

Luke 11:24

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out.

Analysis

When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out. Jesus shifts from the Beelzebub controversy to warn about incomplete deliverance. The phrase "unclean spirit" (τὸ ἀκάθαρτον πνεῦμα, to akatharton pneuma) emphasizes demonic defilement—these beings pollute and corrupt. When exorcised, the demon "walketh through dry places" (ἔρημος, erēmos can mean waterless, desolate regions), "seeking rest" (ζητοῦν ἀνάπαυσιν, zētoun anapausin) but "finding none" (μὴ εὑρίσκον, mē heuriskon).

The demon's monologue—"I will return unto my house" (ὑποστρέψω εἰς τὸν οἶκόν μου, hypostrepsō eis ton oikon mou)—reveals chilling presumption: it still considers the delivered person its dwelling. The warning is profound: exorcism without regeneration leaves a person vulnerable to reoccupation. Deliverance from demons is insufficient; one must be indwelt by the Holy Spirit and filled with God's truth. An empty life, though swept clean of evil, invites demonic return. This teaches that Christianity is not mere moral reformation but spiritual transformation through new birth and Spirit-filling (John 3:5-8, Ephesians 5:18).

Historical Context

Ancient Jewish and pagan literature describes demons inhabiting desolate, waterless places—wilderness, ruins, tombs. The image of a restless demon

wandering dry regions seeking rest reflects widespread first-century demonology. However, Jesus' unique contribution is the warning about return and reoccupation. Many Jewish exorcisms achieved temporary relief but lacked power for permanent deliverance. Jesus warns that superficial religious reform without genuine conversion to God leaves people more vulnerable than before.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. What does the demon's inability to find rest outside a human host reveal about evil spirits' parasitic nature?
2. How does this passage warn against mere behavior modification or 'cleaning up your life' without genuine spiritual rebirth?
3. In what ways might contemporary Christianity produce 'swept and garnished' but empty religious people vulnerable to spiritual oppression?

Interlinear Text

Ὅταν τὸ ἀκάθαρτον πνεῦμα ἐξῆλθον· ἀπὸ τοῦ
When G3588 the unclean spirit I came out out of G3588
G3752 G169 G4151 G1831 G575 G3588

ἀνθρώπου διέρχεται δι' ἀνύδρων τόπων ζητοῦν
a man he walketh through dry places seeking
G444 G1330 G1223 G504 G5117 G2212

ἀνάπαυσιν καὶ μὴ εὑρίσκον· λέγει Ὑποστρέψω εἰς τὸν
rest and none finding he saith I will return unto G3588
G372 G2532 G3361 G2147 G3004 G5290 G1519 G3588

οἶκόν μου ὅθεν ἐξῆλθον·
house my whence I came out
G3624 G3450 G3606 G1831

Additional Cross-References

1 Peter 5:8 (Kingdom): Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:

Psalms 63:1 (Parallel theme): O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is;

Job 1:7 (Kingdom): And the LORD said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.

Job 2:2 (Kingdom): And the LORD said unto Satan, From whence comest thou? And Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.

Isaiah 48:22 (Parallel theme): There is no peace, saith the LORD, unto the wicked.

Mark 5:10 (Parallel theme): And he besought him much that he would not send them away out of the country.

Ephesians 2:2 (Spirit): Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:

Mark 9:25 (Spirit): When Jesus saw that the people came running together, he rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him.

Isaiah 44:3 (Spirit): For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring:

Isaiah 35:7 (Parallel theme): And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes.

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