphemy against the Spirit is unforgivable (see the interchange of the terms Spirit of God, Spirit, and Holy Spirit in Mt 12:28, 31, 32). This must be understood in context. Jesus had restored sight and hearing to a demoniac. Unable to deny the deed, trusted religious leaders attributed its source to Beelzebul. They looked upon an obvious work of God and called it the work of Satan. Their problem was not one of the head but of the heart. This is wilful blindness, for which there can be no excuse. The ignorant may be informed and the weak may be strengthened, but by wilful rejection of God's Spirit one denies himself his only help toward repentance and faith. This passage seems harsh, but it is to be taken in all seriousness. Jesus is not saying that God is ever unwilling to forgive but that man can render himself unforgivable. This has to do with a condition in man. A parallel to this is found in John 9:1-41, where it is shown that the price of rejecting God's light is blindness. To close one's eyes is not to put out the light, but it is to put out one's sight. This is the principle behind "the unpardonable sin."To speak against the Son of man is forgivable, but to speak against the Holy Spirit is not. Possibly Jesus means that the problem is not with himself, the Son of man; for he is ever ready to forgive (cf. Broadus, pp. 271 ff.). But to speak against the Holy Spirit, as the Pharisees have done in a wilful act of disbelief and disobedience, is to deny oneself his only hope. It is for one to cut himself off from the one who alone can lead him to repentance. (
Broadman Bible Commentary – Matthew-Mark)

Thomas Constable - Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, in view of the context (vv. 24–28), involved attributing Jesus' works to Satan rather than to the Spirit. God would not forgive this sin because the person who committed it in Jesus' day was thereby strongly rejecting Jesus as the Messiah. Even today the only sin one can commit that God will not forgive and that will result in his or her eternal damnation is rejection of Jesus Christ. Attributing Jesus' works to Satan was blasphemy of the Spirit in Jesus' day and this resulted in damnation. **Can a person commit this sin today?** One can reject Jesus Christ, but one cannot blaspheme the Spirit in the same sense in which Jesus' contemporaries could. To do so one would have to observe Jesus doing His works and attribute them to Satan. One could say therefore that blasphemy against the Spirit was an unforgivable sin during Jesus' earthly ministry. The unforgivable sin at any time since Jesus began His earthly ministry to the present day is rejection of Jesus Christ. (Matthew 12 Commentary)

William MacDonald - There is reasonable doubt whether the unpardonable sin can be committed today, because He is not bodily present performing miracles. The unpardonable sin is not the same as rejecting the gospel; a man may spurn the Savior for years, then repent, believe, and be saved. (Of course, if he dies in unbelief, he remains unforgiven.) Nor is the unforgivable sin the same as backsliding; a believer may wander far from the Lord, yet be restored to fellowship in God's family. Many people worry that they have committed the unpardonable sin. Even if this sin could be committed today, the fact that a person is concerned is evidence that he is not guilty of it. Those who committed it were hard and unrelenting in their opposition to Christ. They had no qualms about insulting the Spirit and no hesitancy in plotting the death of the Son. They showed neither remorse nor repentance. (BBC)

Gotquestions comments that "The **blasphemy against the Holy Spirit**, specific as it was to the Pharisees' situation, cannot be duplicated today. Jesus Christ is not on earth, and no one can personally see Jesus perform a miracle and then attribute that power to Satan instead of the Spirit. The only **unpardonable sin** today is that of continued unbelief. There is no pardon for a person who dies in his rejection of Christ. The Holy Spirit is at work in the world, convicting the unsaved of sin, righteousness, and judgment (John 16:8). If a person resists that conviction and remains unrepentant, then he is choosing hell over heaven. "Without faith it is impossible to please God" (Hebrews 11:6), and the object of faith is Jesus (Acts 16:31). There is no forgiveness for someone who dies without faith in Christ." (Note)

Steven Cole has a very well reasoned discussion (commenting on the similar statement in Luke 12:10+) - Many people worry that perhaps they have committed the **unpardonable sin**. Jesus states that if a person speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him, but that the person who blasphemes the Holy Spirit shall not be forgiven. What did He mean? First, it is helpful to consider what Jesus did *not* mean. Clearly, He did not mean that a person, whether a pagan or a professing Christian, who utters a word of blasphemy in a moment of temptation is forever beyond the reach of God's grace. Peter horribly denied Christ and yet was restored. Paul says that he formerly was a blasphemer, yet he was shown mercy (1Ti 1:13). When Jesus drew a distinction between speaking a word against the Son of Man and a word against the Holy Spirit, He did not mean that somehow the Son of Man is not on the same level as the Spirit. (Luke 12:9+) shows that if a person denies Christ, that person will be denied at the judgment. Rather, He was drawing a distinction between the level of the offense. **The ministry of the Holy Spirit** is to bear witness to Jesus Christ (Jn 15:26) by convicting the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment (Jn 16:8). During Jesus' life on earth, the Holy Spirit bore witness especially through the miracles that Christ performed. The Jewish leaders, however, attributed those miracles to the power of Satan, not to the power of the Holy Spirit (Mk 3:22-30+). This was **the unpardonable sin**, because these leaders had sufficient evidence from the Spirit that Jesus was the Messiah, yet they hardened their hearts against Him. **This was not a case of men attributing Jesus' miracles to Satan on any one occasion, but rather of men who set their whole lives and hearts against the witness of the Spirit to Jesus Christ. To turn away from the light God gives results in a searing of the conscience and hardening of the heart that has no remedy. Such a person has no capacity to repent**. **Can this sin be committed today?** Some argue that since it specifically involved attributing Jesus' miracles to Satan, it could only be committed during His life on earth. But it seems to me that the warnings of Scripture are applicable today, even if the exact sense cannot be duplicated. In other words, a person today can repeatedly turn his heart away from the witness of the Holy Spirit to Jesus Christ until he reaches a point where he is hardened beyond remedy. God only knows when a person crosses that line, but the point is, unbelief is nothing to fool around with. If the Holy Spirit has been convicting a person of sin, righteousness, and judgment, and has been showing the person that Jesus Christ is God's anointed Savior, but the person rejects that witness, then he is on the path toward the unpardonable sin. He is in grave danger that God will withdraw the light he has been given and he will be hardened in unbelief. That is the unpardonable sin. **So the lesson for us is, if the Spirit of God is tugging on your heart, do not resist Him!** If He is drawing you toward Jesus Christ, but the lure of sin is drawing you the other direction, yield to Jesus Christ! Otherwise, you may cross the line and your time of opportunity will be lost forever! Thus Jesus' words here show us that we must beware of hypocrisy because we will stand before God for eternal judgment. (Confessing or Denying Christ)

Henry Morris - The unforgivable sin of speaking against the Holy Spirit has been interpreted in various ways, but the true meaning cannot contradict other Scripture. It is unequivocally clear that the one unforgivable sin is permanently rejecting Christ (John 3:18; 3:36). Thus, speaking against the Holy Spirit is equivalent to rejecting Christ with such finality that no future repentance is possible. "My spirit shall not always strive with man," God said long ago (Genesis 6:3). Jesus added: "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him" (John 6:44). In the context of this particular passage (Matthew 12:22-32), Jesus had performed a

great miracle of creation, involving both healing and casting out a demon, but the Pharisees rejected this clear witness of the Holy Spirit. Instead they attributed His powers to Satan, thus demonstrating an attitude permanently resistant to the Spirit, and to the deity and saving Gospel of Christ.

W A Criswell - The unpardonable sin is a knowledgeable, verbal, and continuous attributing of the work of the Holy Spirit to Satan (cf. Mark 3:22). Jesus' miracles were authentications of His Person and mission as the Son of God. Rather than admitting that His supernatural power was a manifestation of the Holy Spirit in Him, they ascribed it to hell (cf. 23:13-36; Luke 11:52). Thus the fatal sin is the denial of the Holy Spirit's testimony to Jesus as Savior and Lord, and results ultimately in rejection of the Son of God. (BSB)

Stuart Weber - The essence of the "unforgivable sin" is a refusal to accept forgiveness from Christ in the face of evidence that Jesus is the Christ. The unforgivable sin is deliberately and knowingly attributing the works of the Holy Spirit in the Messiah-Christ to Satan. The unrepentant person actually condemns himself, and God only confirms what that person has already determined. It also follows that the unforgivable sin exists only for the person who maintains his refusal of God's forgiveness throughout his lifetime. If at any time he changes his mind and desires forgiveness, Jesus' warning no longer applies to him. The sin that can actually never be forgiven is the consistent, lifelong refusal to bow to the Holy Spirit's conviction of sin and to accept the forgiveness that Christ offers. These religious leaders, like so many people today, refused to take an open-minded look at the evidence regarding Jesus as Messiah. They refused an honest consideration of the Christ and insisted on their own works-righteousness to justify them before God. (Holman NT Commentary)

Bruce Barton - There is one sin that cannot be forgiven—blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. "Blasphemy against the Spirit" refers not so much to a single action or word as to an attitude. Those who defiantly deny Jesus' power and persistently refuse to believe that he is the Messiah are blaspheming the Holy Spirit. Jesus was not talking about rejecting him, but of rejecting the power behind him. Jesus' words were addressed directly to the Pharisees. They had blasphemed the Spirit by attributing the power by which Christ did miracles to Satan instead of to the Holy Spirit. This is the unforgivable sin—the deliberate refusal to acknowledge God's power in Christ. It indicates an irreversible hardness of heart. Deliberate, ongoing rejection of the work of the Holy Spirit is blasphemy because it rejects God himself. The Pharisees' stubborn refusal to believe demonstrated an impenetrable hardness of heart; thus, forgiveness would not be possible because it never would be sought. The religious leaders accused Jesus of blasphemy (see Luke 5:21; John 10:33–36), but ironically they were the guilty ones because they looked Jesus in the face and accused him of being possessed by Satan. (Life Application Commentary)

David Turner - The solemn words of Mt 12:31–32 ought to be taken to heart by all readers of Matthew. But the question remains as to the precise nature of "the unpardonable sin." Well-meaning but over-zealous preachers have at times used this verse to threaten their listeners that to disbelieve the gospel message is to commit the unpardonable sin. In ministry, one may encounter individuals who are under the impression that there is no hope for them because they have "sinned away their day of grace." Theologians tend to interpret the unpardonable sin as the generic sin of unbelief, linking this Matthean passage to such texts as John 3:18; 16:9; 1 John 5:16. But as serious as general disbelief in Jesus is, those who take this passage as a reference to it are mistaken. The specific situation in Matthew 12 involves the Spirit-empowered miracles of Jesus, which ought to have been viewed as evidence of his messianic status (12:23) and his authority to forgive sins on earth (9:6). Far from simply disbelieving this, the Pharisees slandered the ministry of the Spirit through the Messiah by accusing Jesus of collaborating with the very forces his ministry was overpowering (12:29). Therefore, it would be wise for expositors to exercise caution in the broad application of this text to unbelief in general. **To be sure, ultimate unbelief in Jesus is unforgivable, but the point of this text is to underline not only unbelief in the face of clear evidence that Jesus is the Messiah, but also the slanderous perversion of this messianic evidence into demonic evidence. Today people are accountable to believe the gospel when they hear it, but this hardly warrants the notion that those who do not immediately accept Jesus have entered an unalterable state of unforgivable doom.** (Cornerstone Bible Commentary)

J C Ryle - **let us gather from these verses the exceeding sinfulness of sins against knowledge.**This is a practical conclusion which appears to flow naturally from our Lord's words about the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. Difficult as these words undoubtedly are, **they seem fairly to prove that there are degrees in sin.** Offences arising from ignorance of the true mission of the Son of Man, will not be punished so heavily as offences committed against the noontide light of the dispensation of the Holy Ghost. The brighter the light, the greater the guilt of him who rejects it. The clearer a man's knowledge of the nature of the Gospel, the greater his sin, if he wilfully refuses to repent and believe. **The doctrine here taught is one that does not stand alone in Scripture.** The writer to the Hebrews, "It is impossible for those who were once enlightened—if they

shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance." "If we sin wilfully, after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a fearful looking for of judgment." Heb. 6:4–7, and Heb 10:26, 27.) It is a doctrine of which we find mournful proofs in every quarter. **The unconverted children of godly parents, the unconverted servants of godly families, and the unconverted members of evangelical congregations are the hardest people on earth to impress. They seem past feeling. The same fire which melts the wax, hardens the clay**—It is a doctrine, moreover, which receives awful confirmation from the histories of some of those whose last ends were eminently hopeless. Pharaoh, and Saul, and Ahab, and Judas Iscariot, and Julian, and Francis Spira, are fearful illustrations of our Lord's meaning. In each of these cases there was a combination of clear knowledge and deliberate rejection of Christ (ED: I AM NOT AS SURE AS RYLE IS ABOUT KING SAUL). In each there was light in the head, but hatred of truth in the heart. And the end of each seems to have been blackness of darkness for ever. May God give us a will to use our knowledge, whether it be little or great! May we beware of neglecting our opportunities, and leaving our privileges unimproved! Have we light? Then let us live fully up to our light. Do we know the truth? Then let us walk in the truth. This is the best safeguard against the unpardonable sin.

William Lane - Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit forever removes a man beyond the sphere where forgiveness is possible. This solemn warning must be interpreted in the light of the specific situation in which it was uttered. Blasphemy is an expression of defiant hostility toward God ... "the profanation of the Name." ... This is the danger to which the scribes exposed themselves when they attributed to the agency of Satan the redemption brought by Jesus. The expulsion of demons was a sign of the intrusion of the Kingdom of God. Yet the scribal accusations against Jesus amount to a denial of the power and greatness of the Spirit of God. By assigning the action of God to a demonic origin the scribes betray a perversion of spirit which, in defiance of the truth, chooses to call light darkness. **In this historical context, blasphemy against the Holy Spirit denotes the conscious and deliberate rejection of the saving power and grace of God released through Jesus' word and act.... The failure of the scribes to recognize him as the Bearer of the Spirit and the Conqueror of Satan could be forgiven.** The considered judgment that his power was demonic, however, betrayed a defiant resistance to the Holy Spirit. This severe warning was not addressed to laymen but to carefully trained legal specialists whose task was to interpret the biblical law to the people. It was their responsibility to be aware of God's redemptive action. Their insensitivity to the Spirit through whom Jesus was qualified for his mission exposed them to grave peril. Their own tradition condemned their gross callousness as sharply as Jesus' word. **The admonition concerning blasphemy of the Holy Spirit is not to be divorced from this historical context and applied generally.** Mark emphasizes this by terminating the incident with a reference to the specific accusation that Jesus was possessed by an unclean spirit.... [R]epetition and a fixed attitude of mind ... brought the scribes to the brink of unforgivable blasphemy. (Lane, Mark, 145-56)

John Broadus - The conditions, then, under which this unpardonable sin of blasphemy against the Spirit of God is committed, are (1) that there shall be a work manifestly supernatural, unmistakably the work of God and not of man, and (2) that one shall, in determined and malignant opposition, insultingly ascribe to Satan this which he knows to be the work of God. Now, are these conditions ever fulfilled, except in an age of miracles? Can any other divine work, as, for instance, the conversion of a friend, or a general revival of spirituality, be so unquestionably and unmistakably the work of God, that a person ascribing it to Satan is guilty, not merely of sin, but of that flagrant and deeply malignant blasphemy against God which is unpardonable? This is the question to be decided; and it can hardly be decided in the affirmative.

Daniel Akin - The unpardonable sin is to knowingly, willingly, and persistently attribute to Satan the works of God done by and in Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit, who testifies to these truths in your heart. (1) It is a sin of full knowledge. (2) It is an ongoing disposition of the heart that resists the conviction of the Holy Spirit. (3) It is a verbal act that attributes the works of the Holy Spirit to Satan. (4) It is a willful rejection of God's grace in Jesus. (5) It is rooted in unbelief. (6) It is a sin a Christian cannot commit. (7) It is a sin not committed by one who is concerned that he may have committed it. (Exalting Jesus in Mark)

Ray Pritchard - A while back, I received a letter from a prisoner who had committed a terrible crime. Now behind bars, he felt deep remorse and feared that he had committed the unpardonable sin. I wrote him back and told him that he had definitely not committed the unpardonable sin. How could I be so sure? The one certain mark of the unpardonable sin is that you would never care that you had committed it. It's not just any sin; it's a hard-hearted, persistent, deliberate and final rejection of the Lord. Such a person takes the key to heaven and deliberately throws it away. He says, "I'd rather go to hell," and then laughs about it. Anyone who worries about committing the unpardonable sin shows that they still have a conscience.

Alan Carr - Can This Sin Be Committed Today? Yes! Here's How! 1. The Holy Spirit still testifies of Jesus, declaring Him to be all that the Scriptures say He is John 15:26 2. The Holy Spirit still convicts of sin John 16:7-10; John 6:44 3. The Unpardonable Sin is simply rejecting the Spirit's witness of the Son and therefore, refusing to receive Him as Personal Savior 1 John 5:12; John 3:36. No other sin can send you to Hell! Everything else was paid for at the Cross. But for you to be saved, you must receive the witness of the Spirit and ask Jesus into your heart!! ⇒ Psalm 19 tells us that the heavens themselves declare the existence of God Psa. 19:1-3. But, you can reject that revelation for a while later come to know Jesus. The Scriptures tell us that Jesus Christ is the "Son of God" Mat. 16:16. Yet, you can reject that for a time and later come to know the Lord in eternal salvation. You can deny all the evidence around you and refuse to believe and still not commit the unpardonable sin. Yet, when the Holy Spirit of God deals with your heart, and you see for yourself that the claims of the Scriptures are true. When the Spirit shows you that Jesus really is God and is the only hope for sinners. That He really did die and rise again and that you can be saved if you will only trust Him. When you say no to the Spirit of God, then you have crossed that line!! You are guilty of committing the Unpardonable Sin! That isn't to say that God won't give you 1, 2, 10 or even dozens more chances, but it doesn't mean He will either! Saying "No" to the pleading of the Spirit is a serious thing! Eventually, it will lead to Hell, unless the sinner says, "Yes!" After all, Jesus is the only hope man has for salvation Acts 4:12; John 14:6; Acts 16:31) (Have You Committed The Unpardonable Sin?)

C H Spurgeon - "I believe I have committed the unpardonable sin," someone says. My dear brother, I believe you have not. I want you to call one thing to remembrance, and that is that the unpardonable sin is a sin which is unto death. Now a sin which is unto death means a sin which brings death on the conscience. The man who commits it never has any conscience afterwards; he is dead there. Now, you have some feeling. You have enough life to wish to be saved from sin. You have enough life to long to be washed in the precious blood of Jesus. You have not committed the unpardonable sin. Therefore, have hope.

