

Worse than When We Started

Isaiah 47:1-12; Matthew 12:43-45 / Psalm 63:1-11

I. A Mild Case of Religion Distracts Evil Temporarily

A. Even a mild encounter with the holy life inconveniences evil. *When the unclean spirit is gone out of* a man, he walketh through dry places, *seeking rest, and findeth none.* (MATTHEW 12:43) Jesus had been discussing exorcists.

B. Before Romanticism and the Sierra Club, “holing wilderness” was an unattractive concept. So Moses brought Israel from the Red sea, and they went out into the *wilderness of Shur*, and they went three days in the wilderness, and *found no water.* (EXODUS 15:22)

C. Servants of evil find Jesus troublesome. And, behold, they cried out, saying, *What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?* (MATTHEW 8:29) *along with* And there was there *an herd of many swine* feeding on the mountain: and *they besought him that he would suffer them to enter into them. And he suffered them.* (LUKE 8:32)

D. The prospects for Satan’s agents and their slaves are not happy ones. And *the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever* and ever: and they have *no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image*, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name. (REVELATION 14:11)

II. Partial Conversion Doesn’t Last

A. Partial conversion is like partial sobriety; lowered tolerances enable cheaper binges. 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.* (MATTHEW 12:44)

B. A “MILD CASE OF CONVERSION” does not endure. But my people would not hearken to my voice; and Israel would none of me. So *I gave them up unto their own hearts’ lust: and they walked in their own counsels.* (PSALM 81:11-12)

C. Truth would not be so obvious if there were no defectors and degenerates. For *there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.* (1 CORINTHIANS 11:19)

D. Those who do not receive the love of God make themselves defenseless against the return or evil. *Even him*, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in *them that perish*; because they *received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.* And for this cause *God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:* That they all might *be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.* (2 THESSALONIANS 2:9-12)

E. Obedience to the Scriptures simultaneously demonstrates genuine love and guards the soul. *If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love;* even as I have kept my Father’s commandments, *and abide in his love.* (JOHN 15:10) *along with* *God is not a man, that he should lie;* neither the son of man, that he should *repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath* he spoken, and shall he not make it good? (NUMBERS 23:19)

F. Grace purchased at the Cross is not cheap and those who make it cheap do a terrible disservice to believers. *They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace.* (JEREMIAH 6:14)

III. Dedication to Christ Must Be Total

A. A mild case of Christianity will make a person worse than an unbeliever. 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. (MATTHEW 12:45)

B. Evil is far stronger and more pervasive than the present age is prepared to grasp. For *we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.* (EPHESIANS 6:12)

C. Consider the implications of carelessness; it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. For *if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment* and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. *He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense,* saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.* But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions; Partly, whilst ye were made a gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used. For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance. *Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward.* For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Now *the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.* (HEBREWS 10:26-39)

D. Invest in the spiritual life. *Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.* (HEBREWS 4:11) not? (HEBREWS 3:18)

E. Total engagement with God will bring rich rewards. *He turneth the wilderness into a standing water, and dry ground into water springs. And there he maketh the hungry to dwell, that they may prepare a city for habitation;* (PSALM 107:35-36)