

Pilgrim Way Commentary on Matthew

# **The Pilgrim Way Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew**



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April 2025

**Apology For This Work**

This commentary on Matthew follows in a long line of other works by divines of the past as they have sought to study and expound this first Gospel.

This work grew out of over 40 years of both preaching through Matthew in three pastorates in Maryland, Delaware and North Carolina as well as teaching through the epistle as an instructor at Maryland Baptist Bible College in Elkton, Maryland. I needed my own notes and outlines as I taught and preached from Matthew, so this fuller commentary flows from those notes and outlines. Thus, the layout of this commentary is a practical one, written by a preacher to be preached from in the pulpit or to be taught in a Sunday School. It was not written from an isolated study of a theologian who had little contact with people or practical ministerial experience. There are many such commentaries on the market and they tend to be someone dull and not very practical in their application. It is written as something of a theological reference manual to me, filled with quotes and outlines from various books in my library. I have followed the format (to some degree) of Charles Spurgeon when he wrote *The Treasury of David*. The layout and format are designed to help me in my preaching, teaching and personal study of this book. I figured there may be others out there who may benefit from this work which is why I make it available, but the work is basically laid out in a selfish manner, for my benefit and assistance. That is why I call this as “reference commentary”. You, as the reader, hopefully can find some profit in this!

This commentary cannot be easily classified into any single theological system. I believe that no single theological system is an accurate presentation of Scriptural truth in and of itself. When Charles Spurgeon once wrote “There is no such thing as preaching Christ and Him crucified, unless we preach what nowadays is called Calvinism. It is a nickname to call it Calvinism; Calvinism is the gospel, and nothing else”, he displayed a most unfortunate theological hubris. Calvinism is a human, flawed, limited and uninspired theological system, as any other human theological system. There is some truth there, as there is in any theological system, but it ranks no better than other competing systems, such as Arminianism (which is nothing more than a modified version of Calvin’s teachings), dispensationalism, covenant theology, Lutheranism, Romanism, Orthodox theology, pre-wrath rapture, take your pick. All these systems are flawed as they are all the products of human attempts to understand and systematize Biblical presentations. They can all make contributions to our overall understandings of the truth but none may claim to be the only correct such presentation, at the expense of all others. Knowing the human impossibility for absolute neutrality and the human love for theological systems, I readily admit that I cannot be as dispassionate and uninfluenced by human teachings in these pages as I would like. No man can be. But I have made every attempt not to allow my own personal systems influence my understanding of what the clear teachings of Scripture is.

I have freely consulted a wide variety of commentaries and sermons for insights and other views of various texts that I might have missed. As the old preacher once remarked “I milked a lot of cows but I churned my own butter.” Direct quotes are attributed to their proper source to prevent that unpardonable sin of literary theft. But simply because I quoted a writer should not be viewed as an endorsement of all that he wrote or of his theological system. I selected the quote because I found it interesting and useful, not because I am in any degree of agreement regarding the rest of his teachings. In this sense, I have tried to follow the form of Charles Spurgeon’s *Treasury of David*, where he quoted a wide variety of other writers. I consider his commentary on the Psalms to be the greatest commentary ever in reference to its format.

This commentary is based on the text of our English Received Version, commonly referred to as the King James Version or the Authorized Version. I believe that this is the most preserved English translation available to us and that it is the superior translation in English. I can see no good reason to use or accept any of the modern versions, especially the current “flavor of the month” of the New Evangelicals and apostate fundamentalists, the corrupt and mis-named English Standard Version. When it comes to these modern, critical text versions, I reject them for a variety of reasons. One major reason is that they have not been proven on the field of battle. I have liver spots older than the English Standard Version, but I am expected to toss my English Received Text, over 400 years old, and take up this new translation, whose ink is still barely dry? How many battles has the ESV won? How many missionaries have done great exploits with an NIV? What revivals have been birth and nurtured with an NASB? We will stick with the translations and texts that our fathers have used and that God has blessed. We are also favorably inclined to the Geneva Bible, Tyndale Bible, Bishops Bible, and other “cousins” of our English text. The Greek text used is the underlying text of our English Received Text and its 1769 revision, which is the text most widely in use today by God’s remnant.

I have also decided to do some textual studies, mainly comparing the King James readings with the English Standard Version, the Legacy Standard Version, otherwise known as the “John MacArthur Version” and the translation by John Nelson Darby.<sup>1</sup> Reference is also made to English translations that preceded the Authorized Version, such as the Geneva Bible and the Bishop’s Bible, to trace the development of the readings that eventually made it into the Authorized Version.

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<sup>1</sup> I chose the Darby Version because I have done a lot of reading of Plymouth Brethren works. Darby made his translation to supposedly help the English reader have access to the “Greek text” but Darby, as well as most Plymouth Brethren, were infected with modern textual criticism. Darby’s translation is only marginally better than modern critical text translations. I do not recommend it but most Plymouth Brethren will use it, sometimes in conjunction to the translation made by William Kelly.

## Pilgrim Way Commentary on Matthew

The presupposition of this commentary is that what the Bible says is so and that we will not change the text to suit our theological fancy. It says what it says and that is what we must accept, else we will be found unfaithful stewards of the Word of God, a judgment we fear. We will not amend our text but will take it as it is the best we can.

This commentary certainly is not perfect, nor is it the final presentation of my understanding and application of the book of Matthew. A commentary over 40 years in the making can never truly said to be finished. As new insights are granted by the Holy Spirit and as my understanding of the epistle deepens, additional material will be added and sections will have to be re-written. One is never truly “finished” with any theological book, especially a commentary. As one deepens and grows in his relation with the Lord, so does his theological understandings and that should be reflected in one’s writings.

This book was also written as a theological legacy to my four children and granddaughter. They will need to be mighty for God in their generation for their days will certainly be darker than the generation their father grew up in. This book is an expression not only of the heart of a preacher in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century but also of a Christian father for his children, so they may more fully understand what their father believed and preached during his ministry.

It is my sincere prayer that this unpretentious contribution to the body of Christian commentary literature will be a blessing to the remnant of God’s saints in the earth as we approach the coming of our Lord.



### **Introduction to Matthew**

Matthew has 28 chapters, 1,071 verses and 23,684 in our Authorized Version. Matthew also has 812 promises and 320 pericopes.

Quest verses- Matthew 5:20,48; 7:12.

**Authorship-** the Apostle Matthew. It is of no value to the Bible-believing student to worry if Mark wrote before Matthew or how much, if any, Matthew borrowed from Mark. None of this has any bearing on the interpretation or application of the text, but it sure keeps them busy in the faculty smoking lounges in your nearest Bible college or seminary.

**Date-** mid 60s.

**Theme-** to present Jesus Christ as the King of the Jews, the Son of David, the fulfillment of the prophets. Matthew is the most Jewish of the gospels and he emphasizes the Kingdom of Heaven, which is the Millennial reign of Christ and the upcoming Jewish political kingdom, which God will usher in after the tribulation and the Second Coming. Matthew is giving the gospel from the standpoint of an Old Testament Hebrew who is awaiting the appearance of the “anointed one,” the Messiah. Matthew’s Gospel is thus placed first in the New Testament as the logical link between Malachi and the events that are about to take place around the first appearance of the Lord.

### **Observations**

Along with Acts and Hebrews, Matthew is one of the most difficult and dangerous doctrinal books in the New Testament because of its dispensational nature. Every doctrinal division and heresy in the Body of Christ is based on misapplication of verses found in one of these three books as these people do not (or refuse to) apply dispensation principles of application to these books. Matthew is focusing on the Millennium, Hebrews on the tribulation period and Acts 2-7 is the bridge between these two.

Just about all of the commentators say that Matthew would have written this gospel in Greek, but I can’t help but wonder. If Matthew was writing a Jewish gospel directed toward Jews, I wonder if he would have written in Aramaic or Hebrew or whatever primary tongue the Jews were speaking in Israel in his day, which then was translated into Greek. I cannot prove anything as we have no access to the “original manuscripts” (and no one has ever seen them anyway) but it is a possibility worth considering.

Matthew’s frequent use of numbers would be natural for a tax-collector. He divides things into three parts: the genealogy, the trilogies of miracles in chapters 8-9; five parts: five great sermons of Jesus, all with the same closing formula (7:28; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1; 26:1); six corrections on the misuse of the Law (in chapter 5); seven woes, parables (ch. 13); etc. He also makes many references to money, which would also be normal for a tax collector. He uses unique monetary terms in 17:24,25; 18:24,25.

Matthew contains the only two parables on talents (chapters 18 and 25); and he uses tax-collector-type terminology in 6:12 and 25:27.

**Names and Titles of Christ in Matthew**

- |                                   |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| 1. Jesus Christ 1:1               | 18. My Beloved 12:18b                            |
| 2. The Son of David 1:1; 9:27     | 19. Greater than Jonah 12:41                     |
| 3. The Son of Abraham 1:1         | 20. Greater than Solomon 12:42                   |
| 4. Jesus 1:21                     | 21. Our elder Brother 12:50                      |
| 5. Emmanuel 1:23                  | 22. The Sower 13:3,37                            |
| 6. King of the Jews 2:2; 27:11,37 | 23. The Christ, the Son of the living God: 16:16 |
| 7. Governor 2:6                   | 24. Jesus the Christ 16:20                       |
| 8. A Nazarene 2:23; 26:71         | 25. Good Master 19:16                            |
| 9. The Lord 3:3; 7:21             | 26. A Ransom 20:28                               |
| 10. My beloved Son 3:17; 17:5     | 27. King 21:5; 25:34                             |
| 11. The Son of God 4:6; 8:29      | 28. Prophet of Nazareth 21:11                    |
| 12. Master 8:19; 23:8             | 29. The Heir 21:38                               |
| 13. Son of Man 8:20               | 30. This Stone 21:44                             |
| 14. Friend of sinners 11:19       | 31. The Bridegroom 25:10                         |
| 15. The Son 11:27                 | 32. The risen Lord: 28:6                         |
| 16. Lord of the Sabbath 12:8      |  |
| 17. The Servant of God 12:18a     |  |

**Names and Titles of God in Matthew**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. Lord 2:15,19                           | 6. Lord of heaven and earth 11:25          |
| 2. Lord thy God 4:7; 22:37                | 7. The living God 16:16                    |
| 3. Father 5:16 (used 43 times in Matthew) | 8. Certain Householder 21:33               |
| 4. Our Father 6:9                         | 9. God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob 22:32a |
| 5. Heavenly Father 6:26; 15:13            | 10. God of the living 22:32b               |

**Names and Titles of the Holy Spirit in Matthew**

- |                               |                                |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Holy Ghost 1:20; 3:11      | 4. Spirit of your Father 10:20 |
| 2. Spirit of God: 3:16; 12:28 | 5. My Spirit: 12:18            |
| 3. The Spirit 4:1             |                                |

**Miracles in Matthew**

Peculiar to Matthew:

1. Two blind men healed 9:27-31
2. Dumb spirit cast out 9:32,33
3. Sick healed in Jerusalem 14:14
4. Peter walking on water: 14:29
5. Tribute money provided from a fish 17:24-27

Common to Matthew and Mark:

1. Healing in Galilee 9:35; Mark 6:5,6
2. Syrophenician's daughter healed 15:21-28; Mark 7:24-30



3. Multitudes healed in Galilee 15:29-31; Mark 7:31-37
4. 4000 fed 15:32-39; Mark 8:1-9
5. Fig tree cursed: 21:18-21; Mark 11:13

Common to Matthew, Mark, Luke:

1. Leper cleansed: 8:1-4; Mark 1:40; Luke 5:12-14
2. Peter's mother-in-law healed: 8:14-17; Mark 1:29-31; Luke 4:38-41
3. Stilling the waves: 8:23-27; Mark 4:36-41; Luke 8:22-25
4. Demoniac cured: 8:28-33; Mark 5:1-20; Luke 8:26-40
5. Palsied man healed: 9:1,2; Mark 2:3; Luke 5:18
6. Jairus' daughter healed: 9:18-25; Mark 5:23; Luke 8:41
7. Woman's blood issue healed: 9:20; Mark 5:25; Luke 8:43
8. Withered hand healed on Sabbath: 12:9-13; Mark 3:1-6; Luke 6:6-11
9. Transfiguration: 17:1-8; Mark 9:2-9; Luke 9:28-36
10. Lunatic healed: 17:14-18; Mark 9:14-29; Luke 9:37-43
11. Blind men cured: 20:29-34; Mark 10:46-52; Luke 18:35-43

Common to Matthew, Mark, and John:

1. Walking on water: 14:22-27; Mark 6:48; John 6:19

Common to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John:

1. 5000 fed: 14:15; Mark 6:30-44; Luke 9:10-17; John 6:1-14

### **Parables of Christ**

Peculiar to Matthew

- |                                |                                     |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. The tares 13:24-30,36-43    | 7. Laborers in the vineyard 20:1-16 |
| 2. The hidden treasure 13:44   | 8. Two sons 21:28-32                |
| 3. The goodly pearl 13:45,46   | 9. Marriage feast 22:2-14           |
| 4. The draw-net 13:47-50       | 10. Ten virgins 25:1-13             |
| 5. Meats not defiling 15:10-20 | 11. Talents 25:14-30                |
| 6. Unmerciful servant 18:23-35 | 12. Sheep and the goats 25:31-46    |

Common to Matthew and Luke:

- |  |                                      |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| 1. House built on rock and sand: 7:24-27; Luke 6:47-49 | 2. Leaven: 13:33; Luke 13:20,21      |
|  | 3. Lost sheep: 18:11-14; Luke 15:3-7 |

Common to Matthew, Mark and Luke

1. New cloth and old garment 9:16; Mark 2:21; Luke 5:36
2. New wine in old bottles 9:17; Mark 2:22; Luke 5:37-39
3. The sower 13:3,18; Mark 4:1-20; Luke 8:4-15
4. The mustard seed 13:31,32; Mark 4:30-32; Luke 13:18,19
5. Fig tree 24:32-34; Mark 13:28,29; Luke 21:29-31

### **Passages from the Old Testament Quoted Matthew**

Behold, a virgin shall be with child 1:23 Isaiah 7:14  
Thou Bethlehem, in the land of Judah 2:6 Micah 5:2

Out of Egypt have I called my son. 2:15 Hosea 11:1  
In Rama was there a voice heard. 2:18 Jeremiah 31:15  
The voice of one crying in the wilderness. 3:3 Isaiah 40:3  
Man shall not live by bread alone. 4:4 Deuteronomy 8:3  
He shall give his angels charge. 4:6 Psalm 91:11,12  
Thou shalt not tempt the Lord. 4:7 Deuteronomy 6:16  
Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God. 4:10 Deuteronomy 6:13  
The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim. 4:15,16 Isaiah 9:1,2; 42:7  
Thou shalt not kill. 5:21 Exodus 20:13  
Thou shalt not commit adultery. 5:27 Exodus 20:14  
Whosoever shall put away his wife. 5:31 Deuteronomy 24:1  
Thou shalt not forswear thyself. 5:33 Leviticus 19:12  
An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. 5:38 Exodus 21:24  
Thou shalt love thy neighbour. 5:43 Leviticus 19:18  
Be ye therefore perfect 5:48 Genesis 17:1  
Depart .. ye that work iniquity. 7:23 Psalm 6:8  
Himself took out infirmities. 8:17 Isaiah 53:4  
I will have mercy, and not sacrifice. 9:13; 12:7 Hosea 6:6  
Behold, I send my messenger 11:10 Malachi 3:1  
Behold my servant, whom I have chosen: 12:18: 21 Isaiah 42:1-4  
By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand 13:14,15 Isaiah 6:9, 10  
I will open my mouth in parables 13:35 Psalm 78:2  
Honour thy father and mother. 15:4 Exodus 20:12  
He that curseth father or mother. 15:4 Exodus 21:17  
This people draw nigh unto me 15:8, 9 Isaiah 29:13  
He . made them male and female 19:4 Genesis 1:27  
For this cause shall a man leave father and mother 19:5 Genesis 2:24  
Thou shalt do no murder 19:18 Exodus 20:13  
Honour thy father and thy mother, 19:19 Exodus 20:12  
Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself 19:19 Leviticus 19:18  
Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh 21:5 Isaiah 62:11; Zechariah 9:9  
Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord 21:9 Psalm 118:26  
My house shall be called the house of prayer 21:13 Isaiah 56:7  
Ye have made it a den of thieves 21:13 Jeremiah 7:11  
Out of the mouth of babes 21:16 Psalm 8:2  
The stone which the builders rejected 21:42 Psalm 118:22,23  
If a man die, having no children 22:24 Deuteronomy 25:5  
I am the God of Abraham, 22:32 Exodus 3:6  
Thou shalt love the Lord thy God 22:37 Deuteronomy 6:5  
Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. 22:39 Leviticus 19:18  
The Lord said , , , Sit thou on my right hand 22:44 Psalm 110:1  
Ble-ssed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord, 23:39 Psalm 118:26  
I will smite the shepherd, 26:31 Zechariah 13:7  
And they took the thirty pieces of silver 27:9,10 Zechariah 11:12,

Matthew's Gospel rendering is noteworthy for five blocks of teaching or discourses which together make up nearly three-fifths of the entire document. Each of these blocks of teaching is highly important and significant:

1. The Sermon on the Mount (5-7)
2. The Apostolic Commission (10)
3. The Parables of the Kingdom (13)
4. The Discourse on Forgiveness (18)
5. The Prophetic Discourse (24-25)

It is interesting to note that each of these discourses ends with a special formula of words: "And it came to pass when Jesus had ended" (7:28; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1; 26:1).<sup>2</sup>

"Concerning the three Synoptic gospels, which present the Lord Jesus in human office and station, Matthew's gospel is emphatically dispensational and governmental in character, as Mark's is chronological and Luke's is moral. Matthew, by the Spirit, connects things together according to their dispensational bearing, whereas Luke connects things together according to their moral bearing. Mark, the gospel that depicts the perfect Servant, shows us His service in mostly chronological sequence.

"Since Matthew's gospel is dispensational, we find in it a comprehensive treatment of the mystery aspect of the kingdom of the heavens. This phase of the kingdom was unseen by the OT prophets. It was a secret. Along with this, Matthew speaks of the church which Christ would build. In accordance with the dispensational change that was going to occur, the church would replace the nation of Israel as in testimony and responsibility on the earth.

"The church is not viewed in Matthew as the body of Christ. In the ordering of God, this truth was first given through Paul after God further exposed the state Israel in the early chapters of Acts. Nor is the church seen in its mystery aspect in Matthew."<sup>3 4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> H. T. Spence, *The Canon of Scripture*, page 196.

<sup>3</sup> R. A. Huebner, *Elements of Dispensational Truth*, volume 2, pages 172-173.

<sup>4</sup> We do note the Church is mentioned in Matthew 16 and 18 although this is a Jewish gospel. One reason for this is that Matthew is both dispensational and governmental in nature, which explains why Jesus deals with organizational and practical material about church government in this gospel, but not in Mark, Luke or John, which are not dispensational gospels.



## **Matthew Chapter 1**

“When Ezra the scribe wrote his Chronicles, he had a special audience and special objectives in mind. He wrote for the pioneers who had returned from the Babylonian captivity. They had come to stake a claim in the Promised Land for the coming of the Messiah who was being so loudly heralded by the prophet Zechariah, but there was an enormous obstacle. The land was still “trodden down of the Gentiles.”...the repatriated Jews had a mandate to build a temple but not a palace; to set up an altar, not a throne. Thoughtful people were asking “What has happened to God’s promise to David?” Ezra wrote to assure them that although the throne was gone because of their national sins and the debaucheries of their kings, the royal Davidic line was still there.

Then came the silent centuries. For four hundred years...God said nothing to His people. Again, thoughtful people were asking “Now what has happened to the royal line of David?” They would look at the Chronicles and realize that the list of names were incomplete. The promise that the royal line would never lack a man to sit on the throne of David seemed to mock them. The royal line through Solomon had been cursed because of the sins of Jehoiachin (also called Jechonias, Jeconiah and contemptuously Coniah). It seemed as though God had forgotten His promise.

But the book of Matthew told the Jews that the royal line was still alive- until it terminated abruptly and permanently in the person of Jesus Christ. Similarly, the name of Jehoiakim is omitted between the names of Josiah (Josias) and Jehoiachin (Jechonias) (Matthew 1:11).<sup>5</sup>

There were approximately 400 silent years from the last word in Malachi to the coming of the Lord in His virgin birth. There will be another 400 (or so) silent years from the giving of the Authorized Version of the Bible in 1611 until the next coming of the Lord in the Rapture and Advent. God’s people at the end of this 400-year silent period would be asking the same questions that the believing Jewish remnant would ask in their day, leading up to the birth of Christ.

Looking at this genealogy, we see that Christ’s line was full of sinners- murderers, adulterers, prostitutes, outcasts, Gentiles, obscure people and just plain jerks as well as ordinary people. That is like everyone’s family tree. Few of us have great and mighty and moral people. Most of us have some ancestors hanging from our family tree. But a bad background can be overcome. We need not have our family or background or circumstances to hinder us from going on with God.

The Jews were very thorough in their genealogical records. Anyone could have gone to the temple, consulted their library and verified Matthew’s and Luke’s lists. If there was any fraud or inaccuracies, it would have been an easy thing to spot. In all the attacks made on Jesus’s messianic claims, the Jewish leaders never based their attacks on His genealogy.

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<sup>5</sup> John Phillips, Exploring the Gospel of Matthew, pages 27-28.

W. Graham Scroggie, in his detailed study of the two genealogies, made the following observations:

- (i) Matthew's genealogy has 41 names to and including Jesus.
- (ii) Luke's genealogy has 74 names to and including Jesus.
- (iii) Matthew and Luke have 19 names in common, if Matthan and Matthat are the same person; and 18 if they are not.
- (iv) Besides the names common to both Evangelists, Matthew has 22 (23), and Luke 55 (56) names.
- (v) Luke has 19 names before Matthew begins.
- (vi) Matthew gives 14 names between David and Shealtiel, and Luke 20.
- (vii) Matthew gives 8 names between Zerubbabel and Joseph (including Matthan), and Luke gives 16 (including Matthat).
- (viii) Rhesa, between 55 and 56 in Luke's list, is not a proper name, but a Chaldee title meaning "Prince." Some Jewish copyists did not understand this, and so wrote "Zerubbabel begat Rhesa," whereas it should be "Zerubbabel Rhesa," i.e., Zerubbabel the Prince.
- (ix) Matthew divides his genealogy into three parts of fourteen generations each (i. 17), but in order to do this, in the second part he omits three names, and in the third part he omits three names, and he counts both David and Jechonias twice.
- (x) Luke's genealogy has no artificial arrangement like Matthew's and he has 33 names which Matthew has not.
- (xi) In Matthew the genealogy descends from Abraham, the father of the Hebrew race, but in Luke the genealogy ascends to Adam, the father of the human race. Each of these lines is in keeping with the object and readers which the writers had in view; the one Jewish, and the other Gentile.
- (xii) Matthew employs the word "begat" throughout, but Luke says "the son of."
- (xiii) Matthew's line is traced from David through Solomon, but Luke's is traced from David through Nathan. Both were sons of David.
- (xiv) Cainan, between 12 and 13 in Luke's list, is undoubtedly an interpolation in certain copies of the Septuagint (LXX) towards the close of the 4th century A.D. "The evidence against his existence is to the utmost possible degree clear, full, and positive, and not liable to any mistake or perversion. On the contrary, the evidence for his existence is inferential, obscure, or open to the suspicion of falsification."—(Lord. A. Hervey).
- (xv) In Matthew's pedigree Salathiel (Shealtiel) is said to be the son of Jechonias (Jehoiachin), but in Luke, the son of Neria. No error can be demonstrated here, for there is a possible explanation. In Jer. xxii. 24–30, it is predicted that Coniah (Jehoiachin) would be childless, therefore he could not have been the father of Salathiel, but it is possible and probable that he adopted the seven sons of Neri, the twentieth from David in the line of Nathan. This seems to be intimated in Zech. xii. 12, where we read of "the family of Nathan apart," as well as "the family of David apart." If this were so, Salathiel would be the posterity of Jechonias by an adoption in the line of Nathan.
- (xvi) In Matthew's genealogy, Joseph is said to be the son of Jacob, but in Luke, the son of Heli. Attempts to explain this may be considered unsatisfactory (see later note), but all might be clear if we had some missing information. As long as

this and other seeming discrepancies in the two genealogies are capable of harmonization in natural and probable ways, by reasonable inferences, we should not conclude that they are contradictory and unreliable.”<sup>6</sup>

“We should note that Matthew in his genealogy uses the term “the father of,” while Luke uses “the son of.” Two explanations for Matthew’s construction are possible. The first is that it may refer to actual physical descent establishing an actual father-son relationship. The difficulty with this view is that Matthew admittedly omits some of the names that are included in Luke’s genealogy and these omissions make it impossible for the term “the father of” to mean actual paternity. An alternative view, in harmony with Jewish usage, is that the term refers to the transmission of an inheritance within the bloodline. Thus, a person transmitted according to the Levitical laws of inheritance the right of inheritance that he had received from his father to another generation. Matthew, then, seems to be emphasizing the legal rights of Christ to the throne.”<sup>7</sup>

Many Jews refused to recognize Jesus as the Christ, the Messiah. Some rejected Him for the very reason that His parents were known to them based on John 7:27 **“Howbeit we know this man whence he is: but when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is.”** The belief was that the Messiah’s lineage would be unknown, but Jesus’ lineage was known, therefore, He could not be the Messiah.

### **1. The Generation of Jesus Christ 1:1-17 also see Luke 3:23-38**

#### **1:1<sup>a</sup> The book of the generation<sup>b</sup> of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.<sup>cde</sup>**

1a “The verse is the matchmeet of Genesis 5:1. A comparison of Genesis 5 with Matthew 1 will reveal some remarkable doctrinal truths. First, Genesis 5:1 is “the book of the generations of Adam”. Romans 5:14 tells you that Adam is a type of Jesus Christ. Matthew 1:1 is “the book of the generation of Jesus Christ,” making the Lord Jesus Christ “the last Adam” (1 Cor. 15:45). In Genesis 5, the phrase “and he died” appears about every third verse, teaching you that “in Adam all die” (1 Cor 15:22). But in Matthew 1, although it is evident everyone in the list dies, not one death is recorded, illustrating the great Scriptural truth that “in Christ shall all be made alive” (1 Cor. 15:22) Every adult on earth is either “in Adam” or “in Christ.”<sup>8</sup>

1b The last time we read of **“the book of the generations”** in the Bible was in Genesis 5:1, with the First Adam and the Last Adam (here). Part of the humanity of Jesus Christ is that He had a family tree, like everyone else who ever lived. And like any family tree, He has a mix of good and bad. Everyone today (or who has ever lived) can place their spiritual lineage either in the Generations of Adam (if they are lost) or in the Generations of Jesus Christ (if they are saved).

1c This family tree of Jesus is designed to establish His credentials as King of the Jews, being from the lineage of Abraham and David. Matthew focuses on his Jewish lineage, Luke His human lineage. The Matthew lineage is the official lineage that might have been maintained by

<sup>6</sup> W. Graham Scroggie, *A Guide to the Gospels*, pages. 505-509. We are not going to agree with all of what Scroggie wrote above, discernment is advised, especially with “copyist errors” and the supposed accuracy of the Septuagint.

<sup>7</sup> J. Dwight Pentecost, *The Words and Works of Jesus Christ*, page 38.

<sup>8</sup> Peter Ruckman, *Ruckman Reference Bible*, page 1235.

the temple records, while Luke's lineage can be considered the actual lineage. Matthew lists Jesus' lineage from the (legal) father Joseph while Luke traces it through His mother, Mary.

1d A "son" can be a literal son, a grandson, a great-great grandson, a son-in-law or an adopted son. Jesus was not even David's son by descent, literally; yet here he is called, "the son of David," as also in Matthew 22:45. Jesus was David's son legally, if not even biologically.

1. The expression occurs nine times of Christ in Matthew (1:1; 9:27; 12:23; 15:22; 20:30, 31; 21:9, 15; 22:42)

1e "Abraham" The Jews are the only nation that can trace their history and origin back to a single person and founder. The Jews knew this made them a unique nation and they took a lot of pride in it.

**1:2 Abraham<sup>a</sup> begat Isaac; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat Judas<sup>b</sup> and his brethren;**

2a Abraham, though a man of great faith, twice lied about his wife, Sarah. Out of fear for his life and lack of trust in God, he told two different pagan kings that she was his sister (Genesis 12:11-19; 20:1-18). He failed with Hagar. Yet here he is, an example of the grace of God.

2b Judas is Judah, the son of Jacob. His line would be the Messianic one as seen in Genesis 49:10. "Judas" is the Greek form of "Judah". The slight differences in spelling of the proper names in the New Testament should not upset us. Pedro, Pierre, Pietro, Peter, and Petros are all the same name, but transliterating from Spanish, French, Italian, and Greek makes the words appear different.

**1:3 And Judas begat Phares and Zara of Thamar;<sup>abc</sup> and Phares begat Esrom; and Esrom begat Aram;**

3a Adulteresses and prostitutes in Christ's line:

1. Tamar.
2. Rahab
3. Bathsheba (not mentioned by name in Matthew 1:6)

3b It was unusual for women to appear in Hebrew genealogies yet four of them are listed in Jesus line (add Ruth to the list) and three of them were either harlots (Rahab) or played the harlot (Tamar) or was guilty of adultery (Bathsheba). The other woman, Ruth, was from a cursed Gentile nation (Moab). But with such women as this (not to mention the notorious men) in Christ's family tree, how say ye that this is a "godly line" as many commentators do, especially in dealing with the family trees of Cain and Abel/Seth after the Fall and after Abel's murder? There is no "godly line" but there is a "messianic line". It would be Matthew the Publican who would include these "fallen" women in the Lord's lineage, as if he could sympathize with such people. That a professional harlot should be in Christ's line is interesting, and yet not so shocking when we consider the activity of Tamar, who presented herself as a harlot, Bathsheba, who stepped out on her husband and seduced David, and Solomon, who had 1,000 wives.

