

Swept and Garnished

(Luke 11:24-26)

- A. These words were a rebuttal of the gainsayers who had just attributed Jesus' casting out of a devil to the power of Beelzebub, chief of devils (**vs. 14-16**) as if He were nothing more than a Jannes or Jambres (**2TI 3:8**).
1. **MAT 12:24, 38** shows that the scribes and Pharisees were the particular offenders and objects of Jesus' rebuttal.
 2. Their sons were presuming to cast out devils also. **v. 19 c/w ACT 19:13-17.**
 3. Beelzebub seems to be alive and active today in televangelistic healers.
- B. The wording here suggests that the Pharisees were not actually casting out devils as Jesus cast out devils against their will.
1. Jesus said not, "When the unclean spirit is *cast out*...", but "*gone out*."
 - a. "Cast out" implies an involuntary departure of an unclean spirit.
 - b. "Gone out" allows for the possibility of a voluntary departure by the unclean spirit.
 - c. The unclean spirit described his departure as "I came out," not "I was cast out."
 2. The unclean spirit still claimed possession of the house: "...I will return unto MY house..." His claim apparently was valid in that he reentered without resistance, bringing seven other wicked spirits with him.
 3. Unclean spirits which Jesus cast out were barred from reentry. **MAT 8:28-34; MAR 9:25.**
 4. Satan and his ministers specialize in counterfeits to deceive men. **2CO 11:13-15; 2TH 2:9.**
 5. Many on Judgment Day will futilely claim to have cast out devils. **MAT 7:22-23.**
- C. This unclean spirit *walked through dry places seeking rest*. Not all seekers are **HEB 11:6**'ers.
1. Why would an unclean spirit seek rest when unclean spirits are noted for their affinity for disruption and unrest? **1TI 4:1.**
 2. Whatever this *rest* is, it is evidently not ready at hand in these *dry places*, else why would he have to seek it and then not even find it?
 3. Thus, dry places for such an unclean spirit are obviously places that do NOT give him rest.
 4. Jesus Christ represents unrest to unclean spirits.
 - a. They were discomfited by His person and word. **MAR 3:11; 1:23-24.**
 - b. They know Jesus represents their future and final torment. **MAT 8:29.**
 - c. Unclean spirits are not at rest in a church or soul where the word of God is actively magnified. **1JO 4:1-6.**
 - d. Wherever Jesus Christ and His truth rule would be *unrest* and therefore a *dry place* to an unclean spirit. c/w **2TI 2:25-26.**
 - e. Perhaps this is saying something to the person who is looking for *garnish* more than *gospel* and considers a Bible-emphasizing church "dry."
 - f. "Seeker friendly" churches which emphasize sensual delights over sound doctrine would NOT be dry to an unclean spirit *seeking rest*.
- D. **MAT 12:44** says the house was also *empty*. Nothing had taken the place of the departed spirit.
1. Vacant houses are an invitation to vermin.
 2. This should remind us that *purging out old leaven* (**1CO 5:7**) or *casting off works of darkness* (**ROM 13:12**) is only part of the reform process.
 - a. Repentance must be joined by conversion for successful reform. **ACT 3:19.**
 - b. Sin must not only be *put off*. Christ must be *put on*. **ROM 13:12-14.**
 - c. Bad conduct needs to be replaced with good conduct. **EPH 4:28-32.**
- E. The unclean spirit curiously found a swept and garnished house attractive and receptive.
1. Mind that the house was swept, not *washed*.
 - a. The most diligent sweeping will never thoroughly purge out dirt; there will always

- be some residue.
 - b. Those who rely on their works for justification are as this swept house. **GAL 3:10.**
 - c. Jesus did not say, "If I sweep thee not....," but "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me" (**JOH 13:8**). c/w **REV 1:5.**
 - d. The *washing of regeneration* is without our keeping of commandments. **TIT 3:5.**
 - e. Some may escape the pollutions of this world by a superficial outward cleansing yet still be under the power of the god of this world.
2PE 2:20-22; EXO 9:27 c/w ROM 9:16-18.
- 2. That this house was *empty* and unwashed is reminiscent of the house under the Law that was *emptied* according to the law of leprosy yet the plague was still in the walls.
LEV 14:36-37.
- 3. Let not the assurance of eternal life be built upon outward displays of piety or of workless faith which may be no more than that of an unclean spirit. **JAM 2:18-20.**
- 4. A family home may be spotless and beautifully decorated but devoid of true joy and peace because all the emphasis is on material things and appearance, making it an attractive rest area for malevolent spirits. **PRO 15:16-17; 17:1.**
- F. The Pharisees were noted for outward cleansing while being full of extortion and excess within. **MAT 23:25-28.**
 - 1. Their religion was an outward "...form of godliness..." (**2TI 3:5**) which was meant to impress men. **MAT 23:5.**
 - 2. Religion that impresses the senses with outward show is a magnet for unclean spirits.
 - a. Consider the Scarlet Harlot with all of her beauty, wealth, commerce, power, instrumental music, etc. **REV 17:4-5; 18:12-22.**
 - b. Yet for all her show, she is full of sorceries and innocent blood. **REV 18:23-24.**
 - c. She becomes "...the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit..." (**REV 18:2**).
 - 3. Beware the religion that defines righteousness by irrelevant outward "touch not, taste not, handle not" standards (**COL 2:20-23**) by which one *appears* to be superior to others.
- G. The unclean spirit returned with "...seven other spirits more wicked than himself" (v. 26).
 - 1. *Seven* is a number associated with being full or complete in Scripture.
 - 2. This implies a total takeover of the house by Satan.
 - 3. Jesus was applying this to the generation which would crucify Him, "...even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation" (**MAT 12:45**).
 - 4. Unbelieving Israel would be turned into a diabolical madhouse rushing hell-bent to its own destruction. John Gill observed: "This parable fitly suited them, the Scribes and Pharisees, and the men of that generation, from whom in some measure the unclean spirit might be said to depart through the doctrine, and miracles of Christ, to go into the Gentile world; but being followed there with the preaching of the Gospel by the apostles, returns to the Jews, and fills them with more malice, blasphemy, and blindness, than ever, which issued in their utter ruin and destruction; of which this parable may be justly thought to be prophetic."
 - a. The Book of Acts shows that the going forth of the gospel was attended by a continual hounding by belligerent, unbelieving Jews.
 - b. This antiChrist fever is what brought wrath upon them. **1TH 2:14-16.**
 - c. The nation basically became the house of Satan and its religious assemblies "...the synagogue of Satan" (**REV 2:9; 3:9**).
 - d. "And the last state of that man (of that generation, of that religion) is worse than the first" for "Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father..." (**1JO 2:23**).
 - 5. Believers should soberly consider these facts. **ROM 11:20-23.**