

Empty House

*'When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation.'*¹

'The point of the strange parable of the Empty House....is that the Law may negatively empty a man of evil [but it cannot protect him from it in the future; in fact, an empty mind admits even greater sin], but only the gospel can fill him with good. The Law therefore simply leaves a man an empty invitation for all evil to take up its residence within his heart; the gospel so fills him with positive goodness that evil cannot enter in [or experiences extreme difficulty in doing so]. Here is Jesus' claim that the gospel can do for men what the Law can never do.'²

¹ Mat 12:43-45

² Barclay, William, *The Gospel of Matthew*, Vol.2, p.22 (with added comment and clarification in square brackets)