D. L. Moody told the story of an aged minister who believed he had committed the unpardonable sin. After much inner turmoil, he gave in to what he mistakenly thought to be God's will—for him to be lost. Then something within him whispered, "Suppose there is a hell for you, what would you, with your disposition, do there?' The quick answer was, "I would set up a prayer meeting." With those words came the light of God to show the absurdity of his fears. The very fact that he feared he had committed this sin, plus his deep concern, proved he had not.)

Stuart Weber - The essence of the "unforgivable sin" is a refusal to accept forgiveness from Christ in the face of evidence that Jesus is the Christ. The unforgivable sin is deliberately and knowingly attributing the works of the Holy Spirit in the Messiah-Christ to Satan. The unrepentant person actually condemns himself, and God only confirms what that person has already determined. It also follows that the unforgivable sin exists only for the person who maintains his refusal of God's forgiveness throughout his lifetime. If at any time he changes his mind and desires forgiveness, Jesus' warning no longer applies to him. The sin that can actually never be forgiven is the consistent, lifelong refusal to bow to the Holy Spirit's conviction of sin and to accept the forgiveness that Christ offers. These religious leaders, like so many people today, refused to take an open-minded look at the evidence regarding Jesus as Messiah. They refused an honest consideration of the Christ and insisted on their own works-righteousness to justify them before God. In his confrontation with the Pharisees, Jesus was able to discern the hardened hearts of his opponents. He knew they would persist in their disbelief for life. Thus, he announced that they were guilty of the unforgivable sin. Under Mosaic Law, blasphemy incurred a death sentence (Lev. 24:10-23). (Holman New Testament Commentary – Matthew)

Craig Blomberg - This is not the only place in the New Testament in which an unforgivable sin appears (cf. Heb 6:4–6; 1 John 5:16). Christians have often tried to identify this sin with such things as murder, adultery, or divorce; and individual believers have often wondered if they have committed such a sin. Even if all the details are unclear, we should observe that in this text only Jesus' enemies are in any danger—those who have never professed any allegiance to him and, at least in the pages of Scripture, never do. Instead, they intensify their opposition to the point of crucifying him. Probably blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is nothing more or less than the unrelenting rejection of his advances. Jesus' teaching thus parallels Acts 4:12. If one rejects the Spirit of God in Jesus, there is no one else in all the cosmos who can provide salvation. But we dare never label anyone as having committed this sin. Only God knows human hearts, and we would often make the wrong guess. Moreover, professing believers who fear they have committed the unforgivable sin demonstrate a concern for their spiritual welfare which by definition proves they have not committed it. (NAC-Mt)

R C H Lenski - this sin cannot be pardoned because it shuts out the very possibility of repentance. Other sins

and other blasphemies do not render repentance impossible. It is the Spirit who works repentance, and to blaspheme him bars out him and his work. The point to be noted, however, is that, as far as the symptom of blasphemy is concerned, this need not name the Spirit in its vicious utterance, it may name only Jesus and yet be against the Spirit.We are unable to judge which blasphemer has gone too far and placed himself beyond remission already in this life; all we can say is that he who fears that he has committed this sin by that very fear furnishes evidence that he has not done so. This sin cannot be committed inadvertently or unconsciously. Its commission is possible only where the Spirit has come upon a man through the Word and has been recognized as God's Spirit with his divine grace and power to save. When a man deliberately answers him with blasphemy he puts himself forever beyond the Spirit's reach, into the unalterable condition of the devils and of the damned in hell. This sin thus constitutes his character indelebilis. (The Interpretation of St. Luke's Gospel)

John Walvoord - The Pharisees had to make a choice. They were either with Jesus or against Him. But if they were against Him, they were guilty of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, a sin which by its nature is not forgiven (Mt 12:31–32). There has been much misunderstanding about blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. **Here it is properly defined as attributing to Satan what is accomplished by the power of God.**Such a sin is not unpardonable in itself, but rather because it rejects the person and work of the Holy Spirit, without whom repentance and restoration are impossible. As far as it applies today, it is not the thought that one seeking pardon will not find it, but rather that one who rejects the Holy Spirit will not seek pardon. It is the ultimate in unbelief. (Matthew Commentary)

John Walvoord - This declaration of Christ has raised the question as to whether there are some sins that are not subject to pardon. The point is that if they reject the demonstration that Christ is the Son of God on the basis of the miracles He performs, they are denying what the Holy Spirit is using to bring conviction and faith; and as long as they do this, their sins are not subject to being pardoned. In the twentieth century this sin is no longer possible because no one is a witness to these miracles, but the principle abides that rejecting the ministry of the Holy Spirit to an individual can lead to his confirmed unbelief. The rejection of the very instrument which God uses to bring faith can only result in the penalty assigned to unbelievers. (Every Prophecy of the Bible)

ESV Study Bible - The sin is attributing to Satan what is accomplished by the power of God, and doing this through the flagrant, willful, and persistent rejection of God and his commands. This sin is committed today only by unbelievers who deliberately and unchangeably reject the ministry of the Holy Spirit in calling them to salvation.

Spiros Zodhiates - According to verse 31, any sin or blasphemy against the Son of man can be forgiven. Even on the cross, Jesus asked His Father to forgive those crucifying Him. But blasphemy against the One who reveals the truth about Christ cannot be forgiven. Jesus said that when the Holy Spirit would come, "He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment" (John 16:8). The one who irrevocably rejects this conviction has no recourse: It "**shall absolutely not** [ouk 3756} ; **the absolute negative** used in both Mt 12:31, 32] be forgiven him" (a.t.). Those who blaspheme the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven, "neither in this age [aiōn 165, age, including the prevailing philosophy] nor in the coming one [méllonti {3195}, the one impending, coming soon]" (a.t.). What people embrace as truth in this life will follow them into eternity. "As it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Heb. 9:27). (Exegetical Commentary on Matthew)

Brian Bill has two quotes -

- **Matt Chandler** puts it: “The **blasphemy of the Spirit** is the knowledgeable, willful and continued rebellion against the ministry of the Holy Spirit.”
- **Sam Storms** adds, “It is not a careless act but a calloused attitude…it is not mere denial, but determined denial; not mere rejection, but wanton, willful, wicked, wide-eyed rejection.” It’s a deliberate refusal of the work and ministry of the Holy Spirit. (Mark 3:20-30 The Unforgivable Sin)

John MacArthur adds "The eternal sin for them was this, “Jesus is demonic.” They went to hell for that. You say, “Wait a minute. What if I said that? Would I go to hell for that?” Not necessarily if you said that without full information. That’s a blasphemy that’s forgivable. Right? But if that’s your final conclusion with full revelation, if that’s your response to the full understanding of the Gospel, the full revelation of Christ contained on the pages of Scripture, if that’s your final conclusion, you could never be forgiven, because you’ve had full revelation; you’ve had full light. What else is there? You can’t get anymore. If that’s your final conclusion, that’s an eternal sin.....If you were there (IN JESUS' DAY IN PALESTINE), and you saw it, and you heard it, and your final

conclusion was, "He's demonic," you're damned; you can't be saved, because that's your ultimate conclusion with full revelation. So, **this is unique to those people who had that full revelation. What about today? Could somebody commit this? Right, they could.** Look, we've all been forgiven for rejecting Christ, haven't we? We've all been forgiven for rejecting Christ because we weren't born saved. So, we've all been forgiven for that. **But the one that won't be forgiven is the one called the apostate who gets full exposure to the truth, full exposure to the Gospel, full revelation, and makes the final conclusion, "It's not true; I reject Christ. It's a deception." That's where you end up after full exposure; that's what's called apostasy. That's unforgivable.** (The Unforgivable Sin)

Sin (266)(**hamartia**) literally conveys the idea of missing the mark as when hunting with a bow and arrow (in Homer some hundred times of a warrior hurling his spear but missing his foe). Later **hamartia** came to mean missing or falling short of any goal, standard, or purpose. **Hamartia** in the Bible signifies a departure from God's holy, perfect standard of what is right in word or deed (righteous). It pictures the idea of missing His appointed goal (His will) which results in a deviation from what is pleasing to Him. In short, sin is conceived as a missing the true end and scope of our lives, which is the Triune God Himself. As **Martin Luther** put it "*Sin is essentially a departure from God*." **John MacArthur** comments on **sin** and **blasphemy** in Matthew 12:31+ -

"**Sin** here represents the full gamut of immoral and ungodly thoughts and actions, whereas **blasphemy** represents conscious denouncing and rejection of God. **Blasphemy** is defiant irreverence, the uniquely terrible sin of intentionally and openly speaking evil against holy God or defaming or mocking Him (cf. Mark 2:7+). The Old Testament penalty for such **blasphemy** was death by stoning (Leviticus 24:16+). In the last days **blasphemy** will be an outstanding characteristic of those who rebelliously and insolently oppose God (Revelation 13:5–6+ [ED: SEE ALSO ANTICHRIST IN Da 11:36+]; Rev 16:9+; Rev 17:3+)." (MNTC-Mt)

Tony Garland has some interesting comments that relate to the "**unpardonable sin**" in his discussion of a group of people known as the earth dwellers in the end times **who will not be able to repent** (aka "the unpardonable sin"). John records that these "Men were scorched with fierce heat; and **they blasphemed the name of God** who has the power over these plagues, and **they did not repent so as to give Him glory.**" (Rev 16:9+) **Garland** comments "Here again is recorded the unrepentant nature of the earth dwellers of the time of the end. Even in the face of overwhelming evidence of the reality and power of God, their hearts are so set against Him in hatred that all they can do is continue their pattern of cursing in response to His intervention in their lives (Rev. 16:9▸, Rev 16:11▸, Rev 16:21▸). Those who have taken the mark are irredeemable (Rev. 14:9-11▸) for God knows that they, like Jezebel in the church of Thyatira (Rev. 2:21▸) will not repent (Rev 9:20-21▸). Instead, they follow in the ways of the one whom they worship (Rev. 13:5-6▸; Rev 17:3▸). God's testing is not always to elicit a repentant response. When those being tested have passed the point of return, God continues to test them to provide abundant witness of their unwillingness and inability to return (Ro 1:26+, Ro 1:28+). This is one purpose for this "hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth" (Rev. 3:10▸). In the same way the Holy Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness to *show Who He was*, so now God tests those who have already taken the mark and are beyond redemption (Rev. 14:9-10▸) . **Like Pharaoh, their consistent response is not to *change their mind* but to *harden their heart*** (Ex. 8:15; Ex 9:34-35 ED: NOTE THAT FINALLY AFTER PHARAOH REPEATEDLY, WILLFULLY HARDENED HIS HEART JEHOVAH STEPS IN AND HARDENED HIS HEART IN Ex 9:12! PHARAOH HAD CROSSED THE LINE!). **Each time they respond in blasphemy, they unwittingly underwrite and testify of the justice of God's judgment.** See Beast Worshipers are Unique. (See Garlands' Commentary on the Revelation - the best literal commentary available in my opinion and it is free!)

Blasphemy (slander)(988)(**blasphemia** from **blapto** = hinder, injure, hurt + **pheme** = report, rumor, fame from **phemí** = to speak) means literally **to speak to harm** and to verbal abuse against someone which denotes the very worst type of slander, calculated to hurt the reputation of another. It is speech which seeks to wound someone's reputation by evil reports or evil speaking. In Classical Greek **blasphemia/blasphemeo** represented the strongest expression of personal defamation. 17x in NT - Matt. 12:31; Matt. 15:19; Matt. 26:65; Mk. 3:28; Mk. 7:22; Mk. 14:64; Lk. 5:21; Jn. 10:33; Eph. 4:31; Col. 3:8; 1 Tim. 6:4; Jude 1:9; Rev. 2:9; Rev. 13:1; Rev. 13:5; Rev. 13:6; Rev. 17:3

Shall be forgiven (863)(**aphiemi** from **apo** = prefix speaks of separation, putting some distance

between + **hiemi** = put in motion, send) conveys the basic idea of an action which causes separation. Literally aphiemi means to send from one's self, to forsake, to hurl away, to put away, let alone, disregard, put off. It means "to send away," to remove the sin from the sinner so that he is free of it, and so that the sin can never be found and charged against him before the judgment bar of God. In one secular writing we read "**let the pot drop**". From this early literal use the word came to mean leave or let go.**Aphiemi** in Matthew - Matt. 3:15; Matt. 4:11; Matt. 4:20; Matt. 4:22; Matt. 5:24; Matt. 5:40; Matt. 6:12; Matt. 6:14; Matt. 6:15; Matt. 7:4; Matt. 8:15; Matt. 8:22; Matt. 9:2; Matt. 9:5; Matt. 9:6; Matt. 12:31; Matt. 12:32; Matt. 13:30; Matt. 13:36; Matt. 15:14; Matt. 18:12; Matt. 18:21; Matt. 18:27; Matt. 18:32; Matt. 18:35; Matt. 19:14; Matt. 19:27; Matt. 19:29; Matt. 22:22; Matt. 22:25; Matt. 23:13; Matt. 23:23; Matt. 23:38; Matt. 24:2; Matt. 24:40; Matt. 24:41; Matt. 26:44; Matt. 26:56; Matt. 27:49; Matt. 27:50

THOUGHT - Is there someone regarding whom you need to "drop the pot"? Holding on to a smoldering pot can burn your hand! Unforgiveness is destructive and enslaving! Forgiveness is freeing! Forgive means to set free and the wonderful irony is that the person who forgives (sets free the one that needed forgiveness) is also set free. **D L Moody** said that "Those who say they will forgive but can't forget, simply bury the hatchet but leave the handle out for immediate use!" In case you think you have a sin committed against you that you simply cannot forgive, you need to ponder the convicting illustration of Corrie ten Boom and her former **Ravensbruck** Nazi guard!

Related Resources:

- What is the unpardonable sin / unforgivable sin?
- What is the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit?
- What is the greatest sin?
- Is there any sin that God will not forgive?
- What is the role of the Holy Spirit in our lives today?
- What is blasphemy? What does it mean to blaspheme?

Matthew 12:32 "Whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come.

NET Matthew 12:32 Whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven. But whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.

GNT Matthew 12:32 κα ς ν ε π λ γον κατ το υ ο το νθρ που, φεθ σεται α τ · ς δ ν ε π κατ το πνε ματος το γ ου, ο κ φεθ σεται α τ ο τε ν το τ τ α νι ο τε ν τ μ λλοντι.

NLT Matthew 12:32 Anyone who speaks against the Son of Man can be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven, either in this world or in the world to come.

KJV 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.

ESV Matthew 12:32 And whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.

NIV Matthew 12:32 Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.

ASV Matthew 12:32 And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever shall speak against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, nor in that which is to come.

CSB Matthew 12:32 Whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him. But whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the one to come.

NKJ Matthew 12:32 "Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come.

NRS Matthew 12:32 Whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but whoever speaks

against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.

YLT Matthew 12:32 And whoever may speak a word against the Son of Man it shall be forgiven to him, but whoever may speak against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this age, nor in that which is coming.

NAB Matthew 12:32 And whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven; but whoever speaks against the holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.

NJB Matthew 12:32 And anyone who says a word against the Son of man will be forgiven; but no one who speaks against the Holy Spirit will be forgiven either in this world or in the next.

GWN Matthew 12:32 Whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven. But whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven in this world or the next.

BBE Matthew 12:32 And whoever says a word against the Son of man, will have forgiveness; but whoever says a word against the Holy Spirit, will not have forgiveness in this life or in that which is to come.

- **whoever**: Mt 11:19 13:55 Lu 7:34 23:34 Joh 7:12,52 Ac 3:14,15,19 Ac 26:9-11 1Ti 1:13,15
- **but**: Joh 7:39 Heb 6:4-6 10:26-29
- **it shall not**: Job 36:13 Mk 3:29 Lu 16:23-26
- Matthew 12 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

SPEAKING AGAINST THE SON OR THE SPIRIT

Whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him- As alluded to above, this is exactly what Peter did in his triple denial of Christ finally with cursing and swearing declaring "I do not know this man (JESUS) you are talking about!"(Mk 14:71) But this very Man Peter denied forgave and restored Him (Read John 21:15-17). Note that the pronoun **WHOEVER** opens wide the door to any who would come, reminding us of Paul's words in Romans that "**WHOEVER** WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED." (Ro 10:13) One is also reminded of the Lord's great invitation

> **Come** to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. 29 "**Take** My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. 30 "For My yoke is easy and My burden is light." (Mt 11:28-30+)

Hendriksen explains from the context (always the key to accurate interpretation -Keep Context King) it is clear that what **makes this sin unforgivabl**e is "that the Pharisees are ascribing to Satan what the Holy Spirit, through Christ, is achieving. Moreover, they are doing this willfully, deliberately. In spite of all the evidences to the contrary they still affirm that Jesus is expelling demons by the power of Beelzebul. Not only this, but they are making progress in sin, as a comparison between Mt 9:11; Mt 12:2; and Mt 12:14 clearly shows. Now, as has already been indicated, to be forgiven implies that the sinner be truly **penitent**. Among the Pharisees here described such genuine sorrow for sin is totally lacking. **For penitence they substitute hardening, for confession plotting**. **Thus, by means of their own criminal and completely inexcusable callousness, they are dooming themselves. Their sin is unpardonable because they are unwilling to tread the path that leads to pardon.** For a thief, an adulterer, and a murderer there is hope. The message of the Gospel may cause him to cry out, "O God be merciful to me, the sinner." (Lk 18:13+) But when a man has become hardened (ED: CF "SPIRITUAL ATHEROSCLEROSIS"), so that he has made up his mind not to pay any attention to the promptings of the Spirit, not even to listen to His pleading and warning voice, he has placed himself on the road that leads to perdition. He has sinned the sin "unto death" (1 Jn 5:16+; see also Heb. 6:4–8)." (BNTC-Mt)

BUT - As in the preceding passage, this term of contrast presents a dramatic contrast of forgiveness and fates!

THE STRIKING CONTRAST	
WHOEVER	**WHOEVER**
Speaks against the Son	**Speaks against the Spirit**
Shall be forgiven	**Shall never be forgiven**

Whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him- **Speaks against the Holy Spirit** is synonymous with **blasphemy against the Spirit** in Mt 12:32. As discussed above, this warning was primarily directed against the scribes and Pharisees who witnessed Jesus' miraculous ministry, and in essence cut themselves off from God's mercy because of their rebellious, recalcitrant, rejection of the Spirit's works though Jesus, even attributing them to the power of Satan. But notice the

pronoun **whoever** which opens the application of this truth to more than just first century scribes and Pharisees!**Whoever** speaks this way seals eternal destiny!

