

# ***“Christ Loves Haunted Houses”***

Matthew 12:43-45

September 13, 2026

**INTRO:** Tell us about where you live & who lives with you...  
(And take note... whether in houses, huts, or “habitats” - **NO ONE lives alone.**)

## **PRAYER**

### **CONTEXT:**

- Bible, N.T., Matthew’s Gospel, 3<sup>rd</sup> major section...
- **VIDEO:** *Chapter 12 first half summary...*
- ***Christ is ripping the wool off the wolves!***

**BIG IDEA:** Jesus taught that spirit-filled hosts & hearts that hear but do not heed Him become haunted houses!

### **PREVIEW:**

1. Radical-Reasoning
2. Radical-Realities
3. Radical-**Remedy**

## TEXT:

### Matthew 12:43-45 (NASB)

*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.”*

## I. Radical-REASONING

### *43“Now when*

#### A. Remember Christ's reasoning...

- a. He's fulfilling the Law & the Prophets
- b. He's fulfilling all Righteousness
- c. He's ushering in the kingdom of heaven
- d. He's discipling vipers who want to destroy...
- e. He's ripping the wool off the world's wolves!

#### B. Realize Christ's realities...

- a. BE radically aligned w/ His Word, will, ways!
- b. BE Acts 17 Berean's w/ whatever you hear.

**T/S:** Jesus is saying a lot that divinely (2 Timothy 3:16) establishes & affirms many important theological truths... AND... at the same time, He is driving home a very clear, missional point.

Pray that He will grace us all with right hearing & righteous heeding of His Word, will, & ways!

## VIDEO: *Intro to Secret Church 7*

## II. Radical-REALITIES

**43** “Now when *the unclean spirit goes out of a man, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, and does not find it.*”

- A. There ARE “unclean spirits” & spiritual warfare!
  - a. Let that sink in... Do you know what that means?
  - b. See Secret Church 7
  - c. Beware making too much/little of this truth.
- B. Spirits that “go out” must already be IN...
  - a. God says demons are ON some & IN others!
  - b. Jesus is connecting the vipers with the demonic.
- C. Again, Jesus is SHOCKING with personal CONTRASTS

|                 |    |                |
|-----------------|----|----------------|
| a. For Me       | or | Against Me     |
| b. Gathers      | or | Scatterers     |
| c. Good         | or | Evil           |
| d. Demon-purged | or | Demon-plagued  |
| e. Holy-houses  | or | Haunted-houses |

D. Demons seek rest...

- a. Seekers of signs are part of the evil generation...
- b. So are the seekers of rest on their own terms...

E. Demons do not find rest!

- a. They fight the only offer of rest.
- b. They live in futile, destructive frustration instead.

***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.***

A. “Then it says,” = Demons communicate... vertically & horizontally!

- a. Let that sink in...
- b. Don’t get sucked into trying to talk with them.

B. “I will return” = Demonic activity & attacks repeat...

- a. Let that sink in...
- b. See that demons have power & use strategy

C. “to my house”

- a. Human hearts are spiritual hosts/houses!
- b. See the demon’s sense of OWNERSHIP of some.

D. “from which I came” = historical residence

E. “and when it/demon comes” = they DO come back!

F. “it/demon finds the house/heart” = personal status:

- a. “Unoccupied/Empty”
  - i. Vacuums are not victors!
  - ii. Empty is the opposite of Spirit-filled.

- b. "Swept"
  - i. Well-kept in looks & neatness...
  - ii. Surface conditioning...
- c. "Put in order"
  - i. Appears to be as God would have it...
  - ii. Well placed deck furniture on the Titanic...

***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."***

- A. An empty heart/host/house is an invitation to evil.
- B. No vacancy in the heart invites poison to fill it!
- C. See that demons work ALONE & in GROUPS/packs!
- D. See that demons range in their degrees of evil!
- E. See that demons, like spiritual squatters, take over!
- F. **Those who take grace for granted fall hardest!**
  - a. Better to have never heard then to hear without heeding...
  - b. Better to have been blind then to have seen and not responded...
  - c. Remember, the Ninevites & the Queen of Sheba are going to condemn the unrepentant & unbelieving people who rejected the Light that was given to them...

- G. Don't miss Messiah messing with the vipers again!
- H. Jesus is now calling them DEMON POSSESSED!
  - a. Vipers served as a metaphor...
  - b. Demon possessed is as direct as you can get!

### III. Radical-REMEDY

- A. Jesus FIGHTS with/for haunted houses! (Eph. 6)
- B. Jesus INVESTS in haunted houses! (Romans 5:8)
- C. Jesus REDEEMS the worst of haunted houses!
- D. Today is the day of salvation...

#### REVIEW:

Jesus taught that spirit-filled hosts & hearts that hear but do not heed Him become haunted houses!

