

## Jesus – The King of the Jews #33

### The Truth About Man

Matt 12:33-50

#### Introduction:

1. Man's natural sinfulness and lostness are not always apparent.
  - a. Many outwardly religious, moral, and decent people say they believe in God and are kind and helpful to others.
  - b. Even completely irreligious people sometimes live law-abiding lives and behave as good neighbors.
2. Sometimes the kindly attitude and good works of unbelievers even put the behavior of some Christians to shame.
3. From the human perspective it can be difficult to see how such people could be inherently sinful and alienated from God.
4. Many of them speak well of God, have high behavioral standards, are loving husbands and wives, caring parents, fair employers or employees, good citizens, and faithful friends.
5. They may even go to church regularly, give generously to its support, serve on its boards and committees, and teach in Sunday school.
6. How, it is often asked, could such obviously "good" people be spiritually depraved and lost?
7. Sin is most clearly and indisputably manifested by how a person responds to Jesus Christ.
  - a. No matter what a person's outward life is like, his innate spiritual nature and his true attitude toward God are seen with absolute certainty in his attitude toward Jesus Christ.
  - b. The person who rejects Christ is dead spiritually and an enemy of God, no matter what religious profession he may make or how morally and selflessly he may appear to live.
  - c. The issue of sin becomes perfectly focused when a person confronts Christ, and the crux of damning sin is rejection of Him.
  - d. Men are convicted of "sin because they do not believe in Me," Jesus said ([John 16:9](#)).

#### I. The Truth About Man's Heart – vs 33-37

##### A. The Parable – vs 33

**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.

1. Jesus begins his teaching about man's heart with a short parable
  - a) *A tree and its fruit correspond*
  - b) *A good tree produces good fruit and a bad tree produces bad fruit*
2. Jewish leaders had to make up their minds about Jesus and His work
  - a) *Either he was evil and he was doing evil work*
  - b) *Or else he was good and his work was good*
  - c) *Jesus could not be evil and doing good work*
  - d) *He could not be good and do evil work*
3. Healing the sick, casting out demons and raising the dead are good things and are not Satan's doings

##### B. The Personalization – vs 34a

**34** O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.

1. Jesus states that the Pharisees were much worse than a group of bad trees, they were a brood of vipers
2. That is what John the Baptist said of the Pharisees
3. Jesus did not shy away from condemning men to their faces, especially when their sin was hypocritical and self-righteous
  - a) *We may offend the lost*
  - b) *But we are not serving God if we fail to challenge those who promote irreverence and moral filth*

BYZ **Matthew 12:33** Ἡ ποιήσατε τὸ δένδρον καλόν, καὶ τὸν καρπὸν αὐτοῦ καλόν, ἢ ποιήσατε τὸ δένδρον σαπρὸν, καὶ τὸν καρπὸν αὐτοῦ σαπρὸν· ἐκ γὰρ τοῦ καρποῦ τὸ δένδρον γινώσκεται.

BYZ **Matthew 12:34** Γεννήματα ἐχιδνῶν, πῶς δύνασθε ἀγαθὰ λαλεῖν, πονηροὶ ὄντες; Ἐκ γὰρ τοῦ περισσεύματος τῆς καρδίας τὸ στόμα λαλεῖ.

4. Vipers are deadly – one bite and the person died
5. Vipers are deceptive
6. Their unbiblical, legalistic traditions poisoned the minds of fellow Jews against the pure and redeeming truth of God's Word, and their hypocritical self-righteousness led countless others into that same evil attitude.

### C. The Principle – vs 34b-35

34b ...for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. 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.

1. The mouth speaks what is in the heart of the individual
  - a) *The heart represents the character of a person*
  - b) *The heart is the seat of thought and will*
2. It was the evil hearts of the Pharisees that caused them to blaspheme the Holy Spirit by accusing Jesus of casting out demons by the power of Satan
3. They spoke evil because they were evil on the inside
4. It has been estimated that from the first "Good morning" to the last "Good night," the average person engages in thirty conversations a day.
5. Each day, his words could make a book of 50-60 pages—the equivalent of more than one hundred books a year of 200 pages each.
6. Those who have bitter hearts reveal that by their words
7. Those who have lustful hearts will express it

### D. The Punishment – vs 36-37

36 But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. 37 For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.

