



Matthew 12

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Tape #8011
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Let's turn to Matthew's gospel chapter twelve as we continue our journey through the New Testament, as we are going through the Word of God.

Jesus has just upbraided the cities where He had done His marvelous works but they rejected Him. And then He gave the invitation to all those that were weary and heavy laden to come to Him and find rest, to submit to Him, take His yoke upon them, and to learn of Him. Of course, the purpose of our Sunday night studies are just to learn of Him.

Now at that time Jesus went on the sabbath day through the corn; and his disciples were hungry, and they began to pluck the ears of corn, and to eat. (12:1)

The wheat fields, and it is the corn of wheat, the wheat fields in those days were in long rows and there were these husks between the wheat fields. Under the law, when you were passing through a wheat field and you were hungry, it was allowable under the law to pick the wheat and to eat it. You weren't to carry any wheat away from the field, but you could eat what you needed there in the field but not take anything; say, pack up for a week or something. It was just to satisfy your hunger while passing through the field. As the wheat becomes ready for harvest, the corn of wheat they call it, the head, of course, the wheat is encased in these little husks. And so the common practice was just to pick the husk of wheat and you rub it in your hands; and in rubbing it in your hands, you knock the chaff off of the wheat and then you sort of blow the chaff out and then you can eat the wheat just as it is. You don't have to cook it, it's chewable. And actually, if you chew it enough, it turns into sort of a gum, but it's extremely nourishing. And so the disciples were picking the wheat and rubbing it in their hands, and then eating the wheat.

But when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto him, Behold, your disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the sabbath day. (12:2)

According to the interpretation of the law that was developed, the Mishnah, and later the Talmud, it was not lawful on the sabbath day to pick any food, fruit or wheat, it was not lawful to thresh wheat on the sabbath day, and thus they were violating many of the traditional laws of the sabbath day. And so the Pharisees came to Jesus, accusing the disciples of doing that which was not lawful according to their interpretation of the law.

But he said unto them, [in defending His disciples] Have you not read what David did, when he was hungry, and those that were with him; (12:3)

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? (12:4)

In the tabernacle, they had the shewbread that was on a table, twelve loaves, each loaf representing a tribe of Israel, one loaf for each tribe. And every seven days, this bread would be changed, fresh loaves put on the table and the old loaves removed. Now when the loaves of shewbread were removed, they were only for the priests to eat. Others were not to eat the shewbread. Under the law, only the priests were to eat the shewbread. However, when David was traveling with his men and they were fleeing from Saul, the men were hungry. They came to the tabernacle where the priest in charge was a friend of David. And David sought food for his men, all they had was the shewbread, and so David and his men ate this shewbread that was not lawful for the common person to eat. Jesus is reminding them of David's infraction of the law. And then He said,

Or have you not read in the law, how that on the sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are blameless? (12:5)

On the sabbath day, it was required that they have double sacrifices over the ordinary day, the sabbath day there was a doubling of the sacrifices. In the killing of the sacrifices, in the kindling of the fire on the altar, in performing this service on the sabbath day, they were actually in violation of the laws of the sabbath

where you're not to kindle a fire, and of course, you're not to do any kind of labor. And yet, the priest, in offering these double sacrifices, were doing these things. And Jesus reminds them how that the priest under the law profaned the sabbath.

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

Jesus, referring to Himself, declared that in this place there is One that is greater than the temple. Now Jesus in defending the disciples, is pointing out that human need is even above the rules that were established. The fact that David was hungry, the human hunger, the human need, superceded the rule that only the priest were to eat the shewbread. The fact that they were laboring in the temple, in the service of God, they were permitted to violate certain regulations of the sabbath day; because they were involved in the service of God. So the disciples, involved in the service of God, One greater than the temple was there with them, even Jesus Christ; and thus He was excusing them for the violation of the traditions of the sabbath day.

