

## The Unavoidable Messiah...Rejected!

Matthew 12.43-45

John and Jesus proclaimed the kingdom of heaven, and Jesus' miracles showed He was their King, yet Jewish leaders resolutely opposed Him. Jesus told a parable to announce judgment on that evil generation, then revealed His new 'family.' There are lessons for us here...

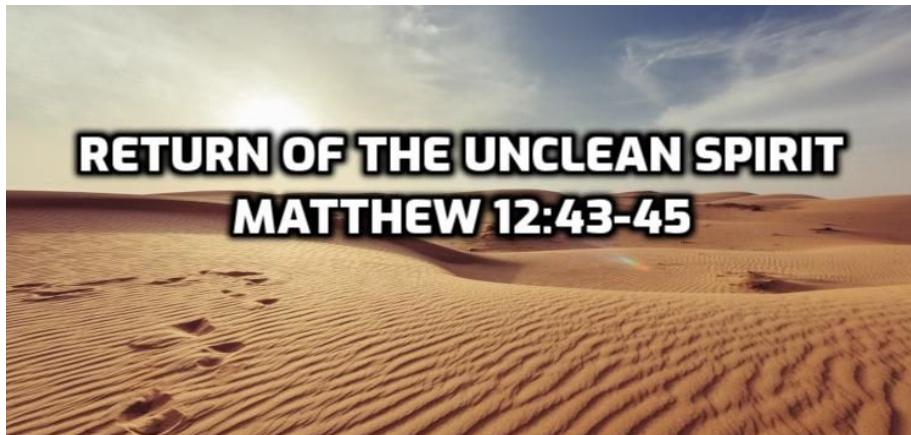
Jesus' miracles evoke recognition, and ridicule (9.18-34)

The kingdom of heaven is proclaimed far and wide (9.35-11.15)

The rejection of the King; the 'unpardonable sin' (11.16-12.37)

An evil generation judged, and a new 'family' (12.38-50)!

- The 'sign of Jonah': Jesus predicts His passion (12.38-40)
- Condemned by pagans! (12.41-42; see 10.15; 11.20-24)
- Parable of demon-possessed man: Israel's demise (12.43-45)
- Jesus' 'mother, brother, and sister;' A new 'family' (12.46-50)



1. The parables of Jesus we've looked at so far – the parables of salt and light (Matt. 5.13-16), the wise and foolish builders (Matt. 7.24-27), and the patch and wineskins (Matt. 9.16-17), reveal aspects of the kingdom of heaven and those who will enter it: Kingdom living involves hearing and acting on Jesus' words, and infecting your world with His truth, which is something totally new! His teaching and miracles clearly showed He was the Messiah, but the more compelling the evidence, the more He was vilified and attacked by Jewish leaders. What about Jesus' miracles in Matt. 8.1-17, 28-34; 9.1-8, 18-33 would have infuriated them?
2. Despite the Jewish religious leaders' condemnation (9.34), Jesus felt compassion for the Jews (9.36). He preached the 'gospel of the kingdom' to them (9.35), and sent out His disciples to preach that "The kingdom of heaven is at hand" (9.37-10.7). Notice that Jesus told them *not* to preach to the Gentiles (10.5); why do you think He gave this instruction? Hint: To what nation were the Old Testament kingdom promises made? Does this mean that Jesus did not intend to bless the Gentiles? See Genesis 12.1-3; Matt. 12.17-21.
3. The narrative of Jesus' early ministry is littered with indications of His coming rejection by the Jews, and the extension of blessing to any and all – including the downtrodden and even Gentiles! – who believe in Jesus. Pious Jews taught that diseased, demon-possessed, and 'depraved' (like tax-collectors) people should be shunned and condemned. Do you see how Jesus' miracles and teachings turned all their ideas upside down? Consider these verses: Matthew 8.10-12; 9.9-13, 16-17, 27-29, 32-34; 10.15; 11.20-24; 12.34, 37, 43-50.
4. Jesus' parable of the demon-possessed man (Mt. 12.43-45) reveals how the Jews who did not follow their Messiah, but clung to their old religion, ended up worse off than they started! It's a tragic tale. But what are the lessons for us today? What about those who hear the good news of Jesus and put off believing in Him? What about those who believe in Jesus, but put off following Him with their lives? Is the 'house' of your life 'clean,' but 'empty'?