#### CLOSE:

- Every heart is a host & a house in the text...
- EVERY house is either holy or haunted!
- Every house is haunted until it is holy!
- Only Christ can make a haunted house holy!
- Christ can & does restore haunted houses.
- Christ LOVES the world's haunted houses!
- Christ will judge/condemn haunted houses!

#### PRAYER

# STUDY NOTES

## Matthew 12:43 ►

### Text Analysis

[Go to Parallel Greek](#)

| Strong's | Greek                                   | English     | Morphology               |
|----------|-----------------------------------------|-------------|--------------------------|
| 3752 [e] | Ὅταν<br><a href="#">Hotan</a>           | When        | <a href="#">Conj</a>     |
| 1161 [e] | δὲ<br><a href="#">de</a>                | now         | <a href="#">Conj</a>     |
| 3588 [e] | τὸ<br><a href="#">to</a>                | the         | <a href="#">Art-NNS</a>  |
| 169 [e]  | ἀκάθαρτον<br><a href="#">akatharton</a> | unclean     | <a href="#">Adj-NNS</a>  |
| 4151 [e] | πνεῦμα<br><a href="#">pneuma</a>        | spirit      | <a href="#">N-NNS</a>    |
| 1831 [e] | ἐξέλθῃ<br><a href="#">exelthē</a>       | is gone out | <a href="#">V-ASA-3S</a> |
| 575 [e]  | ἀπὸ<br><a href="#">apo</a>              | from        | <a href="#">Prep</a>     |
| 3588 [e] | τοῦ<br><a href="#">tou</a>              | the         | <a href="#">Art-GMS</a>  |
| 444 [e]  | ἀνθρώπου,<br><a href="#">anthrōpou</a>  | man,        | <a href="#">N-GMS</a>    |

|          |                         |             |            |
|----------|-------------------------|-------------|------------|
| 1330 [e] | διέρχεται<br>dierchetai | it passes   | V-PIM/P-3S |
| 1223 [e] | δι'<br>di'              | through     | Prep       |
| 504 [e]  | ἀνύδρων<br>anydrōn      | waterless   | Adj-GMP    |
| 5117 [e] | τόπων<br>topōn          | places      | N-GMP      |
| 2212 [e] | ζητοῦν<br>zētoun        | seeking     | V-PPA-NNS  |
| 372 [e]  | ἀνάπαυσιν,<br>anapausin | rest,       | N-AFS      |
| 2532 [e] | καὶ<br>kai              | and         | Conj       |
| 3756 [e] | οὐχ<br>ouch             | none        | Adv        |
| 2147 [e] | εὕρισκει.<br>heuriskei  | finds [it]. | V-PIA-3S   |

## Matthew 12:44 ►

### Text Analysis

[Go to Parallel Greek](#)

| Strong's | Greek | English | Morphology |
|----------|-------|---------|------------|
|----------|-------|---------|------------|

|          |                         |                |           |
|----------|-------------------------|----------------|-----------|
| 5119 [e] | τότε<br>tote            | Then           | Adv       |
| 3004 [e] | λέγει<br>legei          | it says,       | V-PIA-3S  |
| 1519 [e] | Εἰς<br>Eis              | To             | Prep      |
| 3588 [e] | τὸν<br>ton              | the            | Art-AMS   |
| 3624 [e] | οἶκόν<br>oikon          | house          | N-AMS     |
| 1473 [e] | μου<br>mou              | of me          | PPro-G1S  |
| 1994 [e] | ἐπιστρέψω<br>epistrepsō | I will return, | V-FIA-1S  |
| 3606 [e] | ὁθεν<br>hothen          | from where     | Adv       |
| 1831 [e] | ἐξῆλθον·<br>exēlthon    | I came out.    | V-AIA-1S  |
| 2532 [e] | καὶ<br>kai              | And            | Conj      |
| 2064 [e] | ἐλθὼν<br>elthon         | having come,   | V-APA-NNS |
| 2147 [e] | εὕρισκει<br>heuriskei   | it finds [it]  | V-PIA-3S  |

|          |                               |                   |             |
|----------|-------------------------------|-------------------|-------------|
| 4980 [e] | σχολάζοντα<br>scholazonta     | being unoccupied, | V-PPA-AMS   |
| 2532 [e] | ⟨ και ⟩<br>kai                | and               | Conj        |
| 4563 [e] | σεσαρωμένον<br>sesarōmenon    | swept,            | V-RPM/P-AMS |
| 2532 [e] | καὶ<br>kai                    | and               | Conj        |
| 2885 [e] | κεκοσμημένον.<br>kekosmēmenon | put in order.     | V-RPM/P-AMS |