Either in this age or in the age to come - This simply means it shall never be forgiven. Do not misinterpret this phrase to suggest there will be forgiveness in the next life, for that is absolutely not what this is teaching. This is no support for the false teaching of purgatory! All Jesus is saying is that forever and ever this particular sin will not be forgiven. It is as we say today "One and Done!" One sin like this against the Spirit and one is done forever, forever confined to Hell!

ILLUSTRATION - During World War II, an American naval force in the North Atlantic was engaged in heavy battle with enemy ships and submarines on an exceptionally dark night. Six planes took off from the carrier to search out those targets, but while they were in the air a total blackout was ordered for the carrier in order to protect it from attack. Without lights on the carrier's deck the six planes could not possibly land, and they made a radio request for the lights to be turned on just long enough for them to come in. But because the entire carrier, with its several thousand men as well as all the other planes and equipment, would have been put in jeopardy, no lights were permitted. When the six planes ran out of fuel, they had to ditch in the freezing water and all crew members perished into eternity.There comes a time when God turns out the lights, when further opportunity for salvation is forever lost. That is why Paul told the Corinthians, "Now is 'the acceptable time,' behold, now is 'the day of salvation' " (2 Cor. 6:2). One who rejects full light can have no more light-and no forgiveness. (John MacArthur)

ILLUSTRATION - Aaron Burr was one of the most brilliant men ever produced in the United States. He was a brilliant student at Princeton University, and for over a hundred years the academic record that Aaron Burr had was the record in that great institution. About twenty years ago I went to the campus of Princeton two years for a series of meetings on the campus, and while I was there, there was a young man by the name of Bill Rush. He was in the Princeton Evangelical Fellowship. And the talk among the evangelicals and among their friends was that finally, someone on the campus of Princeton has a chance to beat the academic record of Aaron Burr. This was back in about 1955 or '56. Mr. Burr had died around 1840 as I remember, maybe a few years before that. So he was a brilliant man whose record was unusual. When he was on the campus of Princeton, a revival broke out, and he was deeply convicted of sin. His roommate was a Christian, and his roommate urged him to accept Christ. He went to one of his professors, and one of his professors gave him a Bible and he said to him, "Aaron, take this to your room and settle the matter on your knees." **Instead of doing that, he tried to shake off the power of the Holy Spirit in testimony to Christ. And finally, in desperation, as he said later, he cried out, "O God, let me alone, and I'll let you alone."** He said as soon as he said that, all conviction of sin left him. Many years later, he met a friend whom he admired very much and his friend said, "Dr. Burr, I'd like you to meet a friend of mine." He said any friend of yours I'd like to meet, too. He said, "I'd like for you to meet Jesus Christ." And when he said that, the cold sweat – perspiration, we say – the cold perspiration popped out on his forehead, and he told how at the age of 19 he said his prayer in which he addressed to God, God, let me alone and I'll let you alone. And then he said to his friend, "From that day to this, I've never had one desire to become a Christian." It is possible for me to receive testimony, to reject testimony. They reject it over and over and over again until there comes a time when only judgment can come.

See **ILLUSTRATION** of the French philosopher Voltaire.

Norman Geisler - Does Jesus' statement about no forgiveness in this life for the sin mentioned in this verse support the Roman Catholic doctrine of purgatory? Matthew 12:32

Misinterpretation: In this passage Jesus said there would never be forgiveness for blasphemy of the Holy Spirit. From this verse noted Roman Catholic scholar Ludwig Ott infers that this "leaves open the possibility that sins are forgiven not only in this world but in the world to come" (Ott, 1960, 483). Does this verse really support the Catholic belief that believers will be punished for the temporal consequences of their sins in purgatory?

Correcting the Misinterpretation: The Catholic use of this passage to support the concept of forgiveness of the temporal consequences of our sins after death fails for several reasons. First, this text is not speaking about forgiveness in the next life after suffering for sins, but rather indicates that there will be no forgiveness for this sin in the world to come (Matt. 12:32). How can the denial that this sin will not ever be forgiven, even after death, be the basis for speculation that sins will be forgiven in the next life? According to Catholic teaching, purgatory involves only venial sins, but this sin is not venial; it is mortal, being eternal and unforgivable. How can a statement about the unforgiveness of a mortal sin in the next life be the basis for an argument that nonmortal sins will be forgiven then? What is more, the passage is not even speaking about punishment, which Catholics affirm will occur in purgatory. So how could this text be used to support the concept of purgatorial punishment? Even The New Catholic Encyclopedia frankly acknowledges that "the doctrine of Purgatory is not explicitly stated in the Bible" (11:1034). Indeed, it is not implicitly taught in Scripture either, since the Roman Catholic use of Scripture to support purgatory does violence to the contexts of the texts employed.

If this passage did imply punishment, it is not for those who will eventually be saved (as Catholics believe is the case with those who

go to purgatory) but of those who will never be saved. Again, how can a passage not speaking about punishment for the saved after death be used as a basis for belief in purgatory which affirms punishment for the saved? In view of these strong differences, the fact that Roman Catholic scholars cite this verse in support of the doctrine of purgatory indicates the lack of real biblical support for this doctrine. (Correcting the Cults: Expert Responses to Their Scripture Twisting)

Matthew 12:33 "Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for the tree is known by its fruit.

Wuest Either declare the tree good and its fruit good, or declare the tree rotten and its fruit rotten, for by its fruit is the tree known.

NET Matthew 12:33 "Make a tree good and its fruit will be good, or make a tree bad and its fruit will be bad, for a tree is known by its fruit.

GNT Matthew 12:33 ποι σατε τ δ νδρον καλ ν κα τ ν καρπ ν α το καλ ν, ποι σατε τ δ νδρον σαπρ ν κα τ ν καρπ ν α το σαπρ ν· κ γ ρ το καρπο τ δ νδρον γιν σκεται.

NLT Matthew 12:33 "A tree is identified by its fruit. If a tree is good, its fruit will be good. If a tree is bad, its fruit will be bad.

KJV 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.

ESV Matthew 12:33 "Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad, for the tree is known by its fruit.

NIV Matthew 12:33 "Make a tree good and its fruit will be good, or make a tree bad and its fruit will be bad, for a tree is recognized by its fruit.

ASV Matthew 12:33 Either make the tree good, and its fruit good; or make the tree corrupt, and its fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by its fruit.

CSB Matthew 12:33 "Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for a tree is known by its fruit.

NKJ Matthew 12:33 "Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or else make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for a tree is known by its fruit.

NRS Matthew 12:33 "Either make the tree good, and its fruit good; or make the tree bad, and its fruit bad; for the tree is known by its fruit.

YLT Matthew 12:33 'Either make the tree good, and its fruit good, or make the tree bad, and its fruit bad, for from the fruit is the tree known.

NAB Matthew 12:33 "Either declare the tree good and its fruit is good, or declare the tree rotten and its fruit is rotten, for a tree is known by its fruit.

NJB Matthew 12:33 'Make a tree sound and its fruit will be sound; make a tree rotten and its fruit will be rotten. For the tree can be told by its fruit.

GWN Matthew 12:33 "Make a tree good, and then its fruit will be good. Or make a tree rotten, and then its fruit will be rotten. A person can recognize a tree by its fruit.

BBE Matthew 12:33 Make the tree good, and its fruit good; or make the tree bad, and its fruit bad; for by its fruit you will get knowledge of the tree.

- **make the good tree**, Mt 23:26 Eze 18:31 Am 5:15 Lu 11:39,40 Jas 4:8
- **and his fruit good:** Mt 3:8-10 Mt 7:16-20 Lu 3:9 6:43,44 Joh 15:4-7 Jas 3:12
- Matthew 12 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Matthew 7:16-20+ "You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles, are they? 17 "So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. 18 "A good tree

cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. 19 “Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 “So then, you will know them by their fruits.

AN AXIOMATIC TRUTH

Axiomatic means evident without proof or argument, self-evident, self-explanatory. If something is axiomatic, it seems to be obviously true. What Jesus is doing in this section is pointing out the root of the Pharisees' problem, beginning with the axiom that a tree produces after its nature and is easily recognized by its fruit. Given the fact that the Pharisees have just uttered the most damning words a human being can speak, Jesus launches into a discussion of the tongue in Mt 12:33-37, concluding in verse 37 "by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.” Thus it behooves us to pay careful attention to this section so that we come to understand the importance of our words and how they relate to our eternal destiny!

Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for the tree is known by its fruit- This is an axiomatic truth, a simple illustration of the truth that a **good tree** produces **good fruit**, and a **bad tree** produces **bad fruit** (similar illustrations in Mt 7:17, 20; Luke 6:43–44). **Make** (poieo) normally means to do something, but that is not the meaning in this context. Jesus is not telling them to **make** a good and bad tree. First note that both uses of the verb **make** are commands in the aorist imperative . Second, note that in this context poieo conveys the alternative sense of to think about, to consider, to ponder, so He is saying in your thinking, judging or evaluating, you must be consistent. In other words the idea is the tree and its fruit must coincide - good trees, good fruit, bad trees, bad fruit. Wuest's paraphrase conveys the idea better than most of the more literal translations -- "Either **declare** the tree good and its fruit good, or **declare** the tree rotten and its fruit rotten, for by its fruit is the tree known." This is **axiomatic** or taken for granted and this is what He is commanding the Pharisees to ponder. They are to “Consider the tree good and its fruit good, or else consider the tree corrupt and its fruit corrupt.” In other words, Jesus is saying declare the tree good if it has good fruit, and because of His good works of miraculous healings and exorcisms they should have spoken good words and declared Him a "good tree." Instead, they spoke evil, even blasphemous words and declared Him an "evil tree." But ultimately their words put them in a bind as He pointed out in Mt 12:27. Why so? Because if they said what He was doing was evil, then their own sons were doing evil. But they considered what their own sons did as good. So He boxed them in a corner. They were trapped by their own words. Jesus is commanding them to be consistent because the character of His own life (GOOD) should have been clear to them from the good fruit He accomplished (healings and exorcisms were "good fruit"). Thus they should cAnd by implication, they should have called Him a "good tree" instead of a "bad tree."

> **John MacArthur** says it this way - "And so the Lord is saying, “How can you say, when I cast out demons – which your own disciples also do – how can you say that I am evil, when you acknowledge that that is a good thing to do. If that which I do is good, then the tree is good; but if I am evil, then doing that is evil. And if doing that is evil, then your own disciples are doing evil.” So they were trapped....they (PHARISEES) had just reversed that, you see. They (CONSIDERED THAT THEIR SONS) were good and Jesus was evil."

In sum, the Pharisees were inconsistent in their conclusions, in what they said, IN THEIR WORDS. And so Jesus will now expound on the importance of one's WORDS!

For the tree is known by its fruit- This is a straightforward statement that one can know what kind of tree they are looking at by examining its fruit. If you see peaches on the tree, you know it is a preach tree. Of course Jesus is speaking not of peaches but people, in context especially Pharisees. He is teaching that you can tell what kind of people they are by the words they speak.

> **THOUGHT** - Is this not convicting? We all speak words, but do we really pay attention to what we say? Do we really comprehend that what we say "speaks volumes" (pun intended) about who we really are? I fear too often I do not think about this axiomatic truth! I was in church today with a man I had invited to come several months ago. I don't know if he could see me grimace as I heard him use 2-3 (small) curse words in our short conversation before the service began. I do not know his heart, but can assure you I will begin to pray for a sure salvation (whereas before I had been praying more for progressive sanctification). In writing these notes on the "weight of words" I began to have some concerns about the state of his heart.

H A Ironside adds that here Jesus "calls for a clean-cut distinction between evil and good. Every tree is known by its fruit. His life of holiness was the testimony to the reality of His claim. Their evil lives were the evidence of their corrupt hearts." (H. A. Ironside Commentary – Matthew)

> **Make...make** (both)(4160)(**poieo**) normally means to make, do, accomplish but here is used in a specialized sense to refer to mental activity and thus the idea is to consider, regard or suppose.
>
> **Good** (2570)(**kalos**) describes that which is inherently excellent or intrinsically good, providing some special or

superior benefit. **Kalos** is good with emphasis (as discussed below) on that which is beautiful, handsome, excellent, surpassing, precious, commendable, admirable.

Bad (rotten) (4550)(**sapros**) from sepo = cause to decay, to putrefy, to rot away, be corrupted) describes that which is rotten, putrefying, corrupt, disgusting, perishing, rank, foul, putrid, worthless (e.g., in Mt 7:17,18 = fruit, in Mt 13:48 = fish). In secular writings sapros was used to describe spoiled fish, rotten grapes on the ground, crumbling stones. The basic meaning relates to the process of decay. Sapros is used of things unusable, unfit, bad. It describes that which is harmful due to the fact that it is corrupt and corrupting or defiling.

Broadus - There the thought is that we must test character (TREE) by conduct (FRUIT); here it is that conduct (including speech) is all the more important because it corresponds to and reveals character.

Only Matthew records Mt 12:33-37 which deals with one's words and ultimately the consequences of those words for in verse 37 Jesus said "by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned." He is speaking to the Pharisees who had just spoken evil words that damned them because their words revealed the corruption that was in their hearts. They had just accused Jesus of performing His miracles by the power of Satan and in so doing they had blasphemed the Holy Spirit and committed a sin which could not be forgiven.

Recall that Jesus had given an almost identical illustration earlier in His concluding words in the Sermon on the Mount warning the Jewish crowd about false prophets (or false shepherds). Now He speaks to the Pharisees in the same language, so clearly the implication is that they were the FALSE PROPHETS/SHEPHERDS!

> "**Beware** of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. 16 "You will know them by their **fruits**. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles, are they? 17 "**So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit** (THE SAME **Axiomatic** TRUTH AS IN THE PRESENT PASSAGE). 18 "A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. 19 "Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire (HE IS SPEAKING OF THEIR ETERNAL DESTINY - COMPARE WITH Mt 12:37). 20 "So then, you will know them by their fruits. (Matthew 7:15-20+)

To reiterate, Jesus is telling (commanding) the Pharisees to make up their minds. If a tree brings forth good fruit (AS HE DID), then the tree is good. While they could not deny Jesus' GOOD FRUIT, as their continued reaction toward Him in the rest of the Gospel of Matthew shows, they adamantly refused to call Him a good tree! Why? Well, it was not so much what they said, but WHY they said it. The heart of their problem, was the problem of their hearts, which He will now address.

Matthew 12:34 "You brood of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak what is good? For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart.

NET Matthew 12:34 Offspring of vipers! How are you able to say anything good, since you are evil? For the mouth speaks from what fills the heart.

GNT Matthew 12:34 γενν ματα χιδν ν, π ς δ νασθε γαθ λαλε ν πονηρο ντες; κ γ ρ το περισσε ματος τ ς καρδ ας τ στ μα λαλε .

NLT Matthew 12:34 You brood of snakes! How could evil men like you speak what is good and right? For whatever is in your heart determines what you say.

KJV 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.

ESV Matthew 12:34 You brood of vipers! How can you speak good, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.

NIV Matthew 12:34 You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks.

ASV Matthew 12:34 Ye offspring of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.

CSB Matthew 12:34 Brood of vipers! How can you speak good things when you are evil? For the mouth speaks from the overflow of the heart.

NKJ Matthew 12:34 "Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.

NRS Matthew 12:34 You brood of vipers! How can you speak good things, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.

YLT Matthew 12:34 'Brood of vipers! how are ye able to speak good things -- being evil? for out of the abundance of the heart doth the mouth speak.

NAB Matthew 12:34 You brood of vipers, how can you say good things when you are evil? For from the fullness of th e heart the mouth speaks.

NJB Matthew 12:34 You brood of vipers, how can your speech be good when you are evil? For words flow out of what fills the heart.

GWN Matthew 12:34 You poisonous snakes! How can you evil people say anything good? Your mouth says what comes from inside you.

BBE Matthew 12:34 You offspring of snakes, how are you, being evil, able to say good things? because out of the heart's store come the words of the mouth.

- **generation**: Mt 3:7 23:33 Lu 3:7 Joh 8:44 1Jn 3:10
- **how**: 1Sa 24:13 Ps 10:6,7 52:2-5 53:1 64:3,5 120:2-4 140:2,3 Isa 32:6 59:4,14 Jer 7:2-5 Ro 3:10-14 Jas 3:5-8
- **for**: Lu 6:45
- Matthew 12 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

AN EXCORIATING EPITHET

Excoriate means to express strong disapproval of and derives from the idea of to "flay, strip off the hide!" An**epithet** is "descriptive name for a person or thing," a descriptive word or phrase added to or substituted for a person's name, an adjective or phrase that is used to express the characteristic of a person. Jesus now personalizes the parabolic saying (cf Mk 3:23+) in Mt 12:33.

The **epithet** of **Vipers** was an apt comparison of the religious leaders to the poisonous snakes common in Palestine which were both deceptive and deadly for the teaching (works righteousness, legalism, etc) of these men would poison me n's hearts and minds and damn both themselves and their hearers to an eternal hell (Mt 23:15). And one has to believe that Jesus' pithy epithet cut to their hearts similar to the reaction of religious Jews in Acts. In Acts 5:33 "But when they heard this (especially Acts 5:30), they were cut to the quick and in tended to kill them." And in Stephen's speech to the religious Jesus Luke records "Now when they heard this (Acts 7:51-53), they were cut to the quick, and they began gnashing their teeth at him." (Acts 7:54)

Jesus definitely got the attention of the Pharisees, even as did John the Baptist in a similar address in Mt 3:7+ "when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, "**You brood of vipers,** who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" Both Jesus and John accurately saw through these hypocrites to the sinister, "**serpentine**" character of their hearts. This reminds me of Paul's warning to Timothy that (in the last days - 2 Ti 3:1) " evil men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived." (2 Ti 3:13) The Pharisees were deceivers whe were themselves deceived!

Expositor's Greek Testament – John and Jesus agree in thinking the Pharisees a viper-brood. Both conceive them as morally hopeless. The Baptist wonders that they should come to a baptism of repentance. Jesus thinks them far on the way to final impenitence. But the point He makes here is that, being what they are, they cannot but speak evil. The poison of their nature must come out in their words.

Zodhiates - The products of sin and hypocrisy are equivalent to the poisons of venomous snakes that prey on the unsuspecting. (Exegetical Commentary on Matthew)

You brood of vipers (Mt 3:7+, Mt 12:34, Mt 23:33, Lk 3:7+) - **You** is the **Pharisees** (aka scribes in Mk 3:22+ = almost all were Pharisees) described in Mt 12:24 . And in Mk 3:23+ we see "He called them to Himself and began speaking to them in parables." Why did He call these **vipers** to Himself? Because He was aware that they had just made the accusation that (1) He was "possessed by Beelzubul" (Mk 3:22+) and (2) that He cast "out demons only by Beelzebul the ruler of the demons." (Mt 12:24+) They manifested the nature of that old serpent, the devil, in their attitude toward Christ.