3c "According to Jewish custom, a writer of a genealogy would never include a female name; he would include only the names of males. But in this brief genealogy five women are mentioned. These five women are like the fingers of my hand: four from one group and the other one stands



alone. Four of these five women were remarried, and one of the four was a harlot. It seems that the divine record here would not mention the good ones, such as Sarah or Rebekah, but the bad ones. Listen to the divine record: "David begot Solomon of the wife of Uriah" (Matthew 1:6). The record does not even give her name; it gives only her history in order to remind us of what kind of person she was... Why does this brief record mention all these women? It is because they are our representatives. Do not think you are so pure that you are more pure than these women. Trace your own origin. If you do, you will find out by what way and of whom your grandfather was born, by what way and of whom your father was born, and by what way and of whom you were born. We are worse. But the worst ones are included in the generation of Christ! Praise the Lord! He is truly the Savior of sinners."<sup>9</sup>

**1:4 And Aram begat Aminadab;<sup>a</sup> and Aminadab begat Naasson; and Naasson begat Salmon;**

4a "**Amminadab**" is called the prince of the children of Judah, and his "chariots" are mentioned in the Song of Solomon 6:12. Amminadab's son (Numbers 1:7) was a leading warrior in the tribe.

**1:5 And Salmon begat Booz of Rachab;<sup>a</sup> and Booz begat Obed of Ruth; and Obed begat Jesse;**

5a Gentiles in Christ's line:

1. Rahab, an Amorite

A. She was the prostitute who hid the spies before the fall of Jericho in Joshua 6.

2. Ruth, a Moabite

A. As a Moabitess, Ruth was not allowed to enter the congregation of the Lord. But she was seeking God and God's people (Ruth 1:15-17; 2:11,12). This shows that no matter who we are or what our background is, as long as we have a heart which seeks after God and God's people, we are in a position to be accepted into the beloved through the grace and love of God. Even if you were born of a poor origin and have a rough background, but do not be bothered or frustrated by that. Nothing can be worse than a person born of Moab. But as long as you have a heart to seek after God and God's people, you will enter into the enjoyment of Christ.

3. Bathsheba in Matthew 1:6

A. Bathsheba is not named. David had Uriah murdered to cover his sin of adultery with Bathsheba in 2 Samuel 11. David was a godly man who was after God's own heart, but he was not sinless. He confessed the sins, paid the price, and got right again, which is a great encouragement for the rest of us, as one day, we may find ourselves in a similar situation and we will desire that same divine grace.

4. Rehoboam's mother, an Ammonite (Rehoboam's mother)

5. The Gentiles would have a claim on Christ as well!

6. These names are omitted from Luke's genealogy, but Matthew the Publican included them. A man like Matthew would appreciate the struggles of these people and he would have also appreciated the grace involved to have them included in the Lord's genealogy.

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<sup>9</sup> Witness Lee, *Life Study of Matthew*.

**1:6 And Jesse begat David the king; and David the king begat Solomon<sup>a</sup> of her that had been the wife of Urias;<sup>b</sup>**

6a Solomon was peaceful and wise, but also in many ways foolish. He sowed seeds of both domestic and spiritual corruption by marrying hundreds of wives—most of them from pagan countries. These were political marriages, but these foreign women managed to turn Solomon's heart away from the Lord (1 Kings 11:1-8). The unity of Israel was broken, and the kingdom soon became divided. Yet here he is, an example of the grace of God.

6b David sinned terribly in committing adultery with Bathsheba (who is not named here) and then compounded the sin by having her husband, Uriah, killed so that he could marry her. David was guilty of his murder. As a warrior he had slaughtered countless men, and for that reason was not allowed to build the Temple (1 Chronicles 22:8 **"But the word of the LORD came to me, saying, Thou hast shed blood abundantly, and hast made great wars: thou shalt not build an house unto my name, because thou hast shed much blood upon the earth in my sight."**). David was a classic example of a poor father, who failed to discipline his children. Absalom tried to usurp the throne from his own father by armed rebellion. Yet here he is, an example of the grace of God.

**1:7 And Solomon begat Roboam;<sup>a</sup> and Roboam begat Abia;<sup>b</sup> and Abia begat Asa;**

7a "Roboam" (Rehoboam) is a half breed from an Ammonitess mother (1 Kings 14:21). The line of Christ has its fair share of good men, bad men and very wicked men.

7b "Abia" here is the "Abijah" of 2 Chronicles 14.

**1:8 And Asa begat Josaphat;<sup>a</sup> and Josaphat begat Joram;<sup>b</sup> and Joram begat Ozias;<sup>c</sup>**

8a "The reader can readily identify Jehoshaphat from the list. Joram is listed as "Jehoram" in 2 Chronicles 21:1, and the "Ozias" of Matthew 1:8 turns out to be "Uzziah" of 2 Chronicles. Now the student is faced with a serious problem, which unregenerate scholarship has complicated as much as possible. In the genealogy of the kings in 2 Chronicles, we find the monarchy running—Jehoshaphat (21:1), Jehoram (21:1), Ahaziah (22:1), Joash (24:1), Amaziah (25:1), and then Uzziah (26:1). Where Matthew inserts only ONE King between Jehoshaphat and Uzziah, Chronicles lists four. Surely this must be a contradiction! No, there is no contradiction. The student noticed in the first verse of Matthew that a "son" does not have to be the actual, physical son of his immediate father. But there is another fact to consider. In Matthew 1:17, the Holy Spirit tells us that there is a purpose in cutting down the genealogy to the number of names found in chapter 1. If all four kings of 2 Chronicles were listed, the "fourteens" of Matthew 1:17 would not come out even; it would be "fourteen generations from Abraham to David" and "seventeen generations from David until the carrying away," etc. The Holy Spirit has deliberately omitted Ahaziah, Joash, and Amaziah in Matthew for a purpose... Now to clear the air, let it be noticed that Ahaziah is a break in the kingly line and is not a direct descendant of Judah's kings. Ahaziah was not Joram's (Jehoram's) son by his wife, but Ahaziah's mother was Joram's mother-in-law! (2 Chron. 22:9-10), whereas Joram had Ahab's daughter for a wife (2 Kings 8:18), Ahaziah's mother was not Ahab's daughter—she was Ahab's sister (2 Kings 8:26), the daughter of Omri, a wicked king of Israel—not JUDAH! Again, we find the unsearchable riches of the AV 1611 clear a lot of obscurities resulting from mishandling of the Hebrew and Greek "originals" (see Exod. 20:5-6 for why three generations were left out). Why shouldn't there be a

break in a Jewish genealogy presenting a Jewish King Messiah, when the succession from Jehoram (Matt. 1:8) goes to a Baalite from the northern tribes, whose mother was Jehoram's MOTHER-IN LAW!? There is probably an act of immorality here, violating the Levitical law (Lev. 18:17), and there can be no doubt about the consequences; for Jehoram dies of an incurable, internal disease (2 Chron. 21:15–18), and he had no son but Jehoahaz. Ahaziah, then, was probably an illegitimate birth through immorality with a pagan "Baal worshipper," whose relationship is forbidden in Lev. 18:17. The Bible's critics do not have access, evidently, to the scientific and historical facts, which were available to Matthew! Matthew omits Ahaziah, and does not take up the line until Uzziah. The gap comes out happily at an exact seventy years, for upon the death of Ahaziah, Joash reigns forty years (2 Chron. 24:1). His successor runs twenty nine years (2 Chron. 25:1), and on the even "70," Uzziah ascends the throne and Matthew takes up the genealogy again."<sup>10</sup>

8b "Joram = Jehoram (2Ki 8:16. 2Ch 21:1). Three names are omitted here. All are not necessary in a royal genealogy. In 1:1 three names are sufficient. The four names are: 1. Ahaziah (2Ki 8:27. 2Ch 22:1-9). 2Ch 22:2. Joash or Jehoash (2Ki 11:2, 12:20. 2Ch 24:1-25). 2Ch 24:3. Amaziah (2Ki 14:8-20. 2Ch 25:1, 8). 4. Jehoiaquim (2Ki 23:36, 24:6. 2Ch 36:5-8)."<sup>11</sup>

8c "Everyone recognizes the strain required to divide the Lord's ancestry into three equal segments of fourteen names each. Between Jehoram (Joram) and Uzziah (Ozias) for example, the names of Ahaziah, Joash and Amaziah are deliberately erased from the record. All three died violent deaths. Ahaziah was slain by Jehu (2 Kings 9:27), Joash was murdered by his servants (12:20), and Amaziah was put to death by the people of Jerusalem (14:19). All three kings were wicked. All three were descendants of Jehoram and his wife Athaliah, the evil daughter of Ahab and Jezebel. As son-in-law of Ahab, Jehoram did not escape God's curse on Ahab and his house. Jehoram "died of sore diseases" (2 Chronicles 21:19)...In Matthew's omission of Kings Ahaziah, Joash, and Amaziah, we see God's "visiting" for idolatry was literally fulfilled "unto the third and fourth generation" (Exodus 20:4,5). Their names were blotted out according to law (Deuteronomy 29:20)."<sup>12</sup>

**1:9 And Ozias begat Joatham; and Joatham begat Achaz; and Achaz begat Ezekias;**

**1:10 And Ezekias begat Manasses;<sup>a</sup> and Manasses begat Amon;<sup>b</sup> and Amon begat Josias;**

10a Manasseh is in the Lord's genealogy, the worst of the kings of Judah. But he did repent of his sins while he was in prison (2 Chronicles 33).

AV	ESV	LSV
10 And Ezekias begat Manasses; and Manasses begat <b>Amon</b> ; and <b>Amon</b> begat Josias;	10 and Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, and Manasseh the father of Amos, and Amos the father of Josiah,	10 And Hezekiah was the father of Manasseh, and Manasseh was the father of Amon, and Amon was the father of Josiah.

<sup>10</sup> Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer's Commentary on Matthew*, pages 8-9.

<sup>11</sup> Ethelbert Bullinger, *Companion Bible*.

<sup>12</sup> John Phillips, *Exploring the Gospel of Matthew*, page 27.

10b The English Standard Version has “Amos” instead of “Amon”, a clear error.

**1:11<sup>a</sup> And Josias begat Jechonias and his brethren, about the time they were carried away<sup>b</sup> to Babylon:**

11a This is the same situation as in Matthew 1:8 with another gap in the line.

11b “**carried away**”, not “gone into captivity”. The Jews did not like to refer to their time in Babylon as a “captivity”. But they were carried away by force.

**1:12 And after they were brought to Babylon, Jechonias<sup>a</sup> begat Salathiel; and Salathiel begat Zorobabel;**

12a Regarding Jeconiah, Jeremiah 22:30 says “**write this man childless**” referring to his son Coniah. No son of Jeconiah would sit on the throne. He had sons, but none ruled and none of his sons would be reckoned in the genealogy.

**1:13 And Zorobabel begat Abiud;<sup>a</sup> and Abiud begat Eliakim; and Eliakim begat Azor;**

13a The list from Abiud to Jacob is placed in the “400 Silent Year” period between the testaments, where we have no inspired historical records.

**1:14 And Azor begat Sadoc; and Sadoc begat Achim; and Achim begat Eliud;**

**1:15 And Eliud begat Eleazar; and Eleazar begat Matthan; and Matthan begat Jacob;**

**1:16 And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus,<sup>ab</sup> who is called Christ.**

16a There is nothing about Joseph begetting Jesus, since he did not. Joseph was Jesus’ legal father but not His biological father. The wording is very careful in saying that Joseph was not the biological father of Jesus. This is because of the truth of the Virgin birth.

16b Joseph and Mary were distantly related. Joseph was descended from David through Solomon, Mary through Nathan, the second surviving son of David and Bathsheba. This is a second witness to the legal claim of Jesus to the throne of David. It was also a form of insurance. If one side of the line was terminated (as Joseph’s was through the curse of Coniah in Jeremiah 22:28-30 “**Is this man Coniah a despised broken idol? is he a vessel wherein is no pleasure? wherefore are they cast out, he and his seed, and are cast into a land which they know not? O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the LORD. Thus saith the LORD, Write ye this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days: for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah.**”), the other line would still be there as a backup. Jesus is legally the son of David through Joseph but with Coniah cut off, no son of Coniah would sit on the throne. But Jesus was also related to David through Nathan on Mary’s side of the family, so the throne can still be claimed by Jesus. Joseph’s line was the one where all the action and historical interest was focused. Mary’s line was quiet and almost ignored by history.

**1:17 So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David until the carrying away into Babylon are fourteen generations; and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ are fourteen generations.<sup>ab</sup>**

17a Matthew has arranged and selected his genealogy to that it comes up to 42 names, three sets of 14. It took 4000 years from the first promise of a Messiah in Genesis 3:15 until the fulfillment in Christ, but the prophecy was sure. The prophecy was sure, even if the time appointed was long (Daniel 10:1).

17b Taking a summarized view of the generations of Christ by both Matthew and Luke would look something like this:



## **2. The Birth of Jesus Christ 1:18-25**

**1:18<sup>a</sup> ¶ Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise:<sup>b</sup> When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph,<sup>c</sup> before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.<sup>d</sup>**

18a Luke writes of the birth of Jesus from Mary's viewpoint while Matthew writes from Matthew's viewpoint.

18b "**on this wise**" "It happened like this".

18c Mary and Joseph were engaged but not yet married. "**Espoused**" is in the passive voice, showing their marriage was probably arranged by their parents, which was very common among the Jews in this day. The Jewish espousal was almost as strong as an actual marriage, so the same procedure would be used in breaking the engagement as an actual divorce. It would appear that Joseph didn't buy Mary's attempts to explain how she could be pregnant, but no other man involved. How do you think Mary must have felt when Gabriel announced to her that she would become pregnant? Mary understood the risk. She would probably lose Joseph and would have to endure the label of an immoral woman. Her Son would be called a bastard (see John 8:19,41 "**Then said they unto him, Where is thy Father? Jesus answered, Ye neither know me, nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also...Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God.**"). But if this was of God, Mary was willing to put up with all this.

18d This shows that Joseph was not the father of Jesus, for Mary was pregnant with Jesus before she had any sexual relations with Joseph (Luke 1:34 **"Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?"**). The Most remarkable Man who ever lived will have the most unusual birth of any man who has ever lived. His birth must be according to prophecy, fulfilled to the last, exact detail, for the prophets were precise in the details as to the timing, mode and location of His birth.

**1:19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily.<sup>a</sup>**

19a Now it came down to trying to convince Joseph that she had not been unfaithful. Can you blame Joseph for not accepting Mary's explanations? She was telling him a miracle occurred to explain her pregnancy. He still loved her, but he did not want to marry someone he felt had been unfaithful to him, so he decided to end the espousal quietly. Joseph had a right to make a public example of Mary. He had a right to have her killed (stoned, as in Deuteronomy 22:17-21 **"And, lo, he hath given occasions of speech against her, saying, I found not thy daughter a maid; and yet these are the tokens of my daughter's virginity. And they shall spread the cloth before the elders of the city. And the elders of that city shall take that man and chastise him; And they shall amerce him in an hundred shekels of silver, and give them unto the father of the damsel, because he hath brought up an evil name upon a virgin of Israel: and she shall be his wife; he may not put her away all his days. But if this thing be true, and the tokens of virginity be not found for the damsel: Then they shall bring out the damsel to the door of her father's house, and the men of her city shall stone her with stones that she die: because she hath wrought folly in Israel, to play the whore in her father's house: so shalt thou put evil away from among you."**). Joseph was ready to apply Deuteronomy 24:1-3 (**"When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house. And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife. And if the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and giveth it in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, which took her to be his wife"**); and give Mary a bill of divorcement without bringing a scandal upon her. But since they had not yet come together as husband and wife, no formal bill of divorcement would be needed. He broke off the engagement but since they had not come together as husband and wife, no divorce was involved. But later they would be married, probably after Jesus' birth. A perfect example of a righteousness that goes beyond the law. By all legal rights, under the law, Joseph had more than a right to make a public example of Mary.

**1:20 But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream,<sup>a</sup> saying, Joseph, thou son of David,<sup>b</sup> fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.<sup>c</sup>**

20a Gabriel appeared to Mary but the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph.

1. Mary got open visitations by angels, but God spoke to Joseph directly through dreams. We wonder why God just didn't speak directly to Joseph as He did to Mary? Revelation by dreams is always a tricky thing.
2. The first of four appearances to Joseph in these chapters (Matthew 1:20, 24; 2:13, 19).

3. **“dream”** Only six dreams mentioned in the New Testament, all in Matthew, to Joseph (Matthew 1:20; 2:13, 19, 22); to the wise men (Matthew 2:12); and to Pilate's wife (Matthew 27:19).

20b **“Joseph, thou son of David”** By use of this term, the angel:

1. Acknowledges that Joseph was in the line of David and any of his children would be as well.
2. There would be something messianic for this child to do. God was now about to work through the Messianic line, through Joseph and this unborn child.

20c The Lord was quite aware of the unique problems that marrying Mary would have for Joseph, considering these circumstances. Yet the Lord assures Joseph:

1. That Mary had not been unfaithful and that she was not guilty of adultery
2. Mary's pregnancy was of the Lord and she was telling the truth about it
3. The Lord would undertake and offer divine protection and aid for this new family
4. It would take a divine intervention to get Joseph to change his mind, and he got one. The angel confirms that Mary had been faithful and that her pregnancy was a miracle of the Lord. Now Joseph had a tough decision to make. If he went through with the marriage, his wife and (step)son would be branded as immoral and illegitimate and he would be “tarred and feathered” with them. Yet he, as Mary, was willing to put up with the gossip and insults, within the will of God.
5. **“fear not”**, showing Joseph was afraid of the next step he thought he had to take in putting Mary away.

AV	ESV	LSV
20 But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: <b>for that which is conceived in her</b> is of the Holy Ghost.	20 But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.	20 But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the One who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.

**“for that which is conceived in her”** The LSV uses “the One”. Gail Riplinger, in her book *New Age Bible Versions*, documents how modern versions refer to Christ as “One”. “God does not change, but new versions try to transfigure him as they translate. The NASB and other new versions “brings the end of Him” changing the words “he” and “Son” to “the One... Books like *Sensuous Spirituality*, by avowed lesbian NIV editor Virginia Mollenkott, echo the New Age movement's hopes to replace the ‘he’ of Christianity with the neuter ‘One’ of Hinduism... ‘The One’ is being smuggled into Christianity, concealed under the cover of new bible versions like the NKJV. ‘The One’s’ masquerade is betrayed by the 800 blanks which occur where the underlying Greek or Hebrew word should be given in the *NASB Exhaustive Concordance*.<sup>13</sup> Also see Matthew 11:3.

**1:21 And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS:<sup>ab</sup> for he shall save his people from their sins.<sup>c</sup>**

<sup>13</sup> Pages 76-77. See all of chapter 5

21a THE NAMES OF OUR LORD JESUS:

1. EMMANUEL—What He was- HIS PERSON.
2. JESUS—What He was to Do- HIS WORK.
3. CHRIST—What Place He was to Fill- HIS OFFICE.
4. LORD—What Claim He was to Make- HIS HEADSHIP.
5. KING—What Rank He was to Hold- HIS KINGDOM.
6. SON OF GOD—In Relation to God- HIS MISSION.
7. SON OF MAN—In Relation to Man.

21b In our day, we call children by names which have no particular meaning. It was not so in Bible days. Then names meant something and were usually given as the child's character began to emerge. With "Jesus", "His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace," because he is all these.

21c Notice Jesus would save "his" people from their sins.

1. This is from Psalm 130:8 **"And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities."**
2. Although the successful work of Christ on the cross is not to be overlooked or ignored, the application is not the cross but the Second Coming and the establishment of the Millennial Kingdom, when all Israel shall be saved.
  - A. Isaiah 45:17 **"But Israel shall be saved in the LORD with an everlasting salvation: ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end".**
  - B. Romans 11:26 **"And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:"**
3. **"His people"** is Israel.
4. **"He shall save His people from their sins."**
  - A. Theologically, "his people" is Israel. Practically and devotionally, it is anyone who will believe.

**1:22 Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet,<sup>a</sup> saying,**

22a The "prophet" is Isaiah. He clearly spoke of the virgin birth in Isaiah 7:14 (**"Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."**) and Matthew directly links the birth of Christ to a fulfillment of the prophecy.

1. Mary would be the fulfillment of Isaiah 7:14. In case some liberal thought the Hebrew word "almah" in Isaiah 7:14 meant "young woman", the Greek in Matthew 1:23 straightens that heresy out by insuring that "almah" is translated as "virgin". You can throw in Jeremiah 31:22 for good measure. Even the English will help here in the phrase "alma mater" that college students use all the time- that phrase means "virgin mother".
2. The prophecy of Isaiah 7:14 was given as a sign. If this is just a young girl giving birth in the usual way, how is that a sign? It happens a thousand times a day. But a virgin birth would definitely be a sign. We would expect something highly unusual if God in the flesh were coming into the world. His birth would be like no other.
3. "I asked a very fine Hebrew Christian, who is also a good Hebrew scholar, about that. He said, "Look at it this way. Suppose you went to visit a friend of yours who had three



daughters and two of them were married and one was still single. He would say, 'These two are my married daughters, and this young lady is my third daughter.' Do you think he would mean a prostitute when he said 'young lady'? If you would imply that she was anything but a virgin, he would probably knock your block off." May I say, I would hate to be those who deny the virgin birth of Jesus Christ when they must come into the presence of the Son of God. I'm afraid they are going to wish they could somehow take back the things they have said to malign Him."<sup>14</sup>

**1:23 Behold, a virgin shall be with child,<sup>ab</sup> and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel,<sup>c</sup> which being interpreted is, God with us.<sup>d</sup>**

23a Why is the Virgin Birth so necessary and a foundation of the Christian faith?

1. To fulfill prophecy

A. Genesis 3:15 **"And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. "**

B. Isaiah 7:14 **"Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."**

2. So the Lord would not inherit a fallen sinful nature

A. The sin nature is transferred from the father to the child since Adam is the federal head of the race. Since Joseph was not Jesus' biological father, He did not inherit that sin nature from Joseph.

B. If Joseph were the physical father of Jesus, Jesus would have inherited a fallen sin nature, which would have disqualified Him from being anyone's savior as He would have needed a savior for Himself and His own sins. Salvation and redemption become impossible without the virgin birth, which is why it is a "fundamental of the faith" and why it belief in it is an absolutely necessity for salvation. You cannot be saved if you reject the virgin birth as you would have no sinless savior to pay for your sins.

**3. Because we would expect God manifest in the flesh to have an unusual birth, different from all other men. He would not come into the world as all other men and His birth would be radically different from all other so-called "saviors" of the other world religions.**

23b **"a virgin shall be with child"** A clear fulfillment of Isaiah 7:14.

23c **"Emmanuel"** God with us:

1. In our sorrows
2. In our trials
3. In our temptations
4. In our failures
5. In our victories
6. In our worship
7. In our service

23d Seven titles/names are given to Christ before His birth:

1. Emmanuel (here).
  - A. Only Matthew uses this term.

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<sup>14</sup> J. Vernon McGee, *Thru the Bible, Matthew* volume I: Matthew 1-13, pages 27-28.

2. The Son of David
  - A. Matthew 1:1 **"The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham".**
3. Jesus
  - A. Matthew 1:21 **"And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins."**
  - B. Luke 1:31 **"And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS."**
4. The Son of the Highest
  - A. Luke 1:32 **"He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David:"**
5. The Son of God
  - A. Luke 1:35 **"And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."**
6. Christ
  - A. Matthew 1:16 **" And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ."**

**1:24 Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife:<sup>a</sup>**

24a Joseph was a good man because he was an obedient man. Not only was Mary chosen to be the mother of Jesus, but Joseph was chosen to be His stepfather and earthly father-figure. There was something about both of them that made them so appealing for the Lord to choose them.

**1:25 And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son:<sup>a</sup> and he called his name JESUS.<sup>b</sup>**

25a AV

ESV

LSV

25 And knew her not till she had brought forth her <b>firstborn</b> son: and he called his name JESUS.	25 but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.	25 but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.
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Joseph and Mary had other children, just like any other married couple, and they had these children "the old-fashioned way" after Jesus was born. The Romanist fiction about the "perpetual virginity of Mary" is just another opium dream. Mark 6:3 (**"Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him"**) and John 7:3 (**"His brethren therefore said unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judaea, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest."**) make this clear. Jesus had at least 4 step-brothers and 2 step-sisters. The prophecy of Psalm 69:8 (**"I am become a stranger unto my brethren, and an alien unto my mother's children."**) also makes it clear that Jesus had siblings.

The ESV and LSV omit "firstborn", thus opening the door to Roman Catholic and pagan Mariolatry. "Firstborn" implies Mary had other children.

25b It was Joseph who named Jesus, not Mary. This showed that in God's eyes, Joseph would serve as the human father of Jesus and Joseph accepted that responsibility by claiming Jesus as his own son.

### **Spiritual Applications- Matthew Chapter 1**

Jesus had some rather rough and sinful characters in His family tree and He wanted it that way. Jesus was the only man in history Who was able to choose what family He would be born into and who His parents would be. He chose the family with a man who associated with prostitutes (Judah), several Gentile women (Ruth, Rahab), a murderer (David), an apostate (Solomon) and several bad kings. No matter what your family history is like, it is no barrier to walking with God, although many people have a lot of difficulty overcoming their family sins. If you have such a history, you can start a legacy within your family by being a first-generation Christian.

There is a spiritual blessing on some families. On my mother's side of the family, I have two cousins who are preachers (a pastor and a missionary). Not many families can claim three preachers in one generation. One of my teachers, H. T. Spence, of Foundations Bible College in Dunn, North Carolina had his father and grandfather as preachers.

The fact that Mary was willing to endure the stigma of having a child out of wedlock says much about her character, faith and spirituality. Having children out of wedlock was a scandal and much public condemnation came from it. Seeing how Jesus was considered to be a bastard by the Jewish leaders in John 8 illustrates this. This is why some destructive liberals charged Mary with having by a soldier who would have been stationed in a nearby garrison, as this sometimes happens to young girls near military bases. Joseph would also have to put up with the stigma that his wife had been unfaithful to him. Yet both Joseph and Mary were willing to endure public humiliation in order to be faithful to the word of God.



## **Matthew Chapter 2**

### **3. The Wise Men and Herod 2:1-10**

**2:1 Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem<sup>a</sup> of Judæa in the days of Herod the king,<sup>b</sup> behold, there came wise men<sup>c</sup> from the east<sup>d</sup> to Jerusalem,**

1a Bethlehem:

1. Rachel was buried there (Genesis 35).
2. Ruth lived there before she married Boaz (Ruth 2-3).
3. It was the home and city of David.
4. Was located about 6 miles south of Jerusalem.

1b **Herod** was an exceptionally wicked Idumean/Edomite (Gentile) king appointed over Judea, whom the Jews absolutely despised. He rebuilt the temple, trying to buy the favor of his subjects, but his love for all things Gentile and his vices prevented any such love or loyalty. He did some other decent things for the people, such as reducing taxes and feeding them in a time of famine, but his paranoia made him an intolerable ruler.

“This Herod, known as “the Great,” is the first of several Herods mentioned in the New Testament. Julius Caesar had appointed his father, Antipater, to be procurator, or governor, of Judea under the Roman occupation. Antipater then managed to have his son Herod appointed prefect of Galilee. In that office Herod was successful in quelling the Jewish guerilla bands who continued to fight against their foreign rulers. After fleeing to Egypt when the Parthians invaded Palestine, Herod then went to Rome and in 40 B.C. was declared by Octavian and Antony (with the concurrence of the Roman senate) to be the king of the Jews. He invaded Palestine the next year and, after several years of fighting, drove out the Parthians and established his kingdom.

“Because he was not Jewish, but Idumean (Edomite), Herod married Mariamne, heiress to the Jewish Hasmonean house, in order to make himself more acceptable to the Jews he now ruled. He was a clever and capable warrior, orator, and diplomat. In times of severe economic hardship he gave back some tax money collected from the people. During the great famine of 25 B.C. he melted down various gold objects in the palace to buy food for the poor. He built theaters, race tracks, and other structures to provide entertainment for the people, and in 19 B.C. he began the reconstruction of the Temple in Jerusalem. He revived Samaria and built the beautiful port city of Caesarea in honor of his benefactor Caesar Augustus (Octavian’s title). He embellished the cities of Beirut, Damascus, Tyre, Sidon, and Rhodes, and even made contributions to rebuilding work in Athens. He built the remarkable and almost impregnable fortress of Masada, where in A.D. 73 nearly a thousand Jewish defenders committed suicide rather than be captured by the Roman general Flavius Silva.

“But Herod was also cruel and merciless. He was incredibly jealous, suspicious, and afraid for his position and power. Fearing his potential threat, he had the high priest Aristobulus, who was his wife Mariamne’s brother, drowned—after which he provided a magnificent funeral where he pretended to weep. He then had Mariamne herself killed, and then her mother and two of his own sons. Five days before his death (about a year after Jesus was born) he had a third son executed. One of the greatest evidences of his bloodthirstiness and insane cruelty was having the most distinguished citizens of Jerusalem arrested and imprisoned shortly before his death. Because he knew no one would mourn his own death, he gave orders for those prisoners to be executed the moment he died—in order to guarantee that there would be mourning in Jerusalem. That barbaric act was exceeded in cruelty only by his slaughter of “all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its environs, from two years old and under” (Matt.