## Matthew 12:45 ►

### Text Analysis

[Go to Parallel Greek](#)

| Strong's | Greek                        | English | Morphology |
|----------|------------------------------|---------|------------|
| 5119 [e] | τότε<br>tote                 | Then    | Adv        |
| 4198 [e] | πορεύεται<br>poreuetai       | it goes | V-PIM/P-3S |
| 2532 [e] | καὶ<br>kai                   | and     | Conj       |
| 3880 [e] | παραλαμβάνει<br>paralambanei | takes   | V-PIA-3S   |

|          |                           |                   |             |
|----------|---------------------------|-------------------|-------------|
| 3326 [e] | μεθ'<br>meth'             | with              | Prep        |
| 1438 [e] | ἐαυτοῦ<br>heautou         | itself            | RefPro-GN3S |
| 2033 [e] | ἐπτὰ<br>hepta             | seven             | Adj-ANP     |
| 2087 [e] | ἕτερα<br>hetera           | other             | Adj-ANP     |
| 4151 [e] | πνεύματα<br>pneumata      | spirits           | N-ANP       |
| 4190 [e] | πονηρότερα<br>ponērotera  | more evil         | Adj-ANP-C   |
| 1438 [e] | ἐαυτοῦ,<br>heautou        | than itself,      | RefPro-GN3S |
| 2532 [e] | καὶ<br>kai                | and               | Conj        |
| 1525 [e] | εἰσελθόντα<br>eiselthonta | having entered in | V-APA-NNP   |
| 2730 [e] | κατοικεῖ<br>katoikei      | they dwell        | V-PIA-3S    |
| 1563 [e] | ἐκεῖ·<br>ekei             | there;            | Adv         |
| 2532 [e] | καὶ<br>kai                | and               | Conj        |

|          |                       |            |            |
|----------|-----------------------|------------|------------|
| 1096 [e] | γίνεται<br>ginetai    | becomes    | V-PIM/P-3S |
| 3588 [e] | τὰ<br>ta              | the        | Art-NNP    |
| 2078 [e] | ἔσχατα<br>eschata     | last       | Adj-NNP    |
| 3588 [e] | τοῦ<br>tou            | of the     | Art-GMS    |
| 444 [e]  | ἀνθρώπου<br>anthrōpou | man        | N-GMS      |
| 1565 [e] | ἐκείνου<br>ekainou    | that       | DPro-GMS   |
| 5501 [e] | χείρονα<br>cheirona   | worse      | Adj-NNP-C  |
| 3588 [e] | τῶν<br>tōn            | than the   | Art-GNP    |
| 4413 [e] | πρώτων.<br>prōtōn     | first.     | Adj-GNP    |
| 3779 [e] | οὕτως<br>houtōs       | So         | Adv        |
| 1510 [e] | ἔσται<br>estai        | it will be | V-FIM-3S   |
| 2532 [e] | καὶ<br>kai            | also       | Conj       |

|          |                    |            |          |
|----------|--------------------|------------|----------|
| 3588 [e] | τῇ<br>tē           | unto       | Art-DFS  |
| 1074 [e] | γενεᾱ<br>genea     | generation | N-DFS    |
| 3778 [e] | ταύτη<br>tautē     | this       | DPro-DFS |
| 3588 [e] | τῇ<br>tē           | the        | Art-DFS  |
| 4190 [e] | πονηροῦ.<br>ponēra | evil.      | Adj-DFS  |

#### EXPOSITORY (ENGLISH BIBLE)

### Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers

(43) **When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man.**—The parable comes in abruptly, possibly because here, as elsewhere, we have a part and not the whole of a discourse, striking passages noted and put together, now in this order, now in that, while the links that joined them are missing. The inner connection of thought is, however, clear enough. How was it, it might be asked, that Israel had sunk to such a depth of evil? and the answer was found in the similitude which thus opens. The phenomena which furnish the comparison were probably familiar enough. So far as possession was identical in its phenomena, wholly or in part, with insanity, there might be sudden and violent relapses after intervals of calmness and apparent cure. The spirit of the man, under the influence of exorcisms, or prayers, or the sympathy of friends, might assert its freedom for a time, and then yield again to the oppressor. In the history of such a demoniac, which our Lord narrates in the language of the popular belief, He sees a parable of the history of the Jewish people.

**Walketh through dry places.**—The description reflects the popular idea that the parched deserts of Syria and Arabia and Egypt were haunted by demons, who thence came to invade the bodies and the souls of men. So in the book of Tobit ([Tobit 8:3](#)), the demon Asmodeus flees to the upper parts of Egypt.

