

Primary Text: Matthew 12:22–26

Who are “Pharisees?” - The Religious Leaders of Jesus Time

1 - Jesus **AFFIRMS** that He is **GOD**!

Matthew 12:22-23 (ESV) ²² *Then a demon-oppressed man who was blind and mute was brought to Him, and He healed him, so that the man spoke and saw.* ²³ *And all the people were amazed, and said, “Can this be the Son of David?”*

Key Question: Why did Jesus do miracles at specific times, for specific audiences, and at specific places?

- It was to show that He truly is God in the flesh.

John 20:30-31 (ESV) ³⁰ *Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book;* ³¹ *but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name.*

Matthew 12:23 (ESV) *And all the people were amazed, and said, “Can this be the Son of David?”*

They were “**Amazed**” - Amazed - “**existēmi**; ἐξίστημι” (Ex-ees-tay-me) - “**To be profoundly overwhelmed**”

The people even ask this Question: “*Can this be the Son of David?*”

The Davidic Covenant:

2 Samuel 7:12-14 (ESV) ¹² *When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom.* ¹³ *He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.* ¹⁴ *I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son.*

- When the people ask, “*Can this be the Son of David?*” they are essentially asking if this could truly be the Messiah they have been waiting for? This does not sit well with the Pharisees.

2 - This **THREATENS** the **IDENTITY** of the Pharisees...

- Jesus is often working to reveal what is at the heart of the people around Him.

Matthew 12:24 (ESV) *But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, “It is only by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, that this man casts out demons.”*

- Beelzebub (Philistine God) is first mentioned in **2 Kings 1** and is understood to be **“The Lord of Flies” or the “Lord of Dung”**. *He was considered to be the prince of all demons and was believed to spread disease and disgust.*
- Why would the Pharisees respond this way? Because Jesus was threatening **THEIR TRUE IDENTITY**.
- Jesus’ message was very much the opposite of that of the Pharisees.

Matthew 20:26-28 (ESV) ²⁶ *It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, ²⁷ and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, ²⁸ even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.”*

- Jesus was calling them to abandon the hope that they put in this world and in their own success for His kingdom.

Matthew 12:25-26 (ESV) ²⁵ *Knowing their thoughts, He said to them, “Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and no city or house divided against itself will stand. ²⁶ And if Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand?*

Jesus was bringing the Pharisees to a crossroads in their lives:

- **You can only serve one Kingdom, so which one is it going to be?** The Kingdom of Self or The Kingdom of God?

Matthew 16:24 (ESV) *Then Jesus told His disciples, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.”*

Reflection Questions:

1. Whose kingdom are you working to build? Yours? God’s?
2. What is the biggest roadblock(s) in your life that keep(s) you from surrendering everything to Jesus?
3. What is God calling you to do with this **TODAY**?