But if you had known [Jesus said] what this means, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, [as He quotes from Hosea 6:6] you would not have condemned the guiltless. (12:7)

Notice Jesus says concerning these disciples, they are guiltless. And if you only understood what God was talking about, God would rather have you be merciful than to offer sacrifices. You remember Paul's teaching concerning love in First Corinthians thirteen, how that love is superior to any sacrifice that you might make. It is superior to any gift that you might possess. It is superior to any work that you might endeavor for the Lord. For if these things are not done in love, they become meaningless. And so here Jesus is saying, "It's more important that you be merciful than that you keep the letter of the law. God would rather have you to be merciful than to offer sacrifices.

You remember when Saul had disobeyed the command of God to utterly destroy the Amalekites. And the prophet Samuel faced him over his disobedience. Saul gave to him the lame excuse, Oh the animals that we brought back were so beautiful and wonderful, we thought we would bring them back and offer them as sacrifices to God. God said, "Utterly slay them." Oh, they were so... look at that, we just figured we'd offer them as sacrifices to God. And the prophet Samuel said, "To obey is better than to sacrifice, and to hearken to the word of God is better than the fat of lambs." God is interested in mercy more than in sacrifice. God is interested in your being loving, more than He is some marvelous work You might do for Him. More than some powerful gift of the Spirit that you might manifest, or more than some sacrifice that you might make. And then Jesus declared,

For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day. (12:8)

The first mention of the sabbath is in Genesis, where God hallowed the seventh day when He rested from His creative acts. In six days, God created the heavens and the earth, and the seventh day, God rested from His creative acts, and so He hallowed the sabbath day and blessed it. However, for the next 2,500 years, you hear nothing of the sabbath day. It was not until the law was established that this sabbath day of rest was instituted and became a part of the law. No mention of Abraham keeping sabbath day, or any of the early church fathers.

It was not until it was incorporated in the law, "Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy," that you have any mention of it from the beginning of creation 'til then. And when God gave the sabbath day law, He declared that it was a sign between God and Israel. It was a sign of God's covenant with Israel, their keeping the sabbath day. It was a special thing for the nation of Israel to signify its relationship with God. Through the years, they added much to the law concerning the sabbath day as they sought to interpret what God meant when He said, You're not to bear any burden on the sabbath day. So it was determined if you carried anything heavier than two dried figs, you were bearing a burden on the sabbath day. So you could not carry anything heavier than two dried figs.

There was a big discussion over using a wooden leg on the sabbath day. And it was determined that a wooden leg did constitute bearing a burden, and thus, you couldn't use your wooden leg on a sabbath day. There was no rule, that I know of, of false eyelashes. But some of them that I have seen, I am certain, would constitute bearing a burden on the sabbath day. But they had added all kinds of rules and regulations to the sabbath day that weren't in the original law.

When the Gentile church was established, one of the first controversies to come up within the church...

and the first church council was assembled in order to determine what relationship the Gentile believers would have to the Mosaic law. And so they congregated in Jerusalem. It all happened in the church in Antioch where Paul and Barnabas were ministering to the people. It was a great revival, a lot of people were saved, the church was large and so they would come up from Jerusalem to see what God was doing among the Gentiles. And Peter came up and visited, and then there were certain other brethren that came from Jerusalem. Before they came Peter joined right in, he was eating with the Gentiles and all, but when these fellows came from Jerusalem, then Peter separated and he wouldn't eat with the Gentiles. He only ate with the Jews. And this created a division among the people.

And so Paul rebuked Peter openly for creating the division by separating himself as though the Jews and Gentiles were distinct and separate in this relationship that we have in Christ Jesus. They came back to Jerusalem to settle the issue because some of the Jews coming from Jerusalem said, Look, you're not really saved. You can't be saved unless you keep the law of Moses and are circumcised. And so they returned to Jerusalem to settle the issue. And in the council in Jerusalem, Peter got up and told them how God had called him to the Gentiles, to the house of Cornelius, and how they received the Holy Spirit. Then Paul and Barnabas shared with them the marvelous miracles that God was doing among the Gentile believers. God's working, Holy Spirit's working among them. And finally, James said, Well, look, let's just write them, greet them and tell them, give them really the... welcome them to fellowship and just tell them to abstain from things that are sacrificed to idols and from fornication, and if they do that, they do well. So it was determined, and Peter said, Why should we put on them a yoke of bondage that neither we nor our fathers were able to bear? Why put them under the law? We haven't been able to handle it, why should we put that on them? So there's no mention of sabbath day, keeping the sabbath, sabbath day worship or whatever, in the Gentile church.

