

Lesson 3: The Work of God or Satan?

Matthew 12:15-37

I. THE MESSIANIC SECRET (16-21; Isa 42:1-4) **Their expectations were off.**

A. The Messiah's Identity (18a)

1. **God's Servant**— *prestigious title; authority to rule or act & speak on God's behalf*
2. **God's Chosen**— *not elected or randomly appointed; not a human decision*
3. **God's Beloved** (Mat 3:17)— *unique, personal relationship of affection and favor*
4. **God's Pleasure** (Mat 3:17)— *we find God's pleasure/favor in Him*

B. The Messiah's Mission: To Establish Justice (18b, 20b-21)

1. **A Message of Hope**—(21; Isa 8:14; Rom 9:33; 1 Pet 2:6)— *Jesus Christ, the long-awaited Messiah of God, is the only hope for the human race.*
2. **A Message for All Nations** (Mat 8:11)— *Israel's King is the Savior of the World.*

C. The Messiah's Manner (19-20)

1. **Gentle**— *not attempting to establish His agenda by force*
2. **Patient**— *growth process*
 - a. **Spreading the Gospel** (Mat 24:14) *evangelism*
 - b. **Sanctifying our Lives** (Phil 1:6) *growth in grace*
3. **Faithful** (Isa 42:4; Ph 1:6)— *He won't give up until it is accomplished.*

D. The Messiah's Means (2 Cor 10:4). **The work of God must be in done God's way—*spiritual transformation of the human soul.***

1. **The Holy Spirit** (Zech 4:6)— *supernatural source of power*
2. **Preaching** (Rom 1:15-16; 1 Cor 1:21)— *the "foolishness" of the gospel, God's power for salvation*

II. THE KINGDOM COMES (22-30)

A. Driving out the Devil (1 Jn 3:8; Rev 20:10)—*to take back dominion usurped by Satan*

1. Evil Spirits are real and active in the world. *Their goal is opposite to God's.*
2. The Kingdom of God is routing the forces of Satan. *The Church advances in Christ's name.*

B. A House Divided (25)—*the utter perverseness of the Pharisees' accusation*

C. Christ's Power (29)

1. Binding the Strong Man—*Jesus has bound and disabled Satan.*
2. Plundering His House—*The Gates of Hell will not stand against the Church.*

D. Competing Loyalties (30)—*no neutral ground; you work with Christ or against Him.*

III. THE UNFORGIVEABLE SIN (31-37)

A. Blasphemy of the Holy Spirit Defined:

1. Slandering the Holy Spirit—*speaking against His person and work*
2. Calling Good Evil and Evil Good (Isa 5:20)—*radically, diabolically reinterpreting moral reality in a way that is diametrically opposed to the truth*
3. Hardened Rejection—*deliberate, willful and decisive; not ignorance or accident*

B. A Revelation of the Heart (33-37)—*Your words betray you.* (a tree and its fruit)

C. By Definition Unforgivable—*One has steadfastly rejected the power that would make repentance and forgiveness possible.*

1. Sin must be repented to be forgiven. (11:23; 2 Thes 2:10-12)
2. God does not refuse to forgive; we refuse to repent. (1 Jn 1:8-10)

D. Everything Else Forgivable (31a; 11:23) ALL other sins—*no sin is too great!*