

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 εὕρισκον, 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	
ἀνθρώπου	διέρχεται	δι'	ἀνύδρων	τόπων	ζητοῦν	
a man	he walketh	through	dry	places	seeking	
G444	G1330	G1223	G504	G5117	G2212	
ἀνάπαυσιν	καὶ	μὴ	εὕρισκον·	λέγει	Ἵποστρέψω	εἰς τὸν
rest	and	none	finding	he saith	I will return	unto G3588
G372	G2532	G3361	G2147	G3004	G5290	G1519
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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