Paul the apostle, in writing to the Colossians, said, "Let no man judge you in respect of new moons, sabbath days and so forth, which are a shadow of the things to come or which were a shadow of things to come. But the substance is of Christ." The sabbath day rest was just a shadow of things to come. The substance is Jesus. And it foreshadowed the rest that we have in the finished work of Jesus. You see, the original sabbath, God rested from His creative works. It was a time of rest. So for us, believers, our sabbath is Jesus. We are resting in Him and in His finished work. I can't do any work to redeem myself, or to save myself. The work has been done by Jesus Christ and I rest in Him so He's my sabbath. And you want to know about my sabbath day? I point to Jesus, He's my sabbath. I'm resting, there's my rest. And they that have entered into Christ have ceased from their own labors and are resting in Him. So He becomes our sabbath. So "the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day." Greater than the temple. I'm the Lord of the sabbath day.

And when he was departed from there [still on the sabbath], he went into their synagogue: (12:9)

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? in order that they might accuse him. (12:10)

According to their tradition and their traditional interpretation of the law, you could not heal on the sabbath day. They determined that was not lawful. If you put a band aid on, it couldn't have any medication on it. You could put one on so you didn't get blood all over, but you couldn't have medication on it. You could do what was necessary to save a life but nothing towards the healing process until the sabbath day was over. Take whatever emergency measures you need to just keep the guy alive, and hopefully, he'll live through the sabbath and then you can start the process of setting the broken bone or whatever you need to do, but no healing on the sabbath day. So they brought up this point of law. Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath day? And their whole point was just to bring an accusation against Him.

And he said unto them, What man shall be there among you, that if he has one sheep, and it falls into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? (12:11)

If one of your sheep should fall in the pit, sabbath day, wouldn't you lift it out?

How much then is this man better than a sheep?

Jesus wasn't an environmentalist. He felt that men were better than animals. If you would help a sheep on the sabbath day that was in distress, shouldn't you help people who are in distress even though it is the

sabbath day? So then He asked them a question,

Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath day? (12:12)

I guess it would be. And so,

He said to the man, Stretch forth your hand. And he stretched it forth; and it was restored whole, like as the other. (12:13)

This was the breach. It was at this point that,

The Pharisees went out, and they held a council [they gathered together, they held a council] against him, how they might destroy him. (12:14)

This is the thing that created the real break, and at this point, they determined we got to destroy Him.

And when Jesus knew it, he withdrew himself from there: and great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all; (12:15)

And he charged them that they should not make him known: (12:16)

Not to go out and publicize it. Jesus was not wanting a premature attempt of the people to try to overthrow the Roman government and to establish Him as king and to create a rebellion against Rome in which many lives would be lost. And so He's putting down their fervor and their zeal, just telling them not to let it be known.

That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying, (12:17)

Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased: [this is Isaiah 42:1-4] I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall show justice to the Gentiles. (12:18)

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

They had gathered together, this council against Jesus, they were determining to destroy Him, and rather than standing up and fighting them, "I have my rights," and demanding His first amendment rights, He just left. Great multitudes followed, He ministered to them, healed their sick, but didn't want to create a confrontation with them. That the scripture might be fulfilled which said, "He will not strive, nor cry: neither shall any man hear His voice in the streets."

A bruised reed shall he not break, and a smoking flax shall he not quench,

The bruised reed was...many of the reeds, they are very fragile and the bruise they will actually bend over with a bruised mark on them where they'd been crushed, they'll bend over. But He won't break a bruised reed, Israel was like a bruised reed. He didn't come to break it. The smoking flax, or the smoking wick, He's not going to put it out. He didn't come to confront. Men who are bruised, He's not out to break them, He's out to restore them. The smoking flax, He doesn't put it out, He seeks to rekindle the flame. And there are some people who are sort of like the smoking wick, the flame has gone out, but His purpose isn't to just put it out but it's to rekindle it. To bring that flame once again within your heart.