2:16) in hopes of killing any threat to his throne from the One the magi said had been born King of the Jews.”<sup>15</sup>

1c The Greek word “**wise men**” is “magi”, where we get our English word “magician”. “These Magi appear to have been descendants of Abraham, but not of Jacob; for the name of Magi does not apply to Jews, and the mention of gold and frankincense directs our attention to Isaiah 60:6, where he speaks of the coming in of the Gentiles, so that in this place already are seen the preludes of the Messiah being received rather by the Gentiles than by His own people. (See Luke 4:26, etc.)”<sup>16</sup> Joseph in Egypt may have qualified as a “wise man” as he was able to interpret dreams with God’s help.

“Many uses of magos, especially in a Jewish or Christian context, are clearly pejorative, notably of the “false prophet” Bar-Jesus in Acts 13:6, 8. Not every mention of magi necessarily refers to what we would now call “magic,” but it was a grey area from which Jews and Christians preferred to keep their distance. It is therefore remarkable to find Matthew introducing magi into his story without any sign of disapproval. However widely respected the magi may have been in Mesopotamia and more widely in the Greek and Roman world, their title was not one which a careful Christian would willingly introduce without warrant into his account of the origins of his faith. The most satisfactory explanation for their presence in Matthew’s narrative is that this was an element which he had received in his tradition and (probably because the role of the star required them to be identified as such) did not feel at liberty to disguise. In pagan Greek, too, μάγος was sometimes used to mean a “charlatan”; e.g., Sophocles, Oed. Tyr. 387; Plato, Rep. 572E. For a Jewish parallel cf. Josephus, Ant. 20.142.”<sup>17</sup>

We are not told how many wise men came. The “three” wise men is pure speculation. They may not have been “kings” either. Don’t put a lot of stock in the theology behind the hymn “We Three Kings”. If you have three such men traveling a thousand miles with valuable gifts, you can be sure they had quite a delegation, with armed guards and the like. We do not appreciate the danger involved with a trip of probably a thousand miles, on foot and on camel, through often-dangerous terrain, a trip that could have taken months.

1d Men seeking Jesus travel from east to west. The wise men moved west, from the east. God’s movements in the earth are east-to-west. Whenever we see someone going from west-to-east, it is often a sign of rebellion or being out of the will of God. Even in church history, the gospel starts in Jerusalem and then generally moves west through Europe via Paul’s missionary journeys.

1. After receiving their revelation concerning the star, the Wise Men went to Jerusalem, assuming the King would be born. They may not have had Micah 5:2 about the King being born in Bethlehem. After they were corrected by the Scriptures (Matthew 2:4-6), they went to Bethlehem (Matthew 2:8,9), and the star appeared to them again and led them to the place where Christ was (Matthew 2:9,10).

2. “They did not content themselves with admiring the star and comparing it with other stars, and taking notes as to the exact date of its appearance, and how many times it twinkled, and when it moved, and all that; but they practically used the teaching of the star. Many are hearers and admirers of God’s servants, but they are not wise enough to make fit and proper use of the preaching. They notice the peculiarity of the preacher’s language, how much he is like one divine, how much he is unlike another; whether he coughs too often, or speaks too much in his throat; whether he is too loud or too low; whether he has not a provincial tone, whether there may not be about him a

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<sup>15</sup> John MacArthur, *Matthew*.

<sup>16</sup> Johann Bengel, *Gnomon of the New Testament*.

<sup>17</sup> R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*.

commonness of speech approaching to vulgarity; or, on the other hand, whether he may not be too florid in his diction. Such fooleries as these are the constant observations of men for whose souls we labor. They are perishing, and yet are toying with such small matters. With many it is all they go to the house of God for, to criticize in this paltry fashion. I have even seen them come to this place with opera glasses, as if they came hither to inspect an actor who lived and labored to arouse their leisure hours. Such is the sport of fools; but these were wise men, and therefore practical men. They did not become star-gazers, and stop at the point of admiring the remarkable star; but they said, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him." They set out at once to find the now-born King, of whose coming the star was the signal. Oh, my dear hearers, how I wish that you were all wise in this same manner! I would sooner preach the dullest sermon that was ever preached than preach the most brilliant that was ever spoken if I could by that poor sermon lead you quite away from myself to seek the Lord Jesus Christ. That is the one thing I care about. Will you never gratify me by enquiring after my Lord and Master? I long to hear you say, "What is the man talking about? He speaks about a Savior; we will have that Savior for ourselves. He talks about pardon through the blood of Christ; he speaks about God coming down among men to save them; we will find out if there is any reality in this pardon, any truth in this salvation. We will seek Jesus and find for ourselves the blessings which are reported to be laid up in him." If I heard you all saying this I should be ready to die of joy."<sup>18</sup>

AV	ESV	LSV
1 Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came <b>wise men</b> from the east to Jerusalem,	1 Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem,	1 Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying,

**"wise men"** The ESV and LSV use "magi".

**2:2 Saying,<sup>a</sup> Where is he<sup>b</sup> that is born King of the Jews?<sup>cde</sup> for we have seen his star in the east,<sup>fg</sup> and are come to worship him.<sup>h</sup>**

2a **"Saying"** The Greek present participle conveys the idea of continuous action. It suggests they went around Jerusalem questioning everyone they met. star.

2b **"Where is he?"** This is a good salvation question. Every sinner ought to ask such a question in searching for the True Gospel and the True Savior. The sinner needs to be seeking "the King of the Jews" for salvation. It is fruitless to search for a church, denomination, theological system, preacher, pope or some fraud like Mohammad or the Buddha or some god of the Hindus. None of these can save.

They are so sure of the event and the time, that they only ask where? The Scribes only knew the place.

2c This is the first question in the New Testament.

<sup>18</sup> Charles Spurgeon, "The Star and the Wise Men", *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, Sermon 1618.

2d **"King of the Jews"** Jesus is never called the King of the Church. He is the Head of the Church.

2e These wise men had a better understanding of and a greater expectation of the arrival of the Messiah than Israel did. These wise men caught the Jews off-guard and they were not expecting the birth of the King at this time.

1. They were not surprised as they had the writings of the Old Testament including Daniel's prophecies. They had studied them and had taken them very seriously.
2. "These verses show us, that there may be true servants of God in places where we should not expect to find them. The Lord Jesus has many "hidden ones" like these wise men. Their history on earth may be as little known as that of Melchizedek, and Jethro, and Job. But their names are in the book of life, and they will be found with Christ in the day of His appearing. It is well to remember this. We must not look round the earth and say hastily, "all is barren." The grace of God is not tied to places and families. The Holy Spirit can lead souls to Christ without the help of many outward means. Men may be born in dark places of the earth, like these wise men, and yet like them be made "wise unto salvation." There are some traveling to heaven at this moment, of whom the church and the world know nothing. They flourish in secret places like the lily among thorns, and "waste their sweetness on the desert air." But Christ loves them, and they love Christ."<sup>19</sup>

2f It could have taken a year for these wise men to make the trip from Babylon to Israel, so this star that they saw was not a new phenomenon. But it would appear that they were the only ones to attach prophetic appearance to the appearance of this star. They knew that His birth would be marked by a Star (as prophesied by Balaam in Number 24:17 **"I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth."**). They knew the Scriptures and knew what they were looking for. They did not rely on Eastern religions or mysticism, astrology or anything else- they read, studied and believed the Scriptures. This made these men truly wise.

2g What was this star? No one knows but everyone has a theory. There are several possibilities:

1. A nova or supernova. The problem with this is that is no record of any such occurrences in the ancient records. Natural stars also do not move as this star did. The description of this star cannot be explained naturally.
2. A comet- unlikely since they knew the difference between a star and a comet. Comets do not act as the star did, either. Besides, comets were often seen to be ill or evil omens, so to associate a comet with the birth of the King of the Jews would have been highly unlikely.
3. A planetary alignment or conjunction. This is also unlikely as this is a "star" singular, not plural. John Phillips takes this position.<sup>20</sup> He chalks it up to an alignment of Jupiter, Saturn and Mars that only occurs every 800 years.
  - A, Jupiter and Saturn had a very close conjunction in late-2020 and they came so close that they appeared almost as one star. While unusual, it would not have been considered as supernatural. Besides, the 2020 conjunction took place in December and we believe Christ was born in late September.
  - B. The favorite candidate here is a conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn in the constellation of Pisces, which would have taken place in 7 B.C., and which could

<sup>19</sup> J. C. Ryle, *Expository Thoughts on Matthew*, page 10.

<sup>20</sup> *Exploring the Gospel of Matthew*, page 39..



have been interpreted to mean the birth of a king (Jupiter, the royal planet) in Palestine (Saturn was thought to be the planet representing the "westland"), while the constellation of Pisces represented the last days. This unusual conjunction thus indicated, "There will appear in Palestine in this year the ruler of the last days."<sup>21</sup>

4. A supernatural sign. This is the most likely explanation, as this star "moved" to direct the wise men to the location of where Christ was born (Matthew 2:9). Since it is called "his" star, we will lean toward a supernatural interpretation. Since the star moved and guided the wise men to location of Jesus, there must have been a supernatural element to the star. This is the best explanation.

5. It was a star in like the stars of Revelation 1:20 (**"The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches."**) and Revelation 9:1 (**"And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit."**). It was an angel guiding the wise men.

6. A meteor. Spurgeon hazards this guess in his commentary on Matthew but meteors only last for a few seconds and this star lasted much longer.

7. Something similar to the pillar of cloud and fire of Exodus 13:21, **"And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night:"**

#### Who recognized the Star?

1. Wise men from the East. Gentiles who took the prophecies of Daniel seriously and believed what he wrote.

A. Sort of the last people you would expect. This is the way it is with salvation. Sometimes, the worst "candidates" are the ones who get saved. "These verses show us, that there may be true servants of God in places where we should not expect to find them. The Lord Jesus has many "hidden ones" like these wise men. Their history on earth may be as little known as that of Melchizedek, and Jethro, and Job. But their names are in the book of life, and they will be found with Christ in the day of His appearing. It is well to remember this. We must not look round the earth and say hastily, "all is barren." The grace of God is not tied to places and families. The Holy Spirit can lead souls to Christ without the help of many outward means. Men may be born in dark places of the earth, like these wise men, and yet like them be made "wise unto salvation." There are some traveling to heaven at this moment, of whom the church and the world know nothing. They flourish in secret places like the lily among thorns, and "waste their sweetness on the desert air." But Christ loves them, and they love Christ."<sup>22</sup>

b. They saw the star. It was not enough. Now they must see the Savior. You've seen the signs and all the externals; it is now time to see Christ Himself in a personal manner.

2. Who missed the star? Israel. Both the people and the priests and preachers

A. The priests and preachers may have been ignorant, but there is no excuse for that.

3. The people may have been indifferent.

A. They were looking for a military deliverer. They got a suffering Savior, so they missed Christ as they were not looking for Him.

<sup>21</sup> R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*.

<sup>22</sup> J.C. Ryle, *Expository Thoughts on Matthew*, page 8.

- B. The government. Herod and his administration missed it
- C. How few people truly care about spiritual things!
- 4. Some wanted nothing to do with the sign as the coming of the Messiah would upset their plans and lifestyles.

These Gentiles were ready and willing to worship the King while Herod and the Jews were not. The Babylonians worshiped Him, Herod tried to kill Him and Israel would reject and kill Him 33 years later.

2h The King is born, now He must be acknowledged. The worship of these Gentiles is a type and a shadow of the Gentiles worshiping Christ in the Millennium, where all nations will come to Jerusalem yearly to worship. In Zechariah 14:16,17, the prophet says **“And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles. And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain.”**

**2:3 When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled,<sup>a</sup> and all Jerusalem with him.**

3a Who was troubled by the news of the birth of Christ?

1. Herod. It's obvious why Herod was troubled- a true and legitimate king was now on the scene who could easily displace him. Herod was a foreigner placed on the throne by Rome, so he had no real claim to any throne of Israel as a son of David. He then naturally feared for his throne and his power. Power-hungry politicians do not welcome the birth of a competitor. “Where is he that is born King of the Jews?” Why, Herod was King of the Jews! Who was this new competitor?

A. “The king, now seventy years old, might be troubled all the more easily, because the Pharisees, a short time before, had foretold (as we learn from Josephus, *Antiquities* xvii. 3), that the kingdom was about to be taken from the family of Herod. The trouble of the king is a testimony against the carelessness of the people. If Herod fears, why do not the Jews inquire? why do they not believe?”<sup>23</sup>

2. The religious leaders in Jerusalem would be troubled since if the true King and Messiah was now born, their positions of power might be in jeopardy, as they know how cold and backslidden their spiritual leadership of the nation was, and they also knew how unpopular they were with the people. They might rally around his banner and leave the Sanhedrin behind.

3. Political Rome would be troubled as this could be yet another excuse for rebellion among the Jews. Rome had a hard-enough time keeping peace and order in Israel to begin with. This kind of news wouldn't help, as the patriots and zealots would use this as a rallying cry against Rome.

4. But were the common people also troubled? With all the turmoil of the times, they may have been concerned what this would mean with regards to the stability of an already unstable nation. If there was a competitor to Herod's throne, the people knew there would be blood as Herod would attempt to protect his throne and eliminate any

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<sup>23</sup> Johann Bengel, *Gnomon of the New Testament*.

claimant to it by violence and bloodshed. If the people were troubled at His first coming, how much more will they be at His second coming!

A. Christ said He came not to bring peace, but a sword in Matthew 10:34. He divides. He does not unite. He will eventually bring peace but not until He comes to set up the Millennial kingdom. Until that day, the forecast will be “wars and rumors of wars”.

B. Many were troubled but there is no record that anyone of them sought Christ. Many come under some degree of conviction of their sin, but few follow that conviction to salvation.

C. In Genesis 45:3, Joseph (the greatest type of Christ in the Bible) revealed himself to his brethren and they were “troubled” at his presence when he did that.

5. “But the fact is that many are troubled (with the coming of Christ) because the gospel interferes with their sin. “If I become a Christian, I cannot live as I have been accustomed to live,” says one, “so I will not believe the gospel.” The great argument against the Bible is an ungodly life. If you probe to the bottom of the matter, some sinful pleasure is the reason of many a man’s infidelity. There is a practical reason against his repenting, he cannot give up his darling sin, he will not give that up; so he is troubled when Christ comes near to him. It is a terrible thing to cling to sin. That Spartan boy, who caught a young fox, and carried it in his bosom, and then, lest the schoolmaster should see it, and chastise him, allowed the fox to go on eating into his flesh till it ate into his heart, is like you. You are hugging this fox, this wolf, this asp, to your bosom all the while we are preaching to you. What comfort can we give you? Quit your sin, or quit all hope. Wilt thou have thy sin and, go to hell, or wilt thou leave thy sin and go to heaven? Thou canst not have Christ and sin; the two are diametrically opposed. I will not mention what your sin may be; let your own conscience tell you that. You cannot continue in the practice of any known sin, willfully and deliberately, and yet find any comfort from the Word of God, or from the gospel. There must be, in your heart’s intent and resolve, the quitting of sin, or there cannot be the finding of the Savior.”<sup>24</sup>

6. Later, the whole city is “moved ” by Jesus’ triumphal entry (Matthew 21:10 “**And when he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this?**”).

**2:4 And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded<sup>a</sup> of them where Christ should be born.**

4a Herod didn’t ask, he demanded! He was in a panic, upset and unsettled, so he needed this information NOW!

**2:5 And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judæa: for thus it is written by the prophet,<sup>a</sup>**

5a The scribes told Herod right away- they didn’t have to check or study the question out. They knew all about the coming of the Messiah, so give them credit for that. The problem was that their knowledge was academic rather than real and personal. It was not personally meaningful to them. They are examples of people who know the history contained in the Bible and they know certain factual truths, but these things carry no personal meaning for them. They had the Scriptures in their head but no grace in their heart.

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<sup>24</sup> Charles Spurgeon, “The Far Off Near, the Near Far Off”, *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, Sermon 2325.

1. Quoting Micah 5:2 (**“But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.”**). That is where He was born but that is not where Jesus was now! Micah couldn't tell them what town Jesus's family had moved to after His birth. He assumed He was still in the Bethlehem area (Matthew 2:16).

A. Micah 5:2 shows Bethlehem to be a small and insignificant village, that wasn't even reckoned in earlier days. It had more recognition in the Lord's day.

2. There was another village named Bethlehem in the area of Zebulun (Joshua 19:15), so the one in Judea had to be specified. This also served to emphasize Jesus' Judean origins.

**2:6 And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda:<sup>a</sup> for out of thee shall come a Governor,<sup>b</sup> that shall rule my people Israel.<sup>c</sup>**

6a **“art not the least”** Small does not mean “unimportant” (Zechariah 4:10 **“For who hath despised the day of small things? for they<sup>4</sup> shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet<sup>5</sup> in the hand of Zerubbabel with those seven; they are the eyes of the LORD, which run to and fro through the whole earth.”**).

6b Jesus would be both a ruler and a king of Israel, with control over the operations of both daily life and the government. This will ultimately be fulfilled in the Millennium.

**“governor”** Strong's #2233 ἡγέομαι to lead, command (with official authority), chief, governor, viceroy, someone who goes before, who leads the way; to deem, consider. The Bishop's Bible has “captain”.

6c Most of the “scholars” are quite upset on how Matthew quoted Micah 5:2 here. Matthew's quote does line up with the “Septuagint” or other sources. So what? Matthew could have used a “free quotation” or the other source material may be the issue, not lining up exactly with the source Matthew cited. It is no issue.

**AV**

**ESV**

**LSV**

<b>6</b> And thou Bethlehem, <i>in</i> the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall <b>rule</b> my people Israel.	<b>6</b> “And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.”	<b>6</b> ‘AND YOU, BETHLEHEM, LAND OF JUDAH, ARE BY NO MEANS LEAST AMONG THE LEADERS OF JUDAH; FOR OUT OF YOU SHALL COME FORTH A LEADER WHO WILL SHEPHERD MY PEOPLE ISRAEL.”
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**“rule”** The ESV, LSV and Darby have Jesus as a “shepherd” rather than a ruler.

**2:7 Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, inquired of them diligently what time the star appeared.<sup>a</sup>**

7a Herod is trying to pin down the time and location of Christ's birth so he can send his Gestapo goon squad to kill Him. No all men who seek Scriptural information do it for good reasons. Herod put on a good show, pretending to be interested in these details so he could go to

worship him. I wonder how many who heard this really believed him? Herod calls the wise men aside privately to talk with them. He would not have dared talk about worshipping this “King of the Jews” in front of the Jewish scribes and priests as they would have laughed him out of the throne room. The wise men had no experience with Herod (they may have known of him by reputation) but the priests did!

**2:8 And he sent them to Bethlehem,<sup>a</sup> and said, Go and search diligently for the young child;<sup>b</sup> and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also.<sup>cd</sup>**

8a “**Bethlehem**” means “House of Bread”. What better place for the Bread of Life (John 6:35 “**And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.**”) to be born?

8b “**Young child**”, not “baby”. Jesus could have been 2 years old by this time. The picture of the three wise men bowing down to the baby Jesus in a crib is pure myth.

8c “**that I may come and worship him also**” This is Herod’s “Big Lie”. I doubt many involved believed him.

8d Notice Herod did not go to Bethlehem himself, nor did any of the priests or religious leaders. They could not be bothered to take the 6-mile trip to see the King. Such is the way it usually is with the things of the Lord. People will drive 100 miles to a football game, pay \$100 a ticket, fight ungodly traffic and sit in 6-degree weather for 5 hours with 50,000 drunken rowdies, but they can’t be bothered to drive across town to sit through a 60-minute church service in a comfortable church building.

“It is often suggested that the real Herod would not have been so incompetent as to rely on the good faith of the magi rather than sending an escort with them to ensure a correct report back or even to carry out the intended assassination there and then. But Herod had a liking for the use of undercover agents, and he had no reason to doubt their compliance, while an armed escort might well have jeopardized a successful search for the family concerned”<sup>25</sup> Besides, Herod could have kept a close watch on the magi if they were only going 6 or so miles from Jerusalem.

Why did no one else go to Bethlehem to seek Jesus? There is no record of any Jew or any of the Jewish religious leaders going to Bethlehem, only the wise men. Luke will give the account of the shepherds going to see the infant Jesus before these events, but no one else made the trip to see Him- only shepherds and Gentiles.

**2:9 When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was.<sup>a</sup>**

9a The wise men may not have realized it but they had put Jesus’ life in danger as Herod may have sent spies to track their route and the location of Jesus.

**2:10 When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.<sup>a</sup>**

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<sup>25</sup> R. T. France, *Gospel of Matthew*.

10a Because the end of their quest was in sight, and they were about to see the King. Jesus wasn't even their king as they were not Jews, but they understood that Jesus was the King over all creation in the larger context.

#### **4. The Wise Men Worship Jesus 2:11,12**

**2:11 ¶ And when they were come into the house,<sup>a</sup> they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him:<sup>bc</sup> and when they had opened their treasures,<sup>d</sup> they presented unto him gifts;<sup>e</sup> gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.**

11a **"House"**, not "manger" or "stable". Christ was a "child" now, not a baby, so this could have taken place as much as 1-2 years after His birth. This did not take place at Bethlehem. Thus 99% of the nativity scenes you see around Christmas are wrong on many levels if they have the wise men at the stable.

Herod certainly would have had his spy network following the magi and they would have eventually found this location, which is why the angel told Joseph to leave in haste in Matthew 2:13.

11b It is the **"child"** and then Mary, not Mary and the child. Mary always plays "second fiddle" to Christ and she would have it no other way. They worshipped Jesus, not Mary. After all, Herod tried to kill Jesus, not Mary. He wasn't worried about Mary at all. Apparently, Herod would not have made a very good Roman Catholic.

11c Joseph is not mentioned, but no doubt he was there. He was simply not the focus of the attention and worship of the magi.

11d The treasures they present have both tremendous doctrinal and spiritual significance. At this time, Mary and Joseph were so poor that they had not been able even to offer the required sacrifice for Mary's cleansing as a sinner. Mary, as any female sinner (Luke 1:47 **"And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour."**), needed to obey the laws of purification given to every woman in the Old Testament (Luke 2:21-24; Leviticus 12:1-6). But when she came to have Jesus circumcised, she and Joseph were so poor that they could not bring the required Lamb. Instead, they offered the turtle doves and pigeons. They had the required Lamb in their hands but did not realize it. Being this poor, there was no way they could have taken the long trip into Egypt from Bethlehem. But now with the appearance of the wise men, Joseph and Mary now have enough gold to get them through these days in exile and pay the expenses of the trip.

11e The gifts:

1. Gold is for a king. As gold represents the highest material value, it represents the highest spiritual value. A King of divine origin would need this gift. It is also the metal of deity, so His kingship and deity are acknowledged.
2. Frankincense relates to the priesthood (Exodus 30:34-38). Jesus is a priest after the order of Melchizedek.
  - A. This is a bitter vegetable resin.
  - B. It was used for fumigation at sacrifices (Exodus 30:7) and as a perfume (Song 3:6).
3. The bitter herb myrrh would signify the suffering that Christ would endure in His life and on the cross. It would appear again in Mark 15:23, offered to Jesus again, this time

by his enemies while He was on the cross. This is a prophetic gift, looking ahead to His sufferings, so it would answer to Christ bring a prophet.

- A. It is a bitter gum resin.
- B. It was used as a perfume (Psalm 45:8).
- C. It was used in the purification of women (Esther 2:12).
- D. It was used in the holy anointing oil (Exodus 30:23).
- E. It was used for embalming the dead (John 19:19)
- F. The word "Smyrna" (Revelation 2:8-11) comes from this.

These gifts must have seemed to be quite a treasure to a poor family. They would later be used to finance their flight into and stay in Egypt.

**2:12 And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.<sup>a</sup>**

12a If the magi had gone back to Herod, he would have known where Christ was located and would have attacked Him there. In this way, Herod can only hazard an educated guess as to where to send his troops. The magi avoided Herod and traveled a homeward route that would allow them to escape his notice. This would not be that simple, due to the nature and size of their caravan. Herod's spies reported their departure but apparently made no effort to stop them or to detain them. If Herod had tried to detain them, he could have risked a political incident with their home country.

**5. The Flight Into Egypt 2:13-15**

**2:13 And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream,<sup>a</sup> saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt,<sup>b</sup> and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him.**

13a There was a lot of communication by dreams in this period, especially when God was communicating to Joseph. God could have supernaturally protected Jesus and His family from Herod, but He chose instead to have them flee into Egypt, in order to fulfill Hosea 11:1 ("**When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt.**").

13b "Egypt was a natural asylum for the young Jewish family. During the period of Greek rule of the Mediterranean world, which occurred during the intertestamental period, Alexander the Great established a sanctuary for Jews in Alexandria, the Egyptian city he named for himself. Throughout the Roman rule that followed, that city was still considered a special place of safety and opportunity for Jews. The Jewish philosopher and historian Philo, himself a prominent resident of Alexandria, reported that by A.D. 40, a few years after the death of Christ, the city's population included at least one million Jews."<sup>26</sup>

God could have protected Jesus and His family in many other ways and in many other places, even in Bethlehem or Jerusalem. He could have used any number of supernatural means. But God chose to protect Him in an ordinary and non-miraculous manner. The commands to go to Egypt and then to leave were given supernaturally, but the trip itself and the stay there were both marked by no special divine intervention or provision. The family had to

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<sup>26</sup> John MacArthur, *Matthew*.

make the long, tiresome journey on their own, just as hundreds of other Jewish families had done during the previous several centuries.

**2:14 When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night,<sup>a</sup> and departed into Egypt:**

14a Having heard the divine warning and heeding the instructions, Joseph hurried to obey and leave for Egypt. The gifts from the wise men, especially the gold, would help to finance this flight into Egypt.

**2:15 And was there until the death of Herod:<sup>a</sup> that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son.<sup>bcd</sup>**

15a Herod died around 4 B.C.

15b This is quoted from Hosea 11:1.

15c This is also a type of salvation, as God calls His sons (through the New Birth) out of Egypt (which is a type of the world) in salvation and the sanctification that follows. The Father called His Son out of the world and He does the same with us today, calling us out of Egypt into communion with Him **“without the camp”** (Hebrews 13:13).

15d The rabbis, in their anti-Christian polemics, claim that the reason Jesus was able to do His miracles because He learned magic while in Egypt. tradition of a time spent in Egypt has perhaps left its mark in the rabbinic. But as usual, the rabbis don't think their claims through, as Jesus was an infant during His stay in Egypt.

**6. Herod's Murder of the Babies 2:16-18**

**2:16 ¶ Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked<sup>a</sup> of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men.**

16a **“mocked”** How? He had no further contact the magi. The magi probably didn't like or trust Herod but why should they mock a king? But a vain and arrogant man like Herod interpreted their “disobedience” in failing to report back to him the location of the newborn king as an insult and an affront. He took it very personally and was insulted.

Herod was determined to keep his throne at any cost. Herod casts a wide net, to kill all the boys 2 years old and younger, from Bethlehem to the coasts, in a hope that he will get lucky. It was his covetousness for power and the throne that would occasion the death of the baby boys in Bethlehem and ultimately, his own downfall.

Some liberal critics have discounted Matthew's account of Herod's slaughter of the children because there is no extra-biblical confirmation of it (and “Luke doesn't mention it”). Josephus doesn't mention it, either. However, Bethlehem was small, and many other biblically-significant events also have no secular confirmation. Compared to some of Herod's other atrocities, this one was relatively minor.



**2:17 Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet,<sup>a</sup> saying,**

17a This is quoted from Jeremiah 31:15, “**Thus saith the LORD; A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping; Rachel weeping for her children refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not.**”

**2:18 In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel<sup>a</sup> weeping for her children,<sup>b</sup> and would not be comforted, because they are not.**

18a Probably a figurative use of Rachel, representing the women in Bethlehem, as Rachel was buried in Bethlehem and was identified with Bethlehem.

18b “Christian tradition has, of course, inflated the number of babies involved in the “massacre” into several thousands. Estimates of the total population of Bethlehem in the first century are generally under a thousand, which would mean that the number of male children up to two years old at any one time could hardly be more than twenty, even allowing for “all its district.” Terrible as such a slaughter would be for the local community, it is not on a scale to match the more spectacular assassinations recorded by Josephus.”<sup>27</sup> The early Church tended to exaggerate the number. The Byzantine tradition sets it at 14,000; Syrian at 64,000. Some have even equated it with the 144,000 Jews of Revelation 7 and 14.

## **7. The Return From Egypt 2:19-23 also see Luke 2:39**

**2:19 ¶ But when Herod was dead,<sup>a</sup> behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt,**

19a “No more terrible scene is recorded in history than the death of Herod....He was coarse, heavy and almost bald. Three of his front teeth had been broken off...His legs had become great stumps, nine inches thick at the ankles. He was covered with sores and full of mortifying wounds horrible to behold. He could not eat without agony. His guards had to be changed frequently because they could not stand the stench emanating from his rotted stomach. His breath smelled like a charnel house.”<sup>28</sup> He clearly “**departed without being desired**” (2 Chronicles 21:20).”

**2:20 Saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead which sought the young child’s life.<sup>a</sup>**

20a Joseph was getting news from Israel “in real time” from God.

**2:21 And he arose, and took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel.**

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<sup>27</sup> R. T. France, *Gospel of Matthew*.

<sup>28</sup> John Phillips, *Exploring the Gospel of Matthew*, page 46.

**2:22 But when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judæa in the room of his father Herod,<sup>a</sup> he was afraid to go thither: notwithstanding, being warned of God in a dream, he turned aside into the parts of Galilee:<sup>b</sup>**

22a Like father, like son. Joseph could have no assurance that Herod's son was a better man than Herod. Archelaus would be watching for the appearance of any Jewish young man who professed to be a "king." Herod would not have died without giving a fair warning to his household, if they were in danger of losing the throne. Archelaus was cut from the same cloth as his wicked father. He inaugurated his reign by killing 3,000 Jews in the temple during the Passover.