### Benson Commentary

**Matthew 12:43-45.** *When the unclean spirit*, &c. — In these verses, with a view to show how dreadful the state of the Jewish people would be, if they continued to reject him and his gospel, our Lord introduces a parable, borrowed from the late subject of his dispute with the Pharisees. He compares their condition to that of a man, who, after having had an evil spirit expelled out of him, is again, through God's permission, as a punishment of his continuing in sin, taken possession of by that spirit, with seven others still more wicked, and is thereby brought into a worse condition than ever. The parable evidently supposes the existence of demoniacal possessions, for if there had been no reality in them, the comparison would have meant nothing; and it supposes, also, that the Pharisees allowed their existence, otherwise our Lord's words, instead of convincing or instructing them, must have been treated by them with contempt. *When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man* — Not of his own accord, or willingly, but compelled by one that is stronger than he; *he walketh* — Wanders up and down, *through dry places* — Barren, dreary, desolate; or places not yet watered with the gospel. The words contain a plain allusion to the common notion, that evil demons had their haunts in deserts and desolate places. Compare **Isaiah 13:21**; where, instead of *satyrs*, the LXX.

read **δαίμονια**, *demons*. See also **Revelation 18:2**. *Seeking rest* — To his own malignant nature, in observing barren wastes and desolations, rather than such agreeable scenes as might present to his view the memorials of God's goodness to the human race: *and findeth none* — How should he find any, while he carries with him his own hell? And is it not the case of his children, too? Reader, is it thy case? *Then he saith, I will return into my house* — He resolves to make another attack on the person out of whom he had been expelled: *whence I came out* — He speaks as if he had come out of his own accord: see his pride! *And when he is come, he findeth it empty* — Of truth and grace; of wisdom and piety; of God, and Christ, and the Holy Spirit: *swept and garnished* — That is, prepared to receive him: *swept*, from love, lowliness, meekness, and all the fruits of the Spirit, and adorned with levity and folly, vanity and sin. In other words, he finds the miserable sinner unaffected with his late affliction and deliverance, and still a slave to those vices which render him an agreeable dwelling for Satan. *Then goeth he and taketh seven other spirits* — That is, a great many, the number seven denoting perfection, whether of good or bad things; *more wicked than himself* — Whence it appears that there are degrees of wickedness among the devils themselves. *And they enter in*, finding easy access, *and dwell there* — Namely, for ever, in him that is forsaken of God. *And the last state, &c., is worse than the first* — The devils having taken a sevenfold stronger possession of him than they had before. *So shall it be also unto this wicked generation* — Who resist the convictions which my doctrine and miracles have raised in them. Instead of growing wiser and better, they will become seven times more foolish, sinful, and miserable, "as both the natural and judicial consequence of their rejecting the methods used by divine grace for their recovery; till, as if they were possessed by a multitude of devils, they are madly hurried on to their irrecoverable ruin in this world and the next. They who have read the sad account, given by Josephus, of the temper and conduct of the Jews after the ascension of Christ, and just before their final destruction by the Romans, must acknowledge that no emblem could have been more proper to describe them. Their characters were the vilest that can be conceived, and they pressed on to their own ruin, as if they had been possessed by legions of

devils, and wrought up to the last degrees of madness." — Doddridge. But this parable is also designed to teach men, in every age, the danger and awful consequences of resisting the convictions produced in their minds by the truth and grace of God; or of grieving, quenching, and doing despite to the Holy Ghost, by breaking through their resolutions, and relapsing into their former sins; the effect being commonly to render them more obdurate and abandoned than before.

### **Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary**

12:38-45 Though Christ is always ready to hear and answer holy desires and prayers, yet those who ask amiss, ask and have not. Signs were granted to those who desired them to confirm their faith, as Abraham and Gideon; but denied to those who demanded them to excuse their unbelief. The resurrection of Christ from the dead by his own power, called here the sign of the prophet Jonah, was the great proof of Christ's being the Messiah. As Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale, and then came out again alive, thus Christ would be so long in the grave, and then rise again. The Ninevites would shame the Jews for not repenting; the queen of Sheba, for not believing in Christ. And we have no such cares to hinder us, we come not to Christ upon such uncertainties. This parable represents the case of the Jewish church and nation. It is also applicable to all those who hear the word of God, and are in part reformed, but not truly converted. The unclean spirit leaves for a time, but when he returns, he finds Christ is not there to shut him out; the heart is swept by outward reformation, but garnished by preparation to comply with evil suggestions, and the man becomes a more decided enemy of the truth. Every heart is the residence of unclean spirits, except those which are temples of the Holy Ghost, by faith in Christ.

### **Barnes' Notes on the Bible**

When the unclean spirit ... - The "general sentiment" which our Saviour here teaches is much more easily understood than the illustration which he uses. The Jews had asked a sign from heaven that should decisively prove that he was the Messiah, and satisfy their unbelief. He replies that, though he should give them such a sign a proof conclusive and satisfactory, and though for a time they should profess to believe and apparently reform, yet such was the obstinacy of their unbelief and wickedness, that they would soon return to their former course. and become worse and worse. Infidelity and wickedness, like an evil spirit in a possessed man, were appropriately at "home" in them. If driven out, they would find no other place so comfortable and undisturbed as their bosoms. Everywhere they would be, comparatively, like an evil spirit going through deserts and lonely places, and finding no place of rest. They would return, therefore, and dwell with them.