And in his name shall the Gentiles trust. (12:21)

Then was brought unto him one that was possessed with the devil, he was blind, and dumb: and Jesus healed him, insomuch that the blind and the mute both spake and saw. (12:22)

And all the people were amazed, and they said, Is not this the son of David? (12:23)

Jesus was doing the works now that were predicted of the Messiah. He would open the eyes of the blind, He would cleanse the leper, the lame would leap for joy, and the mute would be singing praises unto God. And so here's a man possessed with the devil, he's both blind and mute, Jesus heals him, he can now see, he is now speaking. And faced with this evidence of the Messiahship of Jesus, the people were saying, Isn't this the Messiah? The term "Son of David" is another term for the Messiah because He was to be a descendant of David. And so, they were saying, Isn't this the son of David?

But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils. (12:24)

He's in league with Satan. He's doing this through the power of Satan. This man is Satanic.

And Jesus knew their thoughts, and he said unto them,

He came against them with clear logic, He said,

Every kingdom that is divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand: (12:25)

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

So what you are suggesting is ridiculous. You're suggesting that Satan's kingdom is divided, that I'm doing this by the powers of darkness. But then that would mean a division in the kingdom of Satan and it cannot stand if that division takes place.

And if I [the second argument] by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? therefore they shall be your judges. (12:27)

Exorcism was a common practice in those days. There seemed to be much demon possession as there are in many foreign countries today. And thus, exorcism was a common practice. And so Jesus said, "If I am by Beelzebub casting out the devils, then how are your children doing it? They will be your judges."

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

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. (12:29)

Jesus is declaring I'm doing this by the Spirit of God. Binding the strongman of the house first, and then spoiling his house. I believe that we have here a pattern by Jesus concerning prayer. And I believe that through prayer, we bind the strongman of the house. We can bind the works of Satan through prayer. The principalities and powers of darkness are subject unto Jesus Christ.

When the disciples came back from their mission, they were rejoicing and saying, Lord, even the devils were subject to us. And they are subject to Jesus Christ. For Colossians 2 tells us that Jesus Christ spoiled the principalities and powers that are opposed to us, "Having triumphed over them in His cross, and thereby made an open display of His victory." So through Jesus Christ, we can bind the powers of darkness. And Christian service then is just taking the spoils. Now the problem is that many times, Christians are trying to take the spoils before they have bound the strongman of the house. We get all involved in a works program. And rather than laying, first of all, the path of victory through the binding of the powers of darkness, we just go out in service, we just go out to work. We got a great work to do for God, let's all go... Well, wait a minute. There's a strongman that's going to hinder the work. Let's bind him first. And then we'll go in and take the spoil.

He that is not with me is against me;

You cannot be neutral concerning Jesus Christ. You are either for Him or you are against Him, there is no ground of neutrality. Jesus is so radical and has made such radical statements that it eliminates any thought of Him as just a marvelous teacher, a great philosopher, a remarkable man. He is either the Son of God, or He is a lunatic and a liar. If you're not for Him, you're against Him. You cannot be neutral. And not to be for Him is to be against Him. That's the heavy thing. Not to be for Him is to be against Him. You say, Well, I'm not really... Yes, you are. He said you are, if you're not for Him, you're against Him.

and he that gathereth not with me is actually scattering abroad. (12:30)

You can't be neutral. Either you're gathering with Him or you are scattering from Him. And now, because they have made this declaration that He was doing this by the power of the devil... in reality, you see, faced with the indisputable evidence that He is the Messiah--the people recognizing it and questioning, Is this not the Messiah? Isn't this the Son of David?--because they could not deny the miracle; here's a man talking, here's a man able to see, he was blind, he was mute, they cannot deny that. Thus, they have to give some kind of an explanation, How is it then that this man can see and he can talk? And so their explanation was, He's doing it by the power of the devil.

