

Learning More with
Stories of the Master

Web – www.StoriesoftheMaster.com email – Info@WGSministries.org

~ **Whose Side Are You On?** ~

You can learn much more about this story by doing these three things:

1. Read the story in Matthew 12:22-50 and Mark 3:20-35.
2. Discover key cultural and historical insights.
3. Answer the reflective questions.

1. Read the text of the story from the New American Standard Bible and from the Easy Read Version

New American Standard Bible (NASB) Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by [The Lockman Foundation](http://www.Lockman.org)

New Living Translation (NLT) Holy Bible, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004, 2015 by Tyndale House Foundation

Matthew 12:22-50 - NASB	Matthew 12:22-50 – New Living Translation
<p>²² Then a demon-possessed man <i>who was</i> blind and mute was brought to Jesus, and He healed him, so that the mute man spoke and saw. ²³ All the crowds were amazed, and were saying, “This man cannot be the Son of David, can he?” ²⁴ But when the Pharisees heard <i>this</i>, they said, “This man casts out demons only by Beelzebul the ruler of the demons.”</p> <p>²⁵ And knowing their thoughts Jesus said to them, “Any kingdom divided against itself is laid waste; and any city or house divided against itself will not stand. ²⁶ If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself; how then will his kingdom stand? ²⁷ If I by Beelzebul cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast <i>them</i> out? For this reason they will be your judges. ²⁸ But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. ²⁹ Or how can anyone enter the strong man’s house and carry off his property, unless he first binds the strong <i>man</i>? And then he will plunder his house.</p> <p>³⁰ He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me scatters.</p> <p>³¹ “ Therefore I say to you, any sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven people, but blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven. ³² Whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the <i>age</i> to come.</p> <p>³³ “Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for the tree is known by its fruit. ³⁴ You brood of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak what is good? For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart. ³⁵ The good</p>	<p>²² Then a demon-possessed man, who was blind and couldn’t speak, was brought to Jesus. He healed the man so that he could both speak and see.²³ The crowd was amazed and asked, “Could it be that Jesus is the Son of David, the Messiah?”</p> <p>²⁴ But when the Pharisees heard about the miracle, they said, “No wonder he can cast out demons. He gets his power from Satan, the prince of demons.”</p> <p>²⁵ Jesus knew their thoughts and replied, “Any kingdom divided by civil war is doomed. A town or family splintered by feuding will fall apart. ²⁶ And if Satan is casting out Satan, he is divided and fighting against himself. His own kingdom will not survive. ²⁷ And if I am empowered by Satan, what about your own exorcists? They cast out demons, too, so they will condemn you for what you have said. ²⁸ But if I am casting out demons by the Spirit of God, then the Kingdom of God has arrived among you. ²⁹ For who is powerful enough to enter the house of a strong man and plunder his goods? Only someone even stronger—someone who could tie him up and then plunder his house.</p> <p>³⁰ “Anyone who isn’t with me opposes me, and anyone who isn’t working with me is actually working against me.</p> <p>³¹ “So I tell you, every sin and blasphemy can be forgiven—except blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, which will never be forgiven. ³² Anyone who speaks against the Son of Man can be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven, either in this world or in the world to come.</p> <p>³³ “A tree is identified by its fruit. If a tree is good, its fruit will be good. If a tree is bad, its fruit will be bad. ³⁴ You brood of snakes! How could evil men like</p>

Learning More with
Stories of the Master

Web – www.StoriesoftheMaster.com email – Info@WGSministries.org

man brings out of *his* good treasure what is good; and the evil man brings out of *his* evil treasure what is evil. ³⁶ But I tell you that every careless word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment. ³⁷ For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.”

³⁸ Then some of the scribes and Pharisees said to Him, “Teacher, we want to see a sign from You.” ³⁹ But He answered and said to them, “ An evil and adulterous generation craves for a sign; and *yet* no sign will be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet; ⁴⁰ for just as JONAH WAS THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS IN THE BELLY OF THE SEA MONSTER, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. ⁴¹ The men of Nineveh will stand up with this generation at the judgment, and will condemn it because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, something greater than Jonah is here. ⁴² *The Queen of the South* will rise up with this generation at the judgment and will condemn it, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, something greater than Solomon is here.

⁴³ “ Now when the unclean spirit goes out of a man, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, and does not find *it*. ⁴⁴ Then it says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came’; and when it comes, it finds *it* unoccupied, swept, and put in order. ⁴⁵ Then it goes and takes along with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there; and the last state of that man becomes worse than the first. That is the way it will also be with this evil generation.”

⁴⁶ While He was still speaking to the crowds, behold, His mother and brothers were standing outside, seeking to speak to Him. ⁴⁷ Someone said to Him, “Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside seeking to speak to You.” ⁴⁸ But Jesus answered the one who was telling Him and said, “Who is My mother and who are My brothers?” ⁴⁹ And stretching out His hand toward His disciples, He said, “Behold My mother and My brothers! ⁵⁰ For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother.”

you speak what is good and right? For whatever is in your heart determines what you say. ³⁵ A good person produces good things from the treasury of a good heart, and an evil person produces evil things from the treasury of an evil heart. ³⁶ And I tell you this, you must give an account on judgment day for every idle word you speak. ³⁷ The words you say will either acquit you or condemn you.”