He walketh through dry places - That is, through deserts - regions of country unwatered, sandy, barren, desolate. That our Saviour here speaks according to the ancient belief of the Jews that evil spirits had their abodes in those desolate, uninhabited regions, there can be no doubt; nor can there be any doubt that the Bible gives countenance to the opinion. Thus [Revelation 18:2](#); "Babylon - is become the habitation of "devils" and the hold

of "every foul spirit;" that is, has become "desolate - a place where evil spirits appropriately dwell. So [Isaiah 13:21](#); "And satyrs shall dance there:" "i. e." according to the ancient Greek translation, "devils or demons shall dance there." See also [Jeremiah 50:39](#). Compare the [Isaiah 34:4](#) note; [Deuteronomy 32:17](#) note.

Seeking rest, and findeth none - These desolate and dry regions are represented as uncomfortable habitations; so much so, that the dissatisfied spirit, better pleased with a dwelling in the bosoms of people, as affording an opportunity of doing evil, seeks a return there.

### **Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary**

43-45. When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, &c.—On this important parable, in connection with the corresponding one (Mt 12:29) see on [1283]Lu 11:21-26.

A charming little incident, given only in Lu 11:27, 28, seems to have its proper place here.

Lu 11:27:

And it came to pass, as He spake these things, a certain woman of the company—out of the crowd.

lifted up her voice and said unto Him, Blessed is the womb that bare Thee, and the paps which Thou hast sucked—With true womanly feeling she envies the mother of such a wonderful Teacher. And a higher and better than she had said as much before her (see on [1284]Lu 1:28). How does our Lord, then, treat it? He is far from condemning it. He only holds up as "blessed rather" another class: Lu 11:28:

But he said, Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it—in other words, the humblest real saint of God. How utterly alien is this sentiment from the teaching of the Church of Rome, which would doubtless excommunicate any one of its members that dared to talk in such a strain!

His Mother and Brethren Seek to Speak with Him and the Answer (Mt 12:46-50).

### **Matthew Poole's Commentary**

See Poole on "[Matthew 12:45](#)".

### **Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible**

When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man,.... By "the unclean" spirit, is meant Satan, the old serpent, the devil; who by the Jews, is wont to be called as here, , "the unclean spirit" (x); and that, because he is by sin become so, though he was not so originally; is the cause of uncleanness in men, and delights in unclean persons, places, and things: his "going out of a man", is not to be understood of his being dispossessed of the bodies of men; nor of the ejection of him, and his going by force, through the power of

divine grace, out of the souls of men; but either of his leaving the Jews for a while, in some sort, whilst Christ and the Gospel continued among them; and of his going out of the Scribes and Pharisees; not really, but putting on another form, appearing as an angel of light, and under the guise of holiness and righteousness: and so he may be said to go out of men, when any outward reformation is made in them; and they take up a profession of religion, though destitute of the grace of God:

he walketh through dry places; referring to a prevailing notion, that unclean spirits walk in, and haunt, desert and desolate places; and may have regard to the Gentiles, among whom Satan might go, seeking rest and satisfaction among them, in their idolatries and other wickedness, till he was there also disturbed by the Gospel sent among them: or by these "dry places" may be meant the saints, whom he takes his walks among, in order, by tempting, to distress them, being secure of pharisaical persons: and these may be so called, not for what they are in themselves; not because the sun of righteousness shines upon them: or because thirsty and desirous of divine and spiritual things; much less as if they had no moisture, since they have a well of living water in them, and are watered by the Lord; or were unfruitful, as dry places usually are; but for what they were to the unclean spirit, there being nothing in their grace, and the exercise of it, and in their spiritual performances, grateful to him; nothing to quench his thirst, and satisfy his sinful appetite; nor were there in them the mire and dirt of iniquity to roll in, as in unregenerate persons: wherefore he is represented as

seeking rest, and findeth none: his view in walking in these places, or among such persons, is rest; not the rest of the saints, he seeks their disturbance, but his own rest; which is to do all the mischief he can, by stirring up corruption, tempting to sin, and discouraging the exercise of grace; but is not able to do so much mischief as he would, and so cannot find the rest he seeks for, nor satisfy his envious, spiteful, and malicious temper: and this being the case, it follows,

(x) Zohar in Gen. fol. 77. 2.

### Geneva Study Bible

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

#### EXEGETICAL (ORIGINAL LANGUAGES)

### Meyer's NT Commentary

[Matthew 12:43-45](#). Having foretold that the existing generation would be condemned on the judgment day by the Ninevites and that queen from the South, Jesus now proceeds—according to the account in Matthew, which is undoubtedly original (comp. Weiss, 1864, p. 84 f.)—to explain in an allegorical way the condition of things on which this melancholy certainty is founded. The case of this generation, He says, will be very much like that of a demoniac, into whom the demon that has been expelled from him is

ever seeking to return. The demon finds his former abode ready for his reception, and, reinforced by seven others still more wicked than himself, he again enters the demoniac, making his latter condition worse than the former. So will it be with this generation, which, though it should happen to undergo a temporary amendment, will relapse into its old state of confirmed wickedness, and become worse than before. The reason of this is to be found in the fact that the people in question have never entered into true fellowship with Christ, so that their amendment has not proved of a radical kind, has not been of the nature of a new birth. Comp. [Luke 11:23-24](#) ff., where the words are connected with what is said in [Matthew 12:30](#), and are equally allegorical, and not intended literally to describe a case in which demons have actually returned after their expulsion.