Rather than believing, rather than acknowledging and saying, We were wrong, surely this is the Messiah, let us worship Him; they are so opposed to Jesus that they are now saying He's doing it through the power of the devil. Attributing the works of the Holy Spirit to Satan, rather than to acknowledge that Jesus is the Messiah. And in this, Jesus is pointing out that there is a sin, He calls it the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit, that is such a heinous, horrible sin that there is not forgiveness for this sin neither in this world or in the world to come.

You can speak against Jesus and it will be forgiven. You cannot speak against the Holy Spirit and it be forgiven.

Whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, or the world to come. (12:32)

The Holy Spirit is the One who convicts you of your sin. He is the One who points you to Jesus Christ as the solution and the answer. He is the One who draws you to Jesus Christ. That is the work of the Holy Spirit: to exalt Jesus, to draw people to Jesus that they might be saved from their sin. In the book of Hebrews, it speaks about those who do despite to the Spirit of grace. When the Holy Spirit comes to you, convicts you of sin, points to Jesus Christ; if you reject the message of the Holy Spirit to your heart, if you refuse to come to Jesus Christ, God has provided no other means whereby your sins can be forgiven, and thus, you are rejecting the only means that God has provided for salvation.

The longer you reject Jesus Christ, the easier it is to reject Him. In fact, after rejecting Him so many times, you actually, as He said, you begin to be against Him, you begin to turn against Christ. You have met people and I have met people who can talk to you rationally on any subject in the world except Jesus. And the moment you bring up Jesus, they become totally irrational. Talk about the weather, talk about the Raiders or the Rams, or whatever, my, they're right in it... the Mighty Ducks. But talk about Jesus, there's a fire, their whole being seems to rebel against Him. Indication that these people have taken the road towards the unpardonable sin and are far down the path. There will come a time where God's Spirit will cease to strive with the person. God said to Noah, "My Spirit will not always strive with man." You can go too far in your opposition and refusal of Jesus Christ. You can say "No" once too often and you will never have another opportunity to accept. The Spirit of God will leave you and there will be no further opportunities or invitations for you to receive Jesus. For each person, there is that final call that God gives. And to reject that final call, there is no hope. As the book of Hebrews said, "Only that certain fearful looking forward to the fiery indignation of God's wrath whereby He will devour His adversaries." When a person will refuse the proofs that God has set before them, the indisputable evidence, when they reject that, and they have to make some kind of an excuse for how it was done--He's doing it through the powers of Satan--it shows that they have gone down that path too far. Therefore, as John said, "They could not believe." So Jesus said,

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. (12:33)

O generation of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. (12:34)

Here they were, as He said in another place, the outside of the cup was all clean but inside it was filthy. He said you are like whitewashed sepulchers. You're all painted white on the outside but inside you're full of dead men's bones. You may say these religious platitudes. While in public you may have all of the appearance of being so holy and so righteous, there are so many people that in public they are one thing but in private, there's something totally different. And there is the image that they project, public image, and their words in public are so good, but in private they are filthy mouthed. Politicians especially. They say the right things in public, so careful about what they say, but you get them behind the closed doors, and the kind of language and the filth, tragic, really tragic. And Jesus is, He said, Look, what's in your heart is going to come out in your mouth. Not maybe in public but in private, it's going to be there.

And a good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth good things: but an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. (12:35)

So it's not how you talk when you're in church, it's how you talk when you're home or how you talk when you're on the job. There the truth is revealed.

But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give an account thereof in the day of judgment. (12:36)

For by your words you shall be justified, and by your words you will be condemned. (12:37)

Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from you. (12:38)

He has just done a sign that they cannot explain, the blind man is there and he's talking, he was mute, he's talking, He's just done this sign, but now... then they got angry. They said, You did it by the power of the devil. They said, "We would see a sign from you."