Brood (KJV - "generation")(1081)(**gennema** from **gennáo** = to give birth to, beget, involving generation from **gínomai** = to become) is the product of the activity expressed by gennao and thus means that which is

born or produced.

Vipers (2191)(**echidna**) literally was an adder or other poisonous snake. Four times echidna is used as a figurative description of the Pharisees ((Mt. 3:7; 12:34; 23:33 and all the crowd in Lk 3:7) and once of a literal viper (Acts 28:3). Echidna referred to small poisonous snakes that lived primarily in the desert regions of Palestine and other parts of the eastern Mediterranean. Because they looked like a dried twig when they were still, a person collecting wood for a fire would often pick one up inadvertently and be bitten, as happened to Paul on the island of Malta. That particular viper was deadly, and when Paul suffered no harm from the bite, the superstitious islanders thought he was a god (Acts 28:3, 6). Vipers therefore had the understandable reputation for being both deadly and deceitful. "Vipers (e.g., the Nicander's viper) were commonly believed to eat their way out of their mother's womb; thus John's calling the crowd "viper's offspring" was even nastier than calling them "vipers." Serpents would flee a burning field." (Bible Background Commentary) **ESV note** adds that **viper** was "A general term for any of a number of poisonous snakes in Israel, showing that the people had become the seed of the Serpent (Ge 3:15+)."

Holman Apologetics Commentary on the Bible - **Vipers** are known for their subtle approach and attack, as was the original serpent (Genesis 3). In a similar fashion, the Pharisees attempted to hide their own blasphemy by calling Jesus a blasphemer. But Jesus revealed the crux of the problem of the Pharisees—they blasphemed the Spirit because their hearts were evil. The words of accusation with which they slandered Jesus revealed their evil heart. (Holman Apologetics Commentary on the Bible – Gospels to Acts)

How can you, being evil, speak what is good? - Having already "**cut them to the quick**" with His epithet that they were vipers, Jesus "**cuts to the chase**" as we might say today! He now diagnoses the **ROOT** as rotten, thus explaining why they could not bring forth the good fruit of good words, especially good words about Himself and His good works. And so as He often did, Jesus uses a rhetorical question to further engage the attention of the Pharisees (as if He did not already have it!). Notice first that Jesus draws a conclusion which must have made them squirm and grind their teeth at Him. Jesus' description of them as **being evil** is His assessment of their basic character, the **ROOT** of the problem of their evil words. **Being** (ontes) is present tense defining these men as continually evil and in the active voice indicates evil was their willful, volitional choice! The did not just **D O** evil but they **WERE** evil in their very essence, nature, core and character! They were **totally depraved**! Notice also that the word **evil** is not kakos but **poneros** which speaks of active evil, evil that has the effect of producing harm! And so back to the question He asked - Could they **speak what is good**? Obviously they could not! It was not possible, for as we say today it was not in "their DNA!" Their DNA was DEPRAVED! In short, their essential nature was evil. We read a similar truth in 1 Samuel 24:13 "As the proverb of the ancients says, '**Out of the wicked comes forth wickedness**."

In Proverbs we read "The heart of the righteous ponders how to answer, But the mouth of the wicked pours out evil things." (Pr 15:28) The point is that the righteous man has a righteous heart and wisely thinks before answering. By contrast the wicked man (cf THE PHARISEES) does not just speak evil, but "pours out" or "gushes forth" evil! Evil is the natural outflow of their polluted stream! The Hebrew verb "**pours out**" (naba) in fact can mean to *bubble up* or *gush out* and so it vividly depicts the evil words "***bubbling up***" from this man's evil heart as if he is not even able to control or contain them (AND HE IS NOT!). This verb is also translated "*belch forth*," (Ps 59:7) which is even more picturesque of evil speech from an evil heart! It is repulsive to God!

For - Term of explanation - Jesus explains why it was literally impossible for the Pharisees to speak what is good.

The heart of the problem was the problem of their heart!

The mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart - Now Jesus applies this to the Pharisees using another **axiomatic** truth. This is Jesus' main point. Evil words proceed from an evil heart. The evil words of the Pharisees divulged the true nature of their evil hearts. The word **fills** depicts their heart as full to the brim and spilling over, so to speak. Stated another way what is in our heart comes out of our mouth. How could we expect anything else to bubble up from their evil hearts and out of their foul mouths other than blasphemous words? Jesus expands on this truth in Mt 15:18-20 declaring that "the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and those defile the man. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders. These are the things which defile the man; but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile the man." So the evil heart is not just the source of evil words, but of murderous acts, which finally came to fruition when the Pharisees were able to murder Jesus on the Cross! As Proverbs 23:7 says "as he thinks within himself, so he is." The Pharisees thought evil thoughts and thus were evil to their very core, ultimately these evil thoughts leading them to murder Jesus!

THOUGHT - When we point a finger at the Pharisees, we need to understand that 4 fingers are pointing back at us. Our heart is our greatest enemy. And even for believers who have been given a new heart, we still have the polluting effects of our fallen flesh! Notice that the first effect of being filled with the Spirit (Eph 5:18+) is speech which is exulting. In fact in Eph 5:19+ the very first word in the Greek sentence is **laleo** which refers to

our speaking and in the present tense describes habitual speaking with positive even "lyrical" speech. When the Spirit controls our heart, He also controls our tongue. When we have grieved or quenched the Spirit, we need to be very cautious, for there is a high probability that non-edifying, even rotten ("fleshly") words will spew out of our mouth. In fact, if you are frequently spewing forth angry or bitter words, you can know that your heart is not right with God and you need to confess and repent any known sins, that the Spirit might be "re-activated" so to speak!

Jeremiah describes the heart problem writing "The heart is more deceitful than all else ("incurably deceitful") And is desperately sick; Who can understand it?" (Jer 17:9)

Fills (4051)(**perisseuma** from **perisseuo** = to abound) is a noun that describes a a condition of great plenty and thus a surplus, excess or abundance (figuratively of the heart in Mt 12:34; Lk 6:45). It speaks of a superabundance or an overflow. **The hearts of the Pharisees are so full of evil, that the evil must come out of the "overflow valve" which is their mouth**! In 2 Cor 8:14 it describes the character (and quantity) of the gifts of the saints. In Mk 8:8 it describes that which is remains above and beyond from feeding the four thousand. The only use in the Septuagint is Eccl 2:15.

In a parallel use Luke writes "The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that which **fills** his heart." (Lk 6:45+)

THOUGHT - This teaching is very practical. You do not have to listen to a man or woman speaking for very long before you can have a fairly good gauge on what is filling their heart. This is not to advocate that you be judgmental, but rather that you be discerning. And the truth be told, when you discern that pollution is coming forth from the "overflow valve" of their mouth out of the "reservoir" of their heart, it might be best (if possible) to separate yourself for a time from their speech. Polluted speech will not likely had a positive impact you! And it possibly might even result in you producing polluted speech. Just a thought to keep in mind. As believers we are called to a higher "SPEECH STANDARD." And in one of the more important passages (in my opinion) on a believer's speech Paul gives a command (present imperative with a negative = stop doing this or don't begin) "**Let** no **unwholesome** (sapros - rotten, putrid, foul) word **proceed** from your mouth, but (AN IMPORTANT CONTRAST) only such a word as is good for edification (BUILDING UP, NOT TEARING DOWN) according to the need of the moment, so that (PURPOSE OF OUR WORDS "GIVE GRACE"! AMAZING!) it will give grace to those who hear." (Eph 4:29+) Of course the only way a believer can obey this supernatural command is by continually being enabled by a Supernatural Source, the Holy Spirit! Since our words are so important we should frequently pray the prayer of David in Psalm 141:3 "Set a guard, O LORD, over my mouth; Keep watch over the door of my lips." That is a prayer God will answer, for godly speech brings Him glory! Another great prayer would be "Let **the words of my mouth** and the meditation of my heart Be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my rock and my Redeemer." (Ps 19:14) (Notice David's association of words from his mouth with the condition of his heart!)

Related Resource:

- Why Were Pharisees referred to as a brood of vipers?

Matthew 12:35 "The good man brings out of his good treasure what is good; and the evil man brings out of his evil treasure what is evil.

NET Matthew 12:35 The good person brings good things out of his good treasury, and the evil person brings evil things out of his evil treasury.

GNT Matthew 12:35 γαθ ς νθρωπος κ το γαθο θησαυρο κβ λλει γαθ , κα πονηρ ς νθρωπος κ το πονηρο θησαυρο κβ λλει πονηρ .

NLT Matthew 12:35 A good person produces good things from the treasury of a good heart, and an evil person produces evil things from the treasury of an evil heart.

KJV 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.

ESV Matthew 12:35 The good person out of his good treasure brings forth good, and the evil person out of his

evil treasure brings forth evil.

NIV Matthew 12:35 The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him.

ASV Matthew 12:35 The good man out of his good treasure bringeth forth good things: and the evil man out of his evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.

CSB Matthew 12:35 A good man produces good things from his storeroom of good, and an evil man produces evil things from his storeroom of evil.

NKJ Matthew 12:35 "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things.

NRS Matthew 12:35 The good person brings good things out of a good treasure, and the evil person brings evil things out of an evil treasure.

YLT Matthew 12:35 The good man out of the good treasure of the heart doth put forth the good things, and the evil man out of the evil treasure doth put forth evil things.

NAB Matthew 12:35 A good person brings forth good out of a store of goodness, but an evil person brings forth evil out of a store of evil.

NJB Matthew 12:35 Good people draw good things from their store of goodness; bad people draw bad things from their store of badness.

GWN Matthew 12:35 Good people do the good things that are in them. But evil people do the evil things that are in them.

BBE Matthew 12:35 The good man out of his good store gives good things; and the evil man out of his evil store gives evil things.

- **good man**: Mt 13:52 Ps 37:30,31 Pr 10:20,21 12:6,17-19 15:4,23,28 Pr 16:21-23 25:11,12 Eph 4:29 Col 3:16 4:6
- **and an:** Mt 12:34
- Matthew 12 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Parallel Passage:

"The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart." (Lk 6:45+)

OUR WORDS REVEAL OUR CHARACTER!

This is a truth which should send a shiver down all of us! Think back to this past week and the words that flew out of your mouth!

Jesus gives another axiomatic truth. What man is in life is what he is in his heart. The truth is that a man reveals his character by what he says.

This is why Proverbs 4:23+ is one of the more important proverbs to memorize, mediate upon and practice in the power of the Spirit (notice watch is a command which calls for continual dependence on the Spirit to obey!).

Watch (a command) over your heart with all diligence, For from it flow the springs of life.

Glen Spencer explains "The metaphor used here pictures the heart as a well and our life as the streams that go forth from the well. The idea is that the actions and attitudes of life spring from our heart like water springs from a well. When you go to the well to get water, whatever is in the well comes up in the bucket. If the water is fresh and cool in the well, you get good water in the bucket. But if the water is stagnant and contaminated, such will be the quality of water you draw from it. What a vivid illustration! The same principle is true of life. Whatever is in the heart comes out in the life." (Expository Pulpit Series – Gospel According to Matthew)

The good man brings out of his good treasure what is good - The simple point is that you can only bring out what you have inside! The parallel passage in Luke 6:45+ tells us the source of the good treasure is a man's heart, which is a good heart, for otherwise it could not bring out that which is good. The word for **treasure** (**thesauros**) in this passage speaks of our reservoir, our

storehouse, our treasure chest, speaking figuratively. And so all men have a "treasure chest" in their chest! It is either a good "treasure chest" or a bad (evil) "treasure chest!" What Jesus is saying is that within our "chest" is a storehouse and the only thing that can come out of that storehouse is what is in it! For believers, we have been given a new heart and a new power (Ezekiel 36:26, 27+) and so can bring forth **good** from our treasure chest! What is in our treasure chest will spill out of our mouths. Jesus uses the word **agathos** for **good**, which describes that which is intrinsically good, inherently good in quality but with the idea of good which is also profitable, useful, benefiting others, benevolent (marked by or disposed to doing good). Good and doing good is the idea. **Agathos** describes that which is beneficial in addition to being good. **Agathos** is that which is good in its character, beneficial in its effects and/or useful in its action. And so **agathos** describes the wonderful potential for good words and good works to come forth from every believer!

Zodhiates adds that "God alone is innately **agathos**, according to Mark 10:18, while Satan is frequently called **ho poneros** (Mt. 13:19, 38; Eph. 6:16; 1 John 2:13, 14; 3:12; 5:18)." (Exegetical Commentary on Matthew) (**ED COMMENT:** Therefore, it is little wonder that the Pharisees are **evil** [poneros] like their father [Jn 8:44], for 'like father, like son!")

Our tongue is the index of our heart.

And the evil man brings out of his evil treasure what is evil - By implication the source of his **evil treasure** is his evil heart. Note again that Jesus uses the specific word for evil (poneros) which speaks of active evil, evil that has the effect of producing harm! The **treasure** chest of the unregenerate is filled with evil for it "was brought forth in iniquity" (Ps 51:5) and harbors the "sin virus" which "spread to all men" from Adam! (Ro 5:12) As John MacArthur says "an unregenerate person can say no good thing, can do no truly good thing. That is, nothing which advances the kingdom of God and ultimately glorifies Him."

> **Brings out** (1544)(**ekbállō** from **ek** = out + **bállō** = to cast, throw, drive) means to cast, throw out often with the idea of force (Mt. 8:12; 15:17; 25:30; Acts 16:37, 27:38; Lxx - Lev. 14:40). The use of the strong verb ekballo (used for casting out demons!) suggest speech that is characterized by energy and passion (respectively, good and evil!).
>
> **Treasure** (2344)(**thesauros** from **títhemi** = put, set) refers to the place where goods and precious things are stored for safekeeping and thus a repository (place, room, or container where something is deposited or stored), a treasure chest, a storehouse, a treasury. The second sense of thesauros refers to that which is stored up in the treasury or repository (Mt 2:11+ of the wise men " opening their treasures" Mt 6:19-21+ = " where your **treasure** is, there your **heart** will be also." Our HEART follows our TREASURE! So Col 3:2+ should be our daily goal and prayer! Lk 12:33+ = "an unfailing **treasure** in heaven,"). **Thesauros** is used in its figurative sense in the this passage in Matthew 12 to describe the heart as the **repository** of thoughts, feelings, purposes, etc (also used this way in Lk 6:45+).
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> **Zodhiates** on **treasure** - Those who are good have good hearts filled with good **treasure** and consequently produce good things. Evil people, on the other hand, have evil hearts filled with evil treasure. Jesus used the word "treasure" (thēsaurós) because people value good or evil. We find it difficult to believe that by nature we actually "treasure" evil, but we do until the Lord supernaturally changes our value systems by changing our natures. Apart from regeneration, evil persons cannot produce any good. They do not even want the freedom to do good; instead, they want freedom from God's righteousness: "For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness" (Ro 6:20). Their treasured evil choice, the necessary product of evil natures —"you being evil" (Mt. 12:34)—is to be free from Christ. This was the Pharisees' choice. Legalism has no place for grace. (Exegetical Commentary on Matthew)

The Expositor's Greek Testament – In Matthew 12:34 the heart is conceived as a fountain, of which speech is the overflow, here as a **treasure** whose stores of thought and feeling the mouth freely distributes....(The Pharisees) hissed out their malevolent words at Him, being not heartless but bad-hearted

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Character the Spring of Life (The Expositor's Dictionary of Texts) Matthew 12:35

This is the compact statement of a truth upon which Jesus laid the last emphasis—that everything depends on character. The word has two meanings. And according to its original sense character is the mark made upon a stone by engraving. It is therefore the stamp of the soul and the expression of a man's being. Character has also come to acquire a secondary meaning. It is not now what the man is, and will continue to be, but what he says he is or appears to be. It is the outer show of the man: it is his reputation.

I. One profound difference between our Master and the Pharisees turned upon the reading of this word. With the Pharisees, character was reputation, and their whole strength was given to performing a religious play. With Jesus character was nature, and He was ever insisting that a man must be judged not by appearance but by the heart; not by what he says, or even by what he does,

but by what he is.

II. Common speech betrays our implicit conviction, and every day we ourselves acknowledge the supremacy of character. One man may use the most persuasive words, but no one gives heed because they are not the outcome of a true soul; another may speak with rough simplicity, and his neighbours respond because every word bears the stamp of a brave heart.

III. If character be the spring of life then two things follow.

> 1. That every man's work is the expression of himself. Just as the Almighty is ever creating under a Divine necessity, because He must express Himself, and just as His character can be discovered by those who have eyes to see in the parable of creation, so every man works under the same compulsion, and reveals himself by the fruit of his hands. According as a man is true, so is his work; in proportion as he is false, so is his work. One of the secrets of great art is sincerity, but if the soul be crooked the work will be a makeshift.
>
> 2. Conduct as much as work springs from the heart, and by the heart must be judged. Both God and man try conduct by subtler tests than the outward appearance, and two actions of the same kind may have a different moral complexion. Is calculating prudence on the same level as devout consecration, and do they prove an equal quality in the soul? We ourselves pass behind acts to motives; we also trace the life up to its birthplace. Men are loved who have been able to give but little because they gave it brotherly, fragrant with love; men are hated who have given largely because they gave ostentatiously and inhumanly with cold and careless hand.—J. Watson (Ian Maclaren), The Inspiration of Our Faith, p. 157.

Matthew 12:36 “But I tell you that every careless word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment.

NET Matthew 12:36 I tell you that on the day of judgment, people will give an account for every worthless word they speak.

GNT Matthew 12:36 λ γω δ μ ν τι π ν μα ργ ν λαλ σουσιν ο νθρωποι ποδ σουσιν περ α το λ γον ν μ ρ κρ σεως·

NLT Matthew 12:36 And I tell you this, you must give an account on judgment day for every idle word you speak.

KJV 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.

ESV Matthew 12:36 I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak,

NIV Matthew 12:36 But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken.

ASV Matthew 12:36 And I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.

CSB Matthew 12:36 I tell you that on the day of judgment people will have to account for every careless word they speak.

NKJ Matthew 12:36 "But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment.

NRS Matthew 12:36 I tell you, on the day of judgment you will have to give an account for every careless word you utter;

YLT Matthew 12:36 'And I say to you, that every idle word that men may speak, they shall give for it a reckoning in a day of judgment;

NAB Matthew 12:36 I tell you, on the day of judgment people will render an account for every careless word they speak.

NJB Matthew 12:36 So I tell you this, that for every unfounded word people utter they will answer on Judgement Day,

GWN Matthew 12:36 "I can guarantee that on judgment day people will have to give an account of every careless word they say.

BBE Matthew 12:36 And I say to you that in the day when they are judged, men will have to give an account of every foolish word they have said.

