

Rejection or Relationship?

1. What do the scribes and Pharisees want from Jesus here (38)? What do you think they expect Him to do for them? What three miracles had they just seen in this chapter, that apparently didn't satisfy them (13, 15, 22)? How had some others responded to these same events (23)?
2. Jesus used similar phrases at the beginning (39) and ending (45) of His answer to those who were craving for a sign. What phrases did He use, and who specifically was He describing here? What was He trying to get across to the people by using these very direct phrases?
3. What sign did Jesus say would be given to this generation He was speaking to (39-40)? What then-future event was He referring to by this, and how would that be a sign to them? How do Jesus' examples here support the authenticity of the Old Testament Scriptures (40-42)?
4. What did Jesus tell us will happen to this generation at the future judgment (41-42)? What qualifies the witnesses He mentioned to condemn this generation at the judgment? What was Jesus talking about when He said, "Something greater than _____ is here"? (See also v. 6)
5. What lessons did Jesus teach us about demon possession (43-45)? Why is it not sufficient just to have a demon cast out of a person? Who needs to come in and occupy the empty house?
6. The last sentence of v. 45 ties these teachings about demons to "this evil generation." How could the steps described here for demons in a person be applied to the Jewish nation's history and future, where the man represents the nation and the unclean spirits all the idols they have worshiped (or will in the future)? What prophetic future time period might v. 45 be describing? (See Daniel 9:27 and Matthew 24:15, 21.)
7. What does Jesus teach us about the importance of our spiritual family in this life (46-50)? Which family does He tell us should take precedence as we go through this life, and why do you think He said this? How can we recognize those who are members of this family (50)?
8. What are some ways we can know the will of Jesus' Father who is in heaven, so we can be among the ones who "do" His will (50; see also John 6:40; Romans 12:1-2; Ephesians 5:15-18; Colossians 1:9-10; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5)? Can you share a time when you "did" God's will, even though it was hard for you at the time?
9. In closing, review chapter 12. What indications do you see that Jesus was beginning to turn away from His physical family (the Jews) and toward His new spiritual family (that includes us)? How does Matthew's statement in 13:1 give us a symbolic picture of this same transition?