But he answered and said unto them, An evil and an adulterous generation seeks after a sign;

They were adulterous inasmuch as they had turned their backs on God. In the Old Testament, Israel was considered as the wife of God, married unto God and was to be faithful unto God; but Israel kept committing spiritual fornication and adultery in that they were worshipping other gods. They had made idols to represent the goddess of pleasure, they have made idols to represent the god of power, idols to represent the god of the intellect, and they were worshipping these other gods; and thus were guilty of spiritual adultery. And Jesus said, "An evil and an adulterous generation seeks after a sign,"

and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonah: (12:39)

The greatest sign that Jesus was the Messiah was His resurrection from the dead. That's the greatest sign. Greater than all of the miracles, greater than walking on water, greater than turning water to wine and all of these other things, the greatest and the final sign that He was indeed the Messiah was His resurrection from the dead. On another occasion when they asked for a sign, He said, "Destroy this temple and in three days, I will rebuild it." They answered and said, We've been building on this thing for forty-seven years, and you say you're going to rebuild it in three days, who do you make yourself to be? But Jesus, the scriptures said, was referring to the temple of His body.

Now Jesus said, "No man takes My life from Me, I give My life for I have the power to lay My life down and I have the power to take it up again." Quite a claim. And so He is declaring again, the resurrection will be the sign, the greatest sign. And the only sign that He will give to them will be the resurrection.

As Jonah 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. (12:40)

There is a place in the scripture that is called "Hades" in the Greek, or "Sheol" in the Hebrew. It is translated "grave" and translated "hell." Jesus here locates Hades for us, in the heart of the earth. When we get to Luke chapter sixteen, Jesus will tell the story of a rich man who fared sumptuously everyday. And of the poor man who was brought daily at his gate, covered with sores, eating the scraps that fell from the rich man's table. And how that the poor man died and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom. How the rich man also died and in Hades lifted up his eyes, being in torment, seeing Lazarus there being comforted, cried, Father Abraham, have mercy on me and send Lazarus to me that he may take his finger, dip it in water and touch my tongue, for I am tormented in this heat. Heart of the earth. Paul tells us in Ephesians 4 that "He who has ascended," that is, Jesus, "is the same One who first of all descended into the lower parts of the earth and when He ascended, He led the captives from their captivity."

Peter tells us in Acts chapter two, that the prophecy concerning Jesus was that "God would not leave His soul in hell, neither would He allow the Holy One to see corruption." And so Peter affirms that "This same Jesus hath God raised from the dead." David was not prophesying of himself but prophesying of the Messiah to come. "And we bear witness God did not leave His soul in hell, neither did He allow the Holy One to see corruption, but this same Jesus hath God raised." And so when Jesus died for our sins, He descended into Hades.

Prior to the death of Jesus Christ on the cross whereby He put away our sins, Abraham and the rest of the Old Testament saints could not enter into heaven, because it was impossible that the blood of bulls or goats could put away sin, all they could do was cover them. So God had a compartment in Hades in which Abraham was comforting those who died in faith of the promise of God that He was going to send His Messiah. And when Jesus died, He descended into hell and preached to the souls in prison. When He rose, He led the captives from their captivity because now through His death, access was made for them to enter into heaven. And He led the captives from their captivity. He opened the prison doors to those that have been found. He set the captives free. And now, "To be absent from this body is to be present with the Lord." So Jesus is saying, this is the sign, "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."

And the men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment

[there's a day of the resurrection of the unjust who will stand before God, Revelation chapter twenty]

and they will rise in the day of judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and, behold, a greater than Jonah is here. (12:41)

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. (12:42)

So Jesus declaring Himself greater than Jonah, greater than Solomon, and the people of Nineveh will rise--they only had one preacher, he hated them, he had only one monotonous message, it was that of judgment and he was thrilled to give it to them, smacked his lips and he said, "Forty days and you're going to get wiped out." Ha-ha. Forty days and comes destruction. Well, might the men of Nineveh rise with this generation and condemn it because they repented at the preaching of Jonah. And a greater gospel we have to share than Jonah, he didn't have any gospel. He only had a message of judgment, and they repented. We have the gospel, the good news, God loves you and will forgive you every sin and every trespass if you will but just receive Jesus Christ as your Savior and as your Lord. Queen of the south came from the uttermost parts to hear the wisdom of Solomon. Behold, a greater than Solomon is here.