- **every careless word**: Ec 12:14 Ro 2:16 Eph 6:4-6 Jude 1:14,15 Rev 20:12
- Matthew 12 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

A VERY SOLEMN WARNING!

Expositor's Greek Testament - speech being the outcome of the heart, no word is insignificant, not even that which is**argos**, ineffectual , insipid, "idle". It is an index of thoughtlessness if not of malice. This verse contains an important warning,

Light words weigh heavy in God's balance.
-- Thomas Manton

But - Term of contrast.

I tell you - This adds weight to what follows!

That every careless word that people speak - Now Jesus does not restrict His comment to the Pharisees but here generalizes it with phrase **that people speak**. That opens the application not just to unbelievers but believers and helps understand why this is such a solemn warning! A careless word is a spoken without any thought being given to what was said. **Every careless word** we speak will be like "verbal boomerangs" which will meet us again at the judgment, either at the Bema Seat (Believers) or Great White Throne (Unbelievers)!

> **Careless** (692)(**argos** from **a** = without + **érgon** = work) literally means without work, without labor, doing nothing, as one not working the ground and so living without labor. As employed in the New Testament, argos always describes something inoperative or unserviceable. **Argos** describes that which is not working, ineffective, barren, yielding no return or worthless, not accomplishing anything. **Argos** was used to describe money that was yielding no interest or of a field lying fallow. All 7 NT uses - Matt. 12:36; Matt. 20:3; Matt. 20:6; 1 Tim. 5:13; Tit. 1:12; Jas. 2:20; 2 Pet. 1:8
>
> **Zodhiates** on **argos** - Argós sometimes connotes indolence, slothfulness, or laziness (1 Tim. 5:13; Titus 1:12; 2 Pet. 1:8), but this should not be confused with the concept of "slow" since we are commanded to be "slow [bradús {1021] to speak" (James 1:19). There is a slowness in laziness and presumption, but there is also a slowness in strategy. In the realm of words, unbelievers care little about what they speak. They speak foolishness, for they do not believe their words will be judged: "A fool uttereth all his mind: but a wise man keepeth it in till afterwards" (Pr. 29:11). We believers, on the other hand, while fully capable of thinking nonsense, should restrain ourselves from displaying it. We should measure our words before we broadcast them to the public. To think before we speak takes time; thus, the command to be "slow to speak." (Exegetical Commentary on Matthew)
>
> > **THOUGHT** - Are our words "working" (ergon) words, words that are productive and which edify? "Not working" words include those that are flippant, irresponsible, hypocritical or in any way inappropriate. cf Eph 4:29+.

Glen Spencer - Because our words give such a true evaluation of our hearts, it is our words that we answer for. This ought to help us control our tongues. There is no faster way to destroy our lives or the lives of others, than with words. (Ibid)

Henry Morris - the words men speak will have a bearing on their degrees of reward in heaven, or degrees of suffering in hell. (The Defender's Study Bible)

Expositor's Bible Commentary - Jesus is saying that every spoken word reflects the heart's overflow and is known to God. Therefore words are of critical importance (cf. Eph 5:3-4, 12; Col 3:17; James 1:19; 3:1-12).

Zodhiates - Most people think that God is not interested in details, particularly idle chatter, which, they assume, He overlooks. Yet here we learn not only that such useless words exist but they also are being recorded for review on the day of judgment. The Lord wants us to measure our words before we speak. He wants us to speak valuable words that justify His presence in our lives and advance His kingdom. (Exegetical Commentary on Matthew.)

Disciple's Study Bible - A sin-dominated person will utter evil; the good person devoted to and saved by God will utter good. On judgment day our words spoken in our lifetime will truly reflect who we are.

A great prayer to utter frequently...

Ps 141:3 Set a guard, O LORD, over my mouth; Keep watch over the door of my lips.

Great wisdom regarding words...

Pr 10:19 When there are many words, transgression is unavoidable, But he who restrains his lips is wise.

Pr 21:23 He who guards his mouth and his tongue, Guards his soul from troubles.

WORD(s) IN PROVERBS - Prov. 1:6; Prov. 1:23; Prov. 2:1; Prov. 2:16; Prov. 4:4; Prov. 4:5; Prov. 4:20; Prov. 5:7; Prov. 6:2; Prov. 7:1; Prov. 7:5; Prov. 7:24; Prov. 10:19; Prov. 12:6; Prov. 12:14; Prov. 12:25; Prov. 13:13; Prov. 14:7; Prov. 15:1; Prov. 15:23; Prov. 15:26; Prov. 16:20; Prov. 16:24; Prov. 16:27; Prov. 17:27; Prov. 18:4; Prov. 18:8; Prov. 19:7; Prov. 19:27; Prov. 22:12; Prov. 22:17; Prov. 22:21; Prov. 23:9; Prov. 23:12; Prov. 25:11; Prov. 26:22; Prov. 29:19; Prov. 29:20; Prov. 30:1; Prov. 30:5; Prov. 30:6; Prov. 31:1;

They shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment - **They** would refer to both believers and unbelievers. There is day of reckoning, a day of retribution regarding the words we have spoken in our lifetime! In fact Jesus says this accounting will be for **every careless word**. That means God has a "word bank" in Heaven and **every** worthless **word** will be duly recompensed! For believers our words are covered by the blood of Jesus so we will not be punished for our worthless words. But Paul speaking to believers states "we **MUST** (dei = SPEAKS OF COMPULSION, NECESSITY! IT IS NOT A POSSIBILITY BUT A CERTAINTY!) all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that (PURPOSE) each one (EACH INDIVIDUALLY) **may be recompensed** (RECEIVE BACK) for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad (phaulos = worthless, "pertaining to being low-grade or morally substandard!" = BDAG). " (2 Cor 5:10+) And some of the "**bad**" may be (probably will be) **EVERY CARELESS WORD**! And for those we may lose some of our eternal reward! Woe! Unbelievers of course will give an account before Almighty God at the Great White Throne Judgment for such words (see notes below).

"And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment."
(Heb 9:27)

Zodhiates adds "There will also be a scaled judgment of works (Matt. 11:20-24). For believers, heaven is our reward for justification in Christ by faith, but we will also receive gradational rewards for service and faithfulness (2 Cor. 5:10). (Exegetical Commentary on Matthew)

J C Ryle - There are few of our Lord's sayings which are so heart-searching as this. There is nothing, perhaps, to which most men pay less attention than their words. They go through their daily work, speaking and talking without thought or reflection, and seem to imagine that if they do what is right, it matters but little what they say. But is it so? Are our words so utterly trifling and unimportant? We dare not say so, with such a passage of Scripture as this before our eyes. Our words are the evidence of the state of our hearts, as surely as the taste of the water is an evidence of the state of the spring. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks." The lips only utter what the mind conceives. Our words will form one subject of inquiry at the day of judgment. We shall have to give account of our sayings, as well as our doings. Truly these are very solemn considerations. If there were no other text in the Bible, this passage ought to convince us, that we are all "guilty before God," and need a righteousness better than our own, even the righteousness of Christ. (Phil. 3:9.) Let us be humble as we read this passage, in the recollection of time past. How many idle, foolish, vain, light, frivolous, sinful, and unprofitable things we have all said! How many words we have used, which, like thistle-down, have flown far and wide, and sown mischief in the hearts of others that will never die! How often when we have met our friends, "our conversation," to use an old saint's expression, "has only made work for repentance." There is deep truth in the remark of Burkitt, "A profane scoff or atheistical jest may stick in the minds of those that hear it, after the tongue that spoke it is dead. A word spoken is physically transient, but morally permanent." "Death and life," says Solomon, "are in the power of the tongue." (Prov. 18:21.) Let us be watchful as we read this passage about words, when we look forward to our days yet to come. Let us resolve, by God's grace, to be more careful over our tongues, and more particular about our use of them. Let us pray daily that our "speech may be always with grace." (Coloss. 4:6.) Let us say every morning with holy David, "I will take heed to my ways, that I offend not in my tongue." Let us cry with him to the Strong for strength, and say, "Set a watch over my mouth, and keep the door of my lips." Well indeed might James say, "If any man offends not in word, the same is a perfect man." (Psalm. 39:1, 141:3; James 3:2.) (Ryle's Expository Thoughts on the Gospels)

Illustration of "careless word": In 1980, Lee Atwater, a political campaign manager, inflicted terrible pain with his words. His staff learned that an opposing congressional candidate from South Carolina had once experienced severe depression and undergone

electric shock therapy. When Atwater released the information to the press, it humiliated the candidate and cast doubt on his ability. In anguish, the man questioned Atwater's campaign ethics. Atwater responded by saying that he had no intention of responding to a man "hooked up to a jumper cable." Ten years later, Atwater was afflicted with an incurable brain tumor. He was confined to bed, attached to machines and tubes and wires. Before he died, he wrote the candidate a letter and asked to be forgiven. He saw how cruel and heartless his words had been. Our words can be just as devastating. And it seems that it's our children or family or fellow believers whom we hurt the most. As believers in Christ, we have an obligation before God to evaluate the impact of our words. Idle, angry, hateful words can inflict great harm, for which we will be held accountable (Mt 12:36-37).

Ask God for help. Before hurtful words come pouring out of your mouth, think first—then leave them unsaid. —D C Egner Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

Use words of kindness, filled with love,
That heal and nourish life
Instead of hurling angry words
That wound and stir up strife.
—Sper

Think before you act; think twice before you speak.

Matthew 12:37 "For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."

NET Matthew 12:37 For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."

GNT Matthew 12:37 κ γ ρ τ ν λ γων σου δικαιωθ σ , κα κ τ ν λ γων σου καταδικασθ σ .

NLT Matthew 12:37 The words you say will either acquit you or condemn you."

KJV Matthew 12:37 For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.

ESV Matthew 12:37 for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."

NIV Matthew 12:37 For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned."

ASV Matthew 12:37 For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.

CSB Matthew 12:37 For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned."

NKJ Matthew 12:37 "For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."

NRS Matthew 12:37 for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."

YLT Matthew 12:37 for from thy words thou shalt be declared righteous, and from thy words thou shalt be declared unrighteous.'

NAB Matthew 12:37 By your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned."

NJB Matthew 12:37 since it is by your words you will be justified, and by your words condemned.'

GWN Matthew 12:37 By your words you will be declared innocent, or by your words you will be declared guilty."

BBE Matthew 12:37 For by your words will your righteousness be seen, and by your words you will be judged.

- **For by** : Pr 13:3
- **justified:** Jas 2:21-25
- Matthew 12 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

YOUR WORDS DETERMINE YOUR ETERNAL DESTINY

Aren't you a bit shocked by the words of Jesus? If we take this passage out of the context of the rest of the teaching of the NT, we would be forced to agree with every other "religion" and every cult that we are justified by works, in this case the "works of our tongue" so to speak!

John MacArthur gives an excellent explanation of the context to help understand Jesus' declaration in this passage -

> First there was doubt, then there was criticism, then there was indifference, then open rejection, and finally blasphemy. They're no longer just wondering, they're no longer indifferent, they're no longer just rejecting Him, they are turning on Him in overt vile blasphemy. And that is what we read in Matthew 12:22-32. That is the record of the blasphemy of the Jewish leaders against Jesus Christ. And the substance of their blasphemy is in Mt 12:24, and it is really the key to understanding our passage for today. For in that they say, "This fellow," referring to Christ, "doeth no cast out demons but by Beelzebub, the prince of demons." And of course that is a name for Satan. So they watched Jesus cast the demons out of a man who was blind and dumb and no doubt deaf, in Mt 12:22. They saw the amazement of the people in Mt 12:23, and the people began to wonder if Jesus might not be the Messiah, the Son of David. And they were immediately threatened by the musings of the people. They were threatened by the thought that they might assume Jesus to be the Messiah, so they hurriedly and publicly affirmed that He did what He did by the power of the Devil – by the power of the Devil. And thus they spoke against Jesus Christ the most terrible words that have ever been spoken in human history, the most terrible words that ever fell from human lips, to have called Jesus Christ satanic, to have said of the lovely spotless gift of heaven that He was from hell. They had concluded the very antithesis of the truth and they had blasphemed the Lord and the Holy Spirit who worked through Him. They had committed a crime unequaled in human history. Now that conclusion leads us to the next passage. Jesus has condemned them in Mt 12:31-32. He told them that that kind of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, who was at work through Christ, could never be forgiven. In other words, if you have all of the revelation there is to have – you've seen the miracles, you've heard His teachings, you've seen the quality of His life, you've seen His attitude, you've been able to be exposed to everything there is about Him - and your conclusion is that He is from the Devil, you are unredeemable. Because you have concluded the very opposite with the fullness of revelation. They were lost and they could never be saved; they were lost forever.And their words became that which ultimately damned them. Now may I hasten to say, they were not so much damned by their words as their damnation was made evident by what they said. It was clear they were to be damned by the words that came out from within them. It is not that you are damned by your words; it is that you are damned because your words will reveal the corruption of your heart. That is the issue. That is the substance of the passage. So they were, in effect, rendered hopeless in Mt 12:31-32 because of the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit as He ministered through Christ, but their words became the mark of their hopelessness. The words that they spoke were the objective external evidence of their corrupt and vile and wretched, wicked hearts. (Matthew 12:33-37 Exposing the Truth About Men's Hearts)

For - Jesus has just spoken of our words and the fact that they will be judged. Now He explains what that judgment entails. As noted above Jesus is not teaching that we are saved by works (words). He is not negating the teaching of Paul in Ephesians 2:8-9 "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; 9not as a result of works, so that no one may boast." His point is actually related to Paul's next statement "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them." (Eph 2:10). So clearly we are saved by faith, but then Paul shows that a faith that truly saves will result in good works (or in the present context good words). The good works (words) do not save a person, but they serve to demonstrate that they are genuinely born again.

Our words reveal the character of our heart.

By your words you will be justified - Paraphrase of **you will be justified** = "Shown to be justified." (ESV Study Bible) Keeping the truth in Ephesians 2:8-10 in mind it becomes clear that what Jesus is saying is that your words will demonstrate the state of your heart, the **treasure** of your heart as He stated in Mt 12:35. And here Jesus says that God will judge men according to their **words**. In other words (pun intended) **your words** will become the objective criteria by which God makes His judgment. If your words are good **words**, they indicate a good heart and that indicates that you have been declared righteous by grace through faith in Christ and His Gospel (for there is no other way). Remember that Jesus said earlier "the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart." (Mt 12:34) So good **words** come forth from a good heart which has been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. Will be justified is an interesting phrase. Why? Because believers have been justified by faith when they believed the Gospel (Ro 3:24+). Justification is a past tense, one time event for the believer. And yet Jesus uses the future tense, **will be justified**, but the context is that of future judgment. So clearly believers once **justified** do not need to be re-justified so to speak. The meaning of **justified** in his context is the same as in James 2:21 (see more discussion) where we read "Abraham our father (was) **justified** (dikaioo) by works." In that context the verb **justified** means shown to **be justified**. In other words Abraham's "work" of his willingness to offer up Isaac (in Genesis 22) showed or demonstrated or proved that he had in fact already been justified by faith years earlier in Genesis 15:6+ when "he believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness." In the same way, the **good words** of believers will demonstrate, show or prove that they have a good heart, which is in turn the result of their past justification by faith. Their fruit of their good words will

demonstrate the authenticity of the root of a good heart which was created in them by God's Spirit when they were born again by grace through faith.

> **Will be justified** (1344)(**dikaioo** from **dike** = right, expected behavior or conformity, not according to one's own standard, but according to an imposed standard with prescribed punishment for nonconformity) means to show or declare the rightness of someone. **Dikaioo** describes the act by which a man is brought into a right state of relationship to God. **Dikaioo** is a legal term having to do with the law and the the courtroom, where it represented the legally binding verdict of the judge. This is the sense in which Paul uses **dikaioo** in this section in Romans (Ro 3:21-5:11) in which he unfolds the doctrine of justification. **Wuest** using simple, non-technical language explains that **dikaioo** "refers to the act of God removing the guilt and penalty of sin from a sinner who places his faith in the Lord Jesus as Saviour and the bestowal of the positive righteousness of Jesus Christ, in Whom that believer stands a righteous person before God's law for time and eternity, all this made possible by and based upon the satisfaction (propitiation) which Jesus Christ offered on the Cross as a complete payment of the penalty imposed by the law because of human infractions of that law, thus satisfying His justice, maintaining His government, and making possible the bestowal of mercy upon the basis of justice satisfied." All this is not possible by "**works of the law**"!

Thomas Manton - "Words do much discover the temper of a man's heart. There are three operations of man by which he is discovered to be what he is—thoughts, words, and actions… Certainly in all these things there should be a difference between the people of God and others."

And (kai) links the two destinies of every man and woman ever born. It could have easily been a term of contrast as these are diametrically different destinies, one leading to Heaven and the other leading to Hell!

By your words you will be condemned - And so the **words** of a man are an accurate gauge of the condition of their heart, whether regenerate or in this case unregenerate. For the one who will be condemned, their condemnation is because their heart has never been changed by the Spirit of Christ. It is still so to speak "uncircumcised' spiritually! And the way this judgment is made according to this passage is by reviewing the record of this man's words, which were evil words for that is all that could come from the "treasure" of his evil heart. What Jesus is also saying is that we are each individually responsible and culpable for our own words and we cannot say things like "The devil made me do it!" And so for the unregenerate man, he will be responsible for his (her) words at the **Great White Throne judgment.** (Rev 20:11-15+). Notice John's description "And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from **the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds**." (Rev 20:12+) The implication is that their words **are written in the books**! And by their words they "**were judged, every one of them according to their deeds**" (Rev 20:13+) and then they are "**thrown into the lake of fire**." (Rev 20:15+) John says "**their deeds**" while Jesus says "**your words,**" and they are essentially synonymous for evil works and words will both produce the same judgment and condemnation!

> **Condemned** (Judged)(2919)(**krino**) primarily signifies to distinguish, to decide between. The basic meaning of krino is to form an opinion after separating and considering the particulars in the case. **Krino** means to evaluate and determine what is right, proper, and expedient for correction. John writes "For God did not send the Son into the world to **judge** (**krino**) the world (THE FIRST COMING), but that the world might be saved through Him. He who believes in Him is not **judged** (**krino**); he who does not believe has been **judged** (**krino**) already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." (John 3:17, 18+)

Expositor's Greek Testament - Judgment by words here taught; in Matthew 25:31-46 judgment by the presence or absence of kind deeds. No contradiction, for words are viewed as the index of a good or bad heart: bad positively, like that of the Pharisees, who spoke wickedly; bad negatively, like that of the thoughtless, who speak senselessly.