22b Christ was born in honored Judea but was raised in despised Galilee. He was born in the esteemed town of Bethlehem but grew up in the despised city of Nazareth.

**2:23 And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth:<sup>ab</sup> that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets,<sup>c</sup> He shall be called a Nazarene.<sup>def</sup>**

23a Christ was born in Bethlehem but his "hometown" was Nazareth.

23b "Nazareth" came from a Hebrew word meaning "sprout", as in a small sprout that would shoot up after a tree was cut down. The term was used in contempt. It was not an honorable term, as Nazareth did not have the best of reputations. It would be the same today as saying Jesus was from the Bronx or Buffalo. Nazareth, an obscure town about 70 miles north of Jerusalem. It is not mentioned in the Old Testament.

1. Philippians 2:5-8 is in play here, with His choosing a mean, low and humble earthly estate and reputation. The apostate emperor Julian referred to the Lord as "the Galilean". When he died his miserable death, he cried, "O Galilean, thou hast conquered". He was obliged to confess the Lord's supremacy, though he still showed his contempt by calling him "the Galilean". The Jews, when they feel wroth against Christ, are wont to call him "the Nazarene".
2. There is no written prophecy of Jesus coming from or living in Nazareth, but the prophecy was "spoken" (not written) by an unnamed prophet.
3. The disciples were initially referred to as belonging to the "**Sect of the Nazarenes**" (Acts 24:5).

23c "**spoken by the prophets**" Not "written" by the prophets. This was mentioned by more than one prophet.

23d "I want you to notice our divine Redeemer's condescension...It was a marvel that Jesus should live on this world at all...If he must dwell in this world, why is he born in Judaea?...If Jesus must be a man in this world, why is he not born in Rome, in the capital of the nations? Why must it be in a little miserable country like Judaea? Yet if he shall be born in Judaea, why must he live in Galilee — that Boeotia of Israel, that most despicable part of Judaea? If he must live in Galilee, why not at Capernaum? Why does he choose Nazareth? Why must he go to the lowest of the low — that most despised place of a despised country? And if he must come to Nazareth, — follow him a stop lower — why must he be a carpenter's son? Why, if he lives there, can he not be the son of the minister of the synagogue, or some respectable scribe? No; but he must be reputed to be a poor man's son. And then if he must be a carpenter's son, why can he not so constrain men's hearts that they shall receive him? for the deepest depth of all is that even as a carpenter's son his fellow citizens will not endure him; but they take him to the

brow of the hill to cast him down headlong from the cliff whereon the city stood. Was there ever such condescension as that of the Savior? If in the lowest depth there be a lower deep, he plunges into it for our sakes. He emptied himself...Nothing was left him of honor or respect. He gave up all. "Though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor" — poor to the last degree, poor in reputation. He was born a man, a Jew, a Galilean, a Nazarene."<sup>29</sup>

23e **"he shall be called a Nazarene"** This would fit in with the prophetic declaration of contempt and rejection of Christ in Isaiah 53:3 (**"He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not."**). The people in Judea looked down on the residents in Galilee as uncultured and despised. This was probably due to the fact that Jerusalem and the temple were in Judea, giving those residents a source of pride and self-importance. The religious leaders despised Galilee so much that they denied that the prophet Jonah even came from that part of Israel (John 7:52 **"They answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet."**). It has been observed that "Galilee gave the Messiah a home. Judea gave Him a cross."

23f "There are eighty-nine chapters in the four Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Only four of these deal with the first thirty years of the life of Jesus. I believe that one of the reasons why we do not have more about this period is because it was very ordinary. Many of the early Patristic writers felt that the boyhood of Jesus was spent making wooden dolls walk by a miracle; making wooden birds fly-by a miracle! However, it is not the implication of Scripture that Jesus lived in such frivolity of deity. We believe that Jesus took on a very ordinary life; typical of any average Jewish boy's experience. Jesus lived the common, ordinary life, but yet, that ordinary life was not common. We believed that He lived as a "son of the Law," under the Law-to fulfill the Law."<sup>30</sup>

### **Spiritual Applications- Matthew Chapter 2**

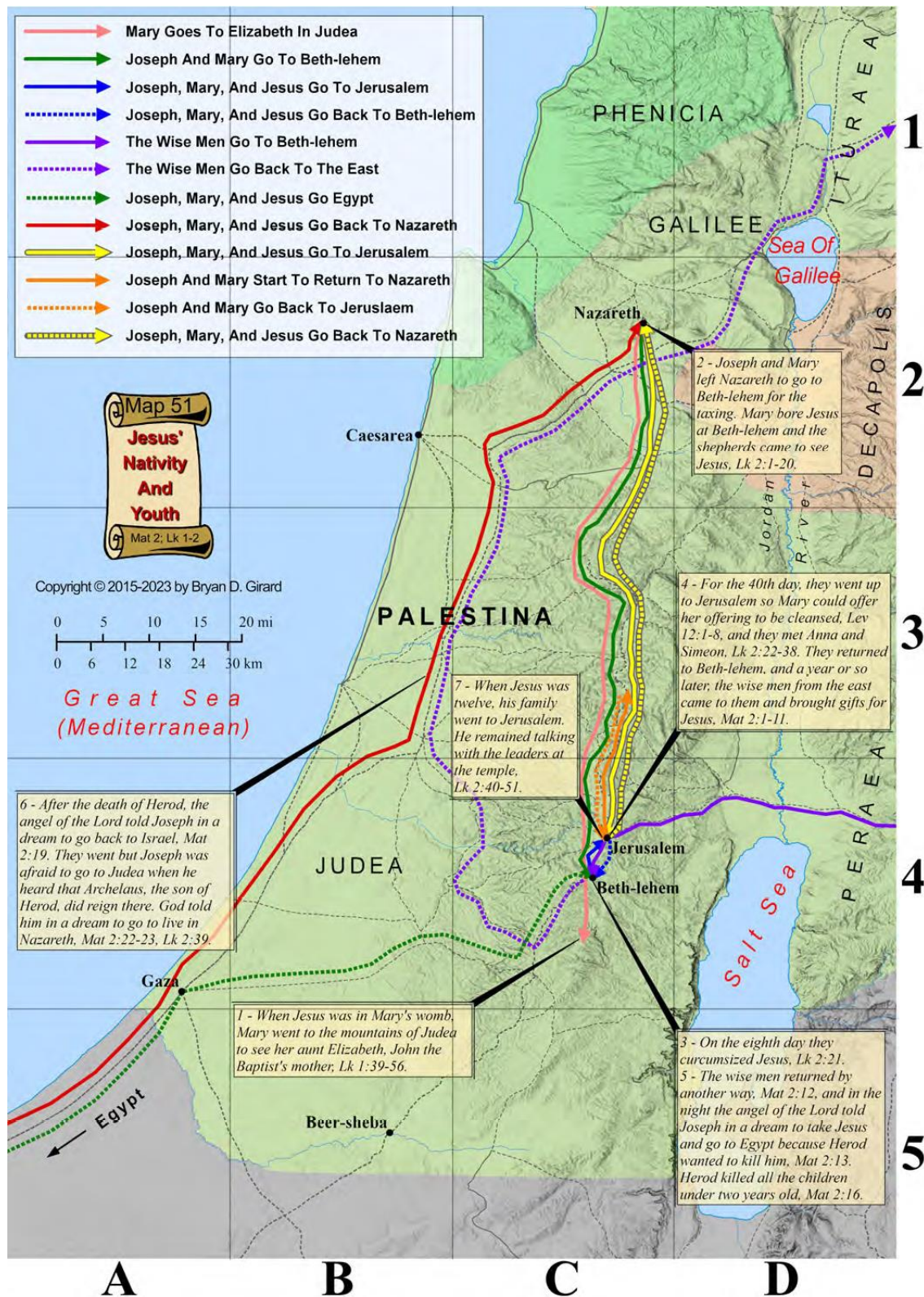
Jesus was born during one of the worst periods of human history, in the days of Rome and the Herods. He was not born in the days of the Pharaohs, the Assyrians, the Babylonians, or even the days of Soviet Communism. He was born during the days of Herod and the cruelty of Rome. The light always shines the brightest when it is the darkest. We have a man in Herod who murdered hundreds (?) of baby boys two years and under just to protect his throne. His cruelty is well-documented in both secular and sacred histories.

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<sup>29</sup> Charles Spurgeon, "The Nazarene and the Sect of the Nazarenes", *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, Sermon 1632..

<sup>30</sup> O. Talmadge Spence, *The Quest For Christian Purity*, pages 111-112.

# Pilgrim Way Commentary on Matthew



Above map from *The Anchor Bible Map Book* by Bryan Girard.

### Matthew Chapter 3

#### 8. The Ministry of John the Baptist 3:1-17 see Mark 1:1-6, Luke 3:1-6, John 1:19-23

**3:1 In those days<sup>a</sup> came John the Baptist,<sup>bc</sup> preaching in the wilderness of Judæa,<sup>d</sup>**

1a “The “in those days” can be dated within six months. The entire information is given in Luke 3:1–2. Augustus Caesar died August 29, 767. (John, here, has to be thirty years old to begin his work, his birth being six months before Jesus.) Tiberias Caesar had a joint-reign with Augustus two years, which would give him thirteen years beyond the date of Augustus’ death in 767. This would bring us to the Roman year 781. It would also give us the date of John’s birth in the Roman year of 751, which would date within six months the birth of Jesus Christ.”<sup>31</sup>

1b John comes on the scene suddenly, without warning.

1c John was not a Baptist in a denominational sense, but was so called because he was known for his work of baptism. Matthew gives no background of John as Luke does. The Apostle John does not refer to him as “The Baptist” in his gospel. There are actually some Baptists who try to make John a modern “Baptist”. These men are usually of the “Landmarker” variety, and they promote this to forward their theory that only Baptist churches (specifically their kind of Baptist churches) are the only genuine church. They also do this to try to push to push the start of the New Testament Church back into the gospels and before Acts 2.

1d John’s ministry was in the wilderness, far from the academic and ecclesiastical centers of the day, which would have had no use for his ministry anyway. It was a divine rebuke that God was working through such a man in the wilderness and not through the learned and powerful men of the day. Yet he was able to attract attention while preaching in the middle of nowhere because of his spirituality and the content of his message.

John’s witness:

1. He was not the Christ
  - A. John 1:20 **“And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ.”**
2. He was not Elijah nor that prophet spoken of by Moses.
  - A. John 1:21 **“And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No.”**
3. He was the voice crying in the wilderness-.
  - A. Matthew 3:3 **“For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.”**
  - B. John 1:23 **“He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias.”**
4. He was unworthy to unloose the shoe latchet of the Messiah.

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<sup>31</sup> Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer’s Commentary on Matthew*, page 52.

- A. John 1:27 **"He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose."**
5. He was the friend of the Bridegroom.  
A. John 3:29 **"He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled."**
6. All flesh would see the salvation of God.  
A. Luke 3:6 **"And all flesh shall see the salvation of God."**
7. The Messiah would have the Holy Spirit and the favor of the Father.  
A. John 3:34,35 **"For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him. The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand."**
8. The Savior would baptize men with the Holy Spirit at His first coming but with fire at His second coming.  
A. Luke 3:16 **"John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire:"**
9. Christ would increase but John would decrease.  
A. John 3:30 **"He must increase, but I must decrease."**

### **3:2 And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.<sup>ab</sup>**

#### **2a John's message:**

1. Repent. The first word from God in 400 years was "Repent!" Every call back to God or to salvation involved repentance. The nation was in dire need of repentance from their religious formalism and deadness. Repentance is a Bible doctrine and must be preached. It is necessary for New Testament salvation.  
A. See Appendix One for a study on repentance.
2. The kingdom of heaven is at hand  
A. The Millennial kingdom, John was preaching the Jewish idea of the kingdom, in preparation for the advent of the Messiah.  
B. It was "at hand"- the Messiah was about to appear and the events ushering in the Kingdom were preparing to take place.
  - i. The Kingdom was "at hand". If Israel had accepted John's message and ministry, he would have been Elijah, and the Kingdom could have been set up in the Gospels. See notes under Matthew 11:14.

C This is the Gospel of the Kingdom. This does not deal with the Church. The Kingdom of God is spiritual while the Kingdom of God is physical and political.

  - i. Simply because the Jewish leaders thought the Kingdom of Heaven and the Kingdom of God were the same thing doesn't make it true. It is clear they are different manifestations of the overall Kingdom which God will set up.

D. See Appendix Two for a study in Biblical theology regarding these two terms.

2b We cannot stress enough the importance of repentance, both for salvation and in the daily life of the Christian. Repentance is absolutely necessary for salvation and that includes a recognition of and an acknowledgement of sins and the sin nature on the part of the sinner. The



sin nature is not eradicated at salvation, so the Christian still deals with sins in his daily walk and the same type of repentance is necessary in order to maintain his walk and fellowship with God. Many preachers in the neo-fundamentalist and pseudo-fundamentalist movement (like Curtis Hutson, Jack Hyles, Sheldon Smith and Steven Anderson) have attacked the doctrine, since it “burdens” soulwinning (in their view) and if properly applied, would decrease their soulwinning results. They give other silly reasons, like saying “repentance doesn’t appear in John’s gospel”, “it is adding works to salvation” or “it is Lordship Salvation”. This is why I felt it necessary to attach my paper of *The Biblical Doctrine of Repentance* to the end of this commentary in Appendix One.

**3:3 For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.<sup>ab</sup>**

3a This is quoted from Isaiah 40:3-8 and Malachi 3:1-3. Notice this destroys an idea of a “deutero-Isaiah” where someone else wrote Isaiah 40-66 while Isaiah wrote chapters 1-39. The Scripture makes it clear that Isaiah wrote all 66 chapters. Matthew states that Isaiah wrote the second section of Isaiah.

3b **“make his paths straight”** With the approach of a king to a region, workers would go before him to remove obstacles from the road and would even re-engineer the road to straighten out any inconvenient curves or hills. In a sense, the Secret Service does this today in preparation for when the President of the United States arrives in a city, in looking for the safest and most direct route to and from his destination. Isaiah 40:4 says **“Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain.”**

**3:4 And the same John had his raiment of camel’s hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins;<sup>a</sup> and his meat was locusts<sup>b</sup> and wild honey.<sup>cde</sup>**

4a Zechariah 13:4 says **“And it shall come to pass in that day, that the prophets shall be ashamed every one of his vision, when he hath prophesied; neither shall they wear a rough garment to deceive”**. It may have been a custom for false prophets to dress in the same manner as John did to build a following, but John went contrary to that practice although he dressed in the same manner. Living and ministering in a wilderness does not lend itself to wearing fine clothes.

4b The locusts were clean under the Mosaic dietary law (Leviticus 11:22 **“Even these of them ye may eat; the locust after his kind, and the bald locust after his kind, and the beetle after his kind, and the grasshopper after his kind.”**)). They would be stewed in butter after removing the head, legs and wings.

4c Notice how similar John’s description to Elijah. Elijah dressed in rough garb to protest against the Phoenician luxury which in his day was sapping Israel’s character. John wore it to protest against the pervading influence of Greek culture.<sup>32</sup>

4d John could have fulfilled Elijah’s prophecy if Israel had accepted his message and ministry.

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<sup>32</sup> John Phillips, *Exploring the Gospel of Matthew*, page 53.

1. Since Israel rejected John, Elijah himself must return to fulfill as per Malachi 4:5 **"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD."**
2. Elijah must return before that great Day of the Lord. Jesus says that John would have been Elijah if Israel had accepted John (Matthew 17:12 **"But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them"**).
3. If the Jews had received Jesus as their Messiah and His offer of the kingdom, all the prophecies in regard to the First and Second Coming in the Old Testament could have been fulfilled.
4. See our notes under Matthew 11:14 for a fuller treatment.

4e John was about as "counter-culture" as you could get. He deliberately set himself in opposition to the religious and cultural styles of his day, just as every Christian must do. The world is to view the Christian as a misfit and the believer is to despise the generation in which he was born into. You cannot serve Christ or live for Him while being "in" or "part" of the wicked and adulterous age in which you live. You cannot live in two worlds, and you cannot serve two masters and you cannot follow two philosophies. You must choose one, and only one.

### **3:5 Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judæa, and all the region round about Jordan,<sup>a</sup>**

5a John had no building, auditorium, advance committee, newspaper, website, evangelistic association, radio program or promotional agency. Yet look at what he accomplished while preaching in the middle of nowhere.

### **3:6 And were baptized of him in Jordan,<sup>a</sup> confessing their sins.<sup>b</sup>**

6a John had a following that the religious leaders in Jerusalem could only dream of. Despite his rough and odd appearance and his remote location, John's announcement of the kingdom had caused great excitement and interest.

- 6b Confession is sin also involves:
1. Acknowledgment of sin
  2. Public confessional
  3. A desire to forsake these sins

### **3:7 ¶ But when he saw many of the Pharisees<sup>a</sup> and Sadducees<sup>b</sup> come to his baptism,<sup>cd</sup> he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?<sup>e</sup>**

7a The Pharisees formed the Jewish sect or party which laid the utmost stress on the strictest outward observance of the law, including the rabbinical traditions and regulations which professed to build a formidable protecting hedge about the law. They were utterly self-righteous, and cultivated a hollow formalism that was ostentatious to a degree, especially in observing ceremonies, fastings, almsgiving, long prayers, tithes, etc. Christ portrays them as thorough hypocrites.

7b The Sadducees rejected the rabbinical traditions, also the doctrine of the resurrection, of the angels and of spirits, of immortality and the judgment to come. They were freethinkers and



skeptics, with a corresponding laxness in morals, yet included in their number many of the richest and most influential Jews such as the family of the high priest. While in general they were in opposition to the Pharisees, the Sadducees occasionally joined with them when their interests coincided.

7c The religious leaders came, but not to be baptized of John for they did not recognize or accept his message. They came out to investigate and report to the powers-that-be back in Jerusalem. Their job was to check on all religious teachers, so their questioning of John may have been routine for them.

7d The baptism was by immersion.

7e There can be no doubt about the **“wrath to come.”** John is speaking from Malachi 3:2-5; 4:1-6. He is speaking of the Second Coming and the Tribulation period that will precede it.

### **3:8 Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance:<sup>abc</sup>**

8a The Bible always stresses repentance in association with salvation. Once a person has repented unto salvation, there will be evidences of that salvation, since if any man be in Christ, he will be a new creature and old things (sins) will pass away (2 Corinthians 5:17, the classic verse on the changed life). The way we gave if a man has truly repented is through the fruits of a changed life. Repentance without fruit is no repentance at all.

8b John would have baptized these Pharisees under the proper circumstances but they were too proud to submit to any rite or ritual from this “simply, unlettered country preacher”.

8c John rips into the religious leaders in verses 8-12:

1. They were a generation of vipers, Matthew 3:7

A. The references are:

i. Job 20:16 **“He shall suck the poison of asps: the viper’s tongue shall slay him.”**

ii. Psalm 58:4 **“Their poison is like the poison of a serpent: they are like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ear;”**

iii. Micah 7:17 **“They shall lick the dust like a serpent, they shall move out of their holes like worms of the earth: they shall be afraid of the LORD our God, and shall fear because of thee.”**

2. They rejected the threats of judgment, Matthew 3:7

3. They were to repent and demonstrate that they had repented if they wanted to escape the judgment of God, Matthew 3:9

4. They were not to take any comfort that they were children of Abraham as God could raise up faithful children of Abraham from the stones round about, Matthew 3:9

5. God was about to cut down the tree of dead and apostate Judaism if they did not bring forth any fruits to demonstrate their acceptance of John’s message and repentance, Matthew 3:10

A. Israel is likened to a fig tree that was threatened to be cut down. It would be cursed by the Lord because it bore no such fruit of repentance in Matthew 21:19.

B. The root would be destroyed, precluding any chance of regeneration.

6. One was coming Who would baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire, Matthew 3:11

A. Baptism with fire is judgment. Charismatics often misquoted this as the “baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire,” but this is a tragic error for the “fire” part of

the baptism is defined in verse 12 as the wrath of God. Why would anyone in his right mind pray for this kind of a baptism?

B. “**garner**” in Matthew 3:12 is the same word used in Matthew 13:30 for the “barn,”

C. “**chaff**” worthless husks, which is how the Judaism of the Lord’s day was in its dead formalism, and how unbelievers will be viewed at the Great White Throne judgment of Revelation 20.

i. The false teachers and Jewish leaders were considered to be chaff by the Lord, good only for the fire. That same divine attitude continues today.

**3:9 And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father:<sup>a</sup> for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.<sup>b</sup>**

9a “**We have Abraham for our father**”. If anything, having Abraham as your father brings you under greater spiritual obligations and judgments (Romans 2,3). They imagined their lineage would somehow protect them from the judgment of God, but John warns them against that false confidence. Your family is no shield from judgment, nor is the fact that your father or grandfather was a preacher.

9b “**God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham**” There is no lack of a posterity for Abraham. Abraham didn’t need these religious hypocrites to speak on his behalf or to carry on his legacy. God created Adam from clay, so He could create children unto Abraham from stone if He so desired.

**3:10 And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.<sup>ab</sup>**

10a This was a warning to cold, apostate Israel that they would face judgment unless they began to bring forth spiritual fruit. To this day, they still have yet to bring forth that fruit.

10b The fire would be divine judgment on an unfruitful nation, even if that nation was Israel.

**3:11 I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance:<sup>a</sup> but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost,<sup>b</sup> and with fire:<sup>c</sup>**

11a The “**baptism unto repentance**” is water baptism as a result of having repented. You are water baptized because you repented and brought forth fruits (or evidences) of that repentance,

11b John baptized with water but only Jesus can baptize with the Holy Spirit.

11c We often hear this phrase misquoted as the “baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire” by Pentecostal and Charismatic people, which leads to the error that there is even such a thing and that it is something to be sought or desired.

1. This is not the same fire of Acts 2:3 (“**And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.**”) that is associated with the Holy Spirit, but judgment by fire, the culminates in the Lake of Fire, as by the context in

the next verse. This is allowing Scripture to interpret Scripture by context. If the Jews would respond and believe John's message, they would receive the Holy Ghost. If they rejected it, when would receive the fire. Charismatics are always wanting to be "baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire". Do they want to receive a baptism of judgment? There is no association with a baptism with the Holy Ghost and the fire, as they are separated by the comma in our English version. Christ will baptize some with the Holy Ghost (positive) and some with fire (who reject the message, in judgment, negative). Wherever the baptism of the Holy Ghost is mentioned by name, in the Book of Acts, the expression "and with fire" is always omitted (see Acts 1:5; 11:16).

2. 3:12 Here is the context and interpretation of the "...and of fire" of 3:11- judgment with unquenchable fire!

3. John had a good understanding of the ministry and person of the Holy Spirit, although not much was revealed about Him at this time.

**3:12 Whose fan<sup>a</sup> is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor,<sup>b</sup> and gather his wheat into the garner;<sup>c</sup> but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable<sup>d</sup> fire.**

12a "**fan**" A winnowing fan, used to throw grain up in the air where the wind would separate the wheat from the chaff.

12b "**floor**" A threshing floor.

12c This may be some form of post-tribulation rapture. Since this is directed to the Jew, any such reference to the rapture would not be the rapture of the church (1 Thessalonians 4, 1 Corinthians 15, Revelation 4) but a post-tribulational rapture of Jewish saints,

12d "**unquenchable**" Strong's #762 ἄσβεστος ásbestos from Strong's #1 "a" (as a negative particle) and Strong's #4570 "σβέννυμι" "sbénnyimi", not extinguished, perpetual. We get our word "asbestos" from this. You can put it into the fire, but it will not burn.

**3:13<sup>a</sup> ¶ Then cometh Jesus<sup>b</sup> from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized<sup>c</sup> of him.<sup>d</sup>**

13a Also see Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21,22 and John 1:30-34.

13b The first time we see Jesus in 18 years, since Luke 2:42-52. Man could not have kept silent about those thirty years in the life of Christ (with that mention of when He was 12 years on in Luke 2:41-52). He has invented the apocryphal gospels and stuffed their worthless pages with prodigies and wonders, all of which can be immediately rejected.

13c If baptism is necessary for salvation, then why was Jesus baptized? Was He lost? Would He have been lost if He hadn't been baptized by John? After all, He had no sins to confess (3:6). Why should the Lord, who was without sin, have come to a baptism of repentance by John? Because He was made sin for us: for which reason He suffered the curse of the law.

13d Why was Jesus baptized of John?

1. To endorse John's ministry and message
2. To endorse the ministry of the Old Testament prophets since John was the last Old Testament prophet
3. To identify with Israel, as He was a Jew and was their King and Messiah

4. To identify with the sinners whom He came to save
5. To stress the need for water baptism and repentance

**3:14 But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?<sup>a</sup>**

14a John recognized Who was standing before him and He felt unworthy to baptize the King and the Messiah.

1. By being baptized by John, the Lord openly identified Himself with the sinners He came to save.
2. It takes a level of submission to be baptized as you can't baptize yourself. Jesus had to submit to John in order to be baptized and Jesus recognized his authority to baptize.

**3:15 And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it<sup>a</sup> to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him.**

15a "Suffer..." "allow it to be..."

**3:16 And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water:<sup>a</sup> and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove,<sup>b</sup> and lighting upon him:**

16a According to the Biblical model, Jesus was fully immersed, not sprinkled at His baptism. John and Jesus both went into the water and then up out of the water.

16b Not a literal dove but "like" a dove. This dove appears in all four gospels.

Twelve times the heavens were opened:

1. Genesis 7:11, the rains of the Flood begin
2. Isaiah 24:18 associated with tribulation judgments
3. Ezekiel 1:1, with his first vision
4. Malachi 3:10, God pouring out a blessing
5. Matthew 3:16, the baptism of Jesus
6. Mark 1:10, the baptism of Jesus
7. Luke 3:21, the baptism of Jesus
8. John 1:51, the baptism of Jesus
9. Acts 7:56 at the death of Stephen
10. Acts 10:11 at Peter's vision of the Gentiles and the Church
11. Revelation 4:1, associated with the rapture
12. Revelation 19:11, associated with the second coming

**3:17 And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son,<sup>a</sup> in whom I am well pleased.<sup>b</sup>**

17a All three members of the trinity are present at the baptism. God, unlike man, is able to separate His Body, Soul, and Spirit so that all Three can appear in separate manifestations without losing their identity. This is a very clear presentation of the trinity. This is a Bible

doctrine, and no one can claim to be an orthodox, Bible-believing Christian who denies this truth. We believe that no one can be Biblically saved who denies this truth.

17b This was the Father's public testimony that Jesus was His Son and that He was well-pleased with Him. God said this of no other man in all of human history.

#### The Father's Ministry in the Life of Christ

1. The Father sent His Son- John 3:16; 6:57; 8:16-18; 12:49; Galatians 4:4
2. The Father sealed the Son- John 6:27
3. The Father taught the Son- John 8:28
4. The Father anointed the Son- Isaiah 61:1; Luke 4:18; Acts 10:38
5. The Father honored the Son- John 8:54
6. The Father commanded the Son- John 10:18
7. The Father bore witness to the Son- John 8:18
8. The Father loves the Son- John 10:17
9. The Father delights in the Son- Isaiah 42:1; Matthew 3:17; 17:5; 2 Peter 1:17
10. The Father heard the Son- Matthew 26:53; John 11:41,42; 12:27,28
11. The Father offered up the Son- John 3:16;18:11; Romans 8:32; 1 John 4:9,10
12. The Father raised the Son- Ephesians 1:20
13. The father exalted the Son- Ephesians 1:20; Philippians 2:9-11
14. The Father glorified the Son- John 17:1
15. The Father made the Son the Head of the Church- Ephesians 1:22
16. The Father has committed judgment to the Son- John 5:22,27.<sup>33</sup>

#### The Holy Spirit's Ministry in the Life of Christ

1. He was begotten by the Spirit- Luke 1:35
2. He was anointed by the Spirit- Matthew 3:16; Hebrews 1:9
3. He preached in the power of the Spirit- Luke 4:18
4. He was sealed by the Spirit- John 6:27
5. He was led by the Spirit- Matthew 4:1
6. He worked miracles through the Spirit- Matthew 12:28; Acts 10:38
7. He was filled with the Spirit and by the Spirit- Luke 4:1; John 3:34
8. He sorrowed in the Spirit- John 11:33
9. He rejoiced in the Spirit- Luke 10:21
10. He offered Himself up through the Spirit- Hebrews 9:14
11. He was raised from the dead by the Holy Spirit- Romans 1:4; 1 Peter 3:18
12. He commanded His apostles through the Holy Spirit- Acts 1:2.<sup>34</sup>

### **Spiritual Applications- Matthew Chapter 3**

We must always stress the need of repentance in association with salvation. Today, pseudo-fundamentalists and neo-fundamentalists attack the doctrine as it cuts down the number of conversions and professions they can claim in their evangelism. I

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<sup>33</sup> Harold Wilmington, *Wilmington's Guide to the Bible*, page 222.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

felt so burdened by this that I included my outline study on repentance at the end of this commentary.

John's ministry only lasted six months or so but he got a lot accomplished in the short period. Some of the most impactful ministries have been of short duration. Hugh Binning died at age 26. Robert Murray McCheyne died at 29. Henry Martyn died at age 32. Live and minister with the possibility that your time may be short and what you intend to do, you must do quickly.

John ministered in the middle of nowhere yet still managed to attract the crowds. He also preached with being ordained and without then support of promotion of any fellowship or ecclesiastical organization. If God calls you to do something, you go it, even if no one supports you and even if you have to labor in obscurity.