δέ] the *explanatory autem*. It is quite gratuitous to suppose that in our present Matthew something has dropped out before [Matthew 12:43](#) (Ewald).

ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου] in whom he had had his abode.

δι' ἀνύδρων τόπων] because *deserts* (ἡ ἄνυδρος, the *desert*, in Herod. iii. 4) were reputed to be the dwelling-place of the demons. [Tob 8:3](#); [Bar 4:35](#); [Revelation 18:2](#).

ἐλθών, [Matthew 12:44](#) (see the critical remarks), is due to the fact that the πνεῦμα ἀκάθαρτον is viewed in the light of a δαίμων, in accordance with a construction, κατὰ σύνεσιν, of which classical writers also make a similar use; see Kühner, II. 1, p. 48 f.; Bornemann in the *Sächs. Stud.* 1846, p. 40.

σχολάζοντα, σεσαρωμ. κ. κεκοσμ.] *empty* (unpossessed), *swept and garnished*, a climax by way of describing the man's condition as one that is calculated to induce re-possession, not to indicate (Bengel, de Wette, Bleek) that healthy state of the soul which forms such an obstacle to the demon in his efforts to regain admission, that he is led to call in the assistance of others. This would be to represent the state of the case in such a way as to make it appear that the demon had found the house *barred against him*; but it would likewise be at variance with the whole *scope* of the allegory, which is designed to exhibit the hopeless *in corrigibility* of the γενεά, so that what is pragmatically assumed is not the idea of moral soundness, but merely that of a readiness to welcome the return of evil influence after a temporary amendment. The reinforcement by seven other spirits is not to be ascribed to the need of greater strength in order to regain possession, but rather (hence πονηρότερα, not ἰσχυρότερα) to the fiendish desire now to torment the man much more than before; and so, according to our interpretation, it is no more necessary to impute the calling in of those others to the noble motive of sympathetic friendship (de Wette's objection) than it would be in the case of the legion with its association of demons.

τὰ ἔσχατα] *the last, i.e.* the condition in which he finds himself under the latter

possession; τὰ πρῶτα: when there was only one demon within him. [2 Peter 2:20](#); [Matthew 27:64](#).

### Expositor's Greek Testament

[Matthew 12:43-45](#). *A comparison. Cf. [Luke 11:24-26](#)*. Formerly Jesus had likened the evil race of Pharisaic religionists to children playing in the market-place ([Matthew 9:16-19](#)). Now He uses expelled demons to depict their spiritual condition. The similitude moves in the region of popular opinion, and gives a glimpse into the superstitions of the time. We gather from it, first, that the effects of the arts of exorcists were temporary; and, second, the popular theory to explain the facts: the demon returned because he could not find a comfortable home anywhere else. On this *vide* Lightfoot, Hor. Heb. The parable was naturally suggested by the cure of the demoniac ([Matthew 12:22](#)).

### Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges

**43.** *dry places*] The waterless desert uninhabited by man was regarded by the Jews as the especial abode of evil spirits.

**43–45.** A Figure to illustrate the surpassing Wickedness of the day

[Luke 11:24-26](#), where the connection is different. St Luke, as usual, omits the direct application to Israel. The connection is not clearly marked. It seems to be this: Christ has been speaking of “this generation;” He now contrasts it with past generations. The Jews of former times were like a man possessed by a demon, the Jews of this day are like a man possessed by many demons.

### Bengel's Gnomon

[Matthew 12:43](#). Ὅταν, κ.τ.λ., *when*, etc.) Having rebuked and dismissed the interruption of the Pharisees, Jesus pursues those matters which depend upon [Matthew 12:30](#); cf. [Luke 11:23-24](#).—ἐξέλθῃ, *has gone out*) as had been said in [Matthew 12:29](#).—διέρχεται, *he goeth through*) one after another.—ἀνύδρων, *without water*) Where there is no water, men do not dwell; see [Psalm 107:35-36](#).—ἀναπαύσιν, *rest*) Rest is wished for by every created being. The devils think that man is their proper resting-place.—οὐχ εὐρίσκει, *findeth none*) sc. except in man. It is miserable always to seek and never to find it.