Now Jesus teaches concerning unclean spirits.

When an unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. (12:43)

Then he saith, I will return unto my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. (12:44)

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. (12:45)

In looking into the spirit realm, these demonic spirits desire to be incorporated. You remember when Jesus met the demoniacs at Gadara, and He asked, Who are you? And they answered, Legion because we are many. They requested that they not be sent to the pit before their time and were given leave and they entered into the swine that stampeded down into the sea. They seem to be restless, they go through the wilderness places, dry places, seeking rest by being incorporated in a body, finding none, no place, no body to inhabit. And I do think that there has to be an opening on the part of man before he can be possessed by a demonic spirit. I believe that a person has to be dabbling in the occult, dabbling into witchcraft or dabbling into occultish kind of things, such as ouija boards or seances or things of this nature, before you can be inhabited by a demon. And notice that he comes back and he finds the house from which he was ordered out all clean. There has been no replacement. It's just an empty religion, they haven't filled the house with Jesus. Now I believe that when Jesus is dwelling within you, it's impossible that a demon could dwell within you, co-dwell with Jesus. That's just an inconsistency. "What fellowship hath light with darkness, what fellowship hath Christ with Belial?" And the answer is none. But a person who only comes for the perks, for the benefits, creates a void in himself, if he does not receive Jesus Christ and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. And he makes himself susceptible to a worse condition than he had to begin with. Even so, Jesus said, shall it be also with this wicked generation. You had the opportunity, you've heard. And you're going to be much worse off because of your rejection than you would have been had you never heard.

And while he yet talked to the people, behold, his mother and his brothers stood outside, desiring to speak with him. (12:46)

And one came in and said unto him, Your mother and your brothers are standing outside, they desire to speak with you. (12:47)

But he answered and said unto him that told him that, Who is my mother? and who are my brothers? (12:48)

And then he stretched out his hand toward his disciples, and He said, Behold my mother and my brothers! (12:49)

For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother. (12:50)

That scripture would trouble me greatly if I was depending on Mary to intercede for me. I would be a little worried. Jesus, your mother is out here, she wants to talk to you. Who's my mother? Who are my brothers? Those that do the will of God, the same are my mother, my brother... The beautiful thing is that

“There is one God and one mediator between God and man, and that’s the man Christ Jesus,” and we have direct access to Jesus Christ. And Paul said, “Don’t let any man deceive you concerning the value of voluntary humility.” Oh, I’m not worthy to go to Jesus, I’ll come in the back door by His mother. The argument is, every good son will surely listen to his mother, so go to Mary. Let her go to Jesus for you. Or go to one of the saints, and this is what Paul was actually speaking about in Colossians 2, “Don’t let any man deceive you concerning voluntary humility,” that you would seek the intercession of saints or whatever. I’m not worthy to come to Jesus, I’ll just come to Saint Stephen.

None of us are worthy to come to Jesus, of course not. But that isn’t the issue. He’s invited you to come. “Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden.” Because of His invitation to come, it would be wrong for me to try to go around by some other means. The door is open for you to come unto the Father, directly through the Son. And so, Jesus looks upon you who are doing His will as His mother, as His brother, and as His sister.

Father, we thank You for the wonderful position that we have in Christ, this beautiful relationship where we are one with Him. We thank You Lord that You made it possible for us to come. You have broken down the walls, You tore the veil, You made access for each of us into Your presence. We thank You for that, we rejoice in the privilege of being able to come. Thank You Father that You call us Yours sons, You’ve adopted us and given us all of the privileges of being Your sons. And if Your sons, then we are Your heirs, joint heirs with Jesus Christ to the goodness and the blessing and the kingdom of God. Bless us Father, as we continue our journey through the New Testament, as we learn more about You and Your great love for us and Your plan for our future. In Jesus’ Name, we pray, Amen.