## Matthew Chapter 4

### 9. The Temptations of Christ 4:1-11 see also Mark 1:12,13; Luke 4:1-13

#### **4:1 Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.**<sup>abcdef</sup>

1a Christ was directly and deliberately led of the Spirit to be tempted. If Christ is going to redeem man as a man, then He must be tempted in all points as we are. Since the Jews were taught to pray “lead us not into temptation,” an inquiring mind would have the right to ask: “Why was Jesus led into it?” The answer is twofold:

1. He had to be tempted to fulfill the requirements of a Savior.

A. Hebrews 2:16,17 **“For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.”**

2. The Greek word in Matthew 6:13 in the disciples’ prayer is “eisenegkas”, while the one for “lead,” here, is “anechthe” Abraham was **“tempted”** (Genesis 22:1), but the **“tempting”** was not the tempting forbidden in James 1:12-14, but a **“testing,”** as is clear from Hebrews 11:17, where the word “tried” occurs.

1b “Perhaps you are asking, “Well then, if Jesus could not have fallen, was His temptation a legitimate and genuine temptation?” May I say to you that His temptation was much greater than any that you and I have ever had. When a new model Chevrolet or Ford or Dodge is developed, it is thoroughly tested to prove it can stand the test. And every genuine diamond is tested to show that it is not a phony. In a similar way, the Lord Jesus Christ was tested to demonstrate that He was exactly who He claimed to be. Let me illustrate with this little story. When I was a boy, I lived out in West Texas. It was a sparsely populated area in those days. The Santa Fe railroad came through our little town, but it went on by and stopped in the next little town. But it crossed the left fork of the Brazos River near our town. In the summertime there wasn’t enough water in that river to rust a shingle nail, but in wintertime you could float a battleship on it. One winter we really had a flood, and it washed out the Santa Fe bridge. We were without a train for a long time. Finally, they put in a bridge. They worked a long time on it. Then one day they brought in two engines, stopped them on the bridge, and tied down their whistles. Believe me, that was more whistling than we had ever heard in our little town! All twenty-three of us ran down to see what was happening. As we were standing around, one brave citizen went up to the engineer in charge with our question, “What are you doing?” The engineer answered, “Testing the bridge.” Our man said, “Are you trying to break it down?” The engineer almost sneered, “Of course not! We’re testing it to prove that it can’t be broken down.” May I say to you, that was the exact reason the Lord Jesus was tested. It was to prove, to demonstrate, that He could not be broken down. His testing, therefore, was greater than ours.”<sup>35</sup>

1c “Christ must be tempted—

1. Because it was impossible that one who came to overthrow the kingdom of Satan should not be attacked by the great adversary at the very threshold.

2. It was to test him.

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<sup>35</sup> J. Vernon McGee, *Thru the Bible*.

3. It was to prepare him, by being tempted like as we are, and yet gaining the victory, to "succor them that are tempted."

4. It was to set an example for us when we are tempted. The three great temptations mentioned by Matthew are the three great classes of temptations to which men are now exposed."<sup>36</sup>

1d **"In the wilderness"** This took place away from human witnesses or interaction. Christ must fight these battles with Satan alone. Fortunately, we do not have to. John the Baptist preached in the wilderness. Jesus was tempted in the wilderness.

This was possibly the area around Mt. Sinai. The text doesn't specifically say He went to Sinai but it is a real possibility. The only other men to go forty days fasting in the wilderness were Moses and Elijah, and both men went to Sinai.

A. Exodus 34:28,29 **"And he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread, nor drink water. And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments. And it came to pass, when Moses came down from mount Sinai with the two tables of testimony in Moses' hand, when he came down from the mount, that Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone while he talked with him."**

B. 1 Kings 19:7-9 **"And the angel of the LORD came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Arise and eat; because the journey is too great for thee. And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God. And he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there; and, behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and he said unto him, What doest thou here, Elijah?"**

1e **"devil"** The Greek word means accuser, slanderer (Revelation 12:9,10 **"And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. ). The devil accuses us before God and slanders us before men."**

1f Could Christ have sinned on earth in His human form? If not, why the point of the temptation? The issue is whether Christ could have sinned or not- was He peccable (He could sin) or impeccable (He could not sin)? Obviously, it is no sin to be tempted as Christ was tempted, but without sin.

**4:2 And when he had fasted forty<sup>a</sup> days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred.**

2a "Forty" is the number of probation and testing.

1. This is the length of the rain that flooded the earth in Noah's day
2. The time of the wilderness wandering, in years
3. It is the time that Goliath tested Israel in the valley of Elah
4. It is the period from Eli to the division of the kingdom, coming in exact quantities of "forties."

A. Eli is priest forty years

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<sup>36</sup> Ethelbert Bullinger, *Companion Bible*.



- B. Samuel is judge forty years
- C. Saul reigns forty years
- D. David reigns forty years
- E. Solomon reigned forty years.

5. "Forty" stands in Scripture for "testing" and the expression "life begins at forty" is connected with the Scriptural truth.

6. Elijah and Moses both spend forty days and nights without food when they appear before the Lord on the Mount.

**4:3 And when the tempter<sup>a</sup> came to him, he said, If<sup>b</sup> thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.<sup>cdefgh</sup>**

3a One of the titles for Satan is "**the tempter**".

3b The first two temptations start with this phrase. "If" you are the Son of God, then prove it! Look at you! A poor, tired, emaciated man, perishing with hunger! Are *you* the Son of God?" "If" suggests a doubt, and, perhaps, a taunt. It is a cunning appeal to Christ to work a miracle to satisfy his hunger and to display his power.

3c After forty days with no food, Christ was very hungry. The temptation here is to provide for yourself instead on relying on the Father to meet your needs. This temptation would involve the lust of the flesh (1 John 2:16 "**For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.**").

- 1. When Satan suggests that you do something, one should always beware, even if it seems to be harmless to do so.
- 2. Satan also came at a low point in Christ's life physically. He had just finished a 40-day fast and was tired and hungry. That is when Satan struck.

3d 4:3,6,9 Three avenues of temptation:

- 1. Do it yourself- Matthew 4:3
- 2. Presume upon God- Matthew 4:6
- 3. Forsake God- Matthew 4:9

3e "The great thing Satan aims at, in tempting good people, is to overthrow their relation to God as a Father, and so to cut off their dependence on him, their duty to him, and their communion with him...Outward afflictions, wants and burdens, are the great arguments Satan uses to make the people of God question their sonship; as if afflictions could not consist with, when really they proceed from, God's fatherly love. (Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary*)."

Matthew and Luke differ on how they present the order of the temptations:

MATTHEW	LUKE
1. Stones to bread	1. Stones to bread
2. Angelic care	2. Request for worship
3. Request for worship	3. Angelic care

Why the difference unless both writers were trying to emphasize the importance of the last temptation. Matthew, presenting Matthew as King and Messiah, would emphasize the last worship, in Satan trying to get Christ to surrender His crown to him. Luke would emphasize the humanity of Christ and we often place our physical needs above all else, something that Satan also included in his temptation.

3f “The order of the temptation here is different from that given in Matthew 4:1-11 because Matthew is given in a logical order of importance. Luke’s account is laid out in the theological order of 1 John 2:16—“the lust of the flesh” (vss. 3,4), “the lust of the eyes” (vss. 5-8), and “the pride of life” (vss. 9-12).”<sup>37</sup>

3g “**Command these stones...**” Satan does not encourage to pray to the Father to turn the stones to bread but for Christ to do it Himself using His own power, without any acknowledgement of the Father or reliance upon His power and provision. The need for bread is valid. How you go about obtaining your daily bread and provisions is what can lead to sin. Satan suggests that it is not only beneath the dignity of the Son of God to suffer hunger, but also unnecessary since He has the means to create food. Satan is trying to play on Jesus’ pride, which will certainly fail.

3h “Man needs bread (food) to live. But who will supply it? God or Satan? God or the State? To where will the Christian look for his daily bread? Too many Christians have fallen into the trap that the Government will feed them, house them, educate their children and treat them when sick. This is Satan’s trap: look to me for your provisions. But Jesus counters this Satanic/Statist attitude by saying that man is to live by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God and this includes all the promises of provisions that God makes in the Scripture. But men would rather live under the authority of a messianic state than under the Messiah Himself. But man is to worship God only and not the State (Matthew 4:10).

“How will you get this bread? Through hard work, thrift, economic investment and ultimately the believing in the promises of God for provision? Or by a miracle? Miracles are seductive as they are exciting and powerful. Work and belief in God are dull and slow. Why work when you can have your bread provided for you by miracle? This is the temptation of our day. Through the miracle of central banking, the state can turn bread into stones.”<sup>38</sup>

“The devil offered Jesus a familiar temptation: something for nothing. Jesus could easily have taken something common and without economic value and converted it into something valuable. A stone was a common item in the wilderness. It commanded no price. There were more stones available at zero price than there was demand for them. Not so with bread. Bread commanded a price. For a hungry man with money to spend, bread commands a high price if there is only one seller. In the wilderness, Jesus was hungry. He presumably would have paid for bread, but either there was no nearby seller or He had no money. How would He relieve His hunger?

“The answer was obvious to the supreme master of the power religion: convert stones into bread. Say the word, and it would be done, Satan told Jesus. Just say the word. Invoke power. But under these circumstances, this would not be power from above; it would be power from below. Why? Because of the context of the temptation. This was a recapitulation of the setting of the Fall of man. Adam had the power to eat the forbidden fruit, but he lacked the lawful authority to do so. Jesus had the power to turn stones into bread; like Adam, He also lacked the lawful authority to do so. Why? Was He not God? Yes, but He was also man. He was under authority. This authority was judicial. He was under the word of God, the authority over man.

“Satan was suggesting a shortcut to satisfaction: no work, no payment of money, no delayed gratification. All it would cost was . . . what? A return to the welfare society of the wilderness. The Israelites had been sustained miraculously, but they had no other way to survive. The wilderness could not sustain them. Miracles could. To gain wealth in the Promised

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<sup>37</sup> Peter Ruckman, *The Bible Believer’s Commentary on Luke*.

<sup>38</sup> See Gary North, *Priorities and Dominion; An Economic Commentary on Matthew*, chapter 1 and G. Edward Griffin, *The Creature From Jekyll Island*.

Land, they were required to work (Deut. 8:10). The miracle of the manna had ceased. The mature way to wealth is through sacrifice of present consumption for the sake of future income: thrift. The devil was offering Jesus miracles in the wilderness as a way of life. This meant leaving the devil in control of society through his disciples: the power religion. There would be no righteous conquest through covenant-keeping. All Jesus had to do was formalize the power religion to satisfy his hunger. He refused.”<sup>39</sup>

**4:4 But he answered and said, It is written,<sup>ab</sup> Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.<sup>cd</sup>**

4a To counter each temptation, Jesus cites Scripture. Satan misquotes and misapplies it, but the Lord does so properly and correctly. If the Lord used only Scripture to combat Satan, then why do we think we can use any other method but this as we struggle in our temptations? Trying to rely on willpower or spirituality or any human means in combatting Satan will end in failure as no man is strong enough to combat the devil in his own power and strength. Satan has brought down all of the mightiest men in the Bible (Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, Solomon- the wisest of them all!) so he won't have any trouble with you.

You need to saturate yourself with the word of God. David said, “**Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word...Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee**” (Psalm 119:9, 11). The Lord defeated the temptations of Satan by quoting Scripture. Read your Bible daily. Reading ten full pages, front and back, will put you through it once every three months. Using Robert Murray McChesney's Bible reading plan will get you through the New Testament, Psalms and Proverbs twice a year and through the rest of the Old Testament once a year.

4b “**it is written**” is in the perfect tense in the Greek text, showing that this “writing” of scripture is final, complete and cannot be added to or altered. It is a final, absolute act that cannot be added to. Citing Scripture should end all debate but it usually doesn't.

4c Physical bread is important, but how much more important is the spiritual bread of the word of God. You could die physically without literal bread and still go to heaven, but no man will see God's heave who has never tasted of the Bread of Life.

4d Deuteronomy 8:3 is quoted in this verse, “**And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live.**”

Almost all of the “mainline” commentators insist Jesus was quoting from some B. C. “Septuagint” but we see no need to take such a position. I believe that Peter Ruckman is correct when he states that there was no such thing as a Septuagint, or a Greek translation of the Old Testament before the time of Christ.<sup>40</sup> If there was such a translation, it was published during the early church era and was part of Origen's Hexapla. We see no need to hold to a B. C. Septuagint and even if one existed, it is of little use and contributes nothing to our understanding of the New Testament. One of my teachers, O. Talmadge Spence, stated that the value of the Septuagint was as a Greek dictionary., nothing more. Jesus would be quoting

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<sup>39</sup> Gary North, *Priorities and Dominion; An Economic Commentary on Matthew*, pages 13-14.

<sup>40</sup> His arguments are summarized in his book *The Mythological Septuagint*, 1996,

from the Hebrew Scriptures, not a Greek translation. Why would the Son of God and an observant Jew quote an uninspired Greek/pagan translation when you have the inspired Hebrew Scriptures?

**4:5 Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple,<sup>ab</sup>**

5a Satan did this supernaturally.

5b This was probably a roof with a portico at the southeastern corner of the temple complex, where a massive retaining wall reached from a level well above the temple mount, deep into the Kidron Valley. According to Josephus, this was a drop of nearly 450 feet.

**4:6 And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.<sup>abcd</sup>**

6a This sounded like a counterfeit of the Second Coming of Revelation 19.

6b This is quoted from Psalm 91:11,12 (**"For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone"**) but mistranslated as Satan leaves out **"in all thy ways."** This is how Satan handles the Scriptures; he either adds something or subtracts something.

This temptation dealt with the pride of life (1 John 2:16 **"For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world."**) in suggesting He could presume upon the goodness of the Father in such a reckless way as this. If Jesus had done this publicly, and if the Father would have saved Him from injury, Jesus would have had instant fame. But it would not be the kind of fame He was looking for. He was not looking to be a sideshow freak, but He wanted His teachings to be the foundation for His fame and reputation in Israel.

6c This temptation went something like this: "You aren't getting anywhere. Here You are, thirty years of age and You have no audience, no followers, no acclaim. You're not even known. If You listen to me and do what I say, You can be famous instantly, a celebrity overnight. Your name will be on everybody's lips. You'll be front-page news. I'll see that you get the crowds. Now here's the plan: I will set You up, up here on the pinnacle of the temple. You can't get any higher than that here in Jerusalem. The people down there in the temple courts seem as small as ants. Look! You've already attracted their attention. In a moment You can have their applause. You are now where You should have been years ago—in the public eye. Now then, I have brought You up; You cast Yourself down... You must do something daring, something spectacular. You say that you trust Your heavenly Father. Well, prove it. Exercise Your faith. Show Your faith by casting Yourself down. Take Your stand on the Word of God. God's Word says,

6d Satan proposed a test. If Jesus failed it, there would be no substitutionary sacrifice. There would only be a dead body on the ground. On the other hand, if Jesus survived, then He was a premature heir to this promise, and therefore He could not be the prophesied lamb led to the slaughter. It was a lose-lose situation for Jesus, and a win-win offer for Satan. Jesus declined to accept the challenge.

**4:7 Jesus said unto him, It is written again,<sup>a</sup> Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.<sup>bc</sup>**

7a “**Again**”, a double witness of the written Scripture.

7b An obvious ploy by the devil which was easier to refute. Why tempt God? Mark 16:16 promises protection from deadly snakebites, but Paul was not conducting a snake-handling meeting in Acts 28 when that viper bit him. Satan said “You claim to trust your Heavenly Father? Talk is cheap. Here is a chance for you to prove it!”

7c Jesus quotes Deuteronomy 6:16. God is not to be tempted, and yet here, God in the flesh is being tempted by Satan. God in His usual state as deity cannot be tempted with sin but Christ, as God in the flesh, can be tempted in His humanity.

**4:8 Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them;<sup>ab</sup>**

8a This will deal with the lust of the eyes (1 John 2:16 “**For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world**”). But why would the Lord be so impressed with the glories of all the kingdoms of the world when He had been in heaven for all eternity past, viewing the infinite glories of the Father?

8b Since the earth is a globe, it is impossible to see all the kingdoms at once, so this must have been a supernatural vision by Satan. This mountain is not named, but it was “**exceeding high**”. Could this have not been a literal mountain in Israel but some supernatural manifestation of a mountain where all the kingdoms of the world could be viewed at once? We can view much of the world in real time today with multiple monitors and satellite and internet feeds, but Satan could do the same thing 2,000 years ago.

**4:9 And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.<sup>abc</sup>**

9a “**if thou wilt worship me**” There it is! It finally comes out. If you wait long enough, the truth, or the true intent, will come out. Here is what Satan really wants- to be worshipped as God. That is what led to his fall, as given in Isaiah 14 and in Ezekiel 28.

9b Why pay Satan for something the Father will give you anyway? They were his to give, as Satan was the god of this age (2 Corinthians 4:4 “**In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.**”). But think about who Christ would have to thank! Besides, the Father had already promised all the kingdoms to the Son (Psalm 2), so why pay Satan for what was already Christ’s? The offer was that Christ could have had His kingdom without having to go to the cross and He could have avoided the suffering. But to do so would have had Christ recognize Satan’s claim to dominion and for Christ to abandon the claim of the Father to the kingdoms of the world.

9c The temptation to idolatry would have been the most offensive temptation of them all. This temptation went like: “I gave the world to Alexander; I have given it to Caesar. You are a much bigger man than either of them—a better man. Think how the world longs for a King like You.

You are a King; all You need is a throne. Think how much good You can do. You can bring in new laws and put Your program into effect. Think of it: carpenter of Nazareth crowned emperor of the world. All of it can be Yours—not just Rome, but beyond the Euphrates, beyond the Nile, beyond the pillars of Hercules. All I ask is a small pinch of salt on Caesar's altar, just one brief bend of the knee. All You have to do is render me one act of homage. Look at You! You have no food, no fame, no fortune. I offer you everything this world contains: the kingdom, the power, and the glory. And no cross!"<sup>41</sup>

**4:10 Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.<sup>ab</sup>**

10a Jesus quotes Deuteronomy 6:13 **"Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name."**

10b Many things demand our worship and allegiance. Satan does. Government does. Political parties and politicians do. Even the theological system do this. You must be a Calvinist and serve Calvinism or Arminianism or Dispensationalism or Postmillennialism or (fill in the blank). We continually hear the clamor of something wanting our allegiance and service in the stead of God. We must worship and serve God only. To do otherwise would be guilty of idolatry.

**4:11 Then the devil leaveth him,<sup>a</sup> and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him.<sup>bc</sup>**

11a **"the devil leaveth him"** But not for long! You may be sure he'll be back. Simply because you win a battle today does not mean that Satan quits. He will be back to attack again.

11b An attack by the devil will result in a later ministration by angels.

"To sum up the temptations practically, it is obvious that the three represent the three of John's first epistle and the three confronting Eve in the garden.

1. The lust of the flesh—the tree was "good for food"—bread (1 John 2:16).
2. The pride of life—desired to make one wise— jump off the temple roof.
3. The lust of the eye—pleasant to the eye (the fruit)—rule the kingdoms. (The references are in 1 John 2:16 and Genesis 3:6.)
4. In the first temptation, Satan is asking you to distrust God and do it for yourself. In the second temptation, he is tempting you to presume on God and make God do something for you, and in the last temptation, he is asking you to abandon God and let the devil do something for you."<sup>42</sup>

11c Adam, the First Man, fell surrounded by plenty in a garden. Christ, the Second Man,<sup>43</sup> triumphed in a wilderness.

General observations about temptation

1. Satan will flee if resisted.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> John Phillips, *Exploring the Gospel of Matthew*, page 66.

<sup>42</sup> Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer's Commentary on Matthew*, page 79.

<sup>43</sup> Christ as the "Second Man: is a favorite Plymouth Brethren title for Christ, although I did not use it in that context here.

<sup>44</sup> But you have to resist him and do so long enough for him to flee. Most of us quit too soon or don't have the

- A. James 4:7. **"Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."**
- B. Paul told Timothy to flee fornication in 1 Timothy 6:11 and to flee youthful lusts in 2 Timothy 2:22. But here is the problem- the temptation is often so packaged to make us unwilling to want to flee. Satan presents something to us that is designed to be pleasing. You can't tempt a man with alcohol if he has no desire for it but you can tempt a drunk or a recovering alcoholic.
2. It is no sin to be tempted. Jesus was tempted, yet without sin.
- A. Hebrews 4:15. **"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."**
3. Jesus was tempted in all points as we were, yet without sin- Hebrews 4:15. This does not mean that He was tempted with every kind of temptation that we are. For example, He was never married so He never had to deal with marital issues. The "all points" are the three types, or "points" of temptation listed in 1 John 2:16- the lust of the eyes, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life, which all of these three temptations listed in this chapter are included. The three basic temptations are, do it yourself, let God do it all and let the devil do it.
4. Jesus endured temptation in order to help us who are tempted, and to be our example in how to handle temptations.
- A. Hebrews 2:18. **"For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted."**
5. Temptations to sin come from Satan, not from God.
- A. Matthew 4:1
- B. James 1:13. **"Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:"**
- C. They are allowed by God.
- i. Job 1,2.
6. God will not allow any temptation to come to us that we would not be able to handle.
- A. 1 Corinthians 10:13 **"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."**
- B. Any temptation with which you are tempted is one with which I am tempted. Any temptation with which I'm tempted is one with which you're tempted. The promise is this: God will allow no temptation to come your way that you can't stand. The promise is that along with the temptation, the Lord provides the way to escape it.
7. With every temptation, God will make a way of escape, if we want to escape or even if we want to look for it.
- A. 1 Corinthians 10:13 **"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."**

## **10. Prophecy of Christ's Early Ministry in Galilee 4:12-16 see also Mark 1:14-20**

### **4:12 ¶ Now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison,<sup>a</sup> he departed into Galilee;<sup>b</sup>**

12a John was imprisoned for publicly confronting Herod over marrying his brother's wife (Matthew 14). He was also in prison when he sent a delegation to Jesus in Matthew 11. With John now "off the scene", Jesus picked up his ministry and message.

12b The Lord would not start or center His ministry around Jerusalem. There would be too much opposition. He went north, into Galilee, which was not a region known for its sympathy with the religious machine that was in Jerusalem.

#### **AV**

12 Now when Jesus had heard that John was **cast into prison**, he departed into Galilee;

#### **ESV**

12 Now when he heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew into Galilee.

#### **LSV**

12 Now when *Jesus* heard that John had been taken into custody, He departed into Galilee;

The Authorized Version is clearer to note that John was not simply arrested but was cast into prison.

### **4:13 And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum,<sup>ab</sup> which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim:**

13a "**Capernaum**" At that time a city of 30,000 inhabitants on the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee. It was one of the chief cities of Galilee, had a synagogue, a Roman garrison, and a customs station, with Matthew as the tax collector. It was called "Christ's own city" because he made it an earthly home. It was on the border between the tribes of Zebulon and Naphtali. It was thought that the literal "gates of hell" were located in nearby caverns, which gave the city a very bad moral and spiritual reputation. The area was also noted for the worship of the Greek god "Pan".

"Capernaum was a city of some considerable importance. It was there that Matthew sat at the "tax office" collecting taxes, possibly on the fish caught in the lake, among other things (Matt 9:9). It was the home of a high-ranking government official (John 4:46). A Roman centurion with his detachment of soldiers also lived there. Their residence was long and significant enough for the centurion to have provided a synagogue for the local Jewish congregation. The question our Lord asked of Capernaum, "Will you be exalted to heaven?" seemingly refers to the city's attitude of pride and his severe condemnation of the place seems to have been fulfilled in the most literal sense as evidenced by the difficulty of discovering and identifying the site now (Matt 11:23; Luke 10:15).

"Jesus seems to have made Capernaum His headquarters in Galilee after leaving Nazareth, possibly because it was a larger population center, possibly because several of His disciples had their homes there (Matt 4:13). It was near this place that he called the fishermen (Matt 4:18; Mark 1:16; Luke 5:1) and the tax-collector (Matt 9:9ff.; Mark 2:13ff.; Luke 5:27ff.) into His service. Many "mighty works" were done in Capernaum including the healing of the centurion's servant (Matt 8:5–13; Luke 7:1–10), the nobleman's son (John 4:46–54), Peter's mother-in-law (Matt 8:14, 15; Mark 1:29–31; Luke 4:38, 39) and the paralytic (Matt 9:2–8; Mark 2:1–12; Luke 5:17–26). It was prob. also in Capernaum that He raised the daughter of Jairus (Matt 9:18–26; Mark 5:21–43; Luke 8:40–56). Here he also cast out the unclean spirit (Mark



1:21–34; Luke 4:31–41) and used the little child to teach humility (Matt 18:1–5; Mark 9:33–37; Luke 9:46–50).<sup>45</sup>

13b Jesus did not establish His base in Jerusalem. The only time He spent any time in Jerusalem was during the feasts when He, as a Jewish male under the law, would have been required to be in the city. He avoided the religious centers as that is where most of his opposition came from. Jesus spent much time in Galilee, “outside the camp” of the religious centers on the day (Hebrews 13:13 **“Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.”**). He grew up in Galilee and that is where He spent most of His time. The Galileans may have felt free to ignore predominantly Judean Pharisees. The Pharisees on the whole were probably centered in Jerusalem rather than in Galilee. The Pharisees seem to have been primarily an urban movement whereas John and Jesus had their followers more in the rural areas. The Pharisees would not have had as much influence in Galilee, giving Jesus more freedom to conduct His ministry.

**4:14 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying,<sup>a</sup>**

14a This is from Isaiah 9:1,2 **“Nevertheless the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation, when at the first he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, and afterward did more grievously afflict her by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations. The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.”**

**4:15 The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea,<sup>a</sup> beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles;<sup>b</sup>**

15a The “**sea**” here is the Sea of Galilee.

15b Galilee was an area with a mixed Jewish/Gentile population, but it was an area largely identified with Gentiles.

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<sup>45</sup> Gleason L. Archer, “Capernaum,” *Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, volume 2, pages. 747-748.



**4:16 The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up.<sup>ab</sup>**

16a But how few appreciated that light or responded to it!

16b The region of Zebulun and Naphtali experienced turmoil under Assyrian domination (2 Kings 15:29) and the inhabitants had longed for liberation from Gentile rule. They are now the first to see the great light of God's deliverance as Jesus started His public ministry in this area.

## **11. Jesus Preaching the Kingdom of Heaven 4:17**

**4:17 ¶ From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent:<sup>a</sup> for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.<sup>bc</sup>**

17a See Appendix 1 for a study on what the Scripture says about repentance.

17b This is the same message as John preached in Matthew 3:2. With John arrested, Jesus picked up his ministry and message of repentance, which showed His approval of it and vindication of it.

1. The theme of the Gospel of the Kingdom and of John is “Repent”.
2. Repentance is absolutely necessary for salvation and any relationship with God, despite what the *Sword of the Lord* crowd and the followers of Jack Hyles, Curtis Hudson, the neo-Fundamentalists and the hyper-evangelicals teach, in their desire to water down the requirement of repentance so they can increase professions. A plan of salvation with no repentance is no sort of salvation at all.

17c Jesus is preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom, as John did. This is not the Church Age gospel that we preach. Dispensationalism recognizes the distinctions between these various gospels. The Gospel of the Kingdom and the Church Age Gospel are separate gospels.

<b>KINGDOM OF HEAVEN</b>	<b>CHURCH (AGE)</b>
Millennial kingdom	Takes place before the Millennium
Jewish	Jewish and Gentile- universal
It is “set up” (Daniel 2:44)	It is “built up” (Ephesians 2:20)
Has heirs (James 2:5)	No heirs (Ephesians 3:6)
Has children (Matthew 8:12)	No children (Galatians 3:26)
Christ visible on earth	Christ not visible on earth, is in heaven
Is coming (Matthew 4:17)	Is going (in the rapture) (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17)
One thousand years in duration	About 2000 years in duration
Ends with Satan’s final rebellion and ultimate defeat	Ends with the rapture.
Political	Spiritual

The various gospels of Scripture:

1. The Gospel “of the grace of God”
  - A. Acts 20:24 **“But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.”**
2. The “Everlasting Gospel”
  - A. Revelation 14:6 **“And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,”**
  - B. Its contents are not defined.
  - C. This is tribulational.

- D. This is the only time we ever see an angel preaching. This is because there are no, or very few, human witness of God on earth at this point in the tribulation, so God resorts to using an angel to preach.
3. The “Gospel” of the Kingdom of God.  
A. Mark 1:14,15 **“Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.”**
4. The “Gospel” of the Kingdom of Heaven.  
A. Matthew 4:17, 23 **“From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand... And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.”**
5. Paul’s gospel (probably the same as the Church Age gospel)  
A. 2 Timothy 2:8 **“Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel:”**
6. The Church Age Gospel  
A. 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 **“Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:”**

## **12. Calling of the Early Disciples 4:18-22 see also Mark 1:16-20; Luke 5:1-11**

**4:18 ¶ And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers.<sup>abc</sup>**

18a “The significance of the first disciples being “fishermen” is not apparent to the person who reads through Genesis 1:4-8 lightly. The Bible teaching of water beyond (northward) the galaxies and constellations is an “undiscovered” scientific truth which scientists may or may not discover later. That our Lord comes down through water to reach us is apparent by John the Baptist’s ministry and the references to Jonah (Matt. 12:40), but the further teaching of an exodus up through that water to land on “shore” is clouded to the carnal believer. (For complete information, study carefully Eph. 3:18; Amos 9:6; Psa. 148:4; Job 9:8; Psa. 33:7, 68:33, 48:2, 75:6–7; Isa. 14:13; and Job 26:7, 38:30.)”<sup>46</sup>

18b Fishing was a humble yet honorable occupation.