Complete Biblical Library Commentary - The words themselves are not so much a factor in judgment as is the heart—either good or evil—which pours them out (Matthew 12:34; James 3:10-12; cf. Luke 19:22). It is clear, therefore, that judgment will be based upon human intent (which determines either guilt or innocence) and knowledge (which determines the degree of guilt or innocence). (Gilbrant)

John Tillotson "What we utter now so freely and without blushing, will then strike us dumb, and be matter of greatest shame and confusion to us, in the presence of God and his holy angels."

Matthew 12:38 Then some of the scribes and Pharisees said to Him, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from You."

NET Matthew 12:38 Then some of the experts in the law along with some Pharisees answered him, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from you."

GNT Matthew 12:38 Τ τε πεκρ θησαν α τ τινες τ ν γραμματ ων κα Φαρισα ων λ γοντες, Διδ σκαλε, θ λομεν π σο σημε ον δε ν.

NLT Matthew 12:38 One day some teachers of religious law and Pharisees came to Jesus and said, "Teacher, we want you to show us a miraculous sign to prove your authority."

KJV Matthew 12:38 Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee.

ESV Matthew 12:38 Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered him, saying, "Teacher, we wish to see a sign from you."

NIV Matthew 12:38 Then some of the Pharisees and teachers of the law said to him, "Teacher, we want to see a miraculous sign from you."

ASV Matthew 12:38 Then certain of the scribes and Pharisees answered him, saying, Teacher, we would see a sign from thee.

CSB Matthew 12:38 Then some of the scribes and Pharisees said to Him, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from You."

NKJ Matthew 12:38 Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered, saying, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from You."

NRS Matthew 12:38 Then some of the scribes and Pharisees said to him, "Teacher, we wish to see a sign from you."

YLT Matthew 12:38 Then answered certain of the scribes and Pharisees, saying, 'Teacher, we will to see a sign from thee.'

NAB Matthew 12:38 Then some of the scribes and Pharisees said to him, "Teacher, we wish to see a sign from you."

NJB Matthew 12:38 Then some of the scribes and Pharisees spoke up. 'Master,' they said, 'we should like to see a sign from you.'

GWN Matthew 12:38 Then some scribes and Pharisees said, "Teacher, we want you to show us a miraculous sign."

BBE Matthew 12:38 Then some of the scribes and Pharisees, hearing this, said to him, Master, we are looking for a sign from you.

- **Teacher**: Mt 16:1-4 Mk 8:11,12 Lu 11:16,29 Joh 2:18 4:48 1Co 1:22
- Matthew 12 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Luke 11:16+ Others, to test Him, were demanding of Him a sign from heaven..

John 2:18+ The Jews then said to Him, “What sign do You show us as your authority for doing these things?”

Then some of the scribes and Pharisees said to Him, “Teacher, we want to see a sign from Yo

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Matthew 12:39 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;

NET Matthew 12:39 But he answered them, "An evil and adulterous generation asks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.

GNT Matthew 12:39 δ ποκριθε ς ε πεν α το ς, Γενε πονηρ κα μοιχαλ ς σημε ον πιζητε , κα σημε ον ο δοθ σεται α τ ε μ τ σημε ον ων το προφ του.

NLT Matthew 12:39 But Jesus replied, "Only an evil, adulterous generation would demand a miraculous sign; but the only sign I will give them is the sign of the prophet Jonah.

KJV 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:

ESV Matthew 12:39 But he answered them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.

NIV Matthew 12:39 He answered, "A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a miraculous sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.

ASV 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 it but the sign of Jonah the prophet:

CSB Matthew 12:39 But He answered them, "An evil and adulterous generation demands a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.

NKJ Matthew 12:39 But He answered and said to them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.

NRS Matthew 12:39 But he answered them, "An evil and adulterous generation asks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.

YLT Matthew 12:39 And he answering said to them, 'A generation, evil and adulterous, doth seek a sign, and a sign shall not be given to it, except the sign of Jonah the prophet;

NAB Matthew 12:39 He said to them in reply, "An evil and unfaithful generation seeks a sign, but no sign will be given it except the sign of Jonah the prophet.

NJB Matthew 12:39 He replied, 'It is an evil and unfaithful generation that asks for a sign! The only sign it will be given is the sign of the prophet Jonah.

GWN Matthew 12:39 He responded, "The people of an evil and unfaithful era look for a miraculous sign. But the only sign they will get is the sign of the prophet Jonah.

BBE Matthew 12:39 But he, answering, said to them, An evil and false generation is looking for a sign; and no sign will be given to it but the sign of the prophet Jonah:

- **adulterous**: Isa 57:3 Mk 8:38 Jas 4:4
- **no sign:** Mt 16:4 Lu 11:29-30
- Matthew 12 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Luke 11:29+ As the crowds were increasing, He began to say, “This generation is a wicked generation; it seeks for a sign, and yet no sign will be given to it but the sign of Jonah.

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

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Matthew 12:40 for just as JONAH WAS THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS IN THE BELLY OF THE SEA MONSTER, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

NET Matthew 12:40 For just as Jonah was in the belly of the huge fish for three days and three nights, so the Son of Man will be in the heart of the earth for three days and three nights.

GNT Matthew 12:40 σπερ γ ρ ν ων ς ν τ κοιλ το κ τους τρε ς μ ρας κα τρε ς ν κτας, ο τως σται υ ς το νθρ που ν τ καρδ τ ς γ ς τρε ς μ ρας κα τρε ς ν κτας.

NLT Matthew 12:40 For as Jonah was in the belly of the great fish for three days and three nights, so will the Son of Man be in the heart of the earth for three days and three nights.

KJV 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.

ESV Matthew 12:40 For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

NIV Matthew 12:40 For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

ASV Matthew 12:40 for as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

CSB Matthew 12:40 For as Jonah was in the belly of the huge fish three days and three nights, so the Son of Man will be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights.

NKJ Matthew 12:40 "For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

NRS Matthew 12:40 For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster, so for three days and three nights the Son of Man will be in the heart of the earth.

YLT Matthew 12:40 for, as Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights, so shall the Son of Man be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights.

NAB Matthew 12:40 Just as Jonah was in the belly of the whale three days and three nights, so will the Son of Man be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights.

NJB Matthew 12:40 For as Jonah remained in the belly of the sea-monster for three days and three nights, so will the Son of man be in the heart of the earth for three days and three nights.

GWN Matthew 12:40 Just as Jonah was in the belly of a huge fish for three days and three nights, so the Son of Man will be in the heart of the earth for three days and three nights.

BBE Matthew 12:40 For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the stomach of the great fish, so will the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

- **as**: Jon 1:17
- **so**: Mt 16:21 17:23 27:40,63,64 Joh 2:19
- **in the heart**: Ps 63:9 Jon 2:2-6
- Matthew 12 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Jonah 1:17 And the LORD appointed a great fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the stomach of the fish three days and three nights.

Jonah 2:2-6 and he said, “I called out of my distress to the LORD, And He answered me. I cried for help from the depth of Sheol; You heard my voice. 3 “For You had cast me into the deep, Into the heart of the seas, And the current engulfed me. All Your breakers and billows passed over me. 4 “So I said, ‘I have been expelled from Your sight. Nevertheless I will look again toward Your holy temple.’ 5 “Water encompassed me to the point of death. The great deep engulfed me, Weeds were wrapped around my head. 6 “I descended to the roots of the mountains. The earth with its bars was around me forever, But You have brought up my life from the pit, O LORD my God.

John 2:19+ Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.”

Luke 11:30+ “For just as Jonah became a sign to the Ninevites, so will the Son of Man be to this generation.

for just as JONAH WAS THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS IN THE BELLY OF THE SEA MONSTER, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth

Related Resources:

- Summary of the Book of Jonah - Bible Survey | GotQuestions.org
- Was Jonah truly swallowed by a whale? | GotQuestions.org
- Did Jonah die while he was in the belly of the fish (Jonah 2)? | GotQuestions.org

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Matthew 12:41 “The men of Nineveh will stand up with this generation at the judgment, and will condemn it because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, something greater than Jonah is here.

NET Matthew 12:41 The people of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented when Jonah preached to them– and now, something greater than Jonah is here!

GNT Matthew 12:41 νδρες Νινευ ται ναστ σονται ν τ κρ σει μετ τ ς γενε ς τα της κα κατακρινο σιν α τ ν, τι μετεν ησαν ε ς τ κ ρυγμα ων , κα δο πλε ον ων δε.

NLT Matthew 12:41 "The people of Nineveh will stand up against this generation on judgment day and condemn it, for they repented of their sins at the preaching of Jonah. Now someone greater than Jonah is here-- but you refuse to repent.

KJV 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.

ESV Matthew 12:41 The men of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, something greater than Jonah is here.

NIV Matthew 12:41 The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and now one greater than Jonah is here.

ASV Matthew 12:41 The men of Nineveh shall stand up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, a greater than Jonah is here.

CSB Matthew 12:41 The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at Jonah's proclamation; and look-- something greater than Jonah is here!

NKJ Matthew 12:41 "The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah is here.

NRS Matthew 12:41 The people of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the proclamation of Jonah, and see, something greater than Jonah is here!

YLT Matthew 12:41 'Men of Nineveh shall stand up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it, for they reformed at the proclamation of Jonah, and lo, a greater than Jonah here!

NAB Matthew 12:41 At the judgment, the men of Nineveh will arise with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and there is something greater than Jonah here.

NJB Matthew 12:41 On Judgement Day the men of Nineveh will appear against this generation and they will be its condemnation, because when Jonah preached they repented; and look, there is something greater than Jonah here.

GWN Matthew 12:41 The men of Nineveh will stand up with you at the time of judgment and will condemn you, because they turned to God and changed the way they thought and acted when Jonah spoke his message. But look, someone greater than Jonah is here!

BBE Matthew 12:41 The men of Nineveh will come up in the day of judging and give their decision against this generation: because they were turned from their sins at the preaching of Jonah; and now a greater than Jonah is here.

- men : Lu 11:32
- **will stand up** Mt 12:42 Isa 54:17 Jer 3:11 Eze 16:51,52 Ro 2:27 Heb 11:7
- **this generation at the judgment**: Mt 12:39,45 16:4 17:17 23:36
- **because**: Jon 3:5-10
- behold (KJV): Mt 12:6,42 Joh 3:31 4:12 8:53-58 Heb 3:5,6
- Matthew 12 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Luke 11:32 - see commentary - “The men of Nineveh will stand up with this generation at the judgment and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, something greater than Jonah is here.

Jonah 3:5-10 Then the people of Nineveh believed in God; and they called a fast and put on sackcloth from the greatest to the least of them. 6 When the word reached the king of Nineveh, he arose from his throne, laid aside his robe from him, covered himself with sackcloth and sat on the ashes. 7 He issued a proclamation and it said, “In Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles: Do not let man, beast, herd, or flock taste a thing. Do not let them eat or drink water. 8 “But both man and beast must be covered with sackcloth; and let men call on God earnestly that each may turn from his wicked way and from the violence which is in his hands. 9 “Who knows, God may turn and relent and withdraw His burning anger so that we will not perish.” 10 When God saw their deeds, that they turned from their wicked way, then God relented concerning the calamity which He had declared He would bring upon them. And He did not do it.

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

Related Resources:

- Why was Jonah angry that the Ninevites repented (Jonah 4:1-2)? | GotQuestions.org
- What is the significance of the city of Nineveh in the Bible? | GotQuestions.org
- When and how was Nineveh destroyed? | GotQuestions.org
- Why did God judge Nineveh so harshly in the book of Nahum? | GotQuestions.org
- Why did Jonah try to go to Tarshish instead of Nineveh? | GotQuestions.org

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Matthew 12:42 “The Queen of the South 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.

NET Matthew 12:42 The queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon– and now, something greater than Solomon is here!

GNT Matthew 12:42 βασ λισσα ν του γερθ σεται ν τ κρ σει μετ τ ς γενε ς τα της κα κατακρινε α τ ν, τι λθεν κ τ ν περ των τ ς γ ς ко σαι τ ν σοφ αν Σολομ νος, κα δο πλε ον Σολομ νος δε.

NLT Matthew 12:42 The queen of Sheba will also stand up against this generation on judgment day and condemn it, for she came from a distant land to hear the wisdom of Solomon. Now someone greater than Solomon is here-- but you refuse to listen.

KJV 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.

ESV Matthew 12:42 The queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here.

NIV Matthew 12:42 The Queen of the South will rise at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for she came from the ends of the earth to listen to Solomon's wisdom, and now one greater than Solomon is here.

ASV 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 ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, a greater than Solomon is here.

CSB Matthew 12:42 The queen of the south will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and look-- something greater than Solomon is here!

NKJ Matthew 12:42 "The queen of the South will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and indeed a greater than Solomon is here.

NRS Matthew 12:42 The queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because she came from the ends of the earth to listen to the wisdom of Solomon, and see, something greater

than Solomon is here!

YLT Matthew 12:42 'A queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and lo, a greater than Solomon here!

NAB Matthew 12:42 At the judgment the queen of the south will arise with this generation and condemn it, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and there is something greater than Solomon here.

NJB Matthew 12:42 On Judgement Day the Queen of the South will appear against this generation and be its condemnation, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and look, there is something greater than Solomon here.

GWN Matthew 12:42 The queen from the south will stand up at the time of judgment with you. She will condemn you, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear Solomon's wisdom. But look, someone greater than Solomon is here!

BBE Matthew 12:42 The queen of the South will come up in the day of judging and give her decision against this generation: for she came from the ends of the earth to give ear to the wisdom of Solomon; and now a greater than Solomon is here.

- **Queen of the South**: 1Ki 10:1-13 2Ch 9:1-12 Lu 11:31,32 Ac 8:27,28
- **hear**: 1Ki 3:9,12,28 4:29,34 5:12 10:4,7,24
- **behold**: Mt 3:17 17:5 Isa 7:14 9:6,7 Joh 1:14,18 Php 2:6,7 Heb 1:2-4
- Matthew 12 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Luke 11:31 see commentary - "The Queen of the South will rise up with the men of this generation at the judgment and condemn them, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, something greater than Solomon is here.

The Queen of the South 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.

Question: Who was the Queen of the South?

Answer: The Queen of the South is mentioned by Jesus in Matthew 12:42 and its parallel passage, Luke 11:31. Jesus says the Queen of the South will bear witness on the Day of Judgment, condemning those Israelites who rejected Jesus as Lord. Jesus identifies the Queen of the South as a queen who visited King Solomon to benefit from his wisdom. From this, we can deduce that she is the Queen of Sheba who came to test Solomon with difficult questions (1 Kings 10:1).

Most biblical scholars believe that Sheba was a city in modern-day Ethiopia or Yemen, and that the Queen of the South was the ruler of that city, a woman of amazing wealth and power. Having heard reports of King Solomon's wisdom, the Queen of Sheba wanted to find out if what she had heard was true, if there really could be a king that wise. So she traveled to Jerusalem to quiz Solomon with riddles. She also brought a wealth of gifts and spices and jewels from her own land to give to him (1 Kings 10:10; 2 Chronicles 9:9). Solomon answered all her questions (1 Kings 10:3) and repaid her in gifts of equal value. The Queen of the South then returned home (2 Chronicles 9:12).

The Queen of the South has been the subject of many artistic works and legends. Some people also speculate that the Queen of the South is the same woman as the Shulammite mentioned in the Song of Solomon, because of the reference to the Shulammite's dark skin (Song of Solomon 1:5). However, there is stronger evidence to suggest that the Shulammite came from Shunem, a region near Israel.

Jesus mentions the Queen of the South in the context of Israel's rejection of their True King. Though she was a Gentile, she traveled a long distance to hear Solomon, and the treasures she brought showed her respect for him and the wisdom he possessed. In contrast, the Jews of Jesus' time were unwilling to travel any distance to hear the King of kings. The Queen of Sheba's lavish respect for Solomon stood in stark contrast to Israel's flat-out rejection of Christ. Yet Christ is greater than Solomon (Matthew 12:42). Solomon was a son of David, but Jesus is *the* Son of David. Solomon was rich, but Jesus is the Creator of all riches. Solomon possessed the gift of wisdom, but Jesus is wisdom personified (1 Corinthians 1:30) GotQuestions.org

Matthew 12:43 “Now when the unclean spirit goes out of a man, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, and does not find it.

NET Matthew 12:43 "When an unclean spirit goes out of a person, it passes through waterless places looking for rest but does not find it.

GNT Matthew 12:43 ταν δ τ κ θαρτον πνε μα ξ λθ π το νθρ που, δι ρχεται δι ν δρων τ πων ζητο ν ν παυσιν κα ο χ ε ρ σκει.

NLT Matthew 12:43 "When an evil spirit leaves a person, it goes into the desert, seeking rest but finding none.

KJV Matthew 12:43 When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none.

ESV Matthew 12:43 "When the unclean spirit has gone out of a person, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, but finds none.

NIV Matthew 12:43 "When an evil spirit comes out of a man, it goes through arid places seeking rest and does not find it.

ASV Matthew 12:43 But the unclean spirit, when he is gone out of the man, passeth through waterless places, seeking rest, and findeth it not.

CSB Matthew 12:43 "When an unclean spirit comes out of a man, it roams through waterless places looking for rest but doesn't find any.

NKJ Matthew 12:43 "When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest, and finds none.

NRS Matthew 12:43 "When the unclean spirit has gone out of a person, it wanders through waterless regions looking for a resting place, but it finds none.

YLT Matthew 12:43 'And, when the unclean spirit may go forth from the man, it doth walk through dry places seeking rest, and doth not find;

NAB Matthew 12:43 "When an unclean spirit goes out of a person it roams through arid regions searching for rest but finds none.

NJB Matthew 12:43 'When an unclean spirit goes out of someone it wanders through waterless country looking for a place to rest, and cannot find one.

GWN Matthew 12:43 "When an evil spirit comes out of a person, it goes through dry places looking for a place to rest. But it doesn't find any.

BBE Matthew 12:43 But the unclean spirit, when he is gone out of a man, goes through dry places looking for rest, and getting it not.

- **the unclean spirit** : Lu 11:24 Ac 8:13
- **it passes**: Job 1:7 2:2 1Pe 5:8
- **waterless places** Ps 63:1 Isa 35:6,7 41:18 Eze 47:8-12 Am 8:11-13
- **seeking**: Mt 8:29 Mk 5:7-13 Lu 8:28-32
- Matthew 12 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passage:

Luke 11:24 see commentary - “When the unclean spirit goes out of a man, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, and not finding any, it says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came.’