1. Because our words are an accurate gauge of our hearts, we shall give account of our words in the day of judgment
  - a) *Salvation and condemnation are not caused by our words, but they are revealed by our words*
  - b) *Words are not the basis of salvation or condemnation but they are reliable evidence of the reality of salvation*
  - c) *The speech of a redeemed person will be different because it comes from a renewed heart*
2. Idle word – careless word, useless, barren, unproductive
3. Even the words of love, encouragement, comfort and kindness may be sincere and greatly helpful to others but they are of no spiritual value to a lost person because they do not come from a redeemed, righteous heart
4. No spiritually good thing can come from a heart that is spiritually evil
5. Scientists theorize that sound waves are never completely lost but gradually fade beyond detection. With sufficiently sensitive instruments, every word ever spoken in the history of mankind presumably could be retrieved. How much more certain can we be that in God's infallible records every word and deed of mankind is perfectly preserved for use as evidence in the coming judgment!

## II. The Truth About Christ Rejecters – vs 38-42

### A. The Last Sign – vs 38-40

- Certain of the scribes and Pharisees might refer to a delegation or special committee sent to challenge Jesus
- Scribes had to be at least 30 yrs old and they had many years of intense training in the Hebrew Scriptures
- They were the supreme teachers and interpreters of the law
- Though some scribes were Sadducees, most were Pharisees

BYZ **Matthew 12:35** Ὁ ἀγαθὸς ἄνθρωπος ἐκ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ θησαυροῦ ἐκβάλλει ἀγαθὰ· καὶ ὁ πονηρὸς ἄνθρωπος ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ θησαυροῦ ἐκβάλλει πονηρά.

BYZ **Matthew 12:36** Λέγω δὲ ὑμῖν, ὅτι πᾶν ῥῆμα ἀργόν, ὃ ἐὰν λαλήσωσιν οἱ ἄνθρωποι, ἀποδώσουσιν περὶ αὐτοῦ λόγον ἐν ἡμέρᾳ κρίσεως.

BYZ **Matthew 12:37** Ἐκ γὰρ τῶν λόγων σου δικαιοθήσῃ, καὶ ἐκ τῶν λόγων σου καταδικασθήσῃ.

BYZ **Matthew 12:38** Τότε ἀπεκρίθησάν τινες τῶν γραμματέων καὶ Φαρισαίων, λέγοντες, Διδάσκαλε, θέλομεν ἀπὸ σοῦ σημεῖον ἰδεῖν.

A sign from thee (apo sou sēmeion). One wonders at the audacity of scribes and Pharisees who accused Jesus of being in league with Satan and thus casting out demons who can turn round and blandly ask for a "sign from thee." As if the other miracles were not signs! "The demand was impudent, hypocritical, insulting" (Bruce).

1. The Challenge – vs 38b

**38b ... Master, we would see a sign from thee.**

- a) *“Master” or “Teacher” is hypocritical and sarcastic here since they considered no one outside of their ranks to be qualified to teach about Jewish law and tradition’*
- b) *They considered Jesus a heretic and blasphemer and their intention here was to expose Him as a false teacher*
- c) *They used the title here to show mock respect for Jesus in front of the crowd and possibly to put him off guard by flattery*
- d) *Here was an official demand for J to prove himself to be Messiah*
- e) *Jesus had already performed hundreds of public miracles of healing, casting out demons, raising the dead*
- f) *Perhaps this sign was on a greater scale*
- g) *Matthew says that they asked for a sign from heaven – which would be a spectacular sign*

2. The Reply – vs 39-40

**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: 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.**

- a) *Jesus called them “evil” – their idolatry, immorality, unbiblical traditions, hardness of heart showed they were evil*
- b) *He called them “adulterous” because they had breached the vows of their unique covenant relationship with God, a relationship often spoken of in terms of marriage*
- c) *Faithful Jews who knew the Father would recognize the Son and no sign was needed*
- d) *Jesus referred to Jonah in the belly of the whale and said that he would be buried 3 days and 3 nights*
- e) *That would be their sign*
- f) *This was not the sign that they wanted or expected, but it was infinitely more wonderful and miraculous*

**B. The Last Sentence – vs 41-42**

**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. 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.**

1. Men of Nineveh

- a) *Were especially wicked, corrupt and idolatrous*
- b) *Were Gentiles and far from God’s covenant*
- c) *Yet they repented at the preaching of Jonah and God spared them physical destruction*
- d) *The scribes and Pharisees thought they were God’s favorites and Jesus said that the Ninevites would rise up in the judgment and condemn them*
- e) *The Ninevites just heard Jonah preach, but the scribes and Pharisees had heard one greater than Jonah*