18c John details the conversion of Andrew and Peter in John 1:40-42 (**“One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias, which is, being**

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<sup>46</sup> Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer’s Commentary on Matthew*, page 83.

**interpreted, the Christ. And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone.”)** They were saved there, they were called here.

**4:19 And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.<sup>abc</sup>**

19a There are a lot of similarities between fishing for fish and fishing for men in evangelism.

1. You need bait. No one will bite at a bare hook. You need some equipment, a rod, reel, net, boat, hook, basket, all provided at the Lord's expense.
2. You need patience.
3. There are seasons or times of the day when the fish won't bite. There will be dry spells in your personal evangelism.
4. You have to know how to clean your fish.
5. You have to go where the fish are. There is no sense trying to catch fish in a field or in a dried-up creek bed. You need a place to fish and that would be the world. This lake is large enough for all and it is stocked with all manners of fish, and in a very great quantity. There will be religious fish, irreligious fish, moral and immoral fish, concerned and careless fish...
6. You need to be willing to invest time and money in the activity. Diligence is required. Fishermen are usually up at dawn and they continue fishing till late in the afternoon. As long as hands can work men will fish. You must be willing to put the work into it, for fish seldom jump into the boat.
7. You need to know how to use your equipment (rod and reel, net...)
8. It is a useful activity. Fishing provides food for your family. To fish for men in evangelism also gives the Christian a profitable occupation.
9. You must love the work. You don't have to nag a man who loves to fish to go fish. He will do so whenever he has the opportunity. So it is with a fisher of men.
10. Fishermen work in all kinds of weather, cold, heat, rain... So must the disciple be prepared to minister in all seasons and in all circumstances.
11. Fishermen tend to be uneducated, unschooled in the sciences, literature and philosophy. Such are not requirements to discipleship. Rather, a willingness and a love for the work are more important.
12. This includes both discipleship and evangelism. Once you "catch" the fish in evangelism, they need to be cleaned in discipleship.
13. Jesus makes no promise of earthly success, monetary rewards or earthly honors. He really promises nothing- just a call to the work. When you decide to follow Christ as a disciple, the fishing ministry is assumed to follow as a natural follow-up to that decision. But you will not enjoy much success in this endeavor if you are not following Christ. We have had many immoral and apostate men, styling themselves as good, Bible-believing men who boasted of great numbers converted under their ministries, but we see little fruit in the long run.

19b "I understand this, first, in this sense: be separate unto Christ. These men were to leave their pursuits; they were to leave their companions; they were, in fact, to quit the world, that their one business might be, in their Master's name, to be fishers of men. We are not all called to leave our daily business, or to quit our families. That might be rather running away from the fishery than working at it in God's name. But we are called most distinctly to come out from among the ungodly, and to be separate, and not to touch the unclean thing. We cannot be fishers of men if we remain among men in the same element with them. Fish will not be fishers. The sinner will not convert the sinner. The ungodly man will not convert the ungodly man; and,

what is more to the point, the worldly Christian will not convert the world. If you are of the world, no doubt the world will love its own; but you cannot save the world. If you are dark, and belong to the kingdom of darkness, you cannot remove the darkness. If you march with the armies of the wicked one, you cannot defeat them. I believe that one reason why the church of God at this present moment has so little influence over the world is because the world has so much influence over the church. Nowadays we hear Nonconformists pleading that they may do this and they may do that—things which their Puritan forefathers would rather have died at the stake than have tolerated. They plead that they may live like worldlings, and my sad answer to them, when they crave for this liberty, is, "Do it if you dare. It may not do you much hurt, for you are so bad already. Your cravings show how rotten your hearts are. If you have a hungering after such dog's meat, go, dogs, and eat the garbage. Worldly amusements are fit food for mere pretenders and hypocrites. If you were God's children you would loathe the very thought of the world's evil joys, and your question would not be, 'How far may we be like the world?' but your one cry would be, 'How far can we get away from the world? How much can we come out from it?'" Your temptation would be rather to become sternly severe, and ultra-Puritanical in your separation from sin, in such a time as this, than to ask, "How can I make myself like other men, and act as they do?" Brethren, the use of the church in the world is that it should be like salt in the midst of putrefaction; but if the salt has lost its savor, what is the good of it? If it were possible for salt itself to putrefy, it could but be an increase and a heightening of the general putridity. The worst day the world ever saw was when the sons of God were joined with the daughters of men. Then came the flood; for the only barrier against a flood of vengeance on this world is the separation of the saint from the sinner. Your duty as a Christian is to stand fast in your own place and stand out for God, hating even the garment spotted by the flesh, resolving like one of old that, let others do as they will, as for you and your house, you will serve the Lord."<sup>47</sup>

19c Some writers make much of Jesus' calling his own disciples rather than waiting for them to come to him, noting that disciples normally chose their teachers rather than the reverse. Early Jewish and Greek tradition most frequently assumes that disciples are responsible for acquiring their own teachers of the law or philosophy. Jesus chooses us, we do not choose Him.

1. John 15:16 **"Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you."**

It is also interesting that Jesus chose no "professional" men, no scribes or Pharisees. Most would not have been serviceable, and they would have had much to "unlearn". Jesus chose tradesmen, who could be of a more practical service to the kingdom. It is good to be able to study Greek and Hebrew, but that won't help you much if the toilet overflows or if you need to put a roof on a building or to change the oil in a church van.

#### **4:20 And they straightway<sup>a</sup> left their nets, and followed him.**

20a **"straightway"** Their response was immediate, as that is what **"straightway"** means. It is an archaic form of the phrase when you do something "straight away", or "right now". How would you react if some stranger showed up at your office and told you to drop everything you were doing and shut up your company to respond to some rather vague call to follow him, without any discussion or promise of income, benefits, retirement plan or what your work schedule would be?

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<sup>47</sup> Charles Spurgeon, "How To Become Fishers of Men", *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, Sermon #1906.

**4:21 And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets;<sup>a</sup> and he called them.**

21a God calls busy men into His service. If you aren't busy before the call, in your secular employment, you will not be busy after the call, in the ministry.

**4:22 And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him.<sup>a</sup>**

22a Just as in 4:20. It is amazing to consider that they responded immediately (as Matthew did in Matthew 9:9 as did Paul in Acts 9:6 ("**And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do**"). Here is a total stranger calling us to leave our secular employments and livelihood and to follow Him, with no promise of provision or benefits. When God calls men today, we often take extended periods to wrestle with it, making sure we have enough money and provisions to follow Christ.

### **13. Jesus' Early Ministry in Galilee 4:23-25 see also Luke 4:14,15**

**4:23 ¶ And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom,<sup>a</sup> and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.<sup>b</sup>**

23a "Now, this is the "gospel of the kingdom." It says it is, so it must be. This gospel includes the "signs and wonders" of miraculous healing that make their first appearance in Scripture with the calling out of Israel as a nation (Exod. 4:1–9). No one gets sick and gets healed until then. You can't find a disease named or implied in fifty chapters of Genesis. Healing is a sign associated with Israel (Exod. 15:26). As such, it teaches the Jew to look for a sign (1 Cor. 1:22). He is justified in looking for one, according to his national history, for that history begins with signs (Exod. 4:30) and ends (before the present age) with signs (Mark 16). But the one sign he was told to believe, many a Hebrew missed (Matt. 12:39), for it was a sign Jonah missed since it was connected with Gentiles getting in on the blessing too!"<sup>48</sup>

23b Physical healing seems to be associated more with the Gospel of the Kingdom than with the New Testament Gospel. The "Gospel of the Grace of God" (which we preach today) does not have this emphasis on physical healing.

**4:24 And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments,<sup>a</sup> and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatick,<sup>b</sup> and those that had the palsy; and he healed them.**

24a "**diseases and torments**" Similar but the "torments" would be a more serious and a more painful disease. Notice the close context that "torments" has with "diseases", showing that a "torment" is an intense form of a "disease". The only other time we see this English word is in Luke 16:23, relating to the rich man in hell. "**And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments,**

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<sup>48</sup> Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer's Commentary on Matthew*, page 86.

**and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.”** The physical condition of these people was so bad it was as though they were going through hell on earth.

AV	ESV	LSV
24 And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with <b>devils</b> , and those which were lunatick, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them.	24 So his fame spread throughout all Syria, and they brought him all the sick, those afflicted with various diseases and pains, those oppressed by demons, those having seizures, and paralytics, and he healed them.	24 And the news about Him spread throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all who were ill, those suffering with various diseases and pains, demoniacs, epileptics, paralytics; and He healed them.

**“torments”** The ESV and LSV are much weaker with just “pains”. The Bishop’s Bible has an interesting rendering of “gripings”, which would have the idea of a physical issue that you would **really** complain about.

The Authorized Version rendering of **“devils”** is correct although almost every other translation and commentary wants to replace it with “demon”. **“Devil”** is correct because “demon” can be used in a positive or in a neutral sense, such as a “muse” or a source of inspiration, especially in Greek thought.

As usual with lists, the versions cannot agree among themselves.

AV	ESV	LSV
torments	pains	pains
possessed with devils	oppressed by demons (no possession)	demoniacs (can imply possession_
lunatick	having seizures	epileptics
palsy	paralytics	paralytics

**“palsy”** Some sort of paralysis.

**24b “lunatick”** Strong’s #4583 σεληνιάζομαι selēniazomai, to be moon-struck or lunatic, to be epileptic, some sort of physical or mental condition thought to have been caused by a (full) moon. We can see “luna” in the word.

**4:25 And there followed him great multitudes of people<sup>a</sup> from Galilee, and from Decapolis,<sup>b</sup> and from Jerusalem, and from Judæa, and from beyond Jordan.<sup>c</sup>**

25a Verses 24 and 25 show the early success and popularity of Christ’s ministry.

25b **“Decapolis”** = Ten Cities.

25c Jesus was drawing crowds from as far away as Jerusalem.



### **Spiritual Applications- Matthew Chapter 4**

Temptations are inevitable. Even the Lord had to deal with Satan while on earth. The Lord shows us the way to battle them, by quoting and applying Scripture. This is why Scripture memorization is so vital in the Christian life. There must also be a willing to stand against the temptation and confront it. I've also found that temptations lose their power over time. The longer you delay in giving into a temptation, the less-powerful it becomes. Remember, there is no sin in being tempted. Jesus was tempted, yet He was without sin. The sin comes in yielding to the temptation. We can escape temptation, but we usually enjoy it too much to flee. We are told that Jesus "suffered being tempted" in Hebrews 2:18 but we enjoy it. If Jesus was tempted, then I must expect to be tempted as well.

I mentioned in this chapter how the "scholars" simply love the Septuagint and can't write two pages of commentary without citing it with hushed reverence. Why? What is so special about it? Why is it held in such high reverence? Why do these scholars treat it as almost inspired? Without getting into all the mythology surrounding it, Ruckman insists that there is no evidence that a B. C.-era Septuagint even existed, assigning it instead to Origen's "fifth column" of the Hexapla, which is a church-age document. O. Talmadge Spence did not think highly of it, saying it was good as a Greek dictionary, but nothing else. I see no reason to use it, cite it or to hold it in any sort of esteem, as I do not believe that Jesus or the New Testament writers ever quoted from it.



## **Matthew Chapter 5**

Doctrinal observations regarding the “Sermon on the Mount”:

1. There are no Christians present here. There are no New Testament writings at this time. The discourse is not addressed to the church. The application is Old Testament (and even tribulation prophetically) and is to the Jews.
2. To attempt to apply it doctrinally to the Christian is theological suicide. Imagine accepting Matthew 5:17-20 as New Testament doctrine and then refusing to believe the Seventh-day Adventist teaching against the Roman church! Or imagine rejecting the Jehovah Witness teaching on the 144,000, while refusing to recognize their “sermon-on-the-mount-conscientious-objecting” (Matthew 5:39). No reasonable Christian could reconcile the passages, doctrinally, with the Pauline epistles. This is the liberal’s purpose: to destroy the belief that the Pauline epistles are of equal authority with the gospels!
3. To correctly understand what the Sermon on the Mount, we have to believe what we have read in the Old Testament up to this point. God has promised a literal, physical and political kingdom with His ruler on the throne of David (see Matthew 2:6; 3:2). The ruler appears. He is heralded, and as a king, He sits (Matthew 5:1) and delivers the constitution for the kingdom, which is an earthly, Messianic, Jewish kingdom on earth—remembering, of course, that up until here, all conditions for the Second Advent of Christ are being met. The further revelation given (that it turned out to be the First Advent) is not an excuse or alibi for us to fly in the face of God with an amillennial and postmillennial “abomination of desolation.” At this point, the “day of the Lord” approaches rapidly. But don’t rush things.
4. Matthew 5-7 can be thought of as the Constitution of the Kingdom.
5. Psalm 15 can be tied into the Sermon on the Mount.
6. These are the laws of the Millennium which men will need to obey and by which they will be judged.
7. We are not certain where the sermon was delivered although traditions suggest many areas.
8. Assuming we have the entire text of the sermon, it ran 2,446 words in our English text and might have taken 30 minutes to deliver. How much truth did the Lord pack into one sermon! Entire commentaries are written on this sermon. Yet it takes most preachers 15-20 minutes just to get started!

“Many years ago, I played handball with a very liberal preacher who later became rather famous as a leader of the liberal wing. One day he told me that all he needed of the Bible was the Sermon on the Mount. He went even so far as to say that all he needed was the Golden Rule, as recorded in Matthew 7:12: “Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.” To say that this is all the Bible you need may sound good, but it is pious drivel. The question is not whether you feel that the Sermon on the Mount is your religion. The question is: Are you living it? That is the important thing, and we’ll have more to say about that later. Those who reduce the Christian message to the Sermon on the Mount represent a very large segment of liberalism in our day. But please notice that the content of the Christian gospel is not found in the Sermon on the Mount. For instance, there is absolutely no mention of the death and resurrection of Christ. Yet Paul said to the Corinthians, “... I declare unto you the gospel...” What is the gospel? The Sermon on the Mount? No. Paul made it clear that the gospel is this: “... that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures” (1 Cor. 15:1, 3–4, italics mine). My friend, the gospel is not in the Sermon on the Mount, and that is the reason a great many people like to claim it as their religion. The

preaching of that doctrine has made more hypocrites in the church than anything else. It is nothing in the world but verbiage for men to say, "I live by the Sermon on the Mount." If a man is honest and will read the Sermon on the Mount, he will know that he is not living up to it. My friend, if the Sermon on the Mount is God's standard (and it is) and you come short of it, what are you going to do? Do you have a Savior who can extend mercy to you? Do you know the One who can reach down in grace and save you when you put your faith in Him? To reduce the Christian message to the Sermon on the Mount is a simplicity which the Scriptures would not permit under any circumstances whatsoever. To do so is the extreme left point of view...The Sermon on the Mount is Law lifted to the nth degree. Man could not keep the Law in the Old Testament. So how in the world can he keep, in his own strength, the Sermon on the Mount which is elevated to an even higher degree?."49

This is one of the portions of Scripture that even liberals and unbelievers love since it is more practical than doctrinal. But you cannot accept Matthew 5-7 while ignoring the rest of Matthew's gospel. If the other events in Matthew are not true then this is only a moral fable with no real authority. This subjective choosing of what parts of Scripture you want to believe and what you don't want to believe is a product of a darkened and reprobate mind. If Matthew is reliable and authoritative in chapters 5-7, then he is just as reliable in chapters 13, 23, 24, and 27.

"An archbishop of the Church of England once remarked that it would be impossible to conduct the affairs of Britain on the basis of the Sermon on the Mount, because the nation was not loyal to the King. The sermon of the King can be understood and followed only by faithful subjects of the King...Trying to apply Jesus' teachings without receiving Him as Lord and Savior is futile. Those, for example, who promote the social gospel, endeavoring to institute Jesus' teachings apart from His saving and regenerating work, prove only that His principles cannot work for those who do not have a transformed nature and God's indwelling power. One cannot behave like Christ until one becomes like Christ. Those who do not love the King cannot live like the King."50

#### A Listing of the Beatitudes:

REFERENCE IN MATTHEW	WHO THEY ARE	WHAT THEY RECEIVE
5:3	The poor in Spirit	The kingdom of heaven
5:4	They that mourn	Comfort
5:5	The meek	They shall inherit the earth
5:6	Those who hunger and thirst after righteousness	They shall be filled (satisfied)
5:7	The merciful	Mercy
5:8	The pure in heart	They shall see God
5:9	Peacemakers	They shall be called the Children of God

<sup>49</sup> J. Vernon McGee, *Thru the Bible, Matthew*,

<sup>50</sup> John MacArthur, *Matthew* volume 1.

### **Outline of Matthew 5-7**

Outline of Matthew 5 – 7 (R. A. Huebner, *Elements of Dispensational Truth*, volume 4, pages 43-44).

Matt. 5 - 7 falls into three main divisions. Chapter 5 speaks of the disciple's character; chapter 6 of the disciple's divine support; and chapter 7 of the disciple's discernment. All of this is proclaimed according to Christ's authority peculiar to Himself.

#### **1. Matthew 5: Christ's Place over the Disciple and the Disciple's Character as Suitable for the Kingdom**

- (1) Matt. 5:1, 2: Christ Takes His Place of Authority
- (2) Matt. 5:3-16: The Disciple's Character and Testimony
- (3) Matt. 5:17-20: Are the Law and the Prophets Thus Made Void?
- (4) Matt. 5:21-48: Ye Have Heard It Said, But I say Unto You
  - a. Matt. 5:20-26: Killing -- Anger
  - b. Matt. 5:27-32: Adultery -- Lust
  - c. Matt. 5:33-37: Swearing -- Honesty in the Heart
  - d. Matt. 5:38-42: Retaliation -- Resist not Evil
  - e. Matt. 5:43-48: Hate -- Love

#### **2. Matthew 6: The Father's Eye in Secret upon the Disciple, for His Support**

- (1) Matt. 6:1-18: With the Father in Secret
  - a. Matt. 6:1-4: The Father Rejects Hypocrisy in Giving
  - b. Matt. 6:5-15: The Father Rejects Hypocrisy in Prayer
  - c. Matt. 6:16-18: The Father Rejects Hypocrisy in Fasting
- (2) Matt. 6:19-34: The Father With Us, Taking Care of Tomorrow
  - a. Matt. 6:19-24: The Disciple's Object as Going Through the World
  - b. Matt. 6:25-33: The Father's Care of the Disciple As Going Through the World
  - c. Matt. 6:34: The Practical Effect Concerning Tomorrow

#### **3. Matthew 7: The Disciple's Discerning Walk**

- (1) Matt 7:1-14: Discernment in the Disciple's Walk
  - a. Matt. 7:1-5: Fitness to Judge Discerningly
  - b. Matt. 7:6: Discerning Holy and Unholy
  - c. Matt. 7:7-11: Asking Discerningly
  - d. Matt. 7:12: Discerning Conduct
  - e. Matt. 7:13-14: Discerning the Gate That Leads to Life
- (2) Matt. 7:15-27: Discerning The False and The True
  - a. Matt. 7:15-20: Discerning False Fruit-Prophets
  - b. Matt. 7:21-23: Discerning False Miracle-Monger-Prophets
  - c. Matt. 7:24-27: Discerning the True Foundation
- (3) Matt. 7:24-27: True Discernment -- Hearing and Doing Christ's Words
- (4) Matt. 7:28-29: The Teacher With Authority Peculiar to Himself Has Spoken

## **14. The Beatitudes 5:1-12, see also Luke 6:20-26**

**5:1 And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain:<sup>a</sup> and when he was set,<sup>b</sup> his disciples came unto him:**

1a We do not know which mountain this was, although there are several traditional sites. The Lord went up on the mountainside for an "elevated" pulpit, to be better heard and seen by the multitude. The Law was given at a mountain in Exodus 19,20, and the Law of the Kingdom was also given on a mountain.

"It was suitable that such elevated ethics should be taught from a mountain."<sup>51</sup>

1b "**when He was set**" A rabbi commonly sat down when he taught. If he spoke while standing or walking, what he said was considered to be informal and unofficial. But when he sat down, what he said was authoritative and official. Even today we speak of professors holding a "chair" in a university, signifying the honored position from which they teach.

**5:2 And he opened his mouth,<sup>a</sup> and taught them,<sup>b</sup> saying,**

2a When the Lord preached, He did not mumble in dark sentences as did the scribes or as false teachers do. He opened His mouth so as to be heard and understood and declared the truth of God very plainly, for all to understand. He also spoke clearly, plainly and with authority. The Lord was a preacher and He preached loud, long and distinctively! that was especially solemn and important. This sermon was both authoritative and intimate; it was of the utmost importance and was delivered with the utmost concern.

2b Preaching also involves teaching. You can't separate them, nor should you try. Too many preachers, especially of the Neo-fundamentalist and Neo-Independent Fundamental Baptist variety, put the emphasis on volume and theatrics and do little, if any teaching.

**5:3a Blessed<sup>b</sup> are the poor in spirit:<sup>cd</sup> for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.<sup>ef</sup>**

3a 5:3-5 Outline

1. The poor in spirit, Matthew 5:3
2. The pressed in soul, Matthew 5:4
3. The patient in strife, Matthew 5:5

3b The Old Testament ended with "a curse": The New Testament opens with "**Blessed**." This runs into Psalm 1:1-3 where this Blessed Man is further described. And this Blessed Man is a believer. No unsaved man can make any claim to be enjoying such blessings from God as he is still apart from God and still is at enmity with God. The first step in receiving and enjoying such blessings is the new birth. A happy man is a man who enjoys the blessing of God.

3c Who are the "poor in spirit? It is the opposite of that haughty, self-assertive, and self-sufficient attitude that the world so much admires and praises. It is the opposite of that independent and defiant attitude that refuses to bow to the will of God. To be poor in spirit is to realize that I have nothing, am nothing, and can do nothing, and that I have need of all things.

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<sup>51</sup> Charles Spurgeon, *Gospel of the Kingdom*.

These are meek and humble people, not necessarily poor economically, who have been broken by the Spirit of God of self and sin. They are poor in spirit in the sense that they do not magnify themselves, do not promote themselves but see themselves as God sees them, as sinners in desperate need of the grace of God. The poor in spirit are the people who have no merit or righteousness of their own on which to stand before God. Due to this lack of merit, they cannot offer God anything in themselves. They are characterized by utter dependence on God.

They are mentioned in Psalms 34:18 (**"The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit."**) and Psalm 51:17 (**"The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."**).

1. Poor people are usually dependent upon other people. The poor in spirit have no power or sufficiency in themselves but rely totally upon the Lord to support them spiritually and in every other compartment of their life.
2. The first requirement for salvation is the development of this humble attitude, for proud men and self-sufficient men do not accept the gospel. They are "too proud to accept charity" and prefer to work their way to heaven by good works and religious rites. The rest of these proud men will deny they have any need for any salvation at all, for whatever reason. But when a sinner comes to realize his own wretched state before God and his own inability to do anything in and of himself to improve his standing before God, then he will come to the cross humbly, broken, poor in spirit, bringing no good works or religion. They will simply cry out for mercy as a condemned beggar, relying only and solely upon the grace and love of God. No man gets saved who possesses any other spirit than this. The penitent sinner is not looking for a physical healing or a raise or a new car, but for mercy and salvation!
3. The world would not honor such a humble self-image. They teach that a man is to strut and promote himself, to stand up for himself, never to allow himself to be stepped on or overlooked. But this is not a virtue in the Kingdom. We will see this theme throughout the Sermon on the Mount as the Lord extols those virtues that the world despises. But "that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination to God" (Luke 16:15) and vice-versa.
4. "Poor in spirit" does not necessarily mean poor in an economic sense. A billionaire can be "poor in spirit" and a mission bum can be happy and have the joy of the Lord.
5. Also see Isaiah 66:2 **"to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word."** The Laodicean of Revelation 3:17 was just the opposite- he thought he was rich and had need of nothing. Also compare the publican and the Pharisee of Luke 18:9-14.

3d "It is the opposite of that haughty, self-assertive and self-sufficient disposition which the world so much admires and praises. It is the very reverse of that independent and defiant attitude which refuses to bow to God, which determines to brave things out, which says with Pharaoh, "Who is the Lord that I should obey His voice?" To be "poor in spirit" is to realize that I have nothing, am nothing, and can do nothing, and have need of all things. Poverty of spirit is a consciousness of my emptiness, the result of the Spirit's work within. It issues from the painful discovery that all my righteousnesses are as filthy rags. It follows the awakening that my best performances are unacceptable, yea, an abomination to the thrice Holy One. Poverty of spirit evidences itself by its bringing the individual into the dust before God, acknowledging his utter helplessness and deservingness of hell. It corresponds to the initial awakening of the prodigal in the far country, when he "began to be in want."<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> A. W. Pink, *The Beatitudes*.

3e This is a millennial promise for the “Kingdom of Heaven” refers to the millennial reign of Christ after the tribulation period. Since Matthew is the Gospel to the Jew, his readers would be very interested in this future political kingdom that the prophets spoke so much about. Those who were poor, weak and despised in these dispensations will be honored and promoted in the Millennium. There is no “kingdom” for them in the Church Age.

3f “It is remarkable that Jesus began his ministry in this manner, so unlike all others. Other teachers had taught that happiness was to be found in honour, or riches, or splendour, or sensual pleasure. Jesus overlooked all those things, and fixed his eye on the poor, and the humble, and said that happiness was to be found in the lowly vale of poverty, more than in the pomp and splendors of life.”<sup>53</sup>

#### **5:4 Blessed are they that mourn:<sup>a</sup> for they shall be comforted.<sup>b</sup>**

4a “**mourn**” What do they mourn over?

1. The sins and carnalities of their generation. The word really doesn’t deal with mourning over a lost loved one, for example. They recognize that they had no righteousness and mourn that lack of righteousness to God. Christ promised that those who acknowledged their sin would be comforted. This was David’s experience as he testified in Psalm 32:1,2, **“Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.”**
2. The falling away that is present in every age. And there is certainly much to mourn over regarding the sins of our generation and the turning away from God that is accelerating in this day. A true Christian will mourn while a carnal Christian will attempt to be reconciled with the age.
3. Their own personal failings and corruptions that lurk in their own hearts.
4. The lost that we know of who continue to reject the gospel.
5. The wayward and the backslider. How many parents weep over a prodigal son or daughter!
6. Are not these three worthy things to spend much time concerned about and weeping over? If these items do not move the believer to a broken heart, then what would? How many believers weep when their favorite sports team loses or the politician that they supported in an election loses! We tend to weep over carnal, temporary things that have no importance in the light of eternity, yet remain dry-eyed over the things that really do matter. The world certainly does not mourn over its sin, its carnality, its rebellion against God and its impending judgment, but they really should if they wished to be wise and avoid the certain judgment of God upon them.
7. There are a few verses that deal with this attitude of mourning:
  - A. Isaiah 61:2,3 **“To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.”**
  - B. James 4:9 **“Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness.”**

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<sup>53</sup> Albert Barnes, *Commentary on Matthew*, page 43.



i. The verse in James shows that an attitude of mourning is better than one of laughter and frivolity. Many laugh and party today, not considering the fact that they are under the condemnation of God because of their sins. If they really understood their spiritual situation and danger, they would leave off the “high life” and spend time on their face before God, weeping over their sins.

8. Those who mourn in this manner, with a broken heart, will have the attention of heaven and may be sure that God hears these tears and will act upon them. They “shall” be comforted, not “might be comforted”. The promise is absolute.

9. The Church rejects this beatitude today. Modern Christianity is presented as nothing but joy, pleasure, a “good time”. Local churches are nothing more than places to fellowship or a place to drop off your children so they can associate with their youth group. Few go to church for spiritual reasons. John Piper presented his “Christian hedonism” heresy in the early 2000s. Many church services are presented as “celebration services”. The prosperity preachers discourage any serious introspection of one’s own sins and inner corruptions. Contemporary churches are always presenting “upbeat” sermons exclusively. How much unlike what preachers preached on in better days. Before people got saved, they would sometimes mourn for months and even years over their own inward corruptions and sins. They gave time for the law to do its good work in the heart in bringing a sinner to a true and genuine conversion. Today, “soulwinners” supposedly “lead people to Christ” after an 8-minute gospel presentation of their front porch. Where is the time for mourning on the part of the sinner? No mourning equals a weak salvation. As long as the church is growing numerically, as long as the money keeps coming in and as long as we occasionally get invited to the White House or asked to open the state legislature in prayer, we imagine ourselves to be doing well spiritually, with no need of any spiritual mourning. This, we lose this blessing.

4b Mourners are not always comforted today but all mourners will be comforted in the Millennium. I mourn over the state of the United States and the church as a whole today but there will be no comfort in this life as both are heading for divine judgment. But all mournings are resolved in the Millennium.