Mark 5:7-13+ and shouting with a loud voice, he *said, “What business do we have with each other, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I implore You by God, do not torment me!” 8For He had been saying to him, “Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!” 9And He was asking him, “What is your name?” And he *said to Him, “My name is Legion; for we are many.” 10And he began to implore Him earnestly not to send them out of the country. 11Now there was a large herd of swine feeding nearby on the mountain. 12The demons implored Him, saying, “Send us into the swine so that we may enter them.” 13Jesus gave them permission. And coming out, the unclean spirits entered the swine; and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea, about two

thousand of them; and they were drowned in the sea.

Now when the unclean spirit goes out of a man, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, and does not find it

Related Resource:

- What are unclean spirits? Are unclean spirits demons? | GotQuestions.org

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Matthew 12:44 "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.

NET Matthew 12:44 Then it says, 'I will return to the home I left.' When it returns, it finds the house empty, swept clean, and put in order.

GNT Matthew 12:44 τ τε λ γει, Ε ς τ ν ο κ ν μου πιστρ ψω θεν ξ λθον· κα λθ ν ε ρ σκει σχολ ζοντα σεσαρωμ νον κα κεκοσμημ νον.

NLT Matthew 12:44 Then it says, 'I will return to the person I came from.' So it returns and finds its former home empty, swept, and in order.

KJV 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.

ESV Matthew 12:44 Then it says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.' And when it comes, it finds the house empty, swept, and put in order.

NIV Matthew 12:44 Then it says, 'I will return to the house I left.' When it arrives, it finds the house unoccupied, swept clean and put in order.

ASV Matthew 12:44 Then he saith, I will return into my house whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished.

CSB Matthew 12:44 Then it says, 'I'll go back to my house that I came from.' And returning, it finds the house vacant, swept, and put in order.

NKJ Matthew 12:44 "Then he says,`I will return to my house from which I came.' And when he comes, he finds it empty, swept, and put in order.

NRS Matthew 12:44 Then it says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.' When it comes, it finds it empty, swept, and put in order.

YLT Matthew 12:44 then it saith, I will turn back to my house whence I came forth; and having come, it findeth it unoccupied, swept, and adorned:

NAB Matthew 12:44 Then it says, 'I will return to my home from which I came.' But upon returning, it finds it empty, swept clean, and put in order.

NJB Matthew 12:44 Then it says, "I will return to the home I came from." But on arrival, finding it unoccupied, swept and tidied,

GWN Matthew 12:44 Then it says, 'I'll go back to the home I left.' When it arrives, it finds the house unoccupied, swept clean, and in order.

BBE Matthew 12:44 Then he says, I will go back into my house from which I came out; and when he comes, he sees that there is no one in it, but that it has been made fair and clean.

- **my**: Mt 12:29 Lu 11:21,22 Joh 13:27 Eph 2:2 1Jn 4:4
- **he finds**: Mt 13:20-22 Ps 81:11,12 Ho 7:6 Joh 12:6 13:2 Ac 5:1-3 8:18-23 1Co 11:19 2Th 2:9-12 1Ti 6:4,5,9,10 1Jn 2:19 Jude 1:4,5 Rev 13:3,4,8,9
- Matthew 12 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

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

Unoccupied (4980) (**scholazo** from **schole** = leisure) is used only in Mt 12:44+ (of a building to be unoccupied, stand empty, metaphorically, of a person after demons have been caused to leave); 1Co 7:5+. It means to take a holiday, to have time, be at leisure for (by implication devote oneself wholly to) be free from labor, to give one's time to. Figuratively it is uses of a place and means to be vacant or empty. Here in 1 Cor 7:5 (with the dative), **scholazo** means to have leisure for something, to give oneself to something free from other cares and hindrances (1 Co 7:5). **Scholazo** in the Lxx = Ex 5:8, 17+; Ps 46:10+ "**Cease** *striving* (scholazo in the aorist imperative) and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth."

NET Note - The image of the house empty, swept clean, and put in order refers to the life of the person from whom the demon departed. The key to the example appears to be that no one else has been invited in to dwell. If an exorcism occurs and there is no response to God, then the way is free for the demon to return. Some see the reference to exorcism as more symbolic; thus the story's only point is about responding to Jesus. This is possible and certainly is an application of the passage.

Related Resource:

- What does the Bible say about demon possession / demonic possession? | GotQuestions.org

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Matthew 12:45 "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. That is the way it will also be with this evil generation."

NET Matthew 12:45 Then it goes and brings with it seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they go in and live there, so the last state of that person is worse than the first. It will be that way for this evil generation as well!"

GNT Matthew 12:45 τ τε πορε εται κα παραλαμβ νει μεθ αυτο πτ τερα πνε ματα πονηρ τερα αυτο κα ε σελθ ντα κατοικε κε · κα γ νεται τ σχατα το νθρ που κε νου χε ρονα τ ν πρ των. ο τως σται κα τ γενε τα τ τ πονηρ .

NLT Matthew 12:45 Then the spirit finds seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they all enter the person and live there. And so that person is worse off than before. That will be the experience of this evil generation."

KJV 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.

ESV Matthew 12:45 Then it goes and brings with it seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they enter and dwell there, and the last state of that person is worse than the first. So also will it be with this evil generation."

NIV Matthew 12:45 Then it goes and takes with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there. And the final condition of that man is worse than the first. That is how it will be with this wicked generation."

ASV Matthew 12:45 Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more evil than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man becometh worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this evil generation.

CSB Matthew 12:45 Then off it goes and brings with it seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they enter and settle down there. As a result, that man's last condition is worse than the first. That's how it will also be with this evil generation."

NKJ Matthew 12:45 "Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first. So shall it also be with this wicked generation."

NRS Matthew 12:45 Then it goes and brings along seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they enter and live there; and the last state of that person is worse than the first. So will it be also with this evil generation."

YLT Matthew 12:45 then doth it go, and take with itself seven other spirits more evil than itself, and having gone in they dwell there, and the last of that man doth become worse than the first; so shall it be also to this evil generation.'

NAB Matthew 12:45 Then it goes and brings back with itself seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they move in and dwell there; and the last condition of that person is worse than the first. Thus it will be with this evil generation."

NJB Matthew 12:45 it then goes off and collects seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and set up house there, and so that person ends up worse off than before. That is what will happen to this wicked generation.'

GWN Matthew 12:45 Then it goes and brings along seven other spirits more evil than itself. They enter and take up permanent residence there. In the end the condition of that person is worse than it was before. That is what will happen to the evil people of this day."

BBE Matthew 12:45 Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits worse than himself, and they go in and make it their living-place: and the last condition of that man is worse than the first. Even so will it be with this evil generation.

- seven (KJV): Mt 12:24 Mk 5:9 16:9 Eph 6:12
- more (KJV): Mt 23:15
- and the (KJV): Lu 11:26 Heb 6:4-8 10:26-31,39 2Pe 2:14-22 1Jn 5:16,17 Jude 1:10-13
- Even (KJV): And so it was; for they became worse and worse, as if totally abandoned to diabolical influence, till the besom of destruction swept them away. Mt 21:38-44 23:32-39,24,34 Lu 11:49-51 19:41-44 Joh 15:22-24 Ro 11:8-10 1Th 2:15,16
- Matthew 12 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passage:

Luke 11:26 see commentary - Then it goes and takes along seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they go in and live there; and the last state of that man becomes worse than the first."

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

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Matthew 12:46 While He was still speaking to the crowds, behold, His mother and brothers were standing outside, seeking to speak to Him.

NET Matthew 12:46 While Jesus was still speaking to the crowds, his mother and brothers came and stood outside, asking to speak to him.

GNT Matthew 12:46 τι α το λαλο ντος το ς χλοις δο μ τηρ κα ο δελφο α το ε στ κεισαν ξω ζητο ντες α τ λαλ σαι.

NLT Matthew 12:46 As Jesus was speaking to the crowd, his mother and brothers stood outside, asking to speak to him.

KJV Matthew 12:46 While he yet talked to the people, behold, his mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him.

ESV Matthew 12:46 While he was still speaking to the people, behold, his mother and his brothers stood outside, asking to speak to him.

NIV Matthew 12:46 While Jesus was still talking to the crowd, his mother and brothers stood outside, wanting to speak to him.

ASV Matthew 12:46 While he was yet speaking to the multitudes, behold, his mother and his brethren stood without, seeking to speak to him.

CSB Matthew 12:46 He was still speaking to the crowds when suddenly His mother and brothers were standing outside wanting to speak to Him.

NKJ Matthew 12:46 While He was still talking to the multitudes, behold, His mother and brothers stood outside, seeking to speak with Him.

NRS Matthew 12:46 While he was still speaking to the crowds, his mother and his brothers were standing outside, wanting to speak to him.

YLT Matthew 12:46 And while he was yet speaking to the multitudes, lo, his mother and brethren had stood without, seeking to speak to him,

NAB Matthew 12:46 While he was still speaking to the crowds, his mother and his brothers appeared outside, wishing to speak with him.

NJB Matthew 12:46 He was still speaking to the crowds when suddenly his mother and his brothers were standing outside and were anxious to have a word with him.

GWN Matthew 12:46 While Jesus was still talking to the crowds, his mother and brothers were standing outside. They wanted to talk to him.

BBE Matthew 12:46 While he was still talking to the people, his mother and his brothers came, desiring to have talk with him.

- **While He was still speaking** Mk 2:21 Mk 3:20, 21, 31-35 Lu 8:10,19-21
- **His mother and brothers were standing outside** Mt 13:55 Mk 6:3 Joh 2:12 7:3,5,10 Ac 1:14 1Co 9:5 Ga 1:19
- Matthew 12 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

JESUS INTERRUPTED BY HIS FAMILY

While He was still speaking to the crowds behold, His mother and brothers were standing outside - Jesus is in the house which was so crowded that they could not enter (cf Mk 3:20+). Note the somewhat ironic picture of family outside, crowd inside the house. His family does display some degree of presumptuous audacity in interrupting His speaking (undoubtedly teaching them truths they needed to here). It's like someone interrupting the pastor in the middle of his sermon! But you have to love Jesus deftness to take an interruption and turn it into an opportunity to introduce truth about a new family relationship which had eternal repercussions! Jesus never wasted a moment!

> **D A Carson** on **brothers** - The most natural way to understand "brothers" (v. 46) is that the term refers to sons of Mary and Joseph and thus to brothers of Jesus on his mother's side. To support the dogma of Mary's perpetual virginity, a notion foreign to the NT and to the earliest church fathers, Roman Catholic scholars have suggested that "brothers" refers either to Joseph's sons by an earlier marriage or to sons of Mary's sister, who had the same name (cf. Lagrange; McHugh, pp. 200ff.). Certainly "brothers" can have a wider meaning than male relatives (Acts 22:1). Yet it is very doubtful whether such a meaning is valid here for it raises insuperable problems. For instance, if "brothers" refers to Joseph's sons by an earlier marriage, not Jesus but Joseph's firstborn would have been legal heir to David's throne. The second theory—that "brothers" refers to sons of a sister of Mary also named "Mary"—faces the unlikelihood of two sisters having the same name. All things considered, the attempts to extend the meaning of "brothers" in this pericope, despite McHugh's best efforts, are nothing less than farfetched exegesis in support of a dogma that originated much later than the NT (see on 1:25; Luke 2:7; cf. Broadus on 13:55–56).

Seeking to speak to Him - They did not come to hear Him but to speak to Him. Why were they **seeking to speak to Him**? Mark's versions tells us why His relatives had come writing "When His own people heard of this, they went out to take custody of Him; for they were saying, "He has lost His senses." (Mk 3:21+) They thought Jesus had lost His mind. After all He was saying things that clearly implied He was claiming to be God. Keep in mind while His mother Mary clearly knew He was God, His brothers did not and had never seen Him (as far as we know from Scripture) perform any miraculous signs or wonders in his 30 years in Nazareth. John 7:5 records that even later "not even His brothers were believing in Him." Their belief would occur later for we see them among the group in the upper room in Jerusalem after Jesus' ascension Luke recording that they were "all with one mind (great word in Acts = homothumadon) were continually devoting themselves to prayer, along with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, **and with His brothers**." (Acts 1:14+) But NOW they are worried that He had "gone off His rocker"! So His family had made the trip of about 30 miles from Nazareth to Capernaum and Mark records "Then His mother and His brothers arrived, and standing outside they sent word to Him and called Him." (Mk 3:31+) They had come to take hold (krateo) of Him. In sum, His family did not want to simply speak to Him but to hustle Him back home. It is interesting that Mary was involved for she knew He was God, Messiah on mission and the lost Jewish crowds were an integral part of His mission. Perhaps her other sons coerced her. We can ask her about this in Heaven (won't Heaven be an interesting place!)

> **Seeking to** (present tense)(2212)(**zeteo**) implies giving attention and priority to and deliberately pursuing after.

Related Resource:

- Did Jesus have brothers and sisters (siblings)?

Matthew 12:47 Someone said to Him, "Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside seeking to speak to You."

NET Matthew 12:47 Someone told him, "Look, your mother and your brothers are standing outside wanting to speak to you."

GNT Matthew 12:47 [ε πεν δ τις α τ , δο μ τηρ σου κα ο δελφο σου ξω στ κασιν ζητο ντ ς σοι λαλ σαι.]

NLT Matthew 12:47 Someone told Jesus, "Your mother and your brothers are outside, and they want to speak to you."

KJV Matthew 12:47 Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee.

ESV Matthew 12:46 While he was still speaking to the people, behold, his mother and his brothers stood outside, asking to speak to him.

NIV Matthew 12:47 Someone told him, "Your mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to you."

ASV Matthew 12:47 And one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, seeking to speak to thee.

CSB Matthew 12:47 Someone told Him, "Look, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to You."

NKJ Matthew 12:47 Then one said to Him, "Look, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, seeking to speak with You."

NRS Matthew 12:47 Someone told him, "Look, your mother and your brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to you."

YLT Matthew 12:47 and one said to him, 'Lo, thy mother and thy brethren do stand without, seeking to speak to thee.'

NAB Matthew 12:47 (Someone told him, "Your mother and your brothers are standing outside, asking to speak with you.")

NJB Matthew 12:47 still speaking to the crowds when suddenly his mother and his brothers were standing outside and were anxious to have a word with him.

GWN Matthew 12:47 Someone told him, "Your mother and your brothers are standing outside. They want to talk to you."

BBE Matthew 12:47 And one said to him, See, your mother and your brothers are outside, desiring to have talk with you.

- Matthew 12 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Parallel Passage:

Mark 3:32 A crowd was sitting around Him, and they said to Him, '**Behold**, Your mother and Your brothers are outside looking for You."

Someone said to Him, "Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside seeking to speak to You." - Mark's version is more general saying it was the crowd who said to Him, but Matthew identifies a specific unnamed individual who spoke to Him. Leon Morris says " The impression Matthew gives is that the family felt that they had prior rights; they could interrupt him in the middle of a teaching session, and he should stop what he was doing and come to them." (PNTC-Mt)

THOUGHT - John Phillips has a pithy but pertinent observation - In the Gospel record of the ministry of Jesus there are only two occasions (prior to the crucifixion) when Mary appears (here and in John 2:1-4+). Both times she seeks to have a say in His affairs and both times she is reproved by Him. Thus there is no basis for prayer to her on the ground that since she is the Lord's mother, He will listen to her and do as she says. Such

passages as these in Matthew 12 and John 2 anticipate and repudiate Roman Catholic dogmas that exalt Mary to the status of deity, teach the bodily assumption of Mary into Heaven, and make Mary coredemptrix with Jesus. (Exploring Matthew)

In Hebrews 2:11+ the writer makes an incredible statement - "For both He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one Father; for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren." If we compare that passage in Hebrews with this present passage in Matthew, we can see who Jesus is not ashamed to call brethren. The key phrase is "**For whoever DOES THE WILL of My Father Who is in heaven**. If we compare this with Mt 7:21+ Jesus clearly teaches that "he who **does** [present tense - habitually] **the will of My Father** Who is in heaven *will enter* (THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN)." And similarly in Mt 7:23+ Jesus said "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; **DEPART** FROM ME, YOU WHO **PRACTICE** [present tense - habitually] LAWLESSNESS [1Jn 3:4+ says "sin is lawlessness"]) So twice in this warning passage about who will and will not enter the Kingdom of Heaven (i.e., who is legitimately, genuinely saved by grace through faith), Jesus focuses on the fruit of faith.

> **THOUGHT** - What is the Jesus' description of His true brother in a spiritual sense, one who is truly a child of God and is in the family of God? Jesus clearly states he or she is truly His spiritual relative if they **DO THE WILL** of the Father; i.e., they are doers of the Word and not merely hearers who delude themselves (James 1:21-22+). There is a dangerous teaching circulating in evangelical circles in what is referred to as the "free grace movement" which believes that one can "become a brother of Jesus" (be born again) by grace through faith (which is a true, Biblical, orthodox statement), but then adds the teaching that such an individual does not need to demonstrate any fruit in their life subsequent to their conversion. They teach that no fruit will simply result in no rewards at the Bema Seat of Christ! If you have "asked Jesus into your heart" and there has been no demonstrable change in your life (no spiritual fruit, no desire for holiness, no desire for God's Word, no desire to fellowship with God's people, etc - see some of the signs of genuine saving faith), then you can have no assurance that you will go to Heaven when you die! For more discussion of this vital topic seeWhat is free grace? What is Free Grace Theology? | GotQuestions.org (See also What is easy believism?, What is cheap grace?, What is a carnal Christian?)

Related Resource:

- Did Jesus have brothers and sisters (siblings)?

Matthew 12:48 But Jesus answered the one who was telling Him and said, "Who is My mother and who are My brothers?"

NET Matthew 12:48 To the one who had said this, Jesus replied, "Who is my mother and who are my brothers?"

GNT Matthew 12:48 δ ποκριθε ς ε πεν τ λ γοντι α τ , Τ ς στιν μ τηρ μου κα τ νες ε σ ν ο δελφο μου;

NLT Matthew 12:48 Jesus asked, "Who is my mother? Who are my brothers?"

KJV Matthew 12:48 But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?

ESV Matthew 12:48 But he replied to the man who told him, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?"

NIV Matthew 12:48 He replied to him, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?"

ASV Matthew 12:48 But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?

CSB Matthew 12:48 But He replied to the one who told Him, "Who is My mother and who are My brothers?"

NKJ Matthew 12:48 But He answered and said to the one who told Him, "Who is My mother and who are My brothers?"

NRS Matthew 12:48 But to the one who had told him this, Jesus replied, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?"

YLT Matthew 12:48 And he answering said to him who spake to him, 'Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?'

NAB Matthew 12:48 But he said in reply to the one who told him, "Who is my mother? Who are my brothers?"

NJB Matthew 12:48 But to the man who told him this Jesus replied, 'Who is my mother? Who are my brothers?'

GWN Matthew 12:48 He replied to the man speaking to him, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?"