³⁸ One day some teachers of religious law and Pharisees came to Jesus and said, “Teacher, we want you to show us a miraculous sign to prove your authority.”

³⁹ But Jesus replied, “Only an evil, adulterous generation would demand a miraculous sign; but the only sign I will give them is the sign of the prophet Jonah. ⁴⁰ For as Jonah was in the belly of the great fish for three days and three nights, so will the Son of Man be in the heart of the earth for three days and three nights.

⁴¹ “The people of Nineveh will stand up against this generation on judgment day and condemn it, for they repented of their sins at the preaching of Jonah. Now someone greater than Jonah is here—but you refuse to repent. ⁴² The queen of Sheba will also stand up against this generation on judgment day and condemn it, for she came from a distant land to hear the wisdom of Solomon. Now someone greater than Solomon is here—but you refuse to listen.

⁴³ “When an evil spirit leaves a person, it goes into the desert, seeking rest but finding none. ⁴⁴ Then it says, ‘I will return to the person I came from.’ So it returns and finds its former home empty, swept, and in order. ⁴⁵ Then the spirit finds seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they all enter the person and live there. And so that person is worse off than before. That will be the experience of this evil generation.”

⁴⁶ As Jesus was speaking to the crowd, his mother and brothers stood outside, asking to speak to him. ⁴⁷ Someone told Jesus, “Your mother and your brothers are standing outside, and they want to speak to you.”

⁴⁸ Jesus asked, “Who is my mother? Who are my brothers?” ⁴⁹ Then he pointed to his disciples and said, “Look, these are my mother and brothers. ⁵⁰ Anyone who does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother!”

Learning More with
Stories of the Master

Web – www.StoriesoftheMaster.com email – Info@WGSministries.org

2. Discover key cultural and historical insights.

- “In antiquity, people were expected to act in accord with their publicly recognized social standing, derived from the standing of their family of origin. People who did not, were seen as deviant – unless some unusual justification could be provided for what they did.”
- It is characteristic of the Mediterranean world to think in terms of stereotypes. Persons were not known by their psychological personality and uniqueness, but by general social categories such as place of origin, residence, family, gender, age, and the range of other groups to which they might belong. One’s identity was always the stereotyped identity of the group.
- Jesus opponents acknowledge that he casts out demons, but accuse him of being a deviant and seek to shame him publicly to ostracize him from the community. If the label they use could be made to stick, implying as it did that Jesus was an evil deceiver in the guise of good, his credibility with his audience would have been irreparably damaged.”
- In Mark’s account the family went to retrieve him. They believed their family honor was at stake.
- The idea behind the word blasphemy is to dishonor and outrage a person by means of speech. To blaspheme the Spirit of God is to say that the activity of Jesus is the result of unclean spirits.
- An evil and adulterous generation – they are the offspring of spiritual adultery and therefore have no claim upon the inheritance of Israel.
- Mother and oldest son form the closest bond in Mediterranean society.
- “In the world of antiquity the extended family meant everything. It was not only the source of one’s status in the community, but also functioned as the primary economic, religious, educational, and social network. Loss of connection to the family meant the loss of these vital networks as well as any connection to the land. Loss of family was the most serious loss one could sustain. Yet a surrogate family, what anthropologists call a fictive kin group, could serve the same functions as a family of biological origin. Jesus groups, acting as surrogate families, are the locus of the good news for all the Gospel writers. It quickly transcended the normal categories of birth, social status, education, wealth, and power, although it did not as readily dismiss categories of gender and race. Followers of Jesus are “brothers.” For those already detached from their families of origin ... a surrogate family could become a place of genuine refuge. For the well-connected, particularly among the city elite, giving up one’s family of origin for the surrogate Jesus=group family, as the Gospel s portray Jesus demanding was a decision that could cost one dearly... It meant breaking ties not only with family but also the entire social network of which one had been a part. Yet, as Jesus promises in Mark 10:30, the rewards could be unimaginably great: “ a hundredfold now in this age and it he age to come eternal life.” 414

(Note: these cultural insights are from Social Science Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels by Bruce Malina)

Learning More with
Stories of the Master

Web – www.StoriesoftheMaster.com email – Info@WGSministries.org

3. Answer these reflective questions.

Mark 3:20-21 says that Jesus' family thought Jesus had lost his senses. Why do you think they did not believe Jesus? Do you think Mary told them stories about his birth? Do you think Mary tried to convince them about Jesus?

Jesus said if he cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom was upon them. How did casting out evil spirits demonstrate that the kingdom was present on earth? How is the kingdom present in your life?

Jesus had done many signs in Israel, yet the Pharisees wanted another sign. Do you think there was any kind of sign that would have satisfied the Pharisees? Have you ever wanted a sign from God?

Why is the sign of Jonah the most important sign of all?

Learning More with
Stories of the Master

Web – www.StoriesoftheMaster.com email – Info@WGSministries.org

Jesus said those who do the will of God are his family members. Are you a member in God's family? If not, why not? If you are a family member, are you taking responsibility in the family of God and honoring God's family by the way you live?