## **5:5 Blessed are the meek:<sup>ab</sup> for they shall inherit the earth.<sup>cd</sup>**

### **5a “meek”**

1. Meekness is strength under control. It is the feeling of patient, submissive humbleness, the disposition to be patient and long suffering. It is a bending under pressure but not breaking.
2. It comes from the Middle English, of Scandinavian origin; akin to Old Norse mjūkr “gentle”; akin to Welsh esmwyth “soft”. Meekness is not produced by self-effort but by Spirit effort.
3. Only the Holy Spirit can produce meekness in the heart of a yielded Christian.
4. To be meek means not to resist the world’s opposition but to suffer it willingly.
5. If we are meek, willing to suffer the world’s opposition in this age, we will inherit the earth in the Kingdom Age.
6. Biblical revelation about the “meek”:
  - A. Moses was the meekest man on the earth
    - i. Numbers 12:3 **Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.**
  - B. The meek shall eat and be satisfied

- i. Psalm 22:26 **The meek shall eat and be satisfied: they shall praise the LORD that seek him: your heart shall live for ever.**
  - C. God will guide the meek in judgment
    - i. Psalm 25:9 **The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way.**
  - D. The meek shall inherit the earth
    - i. Psalm 37:11 **But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.**
    - ii. Matthew 5:5 **Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.**
  - E. God lifts up the meek
    - i. Psalm 147:6 **The LORD lifteth up the meek: he casteth the wicked down to the ground.**
  - F. The meek will be beautified with salvation
    - i. Psalm 149:4 **For the LORD taketh pleasure in his people: he will beautify the meek with salvation.**
  - G. God will judge and reprove for the meek
    - i. Isaiah 11:4 **But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.**
  - H. The meek shall increase their joy in the Lord
    - i. Isaiah 29:19 **The meek also shall increase their joy in the LORD, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.**
  - I. The meek are to seek the Lord
    - i. Zephaniah 2:3 **Seek ye the LORD, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the LORD'S anger.**
  - J. The Lord is meek
    - i. Matthew 11:29 **Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.**
    - ii. 2 Corinthians 10:1 **Now I Paul myself beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, who in presence am base among you, but being absent am bold toward you:**
  - K. The Lord came in His triumphal entry meekly
    - i. Matthew 21:5 **Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.**
  - L. Women are to have a meek and quiet spirit
    - i. 1 Peter 3:4 **But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.**
7. What are some characteristics of a meek man?
- A. He is humble
  - B. He is gentle of spirit
  - C. He is patient with others
  - D. He is longsuffering
  - E. He is quick to forgive a wrong
  - F. He is content with his lot in life
  - G. He is everything a proud man is not and is nothing that a proud man is. He is the polar opposite of a proud man.

5b “What, then, is meekness? I think we can sum it up in this way. Meekness is essentially a true view of oneself, expressing itself in attitude and conduct with respect to others. It is therefore two things. It is my attitude towards myself; and it is an expression of that in my relationship to others. You see how inevitably it follows being 'poor in spirit' and 'mourning'. A man can never be meek unless he is poor in spirit. A man can never be meek unless he has seen himself as a vile sinner. These other things must come first. But when I have that true view of myself in terms of poverty of spirit, and mourning because of my sinfulness, I am led on to see that there must be an absence of pride. The meek man is not proud of himself, he does not in any sense glory in himself. He feels that there is nothing in himself of which he can boast. It also means that he does not assert himself. You see, it is a negation of the popular psychology of the day which says 'assert yourself', 'express your personality'. The man who is meek does not want to do so; he is so ashamed of it. The meek man likewise does not demand anything for himself. He does not take all his rights as claims. He does not make demands for his position, his privileges, his possessions, his status in life. No, he is like the man depicted by Paul in Philippians 2. 'Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.' Christ did not assert that right to equality with God; He deliberately did not. And that is the point to which you and I have to come. Then let me go further; the man who is meek is not even sensitive about himself. He is not always watching himself and his own interests. He is not always on the defensive. We all know about this, do we not? Is it not one of the greatest curses in life as a result of the fall - this sensitivity about self? We spend the whole of our lives watching ourselves. But when a man becomes meek, he has finished with all that; he no longer worries about himself and what other people say. To be truly meek means we no longer protect ourselves, because we see there is nothing worth defending. So we are not on the defensive; all that is gone. The man who is truly meek never pities himself, he is never sorry for himself. He never talks to himself and says, 'You are having a hard time, how unkind these people are not to understand you'. He never thinks: 'How wonderful I really am, if only other people gave me a chance.' Self-pity! What hours and years we waste in this! But the man who has become meek has finished with all that. To be meek, in other words, means that you have finished with yourself altogether, and you come to see you have no rights or deserts at all.”<sup>54</sup>

5c **“they shall inherit the earth”** Quoted from Psalm 37:11. This is obviously not a Church Age promise. This is another millennial promise (it has never happened in human history and never will until the Millennium), for these with this virtue. It is not seen as a valuable trait in the eyes of the world but the Lord thinks so highly of it, He attaches a millennial promise to the meek. Meek people inherit nothing in this age but they will in the Millennium. They shall inherit the earth. Not just a land or a nation, but the entire earth. The rich, powerful and mighty imagine themselves to be the inheritors of all that there is but they will find themselves to be but paupers in the day when the accounts are reckoned and closed if they die without Christ. The righteous poor may have but little of the world's goods in this day but that also shall be reversed in that day.

AV	ESV	LSV
5 Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.	5 “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.	5 Blessed are the lowly, for they shall inherit the earth.

**“meek”** The LSV has “lowly”, which is not the same thing. One can be “lowly” and still be proud.

5d **“Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth”** is well illustrated

<sup>54</sup> D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Studies in the Sermon on the Mount*, pages 57-58.

devotionally and practically for today's believer by King David in 2 Samuel 16:10, 12 "And the king said, What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah? so let him curse, because the LORD hath said unto him, Curse David. Who shall then say, Wherefore hast thou done so?...It may be that the LORD will look on mine affliction, and that the LORD will requite me good for his cursing this day."

"Note then how the Lord requites David for his meekness with a promise whereby the fulfilment of which is yet future. "And David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them. And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children's children for ever: and my servant David shall be their prince for ever" Ezekiel 37:24-25."<sup>55</sup>

## **5:6 Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst<sup>a</sup> after righteousness:<sup>bc</sup> for they shall be filled.**

### **6a "hunger and thirst after righteousness"**

1. Not physically but spiritually. The godly hunger and thirst after righteousness just as a hungry man would hunger after food and a thirsty man would thirst after water. I know what it means to thirst in that manner.
2. In August 1983, I contracted a severe stomach virus. I could eat or drink anything for two weeks, as I threw up anything that went into my stomach. I was eventually admitted into the hospital for 7 days as a result. But not being able to really drink anything for two weeks in the middle of summer makes one appreciate water! I literally panted after the water brooks (Psalm 42:1 "**As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.**"). A blessed man is one who pants and desires the righteousness of God even more than a thirsty man seeks after water. They shall have their desires fulfilled by the Lord and He will always honor such requests.
3. They do not hunger for the things that the world hungers for, such as money, fame, material positions, but for the things of God.
4. To hunger and thirst after righteousness is to hunger and thirst after God-likeness shows an intense desire to be conformed into His image.
5. The Pharisees had no desire for true righteousness as they were quite satisfied with their own self-righteousness.

6b "The question that now remains is obviously this: How can we tell whether we are hungering and thirsting after righteousness? That is the vital thing; that is all we have to be concerned about. I suggest the way to discover the answer is to study the Scriptures, as, for example, Hebrews 11, because there we have some great and glorious examples of people who did hunger and thirst after righteousness and were filled. Go through the whole of the Bible and you will discover the meaning of this, especially in the New Testament itself. Then you can supplement scriptural biography by reading about some of the great saints who have adorned the Church of Christ. There is ample literature concerning this matter. Read the Confessions of St. Augustine, or the lives of Luther, of Calvin, and of John Knox. Read the lives of some of the outstanding Puritans and the great Pascal. Read the lives of those mighty men of God of 200 years ago in the evangelical awakening, for example the first volume of John Wesley's Journal, or the astounding biography of George Whitefield. Read the life of John Fletcher of Madeley. I have not time to mention them all: there are men who enjoyed this fullness, and whose holy

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<sup>55</sup> Alan O'Reilly.

lives were a manifestation of it. Now the question is, how did they arrive at that? If we want to know what hungering and thirsting means, we must study the Scriptures and then go on to see it more on our own level by reading the lives of such people, and if we do so, we come to the conclusion that there are certain tests which we can apply to ourselves to discover whether we are hungering and thirsting after righteousness or not. The first test is this: Do we see through all our own false righteousness? That would be the first indication that a man is hungering and thirsting after righteousness. Until he has come to see that his own righteousness is nothing, is, as the Scripture puts it, but 'filthy rags'; or, to use a stronger term, the particular term that the apostle Paul used and which some people think should not be used from a Christian pulpit, the term used in Philippians 3, where Paul speaks of all the wonderful things he had been doing and then tells us that he counts them all as 'dung' - dung, refuse, putrefying refuse. That is the first test. We are not hungering and thirsting after righteousness as long as we are holding with any sense of self-satisfaction to anything that is in us, or to anything that we have ever done. The man who hungers and thirsts after righteousness is the man who knows what it is to say with Paul, 'In me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing'. If we still want to pat ourselves on the back, and feel a sense of satisfaction in the things we have done, it indicates perfectly clearly that we are still trusting and holding on to our own righteousness. If we are in any sense prone to defend ourselves, well, that means that we are just holding on still to some righteousness of our own. And as long as we do that we shall never be blessed. We see that to be hungering and thirsting in this sense is, as John Darby puts it, to be starving, to realize we are dying because we have nothing. That is the first step, seeing all false righteousness of our own as 'filthy rags', and as 'refuse'.<sup>56</sup>

6c Hungering and thirsting after righteous is good but carries few, if any, rewards today. But there will be rewards and fulfillments of this in the Millennium.

### **5:7a Blessed are the merciful:bc for they shall obtain mercy.bde**

7a 5:7-9 outline

1. When facing cruelty, Matthew 5:7
2. When facing corruption, Matthew 5:8
3. When facing conflict, Matthew 5:9

7b What is mercy? A good definition would be "Grace is especially associated with men in their sins; mercy is especially associated with men in their misery...mercy looks especially upon the miserable consequences of sin. So Mercy really means a sense of pity plus a desire to relieve suffering...it is pity plus the action"<sup>57</sup>

"A popular Roman philosophy called mercy "the disease of the soul." It was the supreme sign of weakness. Mercy was a sign that you did not have what it takes to be a real man and especially a real Roman. The Romans glorified manly courage, strict justice, firm discipline, and, above all, absolute power. They looked down on mercy, because mercy to them was weakness, and weakness was despised above all other human limitations."<sup>58</sup>

### **7c "merciful"**

1. A man who does not show mercy shall not find it, either of man or God. An example is this is in Matthew 18:23-35. The Lord is talking about forgiveness in that parable but the quality of mercy also applies.

<sup>56</sup> D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Studies in the Sermon on the Mount*, pages 74-75.

<sup>57</sup> D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Studies in the Sermon on the Mount*, page 84.

<sup>58</sup> John MacArthur, *Matthew*.

2. They obtain mercy from God since they show mercy to man. A merciful man is ready to extend mercy to others, so he shall receive it when he needs it, both from God and man.
3. "The following passages describe God's mercy toward us:
  - A. God's mercy is great- Numbers 14:18,19
  - B. God's mercy is plenteous- Psalm 86:5,15; 103:8
  - C. God's mercy is everlasting- Psalm 100:5
  - D. God's mercy is good- Psalm 109:21
  - E. God's' mercy is tender- Luke 1:78
  - F. God's mercy is rich- Ephesians 2:4
  - G. God's mercy is abundant- 1 Peter 1:3
  - H. God delights in mercy- Micah 7:18."<sup>59</sup>
4. God has been so merciful to us in providing us salvation, His indwelling Holy Spirit and an opportunity to walk with Him and to eventually spend eternity with Him in heaven, when we deserved nothing but hell. As we have been the recipients of so great mercy, we should be always ready to return that mercy to others who may have wronged us.
5. The Pharisees considered themselves to have no responsibility to the poor, the sick, the infirm, and the lonely, supposing these to be signs of divine displeasure. They felt no obligation to those whom they deemed to be under divine punishment. They seldom practiced mercy.

7d Merciful people often can get stabbed in the back in this age but they will not need to fear this in the Millennium.

7e "To be righteous is to deal with yourself in a strict way. We must be righteous in dealing with ourselves. We should not give ourselves any excuse. Toward others, however, we must be merciful. If we are diligent to seek the surpassing righteousness, we shall eventually become merciful toward others. In our seeking we shall find that our natural man is weak and that we are prone to failure. If you do not realize the pitiful condition of your natural man, you will never have mercy on others. Instead of showing mercy to them, you will condemn them when they fail or fall. The reason you condemn them is that you do not know yourself. If you know yourself, whenever someone fails, you will say, "Lord, have mercy on me and on my brother. We all are weak vessels and cannot fulfill Your requirements. Lord, even though my brother has offended me, I would still be merciful toward him." If you have never failed, you will never be merciful. If you are always successful in your pursuit of holiness and perfection, you will have no sympathy toward others when they fail. You will always condemn them. But if you know how weak you are and how many mistakes you have made, you will be merciful to others."<sup>60</sup>

## **5:8 Blessed are the pure in heart:<sup>a</sup> for they shall see God.<sup>b</sup>**

### **8a "pure in heart"**

1. How little we hear of heart purity in our age (John 3:25 "**Then there arose a between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying.**"). Few are asking any questions about it at all. There is little interest in it and even less striving for it. Preachers ask many questions about church growth, running busses, politics and so on. Get a group of preachers together in a "pastor's fellowship" and they will talk about everything except purity. This accounts for so much of the carnality and apostasy in our today.

<sup>59</sup> Oliver Greene, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, volume 1, page 308.

<sup>60</sup> Witness Lee, *Life Study on Matthew*.

2. The Pharisees put all the emphasis on the externals, while Christ put the emphasis on the heart. No honest man can say that his heart is pure. How can the heart of man, which is desperately wicked, be made clean? Jesus said, **"Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you"** (John 15:3). It is by the washing of regeneration that we are made clean. Only the blood of Christ can cleanse us from all sin (1 John 1:7).

3. Purity of heart is needed to see the Kingdom. This is through the new birth and the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit in the heart. Heart purity should be the goal of every believer.

4. What is heart purity?

A. A saved heart

i. No sinner is pure in heart.

a. Psalm 10:4 **"The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts."**

ii. Not every saint can be said to be pure in heart if he is carnal.

B. A sanctified heart

i. This is a separated heart, separated from the world and unto God

ii. A heart devoted to the things of God.

iii. It is a heart that hates what God hates and loves what He loves.

The purer the heart be, the more conscious it becomes of, and the more it grieves over, indwelling sin and corruption. A pure heart is one which despises foul thoughts, vile imaginations, and evil desires. It is a heart that mourns over pride, unbelief and coldness of heart, and weeps over carnality.

C. A seeking heart

i. Seeking after the things of God

a. Psalm 27:8 **"When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, LORD, will I seek."**

ii. It is a heart that actively seeks communion, fellowship, purity and a walk with God in contrast to things of this world.

D. A separated heart

i. It has the idea of to be single in purpose, to have the single goal of accomplishing God's will for God's glory. It is a heart that is separated and dedicated to the will of God and to the glory of God.

5. Other characteristics of a pure heart

A. Psalm 24:4 **"He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully."**

i. He had clean hands.

ii. He does not lift up his soul unto vanity.

iii. He does not swear deceitfully.

iv. This is the man who shall ascend to the hill of the Lord.

B. 1 Timothy 1:5 **"Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned:"**

i. He manifests charity, which is love put into action.

ii. He has a good conscience.

iii. He has an unfeigned faith.

a. Both have the same idea, that his faith is genuine, that he really is saved, that he truly loves God, he is not putting on a show to impress anyone, and that he really wants to live for God.

C. 2 Timothy 2:22 **"Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart."**

i. He flees (youthful) lusts.

ii. He follows:

- a. Righteousness
- b. Faith
- c. Charity
- d. Peace

iii. He calls on the Lord (presumably in prayer).

D. 1 Peter 1:22 **"Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently:"**

i. He has purified his soul.

a. Salvation and sanctification are both the work of God but there is an element that we have in both, mainly in allowing the Holy Spirit to do His good work in our hearts.

ii. He has obeyed the truth.

- a. He knows what the truth is and then obeys it.
- b. He is not a rebel nor disobedient, but he allows God's will to supersede his own.

iii. He loves the brethren fervently.

6. "A "pure heart" is one which has a pure Object before it, being attracted by "the beauty of holiness." It is one in which the fear of the Lord has been implanted and the love of God shed abroad, and therefore it hates what He hates and loves what He loves. The purer the heart be, the more conscious it becomes of, and the more it grieves over, indwelling filth. A pure heart is one which makes conscience of foul thoughts, vile imaginations, and evil desires. It is one that mourns over pride and discontent, unbelief and coldness of affection, and weeps in secret over unholiness. Alas, how little is this inward purity esteemed today: the great majority of professors content themselves with a mere form of godliness, a shadow of the reality. The heaviest burden of a pure heart is the discovery that such an ocean of unclean waters still indwells him, constantly casting up mire and dirt, fouling all that he does."<sup>61</sup>

7. Purity of heart does not mean sinlessness or the eradication of the sin nature, for no man was/is/will be sinless except Christ. Yet many sinners are said to be pure of heart or have heart purity. Noah got drunk, Abraham equivocated, Moses disobeyed God, Job cursed the day of his birth, Elijah fled in terror from Jezebel, Peter denied Christ.

8. Heart purity extends to both purity of doctrine, purity of intention and to purity of life. Those with this kind of heart purity will see God and experience Him and understand the Scripture in a way that no carnal Christian will. Possessing heart purity is the first step to a true a genuine Christian life and walk. Both are impossible without purity.

9. Making a heart pure is a greater miracle than cleansing a leper or raising the dead. Charismatics are always seeking "signs and wonders" and the hyper-evangelicals are always boasting in their numbers of converts and the size of their ministries. But heart purity is a greater work. Can one really have a "pure heart"? Is there such a hope for this kind of Christian life today? Why not? If God mentions it here and promises a blessing for those who seek it, then it must be attainable, else this beatitude is a farce.

8b **"they shall see God"**

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<sup>61</sup> A. W. Pink, *The Beatitudes*.



1. In a sense, all men will see God, either at the Bema judgment (for the saved) or the Great White Throne judgment (for the lost). But seeing God at any of these judgments is not the idea here. To see God in this context is to see Him in His holiness and glory, to see the King in his glory and majesty. This is reserved only for the pure in heart. This would involve only believers, who have had their hearts purified by the blood of Christ.

2. Once, I “saw” President Bill Clinton while in Washington, but I saw him from afar and he certainly did not see me. Although I “saw” him, he did not invite me into the White House and we never talked. Many believers “see” God in this manner. They know Who He is but really “see” very little about Him except for that which is superficial.

3. Heart purity gives one a unique insight into the nature and character of God that other believers and the unsaved do not get. They all can “see God” in a fashion but heart purity gives one a depth and quality of this understanding of God that is denied to others. Where did men like Samuel Rutherford or Robert Murray McCheyne or O. Talmadge Spence (or any other divine) get their understanding of God? Not from any theological education nor from their theological systems, but from spending much time with God in secret and from a deep and intense yearning for heart purity.

A. The old Greek philosophers used to run their schools and academies and anyone could sit in on a lecture. But these were just common auditors and all they got was the basic teachings that everyone had access to. But the teachers would have a second set of lessons, reserved for the serious and dedicated students that was not available to the indifferent crowd. The Holy Spirit works in a similar fashion.

3. Hebrews 12:14 **“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:”**

A. Holiness is required to see God. Even spirituality won’t allow you to see God.

4. Christian people can see God in a sense that nobody else can. The Christian can see God in nature, whereas the non-Christian cannot. The Christian sees God in the events of history. There is a vision possible to the eye of faith that no one else has. But there is a seeing also in the sense of knowing Him, a sense of feeling He is near, and enjoying His presence.

5. In the Millennium, we will be able to see God, in Christ, physically as He reigns from Jerusalem. The pure in heart will, as we can say, “be invited to the White House”. They will be invited to participate in a very close fellowship with the King in the Millennium. Today, if you follow and support certain politicians, you get rewarded for that, often times with political appointments. Those who have the right heart in the Millennium will enjoy similar benefits with the King. This also implies there will be many in the Millennium who will not have such a perfect heart, which is why the King must rule with a rod of iron in Psalm 2:9, **“Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.”**

A. Revelation 22:4, **“And they shall see his face.”** This is the goal of it all!

## **5:9 Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.**<sup>abcdeh</sup>

9a How this is ignored today! It is with genuine grief to see so many Christians supporting the military and military activity, all under the guise of “patriotism”. Our Mennonite and Amish cousins have the right idea in their refusal to serve in the military and our Baptist forefathers during the Reformation era also had the right idea in refusing to support governments that waged war and persecuted the saints. Now we are not wearing “rose colored glasses” in

thinking that we can do away with war before the establishment of the Millennium. We are fully aware that the Lord warned about an increase of war as we approached the last days (Matthew 24:6). But must we participate in it and promote it? If our lands and homes were being invaded by an invading foreign power, then there would be no question that we would be justified in defending our homes and lands. But when our politicians try to send us to Korea, Vietnam, Iraq or Afghanistan to murder people who never did anything to us, then that is simply out of the question.

I grew up in the Catholic church (I left it in 1983) and the nauseating song "Lord, Make Me An Instrument Of Thy Peace" was constantly sung. The average Catholic certainly did not understand that he was singing a meaningless song. Even the pope and all the religious leaders don't understand that world peace is impossible until the Prince of Peace is ruling from Jerusalem. The Prussians had a saying "In case of rain, the war will be held in the auditorium". The "weather forecast" for the next 20 years is "wars and rumors of wars" in Matthew 24:6 and Mark 13:7.

9b When and where possible, the Christian is to work for peace. In this fallen age, it will not always be possible and will often end in failure. The peace we would seek would be a spiritual peace, but not a political one. We are at war with the world, the flesh and the devil and that war, declared in Genesis 3, continues to this hour. No cease fire has ever been declared between God and Satan. This conflict will not be resolved until Revelation 20. That is our warfare, not fought with carnal weapons such as guns or airplanes, but with spiritual armory.

We should also be working when we can for peace in the church, peace among the brethren, peace among the various denominations and theological systems. This is called "irenicism" and it is honorable. We should do this without compromising the truth. Truth is more important than unity or peace, although all three should be desired and worked for as much as possible. Do you always have to have your way in a business meeting? If something doesn't go your way, do you threaten to fire the pastor or to split the church? Is it "your way or the highway?" Or can you be like Abraham in Genesis 13:8, who was willing to let Lot have first choice in order to keep down strife?

The peacemaker is not a pacifist. He does not want to fight and will strive for peace where he can. But when those attempts fail and conflict is inevitable, then he will fight for the right, even to the death. Pacifists want peace at any price, even to the point of compromise and apostasy. The peacemaker wants peace but never at the expense of truth.

9c Ephesians 6:15 ("**And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;**") applies this to the preacher who preaches the gospel of peace in offering the hope of reconciliation between the sinner and God through the gospel.

9d Warmongers and military apologists will not qualify here. The Jews were expecting a Messiah who would be a warrior-king, much like David. Instead, they got someone who never directly confronted Rome and talked of peace.

9e This verse cannot be applied doctrinally to this age as Jesus Himself admitted He came, not to bring peace, but a sword in Matthew 10:34! He also came to divide families in Luke 12:51-53 ("**Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division: For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three. The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother in law against her daughter in law, and the daughter in law against her mother in law.**"). The application then must be for the Tribulation and the Millennium, but I really can't get

more detailed than that. If it is for the Tribulation, then how can a believing Jew bring peace when the Antichrist is out to utterly destroy him and his nation?

9f There will be no war or international conflicts in the Millennium.

9h **“children of God”** But aren’t all Christians “children of God?” There must be a special distinction in the millennium, although this appears to be obscure. So the first thing we must do is to examine the phrase as it is used in Scripture:

1. Matthew 5:9 **Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.**

A. Peacemakers shall be called the children of God.

B. Notice the future tense. They are not called the children of God in Jesus’ day or now, but will be, probably in the millennium.

2. Luke 20:36 **Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.**

A. These are resurrected people, so this is a future application.

B. They cannot die anymore as they are immortal.

C. They are equal to the angels.

i. Probably in their immortality.

D. They are called “children of the resurrection”.

3. John 11:52 **And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.**

A. The context here is Jewish, regarding the “prophesy” of Caiaphas, that one man (Jesus) should die for the nation.

4. Romans 8:16 **The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:**

A. This is a clearly Christian context, that the Holy Spirit bears witness that Christians are the children of God.

5. Romans 8:21 **Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.**

6. Romans 9:8 **That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.**

A. Unsaved Jewish legalizers cannot be the children of God as they are the children of the flesh, and a child cannot have two fathers. Your father is either God or the flesh. It cannot be both.

7. **Galatians 3:26 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.**

A. Faith in Jesus Christ makes us children of God..

8. 1 John 3:10 **In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.**

A. The children of God are manifested in that they do not commit sin (1 John 3:9 by context **“Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God”**).

i. Studying this verse is beyond the scope of this commentary so see our commentary on 1, 2 and 3 John.

9. 1 John 5:2 **By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments.**

A. We love the children of God when we:

i. Love God

ii. Keep His commandments.

This phrase then has a future application to believers in the Millennium as well as Christian during the Church Age.

AV	ESV	LSV
9 Blessed <i>are</i> the peacemakers: for they shall be called the <b>children</b> of God.	9 “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.	9 Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

“children” The ESV and LSV both use “sons”.

### 5:10 Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake:<sup>a</sup> for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.<sup>b</sup>

10a “persecuted for righteousness’ sake” First Peter 2:20,21 (“For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps.”) certainly applies here. To be persecuted for your own sin or stupidity brings no blessing. But when we suffer for righteousness sake, there is a blessing for that. You must suffer for the gospel and for a Christian, righteous cause for this blessing to be realized. Suffering for social or political reasons do not qualify for the blessing. And if you live godly in Christ Jesus, you will be persecuted (2 Timothy 3:12 “**Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.**”). The godly will be persecuted since the world hates truth, God and the Bible. So woe unto you when all men speak ill of you or when you are approved of by this world system (Luke 6:26 “**Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets.**”)! Also see Philippians 1:29 “**Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake**”.

This verse will no doubt become more relevant to the Church and to the believing remnant in the Tribulation period as persecution is coming and it cannot be avoided without severely compromising our spiritual principles and testimony. To be identified with Christ or the Bible in any way, shape, manner or form will result in persecution even to the death.

10b “**kingdom of heaven**” This relates to the Millennial kingdom, which is Jewish in context. Would this immediate doctrinal application apply to tribulation Jews who faithfully suffered and endured during the reign of the Antichrist? Your reward for suffering and persecution in this age and in the Tribulation is often death but the reward will come in the Millennium.

### 5:11 Blessed are ye,<sup>a</sup> when men shall revile you, and persecute you,<sup>bc</sup> and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

11a There are several conditions to qualify for this blessing:

1. **Persecution for Christ’s sake.** Not for our sake or the sake of our denomination or our theological system, but for Christ’s sake, for His person, work and name.
2. **We are not persecuted for our own stupidity.** 1 Peter 2:20 says “For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.” I have known people who went out street preaching and made a nuisance of themselves. They blocked traffic, violated noise ordinances and disobeyed lawful commands from police. They then get fined and/or arrested. Then they can claim how they were “persecuted for

the gospel's sake". No, they were persecuted for being stupid. There is no glory or blessing in that.

**3. Falsely.** There is an element of slander in this criticism. You will be accused of being "holier than thou", "thinking you are better than everyone else", "thinking you are right and everyone else is wrong" (but no points if these criticisms are true! Only if they are said against you falsely!). The Bishop's Bible does add "lying".

11b As in 5:10, the doctrinal application is to the Jews who are persecuted by the Antichrist and His followers in the tribulation period. They will have a great millennial reward for their faithfulness during such trying times. Spiritually, this can relate to anyone who suffers similar persecution and harassment on account of Christ.

11c The reward is heavenly for enduring earthly persecutions.

**5:12 Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.<sup>a</sup>**

12a Why would we expect any better treatment than the prophets? They were all persecuted. So were the apostles. So was the Lord. If they were persecuted, and if we are walking in their way, we should expect the same fate. That means we are in the same spirit as they were and we have also aroused the same wrath and ire of the world and the devil that they did. What a glorious company to find oneself in!

Do not look for your spiritual rewards in this age or in this life. The reward is coming in the Millennium.

## **15. Salt 5:13**

**5:13a ¶ Ye are the salt<sup>bcd</sup> of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour,<sup>e</sup> wherewith shall it be salted?<sup>f</sup> it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.<sup>g</sup>**

13a Israel is called two things in verses 13 and 14:<sup>62</sup>

1. The salt of the earth
2. The light of the world

13b It is true that some of us are saltier than others but we should all be applying some salt where it is needed.

13c Salt is a mineral that is composed primarily of sodium chloride although there are other compounds of salt.. Salt flavor is one of the basic tastes, making salt one of the oldest, most ubiquitous food seasonings. Salting is an important method of food preservation. Chloride and sodium, the two major components of salt, are needed by all known living creatures in small quantities.

1. Salt was included among funereal offerings found in ancient Egyptian tombs from the third Millennium B.C., as were salted birds and salt fish. From about 2800 B.C., the Egyptians began exporting salt fish to the Phoenicians in return for Lebanon cedar, glass, and the dye Tyrian purple; the Phoenicians traded Egyptian salt fish and salt from North Africa throughout their Mediterranean trade empire.

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<sup>62</sup> Doctrinally, these two things apply to Israel, not the Church.