### Pulpit Commentary

Verses 43-45. - Parallel passage: [Luke 11:24-26](#), almost verbally, but omitting the application at the end of our ver. 45. A solemn warning against a merely negative improvement. External preparation, mechanical religion, is insufficient; a definite acceptance of my teaching is required. Our Lord's primary thought Would appear to be

the relation in which those to whom he was speaking stood to himself. But he frames his words so as to include the whole of that generation of Jews (vers. 39, 45) For his present hearers truly represented their contemporaries. Observe

(1) the close of this discourse resembles that of the sermon on the mount;

(2) the connexion of **thought** is the same in Luke, though there the passage comes immediately after our ver. 30; **i.e.** if you are not with me you are really against me; you are only swept and garnished, and the evil spirit returns. Verse 43. - **When; but... when** (Revised Version); ὅταν δέ. St. Matthew does not bring this forward as a separate utterance; he wishes the connexion between it and the preceding to be seen. There is a contrast between the behaviour of the Ninevites and the Queen of Sheba, and that of the Jews. **The unclean spirit** ([Matthew 10:1](#), note) **is gone out of a** (**the**, Revised Version) **man** (τὸ πνεῦμα... τοῦ ἀνθρώπου). The first article is inserted for the sake of vividness; the second points back to the spirit; he leaves the man in whom he had dwelt. The two together make the saying parabolic instead of abstract. **He walketh; passeth** (Revised Version); διέρχεται. Perhaps merely "goes through," with the connotation of distance traversed ([John 4:15](#); [Acts 9:38](#)), but probably "goes about," **i.e.** to different spots (cf. [Luke 9:6](#); [Acts 8:4, 40](#); [Acts 20:25](#), and so of a rumour being spread abroad, [Luke 5:15](#)), in restless wandering. **Through dry** (**waterless**, Revised Version; δι' ἀνύδρων) **places**. Which supplied nothing wherewith he might refresh himself ([Psalm 63:1](#)), and which would, of course, have no houses ([Psalm 107:4-7, 33-36](#)). **Seeking rest** ([Matthew 11:28, 29](#), notes), and findeth none; **and findeth it not** (Revised Version). [Matthew 12:43](#)

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## CONTEXT:

- Jesus connects the theological & applicational dots here...
- Many struggle to see the connection (as tho this passage is out of place) because they fail to do effective contextualization

**BIG IDEA:** Jesus taught that spirit-filled hosts & hearts that hear but don't heed (Him) become haunted houses. ("haunted" = demonically impacted)

- See 2 Timothy 3:16-17

- See 1 Timothy 4:16
  - See Titus 2:1 & 2:15
  - Hosts
  - Houses
  - Hearts
- 
- Radical-Reasoning (context)
  - Radical-Reality (content)
  - Radical-Remedy (contrast)

Jesus is saying a lot that divinely & biblically (2 Timothy 3:16) establishes & affirms many important theological truths...

AND... at the same time, He is driving home a very clear missional point. We are going to ask the Lord to grace us with right hearing & righteous heeding of His Word, will, & ways today.

\*\*\* DEVILISH DRY/DESERT places:

He walketh through dry places - That is, through deserts - regions of country unwatered, sandy, barren, desolate. That our Saviour here speaks according to the ancient belief of the Jews that evil spirits had their abodes in those

desolate, uninhabited regions, there can be no doubt; nor can there be any doubt that the Bible gives countenance to the opinion. Thus [Revelation 18:2](#); "Babylon - is become the habitation of "devils" and the hold of "every foul spirit;" that is, has become "desolate - a place where evil spirits appropriately dwell. So [Isaiah 13:21](#); "And satyrs shall dance there:" "i. e." according to the ancient Greek translation, "devils or demons shall dance there." See also [Jeremiah 50:39](#). Compare the [Isaiah 34:4](#) note; [Deuteronomy 32:17](#) note.

\*\*\* DEMONS SEEKING REST: seeking rest, and findeth none: his view in walking in these places, or among such persons, is rest; not the rest of the saints, he seeks their disturbance, but his own rest; which is to do all the mischief he can, by stirring up corruption, tempting to sin, and discouraging the exercise of grace; but is not able to do so much mischief as he would, and so cannot find the rest he seeks for, nor satisfy his envious, spiteful, and malicious temper: and this being the case, it follows,

REST comes as CHRIST's GIFT that comes with & thru repentance...

## **Topical Lexicon**

## Overview of the Theme of Rest

Strong's Greek 372 (ἀνάπαυσις) consistently portrays the contrast between divine rest and restless existence apart from God. In the Synoptic Gospels it is the refreshment Jesus offers and the relief evil spirits cannot obtain; in Revelation it marks both the unending worship of the redeemed and the unending torment of the condemned. Across these contexts “rest” is never mere inactivity; it is a state determined by one's relationship to the Holy One.

### Rest Promised by Christ ([Matthew 11:29](#))

“Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me... and you will find rest for your souls.” The invitation follows Jesus' prayer of thanks to the Father ([Matthew 11:25–27](#)) and declares that true rest is inseparable from submission to Christ's yoke. The imagery recalls [Jeremiah 6:16](#), where walking in God's ways brings rest, and alludes to Sabbath fulfillment ([Exodus 20:8–11](#)). Here rest is not freedom from service but service under the gracious Master whose burden is light. For weary and heavy-laden sinners the promise is immediate spiritual relief and foreshadows eschatological peace ([Hebrews 4:1–11](#)).

