

Swept Clean

Paul tells us in 2 Tim. 3:16 All scripture that has been given is inspired by God, and is profitable for doctrine or principle, for reproof or rebuke, correction, and always for instruction that leads us toward the correct path to righteousness.

There are times, as we read scripture, when some verses “jump out” and strike a chord deep within us. Such was the case as I read Matthew 12:43 through 45. I have read these verses many times believing I knew the message Yah was and is entrusting to us. Upon much thought, I realized I was so far from the truth as the message has proved much more significant and spiritually profound than I had previously believed.

In this instance Yahshua is speaking in parables as He had done many times. His audience was composed from all walks of life: men, women, children, poor, wealthy, ill, lame and feeble, including the Pharisees and the Scribes.

In many of the parables, Yahshua revealed the hypocrisy of the Pharisees, the Sadducees and the Scribes by describing their need for attention and glory, lusting after the finest station a privileged life has to offer: the upper most room, and the chief seats, the greetings and honor when approached by members of the congregation. They “devoured” the helpless widows’ houses by taking advantage of them or giving bad advice. Their fear and hatred of our Lord was so immeasurable and intense that they plotted to take His life, regardless of the fact that He was the prophesied Messiah.

Mark 12:38 And he said unto them in his doctrine, Beware of the scribes, which love to go in long clothing, and love salutations in the marketplaces, 39 And the chief seats in the synagogues, and the uppermost rooms at feasts: 40 Which devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers: these shall receive greater damnation.

In John 18:14, the High Priest, Caiaphas, is quoted as saying, “it was expedient that one man should die for the people.” This statement indicates the mind-set of these men who would do anything to retain their position and prestige. Their true motives were hidden under the rationale that if Yahshua was allowed to continue causing a widespread public uprising or disturbances, Rome would enter Jerusalem and crush it with the result that the Pharisees, all Jews, would then lose possession of their power, control and wealth.

John 18:13 And led him away to Annas first; for he was father in law to Caiaphas, which was the high priest that same year. 14 Now Caiaphas was he, which gave counsel to the Jews that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.

The evil intentions of the Pharisees and the Scribes were focused on discrediting Yahshua by destroying His reputation, His popularity amongst the people which would lead to His death with little or no outcries.

Returning to the Parable as recounted by Christ:

Matt. 12:43 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.

Strong's # 169 - unclean - not clean, unclean; demons, bad angels.

Strong's # 504 - dry places - desert places were to be believed the haunts of demons.

Strong's # 2212 - seeking - to seek, to plot against the life of one.

Strong's # 4980 from 4981 – empty - where there is leisure for anything; to be idle; to loiter
All of the above definitions are from Thayer's Lexicon

The parable of Matthew 12:43 is about an unclean spirit (demon) going out of a person: his "house" (body), his mind, and heart that has now been swept clean. The unclean spirit is now walking through the dry place where there are other demons; he vainly seeks a place that is void of Yah and His Word. Happily he finds none in the dry place since they are all like him, full of wickedness and evil.

Where can he go? He goes back to the house that had evicted him which had just recently been swept clean. He returns to that house in order to find out if Yah is living there, but instead, finds it empty, void, for the love of Yah there was only temporary. He rejoices and plans to live there as he takes seven others more-wicked than himself and they collectively begin to plot against and take over the life, the home of the person now invaded and dominated. A mind now invaded with the values of the secular world and its beliefs, good becomes judged as evil and evil now promoted as good.

Isa. 5:20 Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!

Thus the door is opened allowing all of Yah's words to fall by the wayside. You have left the straight and narrow path that is often filled with a rocky road of trials. You slip off that path and are not aware that you are now walking the broad, smooth, "pleasurably-easy" path leading to destruction.

Matt. 7:13 Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:

This parable doesn't provide any background of this man. We can come to a reasonable conclusion that this man was likely a new believer or a person who as a believer, had now become more intimately acquainted with our Lord.

