

Matthew 12:43-45 Reformation Without Regeneration

Introduction: The scribes and Pharisees and many others of the Jews had rejected the Lord Jesus as their Savior. In our text last week Jesus said that the men of Nineveh and the queen of the south would rise up in the judgment and testify against them.

I. The meaning of the words “reformation” and “regeneration”.

- A. Reformation means to change one's conduct, to seek to eliminate the bad habits and substitute better habits. (It fails to bring a change on the inside.)
- B. Regeneration means to be born again, to experience the new birth.
 - 1. It will produce a change in one's conduct, but the first and primary change goes deeper. (It is a change on the inside.)
 - 2. The depraved, sinful nature of man is reborn by the Holy Spirit and takes on the sinless nature of the Holy Spirit.
 - 3. Then because of the change on the inside, a change for the better begins to take place in the conduct.

II. An unclean spirit within man, Verse 43.

- A. Jesus speaks of an unclean spirit dwelling within man.
 - 1. He speaks about a demon spirit, an evil satanic like spirit.
 - 2. This spirit is not the spirit of the man himself, but it dwells within the man along with his own spirit.
 - 3. Because the spirit is unclean or evil, it influences the man to do evil.
- B. Jesus speaks of the possibility of the unclean spirit leaving the man.
 - 1. He is not cast out by the man or by the Lord, but he leaves of his own accord.
 - 2. Apparently this is because the man has reformed his ways and is trying to live a clean life. (Evil spirits cannot stand that kind of living.)
- C. Jesus speaks also of the possibility of the unclean spirit returning to dwell once again in the man, verse 44.
 - 1. The unclean spirit is not content to roam about but prefers to dwell within some man or some thing.
 - 2. He is at liberty to return within the unsaved man at will. (Since the Holy Spirit did not dwell there.)
- D. Jesus said that when he returns, he will carry with him seven other spirits more evil than himself, verse 45.
- E. The last state of that man is worse than in the beginning, verse 45.

III. The application to that generation of Jews, Verse 45b.

- A. Jesus said that this applies to that generation of Jews who had rejected the Christ as Savior.
- B. They had tried by their own efforts to clean up their lives and make themselves acceptable to God. (They tried to live by the Mosaic law or at least by the law as it had been modified by the traditions of the Jewish fathers.)
- C. But they had rejected the Christ who could save their souls and change their inward spirits by the new birth.
- D. The unclean spirits would return to those Jews and their last state would be worse than ever. (They would crucify the Christ.)

IV. The application to our own generation.

- A. Even today there are many who try to get saved without the new birth.
 - 1. They turn over a new leaf; they quit their bad habits, (or try to); they begin to do good deeds.
 - 2. But they never do really repent of their sins and trust in Jesus and get born again.
- B. Eventually the unclean spirits return and then are more ungodly than ever.
- C. The last state of these unsaved is really worse than the first, for their last state will be in the fires of hell.

V. God's better plan.

- A. God's plan is for a man to repent toward God and trust in Jesus Christ and be saved.
- B. Not only will his inward nature be changed but his whole life can be changed for the better.
(He has got some help from the holy Spirit within.)
- C. The last state of that man will be in the glories of heaven.

Conclusion:

- 1. Come and trust the Lord Jesus as your Saviour.
- 2. Come and surrender your life to Jesus.

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