### Rest Sought by the Unclean Spirit ([Matthew 12:43](#); [Luke 11:24](#))

“When an unclean spirit comes out of a man, it passes through arid places seeking rest and does not find it.” Evil is depicted as dislocated, wandering through desert wastelands reminiscent of [Isaiah 34:10–14](#). Restless

demons mirror the spiritual condition of those who resist repentance; they cannot settle because they refuse the Lord's dominion. Jesus warns that a mere moral reformation, apart from His indwelling presence, leaves a vacuum sure to be re-occupied. The passage underscores that rest is intrinsically tied to holiness; unclean spirits and unregenerate hearts remain perpetually unsettled.

\*\*\* QT: (Matthew Henry) “ Every heart is the residence of unclean spirits, except those which are temples of the Holy Ghost, by faith in Christ.”

\*\*\* QUOTE: (Barnes) The Jews had asked a sign from heaven that should decisively prove that he was the Messiah, and satisfy their unbelief. He replies that, though he should give them such a sign a proof conclusive and satisfactory, and though for a time they should profess to believe and apparently reform, yet such was the obstinacy of their unbelief and wickedness, that they would soon return to their former course. and become worse and worse. Infidelity and wickedness, like an evil spirit in a possessed man, were appropriately at "home" in them. If driven out, they would find no other place so comfortable and undisturbed as their bosoms. Everywhere they would be, comparatively, like an evil spirit going through deserts and lonely places, and finding no place of rest. They would return, therefore, and dwell with them.

\*\*\* See & reference Secret Church on “Angels, Demons, & Spiritual Warfare”

True deliverance finds its protection not in emptiness but in occupancy by the Lord.

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### **Warnings against Spiritual Vacuity**

Jesus’ parable stresses that sweeping moral reform without regeneration invites greater bondage. Modern parallels include addiction recovery programs that omit the gospel, or ethical self-help that lacks the Spirit’s power. Ministry must therefore aim not only to clear out sin but to enthrone Christ.

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### **Conclusion**

The verb highlights a critical biblical pattern: freedom from ordinary activity becomes spiritually fruitful only when intentionally filled with the presence, purposes, and power of God. Whether addressing marital devotion or deliverance from evil, Scripture calls believers to exchange idle emptiness for active, prayer-saturated occupancy by the Holy Spirit.

\*\*\* Heart = individual “Home”

\*\*\* Homes = community/church

\*\*\* Humanity = ALL hearts & homes

\*\*\* Unite & unpack “condemn” from vv.38-42 with vv.43-45!!! Then contrast with the grace & promise of Romans 8:1...

\*\*\* Illustrate with squatters...

- Hebrews 6 & 10
- No vacancy means VICTORY!
- Nirvana = numb emptiness :-)

\*\*\* Condemnation often starts on the slippery slopes that get you distracted, drifting, disconnected, disgruntled & dissatisfied... until the slope ends in the condemning realities of disobedience, denying, & defying God... per His Word, will, & way!

\*\*\* Show how “spirit” = “pneuma”

- CONTEXT or divine adjective is required to define
- Compare & contrast “dandelion disciples” with “demonic devils” (see Deviltry & Diabolical as fitting descriptions)!!!
- See the war in the heavenly realm for the souls of our homes...

\*\*\* 1 Samuel 16... Holy Spirit leaves Saul & evil spirit attacks Saul!!! \*\*\*

- Get into Spiritual Warfare
- Unpack Genesis 3
- Unpack Ephesians 6:10-20

\*\*\* “UN-clean” is a compound GK word

- “a” = anti or opposite
- “CLEAN”
- Parallels English: “a-theist” = not a theist”

\*\*\* Exorcism without exercise is extremely dangerous.

\*\*\* I’ve been personally & physically assaulted (being continuously kicked) by a man (as I tried to help him after a fall) who later told me what the demon(s) told him... “I’m going to use you to split this church!”

REVIEW:

- Spiritual warfare is REAL!
- Human responsibility is eternal!
- Vacuums are never victors!
- Vacuums are oxymorons... per Jesus (here & prior)
- This is why “12 Steps Programs” are so dangerous!!!  
They only seek to empty the house... OR they refill it with other poisons/demons!
- Passage summarizes Hebrews!!!
- Hell’s degrees of progressive horrors: (Hogs, Dogs, Vipers, Goats, & Wolves)
- Think about the 7 churches now
- Think about Demas
- Think about Judas in this light
- Think about the people/places that saw, experienced, & were blessed by Christ’s Word, ways, & wonders...
- Think about what they did & did NOT do that brought about Christ’s warning & wrath (no repentance like the earlier townies & Jonah... plus, no believing like Queen of Sheba & the Ninevites...

## CLOSE:

- Get your house in order!
- Empty houses are time bombs!
- Empty houses are death traps!