BBE Matthew 12:48 But he in answer said to him who gave the news, Who is my mother and who are my brothers?

- **Who is:** Mt 10:37 De 33:9 Mk 3:32,33 Lu 2:49,52 Joh 2:3,4 2Co 5:16
- Matthew 12 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Parallel Passage:

Mark 3:33 Answering them, He said, "Who are My mother and My brothers?"

JESUS INTRODUCES A NEW FAMILY RELATIONSHIP

But Jesus answered the one who was telling Him - Jesus was the Master at using common circumstances to make uncommon comments that had profound implications! Mark has Jesus addressing the crowd but Matthew is more specific identifying Jesus answer as directed to **the one who** had brought him news about His family.

And said "Who is My mother and who are My brothers?" - Like a good teacher, He asks a question to introduce a profound principle dealing with salvation and relation to Him. His teaching point by asking this question was that the only relationship to Him that matters eternally is one's spiritual relationship not one's physical relationship. In proclaiming this principle He demolished the argument of the Jews who were taught they would enter the Kingdom of God because they were physically related to Abraham, their father (cf John 8:33, 39). His spiritual family was comprised of those who have a saving relationship with Him through faith and at this time "not even His brothers were believing in Him." (Jn 7:5) They may have been His physical family but at this time were not yet in his spiritual family which is the far more important relationship.

L**eon Morris** comments "In the light of the ministry he is exercising in the name of God, what do ordinary family ties mean? Must Jesus forsake the service of the heavenly Father in order that he may please his earthly family?" (PNTC-Mt)

Matthew 12:49 And stretching out His hand toward His disciples, He said, 'Behold My mother and My brothers!

NET Matthew 12:49 And pointing toward his disciples he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers!

GNT Matthew 12:49 κα κτε νας τ ν χε ρα α το π το ς μαθητ ς α το ε πεν, δο μ τηρ μου κα ο δελφο μου.

NLT Matthew 12:49 Then he pointed to his disciples and said, "Look, these are my mother and brothers.

KJV Matthew 12:49 And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren!

ESV Matthew 12:49 And stretching out his hand toward his disciples, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers!

NIV Matthew 12:49 Pointing to his disciples, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers.

ASV Matthew 12:49 And he stretched forth his hand towards his disciples, and said, Behold, my mother and my brethren!

CSB Matthew 12:49 And stretching out His hand toward His disciples, He said, "Here are My mother and My brothers!

NKJ Matthew 12:49 And He stretched out His hand toward His disciples and said, "Here are My mother and My brothers!

NRS Matthew 12:49 And pointing to his disciples, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers!

YLT Matthew 12:49 And having stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, he said, 'Lo, my mother and my brethren!

NAB Matthew 12:49 And stretching out his hand toward his disciples, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers.

NJB Matthew 12:49 And stretching out his hand towards his disciples he said, 'Here are my mother and my brothers.

GWN Matthew 12:49 Pointing with his hand at his disciples, he said, "Look, here are my mother and my brothers.

BBE Matthew 12:49 And he put out his hand to his disciples and said, See, my mother and my brothers!

- **His disciples**: Mt 28:7 Mk 3:34 Joh 17:8,9,20 20:17-20
- Matthew 12 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Parallel Passage:

Mark 3:34 Looking about at those who were sitting around Him He said, '**Behold** My mother and My brothers!

THE FAMILY OF GOD

And stretching out His hand toward His disciples - While Mark depicts Jesus looking around the room, Matthew adds that He pointed to His twelve **disciples**. Presumably His twelve disciples were seated around Him in close proximity, probably in a circle or semi-circle. It is to them that He points.

Stretching (1614)(**ekteino** from **ek** = out + **teino** = to stretch) means stretch out literally, as a gesture with one's hand stretched out. Here Jesus **stretched** His hands out "toward His disciples" (Mt 12:49), later He **stretched** out His hand to Peter who was drowning (Mt 14:31), and He also **stretched** out His hand to touch the untouchable leper (Mk 1:41, Mt 8:3, Lk 5:13).

He said, "Behold My mother and My brothers! - Jesus had just asked a question to peak the attention of the crowd and now proceeds to answer His own question. He is saying that spiritual relation supersedes physical relationship. In this new family the ties are spiritual, not natural! He is singling the disciples out of the large crowd as those who while not physically related to Him, were more importantly spiritually related to Him. Jesus defines in essence the New Family of God! One is reminded of the old song "**We Are Family.**" (the lyrics are not a bad "Christian song")

Edersheim points out that Jesus' declaration did not demean Mary or His family ""For, had He not entered into earthly kinship solely for the sake of the higher spiritual relationship which He was about to found…? Thus, it was not that Christ set lightly by His Mother, but that He confounded not the means with the end."

Matthew 12:50 "For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother."

NET Matthew 12:50 For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother."

GNT Matthew 12:50 στις γ ρ ν ποι σ τ θ λημα το πατρ ς μου το ν ο ρανο ς α τ ς μου δελφ ς κα δελφ κα μ τηρ στ ν.

NLT Matthew 12:50 Anyone who does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother!"

KJV 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.

ESV Matthew 12:50 For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother."

NIV Matthew 12:50 For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother."

ASV Matthew 12:50 For whosoever shall do the will of my Father who is in heaven, he is my brother, and sister, and mother.

CSB Matthew 12:50 For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven, that person is My brother and sister and mother."

NKJ Matthew 12:50 "For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother."

NRS Matthew 12:50 For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother."

YLT Matthew 12:50 for whoever may do the will of my Father who is in the heavens, he is my brother, and sister, and mother.'

NAB Matthew 12:50 For whoever does the will of my heavenly Father is my brother, and sister, and mother."

NJB Matthew 12:50 Anyone who does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.'

GWN Matthew 12:50 Whoever does what my Father in heaven wants is my brother and sister and mother."

BBE Matthew 12:50 For whoever does the pleasure of my Father in heaven, he is my brother, and sister, and mother.

- **Does**: Mt 7:20-23 17:5 Mk 3:35 Lu 8:21 11:27,28 Joh 6:29,40 15:14 Ac 3:22,23 16:30,31 17:30 26:20 Ga 5:6 6:15 Col 3:11 Heb 5:9 Jas 1:21,22 1Pe 4:2 1Jn 2:17 3:23,24 Rev 22:14
- **he is My brother**: Mt 25:40,45 28:10 Ps 22:22 Joh 20:17 Ro 8:29 Heb 2:11-17
- **and sister:** Song 4:9,10,12 5:1,2 1Co 9:5 2Co 11:2 Eph 5:25-27
- **and mother**: Joh 19:26,27 1Ti 5:2
- Matthew 12 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

THE WONDERFUL WORD "WHOEVER"

For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven - One could misuse this passage to teach "works based" salvation, but from many other NT passages, the only one who can do the will of His Father is the one who has been born again. The key in this passage is **does the will of** God. In other words Jesus is saying that it is not profession of being His disciple that identifies one who is truly spiritually related to Him, but it is active obedience. Notice the pronoun **whoever** (KJV - whosoever) which means "anyone at all" which flings open wide the Gospel gates to any and all who would come by grace through faith and enter through those glorious gates into the Kingdom of God! Romans gives a similar invitation, Paul writing "for “WHOEVER WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED.” (Ro 10:13+) Jesus' invitation given almost 2000 years ago is still open to all who what to experience true life in Him “Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. 29“Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. 30“For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.” (Matthew 11:28-30+)

> **THOUGHT** - The antithesis of doing the will of God is committing sins! Practitioners of sin are not of God! They are not regenerated and indwelt by the Holy Spirit as indicated by their unholy lives! They are not born from *above* as shown by their pattern of living like those from *below*! **A W Tozer** said "The Bible recognizes no faith that does not lead to obedience, nor does it recognize any obedience that does not spring from faith. The two are at opposite sides of the same coin."
>
> Will is the whole man active. I cannot give up my will; I must exercise it. I must will to obey. When God gives a command or a vision of truth, it is never a question of what He will do, but what we will do. To be successful in God's work is to fall in line with His will and to do it His way. All that is pleasing to Him is a success. — Henrietta Mears (COMMENT - Praise God we are not left on our own, but the indwelling Spirit continually energizes us giving us the desire and the power to actively obey God's will - see Php 2:13NLT+)
>
> **D A Carson** points out "We do not make ourselves Jesus’ close relatives by doing **the will** of His heavenly **Father**. Rather, doing the Father’s **will** *identifies* us as his mother and sisters and brothers (cf. Mt 7:21)." (EBC)
>
> **Leon Morris** - Jesus is not saying that earthly familial ties are unimportant, only that they are not all-important. Doing the will of God is all-important. (Ibid)

As alluded to above, in declaring this profound principle Jesus obliterated the Jewish belief that they were spiritually "safe" because Abraham was their father. John records "They answered and said to Him, “**Abraham is our father.**” Jesus *said to them, “If you are Abraham’s children, **DO THE DEEDS** of Abraham." (Jn 8:39) Do you see the same principle Jesus taught here in Matthew 12? He qualified their claim to be in Abraham's family, by stating if that were true then they must "**DO**" (imperfect tense) the deeds which Abraham did. Their deeds would not save them, but they would demonstrate that they were spiritual children of Abraham. James echoed this same truth writing "Was not Abraham our father justified (IN CONTEXT THE MEANING IS SHOWN TO BE JUSTIFIED) by works when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar? 22 You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected; 23 and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, “AND ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS

RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS," (ABRAHAM'S FAITH RESULTED IN HIS JUSTIFICATION, HIS DECLARATION OF RIGHTEOUSNESS) and he was called the friend of God. 24 You see that a man is justified (AGAIN THE SENSE IS THAT ONE IS SHOWN TO BE TRULY JUSTIFIED) by works and not by faith alone." (James 2:21-24+) Faith alone saves, but the faith that saves is not alone!

Speaking to His disciples in the Upper Room Jesus declared "You are My friends (philos) if you **do** what I command you." (John 15:14) **Do** is in the present tense which speaks of their obedient behavior as a lifestyle, not a passing fancy. Such a lifestyle is not possible by relying on one's old nature, but is made possible only as we rely on the Holy Spirit to obey Jesus' commands! Trying to obey in our own power can lead to legalism and will result in failure and a sense of futility in our Christian life. The secret to an obedient life is wholehearted reliance on the Holy Spirit of Christ. None of us will ever achieve this goal perfectly in this lifetime, but as the present tense indicates such obedient behavior should be the general direction (as opposed to complete perfection) of our life and lifestyle.

We see the critical importance of doing the will of God the Father in Jesus' closing words of warning in His famous Sermon on the Mount...

> So then, you will know them by their fruits (= '**Fruit** is evidence of the **root**") 21 "Not everyone who says to Me, '**Lord, Lord**,' (PROFESSION OF JESUS) will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does (present tense - not perfectly but habitually a habit which is enabled by the Holy Spirit) the will of My Father Who is in heaven will enter. 22 "Many (NOTE THIS FRIGHTENING ADJECTIVE) will say to Me on that day, '**Lord, Lord**, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' (HE DOES NOT DENY THEY DID THOSE WORKS - E.G., JUDAS ISCARIOT LIKELY DID THOSE WORKS - cf Mt 10:7,8) 23"And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; DEPART (COMMAND CALLING FOR IMMEDIATE OBEDIENCE - PROBABLY SPOKEN TO THEM IN Rev 20:11-15, 12+) FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE (present tense-habitually) LAWLESSNESS.' (Mt 7:20-23+)

He is My brother and sister and mother - **Clarke** has called this "the adoption of the obedient."

Henry Morris has an interesting comment - This mild rebuke to Mary did not indicate a lack of love or filial respect on Jesus' part (John 19:27), but does show that she does not hold priority with Him over other believers in the family of God. (Defender's Study Bible)

In the book of Hebrews we read of this new spiritual family - "For both He who sanctifies (CHRIST AND HIS SPIRIT) and those who are sanctified (ALL WHO BELIEVE) are all from one Father; for which reason He is not ashamed to **call them brethren,** 12 saying, "I WILL PROCLAIM YOUR NAME **TO MY BRETHREN,** IN THE MIDST OF THE CONGREGATION I WILL SING YOUR PRAISE." 13 And again, "I WILL PUT MY TRUST IN HIM." And again, "BEHOLD, I AND **THE CHILDREN WHOM GOD HAS GIVEN ME**." (Heb 2:11-13+)

Knox Chamblin - These words call for several comments.

> **1. To become a disciple of Jesus is to enter a genuine family.**Given the arrival of Jesus' mētēr and adelphoi (Mt 12:46), the accent on these terms in Mt 12:47–50 is especially noteworthy. Conspicuous by its absence from these references to human beings is the term patēr: Joseph has apparently died; and within the family of Jesus' followers, the heavenly Father is the only one to whom this name is rightly applied (Mt 23:9). Jesus here speaks of 'my Father [tou patros mou],' which makes it plain that the only others permitted to address God in this way are those who belong to Jesus (Mt 6:9).
>
> **2. While Jesus teaches love for the neighbors within one's own family (Mt 15:4–9; 19:19), he also insists that commitment to him and his mission must exceed all others** (see comments on Mt 8:21–22; 10:34–39).
>
> **3. This passage, far from excluding Jesus' mother and brothers from the circle of his disciples, invites them to join it**: 'whoever does the will of my Father' (Mt 12:50). On this occasion, his mother and brothers show a lack of faith (Mark 3:21); and John 7:5 reports that 'his brothers did not believe in him.' But Mary is at the cross (John 19:25–27); and both she and Jesus' brothers gather with other believers in the upper room to await the coming of the Spirit (Acts 1:14).
>
> **4. The mark of the true disciple, and the one escape from this generation's rampant evil, is doing the heavenly Father's will** (Matt. 12:50)—which especially means loving him and loving one's neighbors (Mt 22:37–40), by which means good conquers evil (Rom. 12:21), the very point of Mt 12:43–45. (Matthew-Mentor Commentary)

Counterfeit Reality - When people see a photograph or video today, they often ask, "Is it real?" A home computer can manipulate images to create a picture of an event that never happened. Images can be inserted into or removed from photographs. A video can be doctored to make it appear that a person was caught committing a crime or performing an act of heroism. The camera may not lie, but the computer can.

Centuries before such modern technology, the apostle Paul warned Timothy about counterfeit reality in the church. He said that in the last days people would be self-absorbed, "having a form of godliness but denying its power" (2Ti 3:5+). He repeatedly emphasized the need to live a godly life, warning that "evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived" (2Ti 3:13+).

Paul charged Timothy to "continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of" (2Ti 3:14+). True godliness honors and obeys God while its counterfeit seeks pleasure and personal gain. One pleases the Lord; the other gratifies natural desire. Both are identified by their actions.

When people hear us say we are Christians, they may wonder if our faith is real. Our lives will answer the question by reflecting the reality of Christ. —David C. McCasland (Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

Dear Heavenly Father, Help me, I pray,
to honor You with all that I do today.
By Your Holy Spirit's power, may my words and actions
cause others to glorify Your Name. Amen.

Question: "Is Jesus our brother?" (from Got Questions - highly recommended conservative resource).

Answer: The Bible clearly presents Jesus Christ as being one with the Father (John 10:30), a Member of the triune Godhead who set aside His rights as God and took on human flesh to dwell among us (Philippians 2:5–11+; Galatians 4:4–5). Therefore, it is right to call Him Savior and Lord (Luke 2:11+; 2 Peter 3:18+; Jude 1:25+). However, a few passages also refer to Jesus as our brother (Hebrews 2:11+; Romans 8:29+; Mark 3:34). In order to fully understand the concept of Jesus as our brother, let's look more closely at each of those passages:

> Hebrews 2:11+ says, "For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one source. That is why he is not ashamed to call them **brothers**" (ESV).

The word translated "**brothers**" is the word used for blood relatives, but it also refers to Christians. The generic term brother in Scripture usually also includes sisters. In this passage, the writer of Hebrews is explaining how the perfect God-Man, Jesus, could call imperfect humans His brothers and sisters.

This is more easily understood in terms of physical relationships. Jesus explained spiritual realities by telling Nicodemus that he must be "born again" (John 3:3+). He used this physical term because we all understand birth. When two babies have shared the same womb or the same father, they are of the same family. They carry similar DNA, inherited traits, and rights to claim parentage. When a human being is born into the family of God, through faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus, God becomes our Father (Romans 8:15+; Galatians 4:4–6+). This happens through an act of the Holy Spirit who moves into our spirits and begins to change us (2 Corinthians 5:17+). God is also the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, and we share in that relationship as adopted children. Jesus, our brother, purchased with His blood the right for us to call His Father our Father. He is not ashamed to call us brothers because His righteousness is imputed to us, making us blameless as He is blameless (2 Corinthians 5:21+).

> Romans 8:29+ says, "Those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters."

Some cults have misinterpreted this verse to mean that Jesus was only the first of God's many adopted children. However, in the Bible, the word firstborn does not always refer to physical or even spiritual birth; rather, being "firstborn" implies preeminence and position, as it is used in Psalm 89:27: "I will appoint him to be my firstborn, the most exalted of the kings of the earth." In Jeremiah 31:9+, God calls the nation of Israel His "firstborn son." So when Paul uses the term firstborn in Romans 8:29+, he means that Jesus holds the preeminent position of "only begotten Son of God" (John 3:16+) and that, through His obedience to the Father, Christ made it possible for His holy Father to adopt unholy human beings as His own children. The resurrection of Christ was the first of many to follow, as God gathers His children home (1 Corinthians 15:20–23).

> In Mark 3:34–35, Jesus declares that those who follow Him are His brothers: "He looked at those seated in a circle around him and said, 'Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does God's will is my brother and

sister and mother.'"

The setting for this statement is a house where Jesus was teaching. His physical family had begun to worry about Him, and they had come to take Him home with them. As they waited outside the packed house, messengers informed Jesus of their presence. Seated around Jesus were the disciples. His statement told everyone that, while earthly relationships are important, spiritual relationships are those that last. From then on, He would be focused upon establishing those eternal relationships with everyone who trusted in Him.

It is important to note that the qualifier for being considered Jesus' brother or sister is not the mental exercise of "believing," since many in the room with Jesus in Mark 3 would have considered themselves believers in Him. The qualifier for being a brother or sister of Christ is "doing the will of the Father." The ultimate will of the Father is that we love, trust, and obey His Son (John 3:36+; 2 Thessalonians 1:8; Romans 2:7–8+). When we believe in our hearts the gospel of Jesus Christ and surrender our lives to His lordship, God adopts us into His family and considers us "joint heirs" with His Son, Jesus (Romans 8:17+; Ro 10:9–10+). Our heavenly Father wants His children to bear a family resemblance, and He gave us the perfect example in our big Brother, Jesus Christ.