The only way a new believer can rid himself of evil thoughts and actions is by true repentance, begging forgiveness from our Lord. This parable appears to indicate a sinner who upon finding God, studied and learned about Him. His learnings led him to the place where he needed to make a choice. The choice is the same one we all have had to make: either continue on the same path of sinful behavior or repent, turning to the Lord by being baptized in Yahshua's name. It appears that the sinner's choice was for God because he was baptized. Due to his repenting of past sins, being baptized and receiving the Holy Spirit, Yah forgave those sins and remembers them no more.

Jer. 31:34 And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

Heb. 8: 12 For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.

This newly baptized, converted person had been purified and transformed or regenerated into a "new man."

Eph. 4:22 That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; 23 And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; 24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

Col. 3:5 Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: 6 For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience: 7 In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them 8 But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. 9 Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; 10 And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:

Baptism is the beginning of a process: a continual and never ending initiative which includes reading and studying Scripture, constant prayer, sharing of The Word while sustaining one's faith and trust. The new man must work diligently to not revert back to old man habits. He needs to work hard not to repeat the past, yet diligently working to keep the new man on the straight and narrow. Baptism does not mean that one is free from trials and tribulation. Quite the contrary! There are and will be times when trials seem to be unending. These are tests when faith and trust are put on trial. We have all faced these trials; do you believe you passed the test?

*The above scenario is not what had happened to our newly converted person. True, he had been baptized, past sins forgiven and forgotten, the demons gone. Yet he had forgotten or did not know the next crucial step in this never ending process. Despite his mind, his heart having been cleaned out, an ensuing bad choice was then made: to **not** include Christ in his daily life. Why? Because such a spiritual turn involves too much effort, taking too much time to read, to study, to*

pray, to give thanks for the blessings that had been bestowed upon him or us. A frank self-evaluation is required by everyone!

While our newly converted person is not filling his mind or heart with Christ, the swept out demon is looking for a place to call home. He enjoys a home that is clean and emptied out where he can bring his fellow demons, (seven of them, more-wicked than he) who will share with him the enjoyment of polluting, defiling, ravaging, and profaning this clean home with all the filth and evil of this secular world.

Gal. 5:19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, 20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, 21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

I am sure this demon or fallen angel gets a special “well done” by his boss and master, Satan. As stated in verse 45 “the last state of that man is worse than the first.”

2 Pet. 2:20 For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. 21 For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. 22 But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.

If this man had truly been converted at the time of his baptism, he would have turned to the Lord and allowed His Spirit to guide and direct his footsteps. He would have had his eyes opened in order to see the wickedness of the secular world that was beginning to possess his heart and mind. He would have rejected this evil that was beginning to overwhelm him and would have allowed the fruit of the Spirit to engulf and spread through his very existence filling his void and empty-house.

Gal. 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith 23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. 24 And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. 25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

1 John 2:15 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

*Yahshua's parable is very profound, yet very simple. Give your love, heart and obedience to the Lord in order to escape the wrath of Yah as stated in the latter part of verse 45: **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.***

In conclusion, if you don't believe in demons or the demonic world, read the following scriptures highlighting a significant portion of the miracles Yahshua and His Apostles' performed as they were casting out demons or evil spirits from the bodies they now call their homes. Matthew 4:24; 8:16, 28-34; 9:32-33; 10:1, 8; 12:22-28; 15:22; 17:18; Mark 1:23-27, 32-34, 39; 3:11, 15; 5:1-17; 6:7, 13; 7:25-30; 9:17-29, 38; 16:9, 17; Luke 4:33-36, 41; 6:18; 7:21; 8:2, 27-38; 9:1, 37-42; 10:17, 20; 11:14-23; 13:32; Acts 10:38

This world, this country is occupied by many that are possessed with evil with their goal of eliminating Yah and Yahshua from our lives.

Remember, Yah removed His protection from Israel because of their unfaithfulness and the result was the demons forming and spreading their nests throughout the land of Israel.

Proverbs to ponder:

Prov. 16:17 The highway of the upright is to depart from evil: he that keeps his way preserves his soul.

Prov. 24:3 Through wisdom is a house built; and by understanding it is established: 4 And by knowledge shall the chambers be filled with all precious and pleasant riches.

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