2. The queen of Sheba – (Queen of the South)

- a) *A queen of the Sabaeans in lower Arabia south of Israel*
- b) *They prospered from lucrative Med trade routes with India*
- c) *When Solomon was king of Israel, his wisdom and the splendor of his kingdom became known throughout the world*
- d) *The queen heard of Solomon and made a trip to visit him and she was not disappointed*
- e) *She admitted that the greatness of Solomon was far greater than what she had heard*
- f) *Our Savior uses this verse here to rebuke people for their lack of interest in himself*

BYZ **Matthew 12:39** Ὁ δὲ ἀποκριθεὶς εἶπεν αὐτοῖς, Γενεὰ πονηρὰ καὶ μοιχαλὶς σημεῖον ἐπιζητεῖ· καὶ σημεῖον οὐ δοθήσεται αὐτῇ, εἰ μὴ τὸ σημεῖον Ἰωνᾶ τοῦ προφήτου

BYZ **Matthew 12:40** Ὡσπερ γὰρ ἦν Ἰωνᾶς ἐν τῇ κοιλίᾳ τοῦ κήτους τρεῖς ἡμέρας καὶ τρεῖς νύκτας, οὕτως ἔσται ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ τῆς γῆς τρεῖς ἡμέρας καὶ τρεῖς νύκτας.

**κήτους** noun gns from **κῆτος** - sea monster, large fish (MT 12.40)

BYZ **Matthew 12:41** Ἄνδρες Νινευῖται ἀναστήσονται ἐν τῇ κρίσει μετὰ τῆς γενεᾶς ταύτης καὶ κατακρινοῦσιν αὐτήν· ὅτι μετενόησαν εἰς τὸ κήρυγμα Ἰωνᾶ· καὶ ἰδοὺ, πλεῖον Ἰωνᾶ ᾧδε.

BYZ **Matthew 12:42** Βασίλισσα νότου ἐγεροθήσεται ἐν τῇ κρίσει μετὰ τῆς γενεᾶς ταύτης καὶ κατακρινεῖ αὐτήν· ὅτι ἦλθεν ἐκ τῶν περᾶτων τῆς γῆς ἀκοῦσαι τὴν σοφίαν Σολομῶνος· καὶ ἰδοὺ, πλεῖον Σολομῶνος ᾧδε.

g) *Cares*

- (1) The queen of Sheba made the long trip to Solomon even though she had many cares in life
- (2) She was a queen and therefore had many responsibilities
- (3) Yet she felt that it was so important that she made the trip anyway
- (4) Many of us use the excuse of the cares of this life for our lack of devotion to Christ
- (5) We are too busy to read our Bibles, pray, and worship
- (6) If the queen of Sheba could leave her cares to come to Solomon, we can leave our cares to follow Christ

h) *Cost*

- (1) The queen of Sheba had to make a great sacrifice to see Solomon
- (2) She had to travel many miles by camel which must have been a very difficult trip
- (3) On top of that, she brought many expensive gifts to Solomon
- (4) If she could sacrifice all that to seek Solomon, then how much more should we sacrifice in order to follow Christ

i) *Calling*

- (1) The queen of Sheba had no calling from Solomon to encourage her to seek him
- (2) Yet she came anyway
- (3) We have many encouraging callings from Christ to come to him, yet we fail to seek Him as we ought
- (4) The queen of Sheba truly rebukes our lack of interest in Christ

### III. The Truth About Reformation – vs 43-50

#### A. Danger of Reformation – vs 43-45

43 When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. 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. 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.

1. Here we see the danger of religious and moral reformation apart from a right relationship to Him
2. The main character in this illustration is an unclean spirit
  - a) *His specific evil characteristics are not identified*
  - b) *“unclean” represents the wicked, vile nature of all demon spirits*
  - c) *This evil spirit was not as evil as he could have been since we learn later that he had evil friends who were worse than he was*
3. A moral reformation takes place and the demon leaves for another home
  - a) *Here is one who turned over a new leaf*
  - b) *It might have been from fear of imprisonment, disease, social stigma, financial ruin*
  - c) *Perhaps the man changed out of love for his wife and children*
  - d) *Such self-cleansing is never permanent if not accompanied by saving faith in Christ*
4. The demon returned and found the house cleaned, swept and unoccupied and brought back seven more spirits more wicked than himself
  - a) *The morality of the moral man blinds him to his basic sinful condition and need*
  - b) *“dwell” in vs 45 is katoikeo – settling down*
  - c) *Where Christ does not live, demons are free to live*
5. To preach morality without salvation through Christ promotes a religion that drives people further from God
  - a) *Reformation is not salvation, regeneration, or redemption.*
  - b) *It may, in fact, work toward the very opposite by entrenching a person in self-satisfaction and blinding him to his need for God's mercy.*
  - c) *In order to have salvation there must be a new and right relationship to God, which comes only as a sinner humbly confesses and turns from his sin and receives Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.*

BYZ **Matthew 12:43** Ὅταν δὲ τὸ ἀκάθαρτον πνεῦμα ἐξέλθῃ ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, διέρχεται δι' ἀνύδρων τόπων, ζητοῦν ἀνάπαυσιν, καὶ οὐχ εὐρίσκει.

ΥΖ **Matthew 12:44** Τότε λέγει, Ἐπιστρέψω εἰς τὸν οἶκόν μου ὅθεν ἐξῆλθον· καὶ ἐλθὼν εὐρίσκει σχολάζοντα, σεσαρωμένον, καὶ κεκοσμημένον.

κεκοσμημένον. verb ptc perf pass  
ams from κοσμέω

(1) *put in order, arrange*; of lamp wicks *trim* (MT 25.7); (2) *adorn, decorate* (MT 23.29); figuratively, of spiritual or moral attractiveness *adorn, make beautiful and attractive* (1P 3.5); of a way of life that recommends doctrinal teachings *do credit to, honor* (TI 2.10)

σεσαρωμένον, verb ptc perf pass  
ams from σαρώω - *sweep, clean with a broom*

σχολάζοντα, verb ptc pres act ams  
from σχολάζω - *be at leisure, have time*; (1) of persons, with the dative *give one's time to, devote oneself to* (1C 7.5); (2) of a building *be unoccupied, stand empty*, metaphorically, of a person after demons have been caused to leave (MT 12.44)

BYZ **Matthew 12:45** Τότε πορεύεται καὶ παραλαμβάνει μεθ' ἑαυτοῦ ἑπτὰ ἕτερα πνεύματα πονηρότερα ἑαυτοῦ, καὶ εἰσελθόντα κατοικεῖ ἐκεῖ· καὶ γίνεται τὰ ἔσχατα τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐκείνου χείρονα τῶν πρώτων. Οὕτως ἔσται καὶ τῇ γενεᾷ ταύτῃ τῇ πονηρᾷ.

## B. Power of Relationship – vs 46-50

46 While he yet talked to the people, behold, his mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him. 47 Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee. 48 But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? 49 And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! 50 For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.

1. The tone of his answer showed plainly to the audience that he would allow no interference with his work on the score of earthly relationships
2. It shows plainly to us that the supposed subserviency of Jesus to his mother, which is the ground of the worship of Mary, is most emphatically repudiated by Jesus himself.
3. To all who now call on the "Mother of God," as Mary is blasphemously styled, Jesus answers, as he did to the Jews, Who is my mother?
4. Mary is here, but Joseph is not mentioned, and it may be that he had died by this time.
  - a) *There were at least four brothers, for Mat. 13:55-56 mentions James, Joseph, Simon and Judas and also some sisters.*
  - b) *Indeed, two of the letters in the NT come from two of these brothers, James and Jude.*
  - c) *But there is no indication in Matthew's story that the brothers are men of faith at this stage.*

**BYZ Matthew 12:46** Ἔτι δὲ αὐτοῦ λαλοῦντος τοῖς ὄχλοις, ἰδοῦ, ἡ μήτηρ καὶ οἱ ἀδελφοὶ αὐτοῦ εἰστήκεισαν ἔξω, ζητοῦντες αὐτῷ λαλῆσαι.

**BYZ Matthew 12:47** Εἶπεν δὲ τις αὐτῷ, Ἰδοῦ, ἡ μήτηρ σου καὶ οἱ ἀδελφοὶ σου ἔξω ἐστήκασιν, ζητοῦντές σοι λαλῆσαι.

**YZ Matthew 12:48** Ὁ δὲ ἀποκριθεὶς εἶπεν τῷ εἰπόντι αὐτῷ, Τίς ἐστὶν ἡ μήτηρ μου; Καὶ τίνες εἰσὶν οἱ ἀδελφοί μου;

**BYZ Matthew 12:49** Καὶ ἐκτείνας τὴν χεῖρα αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τοὺς μαθητὰς αὐτοῦ εἶπεν, Ἰδοῦ, ἡ μήτηρ μου καὶ οἱ ἀδελφοί μου.

**BYZ Matthew 12:50** Ὅστις γὰρ ἂν ποιήσῃ τὸ θέλημα τοῦ πατρὸς μου τοῦ ἐν οὐρανοῖς, αὐτός μου ἀδελφός καὶ ἀδελφὴ καὶ μήτηρ ἐστίν.