2. In the Old Testament, 35 verses mention salt, the earliest being the story of Lot's wife. When King Abimelech destroyed the city of Shechem, he is said to have "sown salt on it," probably as a curse on anyone who would re-inhabit it. (Judges 9:45)
3. In the New Testament, 6 verses mention salt. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus referred to his followers as the "salt of the earth". Paul also encouraged Christians to **"let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt"** (Colossians 4:6).
4. Salt is mandatory in the rite of the Tridentine Mass in the Roman church. Salt may be added to the water "where it is customary" in the Roman Catholic rite of Holy water.
5. In Judaism, it is recommended to have either a salty bread or to add salt to the bread if this bread is unsalted when doing Kidush for Shabat. It is customary to spread some salt over the bread or to dip the bread in a little salt when passing the bread around the table after the Kidush. To preserve the covenant between their people and God, Jews dip the Sabbath bread in salt.
6. Leviticus 2:13 ("**And every oblation of thy meat offering shalt thou season with salt; neither shalt thou suffer the salt of the covenant of thy God to be lacking from thy meat offering: with all thine offerings thou shalt offer salt.**") commands offering with every sacrifice as it was the symbol of a binding covenant.
7. Numbers 18:19 speaks of a "covenant of salt."
8. Job 6:6 says that God cannot "swallow" some things without salt, any more than a man can.
9. The salt is used for destruction in Ezekiel 47:11, **"But the miry places thereof and the marishes thereof shall not be healed; they shall be given to salt."**
10. Salt is:
  - A. An antiseptic. It cleanses and kills the germs of corruption.
    - i. Christians need to be clean and holy in their walk.
  - B. A flavoring. It makes bland things taste good.
    - i. Christianity is the spice of life! We have the greatest life there is and we pity the sinner in his misery and drudgery,
  - C. A preservative. It keeps things from going bad.
    - i. As bad as things are now, how much worse would they be if there was no Church on earth? America is in horrible shape but how much worse would we be without our churches? And how much worse will things get in the Tribulation when the Church is removed from the earth in the rapture?
4. A symbol for purity.
  - A. The Romans saw salt as the purest thing on earth because it came from the purest of things, the sun and the sea.
5. A miracle. It is made up of sodium, necessary for life and chlorine, which is poisonous. But combine them and they form an essential ingredient for life.
  - A. The Christian is a miracle- the poison of his sin nature and sin practice are transformed into something healthy by contact with the Holy Spirit.
  - B. Hypostatic union- made up of something poisonous- sin, and something good- the divine nature.
6. It can create thirst.
  - A. Do we create an interest in the things of God by our testimony? Our lives and witnesses should create a "thirst" for spiritual truth in the lost around us.
7. It is an irritant.
  - A. Do we irritate sinners, and the backslider? Our lives and witnesses should always have a "bite" to it.

13d Unsalty salt is a contradiction in terms (“like water losing its wetness”); if it is not salty, it is not salt. But salt as used in the ancient world was seldom pure sodium chloride. The “salt” collected around the Dead Sea contained a mixture of other minerals, and it is possible to imagine the salt content being washed out, leaving a useless substance.

13e **“lost his savor...”** This is a warning. Stale salt that has lost its flavor cannot be re-salted. Once you lose your godly influence and testimony, you cannot get it back. Testimony and reputation lost are lost forever. Flavorless salt is good for nothing but to be used for traction, to be used to step on. Disqualified Christians who have lost their power or testimony are useless in the program of God.

1. Why is the salt given a masculine pronoun here, unless the salt is a type that is to be applied to individuals?

13f In order to be salt, you have to get out of the shaker. You cannot live in monkish isolation and hope to salt society with gospel influence. You have to get out into the world and get involved in society so you can salt your area with the gospel. You must engage society with a gospel influence. We practice separation from sin but not from society. We must get out into the marketplace in the arts, literature, business, politics, science, philosophy, etc. We cannot influence institutions that we have removed ourselves from. The world needs salt because it is rotten and decayed from 6,000 years of sin. Only believers have the ability to save it and preserve it through the gospel.

13g **“to be trodden under foot of men.”** We use salt like this when walking or driving over snow and ice to help us maintain our traction. This is the final use of salt that can no longer be used for its original intended purpose.

## **16. Light 5:14-16, see also Mark 4:21-23; Luke 8:16-18**

**5:14 Ye are the light of the world.<sup>abcdef</sup> A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.<sup>g</sup>**

14a See Philippians 2:15 (**That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;**”), where Paul applies this name to the Christian. Christians are even called **“children of light”** (1 Thessalonians 5:5), which is also applied to Jews before the crucifixion in Luke 16:8 (**“And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.”**). It is true that some of us will put out more light than others but we should all be putting out some light.

Only believers can function as the light of the world and the light of their generations. The cults cannot. The “world religions” cannot for they are all in darkness. Even in generations where the remnant was small and weak (as it will be in the Tribulation), the salt and light were still there, doing its job.

14b As **“the light of the world”**:

1. We reflect Christ’s light, for He is “the light of the world”.
  - A. John 8:12 **“He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.”**
  - B. John 9:5. **“As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”**
2. As the moon has no light of its own but reflects the light of the sun, so the Church has no light of its own but reflects the glory of God.

A. Song 6:10 **“Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners?”**

B. Job 25:5 **“Behold even to the moon, and it shineth not.”**

C. The believer is dead in Christ, since the moon is a dead planet (Galatians 2:2 **“For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.”**)

D. The moon is bound to the earth by gravity. The Church is bound to Christ as His bride and by His power and grace.

E. The believer still bears the marks of sin as the moon shows craters spots (the “seas”).

F. Occasionally, he suffers a total eclipse when the world (1 John 2:15) comes between him and his “Sun.”

i. The light of the moon waxes and wanes, so does the light of the Christian. Sometimes the Body of Christ gives off a bright, shining light, and sometimes it doesn’t. The testimony of the Church ought to be strong and powerful so that it guides and moves things in the world like the moon moves the tides. But the sad fact is that the testimony of the Church today is so sorry, so lukewarm, so weak, and so worldly that it has little influence on the community around it.

3. The Christian can be compared to the golden candlesticks in the Tabernacle in Exodus 27:20,21. They were fueled by “pure olive oil, beaten for the light”. The oil had to be purified in order for it to shine the brightest and purest that it possibly could. The same goes for Christians and especially ministers.

14c “I once asked a rabbi why the children of Israel had to use olive oil that was beaten to be used to light the tabernacle as expressed in Exodus 27:20. The rabbi knew of my experience as a camp director and as any good rabbi would do, he answered my question by asking a question. He asked me what I would do if a log did not burn. Just because I was a camp director, I really knew nothing more about camping than the residents of the camp who were all inner-city teenagers. But I just happened to know the answer to that question because I faced it many times. I replied that you chop the log up into splinters and start the splinters on fire. The rabbi smiled and said: “Does not God do the same with us so He can start a fire in us.” I am always amazed as I read the first five books of the Old Testament as to how God would ask the children of Israel to do some seeming impractical thing. Our Western thinking causes us to first ask, “What practical value would beaten olive oil have to be used for the light of the tabernacle. Regular olive oil would do just fine and be more plentiful. Beaten oil should be used for special occasions like anointing or medication rather than burned quickly away for lighting purposes. Is it because beaten oil would burn brighter, or longer? Yet, if we think like a Hebrew, our first thought should be, “What is God trying to illustrate here?” You get two types of oil from the olive. The first which is the most pure, the finest and, of course, the most expensive is the beaten oil...The word in the Hebrew is “katith” which means to break into pieces. The first oil to be extracted from the olive does not come from pressing the olives, but breaking, cutting or tearing them into pieces. Olives spring from a tree and turn a dark green. When they are ripe they turn black and inside the olive are a couple drops of liquid gold as it is called. This is the beaten oil, the purest and finest. This is used for anointing, medicinal purposes and other specific uses. After the liquid is drained from the olive by bruising it, so to speak, it is then crushed or pressed to extract the oil contained in the meat of the olive. This oil is not as pure and is used for cooking and put into lamps for light. However, for the light in the tabernacle the people were instructed to use only the pure, beaten oil. The beaten oil is considered to be the first fruit of the olive and it is this oil that is used to provide the light in the tabernacle...The olive is afflicted in every way to extract the pure oil, but it is not crushed because once it is crushed the oil mixes with the impurities and it is no longer pure...Sometimes God has to break us up into little



splinters in order for us to catch the fire of God, God will break us into splinters or in pieces to extract that which is pure. Yet, He will not crush us such that the impurities mix with the pure resulting in a lesser quality...God wants to extract that which is pure, the life of Jesus Christ, from us. However, sometimes we are like that old log that will not catch fire. We just cannot catch the fire of Jesus. So God has to put us through the type of difficulties that have the potential of crushing us, but He will not allow us to be crushed, instead what He will do is to strip us of all our trust in ourselves so that the world can see that our trust is in God and God alone. The world will be able to see that which is pure, Jesus Christ, the first fruit that lives inside our earthen vessels.<sup>63</sup>

How is this oil beaten? It involves purifying something through either an application of intense heat or a filtering or a physical manipulation of the object to grind out any impurities or imperfections. This is what must happen to the preacher. He has the Holy Spirit dwelling within him but his relationship to the Holy Spirit may not be pure and it may not be what it ought to be. He may not be filled with the Spirit so his spiritual relationship and power is not what it ought to be. In order for him to have any impact for God and in order for him to shine with the spiritual light that he needs, he be purified. He needs to be beaten and thus trials, tribulations and testings come into the life of the preacher, and these are designed to beat the preacher and to purify him. This will bring a refining in his life, with the purging of sin and the magnification and promotion of godliness and spirituality and a development of Christ-likeness and a lessening of the influence of self and the flesh in that preacher's life.

1, Robert Murray McCheyne, when being asked of his view of diligent preparation for the pulpit, he quoted Exodus 27:20, where he mentioned "beaten oil, beaten oil for the lamps of the sanctuary". Just as the lamps of the sanctuary required the purest of olive oil in order for them to shine and to illuminate the Holy of Holies, so must the minister be similarly beaten and purified in order that he might shine bright enough to illuminate the house of God for the people of God.

2. God "beats" His ministers in order to purify them and to purge them from sin and self so they can shine as they ought. This "beating" comes in the forms of trials and tests. No one who ever accomplished anything for God did it without spending much time in the crucible. This is why trials are allowed to come into the life. A man who runs from them will never learn the lessons they are designed to give nor will he ever see any spiritual improvement in his walk with God.

A. The more you are "beaten" by God, the brighter and purer the light shines.

B. We are to be the **"light of the World"** in Matthew 5:14.

C. Some examples:

- i. Moses- 40 years in exile
- ii. David- persecuted by Saul
- iii. Peter- imprisoned and almost killed
- iv. Paul
  - a. 2 Corinthians 4:8-18
  - b. 2 Corinthians 11:24-29
- v. John- exiled on Patmos
- vi. McCheyne- constant physical issues
- vii. Spurgeon- constant depressions
- viii. Carey- a wife who suffered from a nervous breakdown
- ix. Judson, thrown into a death prison
- x. Patton- burying wife and children on the mission field

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<sup>63</sup> From the website <https://www.chaimbentorah.com/2014/10/herew-word-study-beaten-oil/>.

14d “This title had been given by the Jews to certain of their eminent Rabbis; with great pomp they spoke of Rabbi Judah, or Rabbi Jochanan, as the lamps of the universe, the lights of the world; it must have sounded strange in the ears of the Scribes and Pharisees, to hear that same title, in all soberness, applied to a few bronzed-faced, and rough-handed peasants and fishermen who had become disciples of Jesus. Jesus, in effect, said: “Not the Rabbis, not the Scribes, not the assembled Sanhedrim, but you, My humble followers, you are the light of the world!”<sup>64</sup>

14e “Then there was, as you know, a similar revival in the eighteenth century, which actually gave itself this very name of the ‘Enlightenment’. Any who are interested in the history of the Christian Church and of the Christian faith must reckon with that movement. It was the beginning, in a sense, of the attack upon the authority of the Bible, for it put philosophy and human thought in the position of the authoritative divine revelation and the declaration of God’s truth to man. Now that has continued up to this present hour, and the point I am emphasizing is that it always represents itself in terms of light, and men who are interested in that kind of movement always refer to it as ‘enlightenment’. Knowledge, they say, is that which brings light, and, of course, in so many respects it does. It would be foolish to dispute that. The increase in knowledge about the processes of nature and about physical illnesses and diseases and many other subjects has been truly phenomenal. New knowledge has also thrown greater light upon the working of the whole cosmos, and has given greater understanding with regard to so many different aspects of life. That is why people commonly talk about being ‘enlightened’ as the result of knowledge and of culture. And yet, in spite of all that, this is still the scriptural statement: ‘Ye, and ye alone, are the light of the world.’”<sup>65</sup>

These people are the ones who were ever leaning yet never able to come to a knowledge of the truth (2 Timothy 3:7 “**Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.**”).

Freemasonry also does this, claiming to have special and unique access to “light” and illumination that is denied to others, and that you have to go through the levels of their teachings to access it. But thankfully, God does not operate like that. Anyone can have access to truth if he has a Bible and a believing heart that is willing to be taught and to believe what it reads. You may only have a 6<sup>th</sup>-grade education, but you would still have access to the light of truth and you can still shine that truth in your personal life and testimony as a witness for Christ.

14f “Light not only exposes the darkness; it shows and provides the only way out of the darkness. This is where every Christian should be jumping to the task. The problem of man is the problem of a fallen, sinful, polluted nature. Can nothing be done about it? We have tried knowledge, we have tried education, we have tried political enactments, we have tried international conferences, we have tried them all but nothing avails. Is there no hope? Yes, there is abundant and everlasting hope: ‘Ye must be born again’. What man needs is not more light; he needs a nature that will love the light and hate the darkness—the exact opposite of his loving the darkness and hating the light. Man needs to be taken hold of, and he needs to get back to God. It is not enough just to tell him that, because, if we do, we are leaving him in a still greater state of hopelessness. He will never find his way to God, try as he may. But the Christian is here to tell him that there is a way to God, a very simple one. It is to know one Person called Jesus Christ of Nazareth. He is the Son of God and He came from heaven to earth to ‘seek and to save that which was lost’. He came to illumine the darkness, to expose the cause of the darkness, and to make a new and living way out of it all back to God and to heaven. He has not only borne the guilt of this terrible sinfulness that has involved us in such

<sup>64</sup> Charles Spurgeon, “The Light of the World”, *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, Sermon 1109.

<sup>65</sup> D, Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Studies in the Sermon on the Mount*, page 139.

trouble, He offers us new life and a new nature. He does not merely give us new teaching or a new understanding of the problem; He does not merely procure pardon for our past sins; He makes us new men with new desires, new aspirations, a new outlook and a new orientation. But above all He gives us that new life, the life that loves the light and hates the darkness, instead of loving the darkness and hating the light.”<sup>66</sup>

14g Verses 13 and 14 speak to the witness and the influence of the Christian in the world. We are to be witnesses to and examples of the grace of God to our generation both individually and corporately. We are to cleanse (via the salt) and bring spiritual illumination (via the light). In Revelation 1:20, the local churches are golden lampstands. The stands elevate the light from the candles so that they may illuminate a wider area. The higher the stand, the greater the area of light. And it is the corporate membership that gives off the light more than the individual members.

**5:15 Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel,<sup>ab</sup> but on a candlestick;<sup>c</sup> and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.<sup>d</sup>**

15a This is illogical- why go to all the trouble to light a candle and then hide it? It thus becomes useless. They may be ashamed or embarrassed by the candle for some reason. How many times do we fail to witness or give a good word for Christ because we are embarrassed or ashamed of Christ! When we do that, we put the candle of our witness under a bushel, where it becomes worthless.

15b “The candle “under a bushel” can also be misplaced “under a bed,” according to Mark 4:21 (and Luke 8:16), which indicates that there are two dangers in regard to an effectual witness for Jesus: commercialism and laziness!”<sup>67</sup>

15c Notice the candle and the candlestick. The believer’s “light” is likened to a candle. It is small and does not put out much light, but it can be vitally useful still to illuminate your immediate surroundings. The believer is not a torch or a lighthouse or a searchlight but is a candle. The best place a Christian can shine is in a local church for a local church is referred to as a candlestick in Revelation 1:20 (“**The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.**”). The believer, who is likened to a candle, may not give off much light but he should give off some light and illuminate the area he occupies. Maybe I cannot illuminate China, but I can illuminate my little corner of the world.

In order to be light, you have to light the candle and set it on high so it can cast its illumination. You cannot live in monkish isolation and hope to illuminate society with gospel influence. Lighthouses are not built in valleys. You have to get out into the world and get involved in society so you can illuminate your area with the gospel. You must engage society with a gospel influence. We practice separation from sin but not from society. We must get out into the marketplace in the arts, literature, business, politics, science, philosophy, etc. We cannot influence institutions that we have removed ourselves from. The world needs light because it is in spiritual and moral darkness from 6,000 years of sin. Only believers have the ability to save it and illuminate it through the gospel.

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<sup>66</sup> D, Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Studies in the Sermon on the Mount*, pages 146-147.

<sup>67</sup> Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer’s Commentary on Matthew*, page 101.

15d Darkness is driven out by light. Darkness is not the equal of light. It cannot withstand light or co-exist with it. The power of light is positive; darkness is a negative factor. Darkness exists only where there is no light.

Biblical revelation about “candles”:

1. The candle seems to be related to the life of a man, or at least his inner, spiritual life
  - A. Job 18:6 **The light shall be dark in his tabernacle, and his candle shall be put out with him.**
  - B. Job 21:17 **How oft is the candle of the wicked put out! and how oft cometh their destruction upon them! God distributeth sorrows in his anger.**
  - C. Psalm 18:28 **For thou wilt light my candle: the LORD my God will enlighten my darkness.**
  - D. Proverbs 20:27 **The spirit of man is the candle of the LORD , searching all the inward parts of the belly.**
  - E. Proverbs 24:20 **For there shall be no reward to the evil man; the candle of the wicked shall be put out.**
2. It speaks of diligence and work
  - A. Proverbs 31:18 **She perceiveth that her merchandise is good: her candle goeth not out by night.**
3. A candle is meant to be used and seen. It is useless if covered
  - A. Matthew 5:15 **Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.**
  - B. Mark 4:21 **And he said unto them, Is a candle brought to be put under a bushel, or under a bed? and not to be set on a candlestick?**
  - C. Luke 2 8:16 **No man, when he hath lighted a candle, covereth it with a vessel, or putteth it under a bed; but setteth it on a candlestick, that they which enter in may see the light.**
  - D. Luke 11:33 **No man, when he hath lighted a candle, putteth it in a secret place, neither under a bushel, but on a candlestick, that they which come in may see the light.**
4. Candles speak of the testimony of the believer or a local church
  - A. Luke 11:36 **If thy whole body therefore be full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as when the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light.**
  - B. Revelation 2:5 **Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.**
5. The only source of light in the tabernacle was by the seven candles of the golden candlestick.
6. Local churches are likened to candlesticks.
  - A. **Revelation 1:20 The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven**

**stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.**

**5:16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.<sup>a</sup>**

16a This is our public testimony, as seen by our good works and walk with God to both saint and sinner alike. This is a form of “lifestyle evangelism”, which is so hated by the hyper-evangelicals of the *Sword of the Lord* crowd.

In summarizing verses 13-16, a genuine Christian cannot be hidden. He cannot escape notice. A man truly living and functioning as a Christian will stand out and he will be noticed. The true Christian does not even desire to hide his light. There are no “Secret Service” Christians. If the world cannot discern the fact that you are a Christian, then you may not be one at all.

1. We are to be salt.
  - A. We are to preserve society from corruption
  - B. We are to purge and cleanse society with the gospel
  - C. We are to irritate society
  - D. We are to create a thirst for the Water of Life
2. We are to light
  - A. We are to illuminate a dark world
  - B. We are to drive out darkness with light
  - C. We are to expose the bugs that like to hide in the corners as well as the sin and corruption in our age
3. How do we do all this?
  - A. Spiritually- witnessing, preaching and living right
  - B. Politically- voting for the right candidates who will promote Biblical values, as well as conservative and Judeo-Christian values as well as the best ideas and practices of Western Civilization
  - C. In society- not by withdrawing from all secular institutions but by being active in them with a Christian witness, in art, literature, politics, law, business and music/
    - i. We do not compromise, but produce Christian music, books, paintings, jurisprudence, companies...

## **17. The Law 5:17-20**

**5:17 ¶ Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets:<sup>ab</sup> I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.<sup>cd</sup>**

17a This was a constant complaint by the Jewish religious leaders, that Jesus was “against” Moses and that He was trying to change the laws and the customs Moses (supposedly) delivered to them. But as we know, it was the Jews that had totally misinterpreted the Law and who were misapplying it. Jesus was simply correcting their errors and was trying to steer them back to the proper understanding and application of the law. Who else better to “re-discover” the “original intent” of the Law than the One Who gave it?

17b The preceding verses were so opposed to the teachings of the scribes and Pharisees that some might assert that he was a destroyer of the law. He replies that he has not come to destroy it, but to fulfil. He does not say that he has come to perpetuate it and fulfill it.

17c Christ is the end, or the fulfillment of the law to those who believe in Romans 10:4 (**“For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.”**). The law was never destroyed as we will see it again in the tribulation and probably in the Millennium. We will see the law and its components, such as the Sabbath, return in the Millennium.

17d Hyper-dispensationalists are always pitting the Old Testament against the New Testament. I have known people who never carried an Old Testament with them, just a New Testament. They would never read from the Old Testament, would never preach from the Old Testament. They believed the Old Testament to be inferior to the New Testament. Genuine, Biblical dispensationalism never teaches this, but as with all theological systems, dispensationalism can be easily hijacked and twisted. Bible believers see a harmony between the Old and New Testament and that you can't have one without the other and both are absolutely vital for the Christian who desires to have the complete revelation of God. You cannot be a genuine Christian and reject the Old Testament or have a low opinion of the Old Testament because it, like the New Testament, is inspired by God and was endorsed by Jesus Christ Himself.

**5:18 For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.<sup>a</sup>**

18a The Scriptures MUST be fulfilled, and God will move heaven and earth to ensure that it is, they are that important in the sight of God. The Jews counted 613<sup>68</sup> separate precepts of the law and the Lord said they must all be fulfilled. In His time on earth, the Lord was very careful to make sure all the prophecies concerning Him were fulfilled to the letter.

**5:19 Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven:<sup>a</sup> but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.**

19a Also see James 2:10. If you break one commandment, you have broken them all, and it doesn't matter which commandment you break, as one is as important as the rest, and they all stand equal in authority. The Pharisees taught that some commands were more important than others, and that it was a trivial matter to break the smallest commands. Roman Catholics still divide sins into mortal sins and venial sins.

AV	ESV	LSV
19 Whosoever therefore shall <b>break</b> one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be	19 Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the	19 “Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others <i>to do</i> the same, shall

<sup>68</sup> 2 These laws are listed at the back of my *Pilgrim Way Commentary on Exodus*.

called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach <i>them</i> , the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.	same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.	be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches <i>them</i> , he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.
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“**break**” The ESV and the LSV had to over-complicate this simple idea of breaking a commandment. The ESV has “relaxes” which is not the same idea as breaking. The LSV has “annuls”. Why not just keep “break”?

**5:20<sup>a</sup> For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees,<sup>b</sup> ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.<sup>c</sup>**

20a This is a verse listed by O. Talmadge Spence in his *Quest For Christian Purity* that he lists as a “guiding verse” for that quest. This is a verse that deals with some aspect of the Christian’s growth and pursuit of God.

20b This was impossible, since the Scribes and Pharisees considered themselves to be perfect. But even perfect human righteousness is not good enough for salvation, as even the scribes and Pharisees did not have enough (self-)righteousness to get into the kingdom. No one has enough self-righteousness, which is why we must depend upon the righteousness of someone else. The scribes and Pharisees were still outwardly moral and religious, so humanly-speaking, it would be very difficult to surpass them. But in Christ we can exceed the righteousness of the self-righteous as we have the righteousness of Christ imparted to us at salvation.

The righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees was a self-righteousness based on a keeping of certain religious laws and regulations. It was a horizontal righteousness that men could obtain to say that they did this and did that and to look good in front of other men, but it was not accepted by God. Righteousness before God involves an acceptance of the imputed righteousness of Christ and to stop relying on our own righteousness. The only way to be righteous before God is to admit that we have no righteousness at all and to fully depend on the imputed righteousness of Christ to be our only claim to have any righteousness at all.

20c The doctrinal interpretation here is Jewish and millennial, since Christ is talking about having the necessary righteousness to enter the Kingdom of Heaven, which is millennial. This may be aimed at the tribulation Jew who has to work (to some degree) to “earn” his righteousness, unlike the Church Age saint who receives his righteousness from Christ freely at the New Birth. This is why it is so important to make the dispensational distinctions when studying Matthew, otherwise you will have Christians trying to be self-righteous and trying to earn their way into heaven. It is imperative that the student have a proper and accurate understanding of what exactly the Kingdom of Heaven is while studying Matthew.

## **18. Anger 5:21-26**

**5:21 ¶ Ye have heard that it was said<sup>a</sup> by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill;<sup>b</sup> and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment:<sup>c</sup>**

21a “**Ye have heard that it was said**”. These are oral traditions, not written ones. Oral traditions seldom agree with the scripture. “**Ye have heard that it was said**” (5:21,27,33,38,43);

not, “Ye have seen that it was written.” Christ is addressing a crowd where most of whom could neither read nor write. This meant that their knowledge of the Law came from the public instruction in the synagogues, where the letter of the Law was read, but the spirit of it frequently missed or obscured. Roman Catholics were often like this through history as they either did not have access to the Scriptures, could not read them or were forbidden to read them. All they knew was what their priests told them.

Traditions are practices that have no direct command or authorization from Scripture. Baptists have them as well. Who says we have to have a Sunday School? If we do, why must it be before the morning service? Why do we have a Sunday morning service at 10:30 AM or 11 AM? Why do we have a Sunday evening service? Why not just one service on Sunday? The answer is usually some variation of “we’ve always done it this way”. I preached at a church in New Jersey that had its morning service before their Sunday School and there was nothing wrong with that. One large Baptist church decided to put its Sunday School after its morning service and that pastor was criticized by other Baptist pastors. Some churches have bus routes “just because” or because other churches in their orbit have one.

21b **“thou shalt not kill”**. This refers to the sixth commandment in Exodus 20:13.

21c What judgment? In the immediate context, the Jewish (or in this case, the Roman) legal process. But spiritually and prophetically, there must be a greater judgment because we are told that no murder has eternal life abiding in him (1 John 3:15). Murder is not the unforgivable sin but it is serious enough to merit a special warning and judgment.

**5:22 But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause<sup>ab</sup> shall be in danger of the judgment:<sup>c</sup> and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca,<sup>d</sup> shall be in danger of the council:<sup>e</sup> but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.<sup>f</sup>**

22a **“without a cause”** is missing in modern versions (see verse comparison below).

1. If **“without a cause”** is dropped, that makes Jesus a sinner as He got angry in Mark 3:5, thus making Him a sinner.
2. I’m sure the Lord was also rather angry when He cleansed the temple in John 2:15.
3. Whenever the Lord did get angry, He did so for a righteous reason, not a selfish one. When we get angry, it is because we have been offended in some way.
4. Paul commands us to get angry about certain things in Ephesians 4:26, but we must be careful not to sin in that anger.
5. It is no sin to be angry if you have a very good reason, like being angry at sin.

22b **“brother”** This is why the so-called Imprecatory Psalms are not sinful. The anger here is directed toward a “brother”. Those Psalms in question are directed toward the enemies of God and of God’s people.

22c **“in danger of the judgment”** This is not applicable in the Church Age. After all, if we called someone a “fool”, what council would we be in danger of? Such an act does not place one in danger of hellfire. This must have a Jewish dispensational doctrinal application, probably millennial. See also note 21c above.

22d **“Raca”**. Vain, empty, as if saying “You empty headed fool!” Saying this to another person in the Millennium brings the threat of hellfire. This is usually said in human anger. Notice it is said to a brother, while you can call anyone a fool.



22e What and were is the “council?” Similar to the judgment? But there are differences.

1. Kill- you are in danger of the judgment.
2. Being angry with your brother without a cause- you are in danger of the judgment.
3. Call someone “Raca”- you are in danger of the council.
  - A. This is said to a brother but it is probably used in a Jewish context. When is the last time you heard a Gentile call someone “Raca!”?
4. Call some a fool- you are in danger of hell fire.
  - A. No distinction given, this can be said to anyone.
  - B. Paul used “**thou fool**” in relation to some of his readers who were attacking the doctrine of the bodily resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15:36. Was he in danger of hellfire?
  - C. God Himself called a man a fool in Luke 12:20.
    - i. **“But God said unto him, *Thou* fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?”**
  - D. Jesus calls the disciples fools in Luke 24:25.
    - i. **“Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken:”**
    - ii. Was Jesus in danger of hell fire?
5. All of this has to be Millennial in application as it will not fit doctrinally or practically in the Gospels or in the Church Age.
  - A. Thus “the council” must be some sort of body in the Millennium that will deal with these types of infractions.
  - B. People will be sent to hell in the Millennium for serious transgressions.

22f “**hell fire**”

1. Jesus believed and taught literal hell fire and a literal hell.
2. Most of the liberals who talk about “living by the Sermon on the Mount” are the same kind who deny the truth of a literal hell, despite the fact that the Preacher Who taught the “Sermon on the Mount” also warned a literal hell.

AV	ESV	LSV
22 But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of <b>hell fire</b> .	22 But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, ‘You fool!’ will be liable to the hell of fire.	22 “But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever says to his brother, ‘Raca,’ shall be guilty before the Sanhedrin; and whoever says, ‘You fool,’ shall be guilty <i>enough to go into the fiery hell</i> .

“**without a cause**” is missing from the ESV and LSV. Darby has “lightly angry” and also omits “without a cause”.

“**hell fire**” The modern versions do not like the doctrine of hell. The ESV has “hell of fire” (whatever that means). The LSV is better with “fiery hell” this is not an improvement of “hell fire”. Recovery Version of the Bible (Witness Lee’s group)- has “Gehenna”. The English Revised Version (1881), American Standard Version (1901), New International Version, Darby

Translation, Robertson's *Word Pictures*, Vincent's *Word Studies*, Adam Clarke all use "hell of fire" The *Companion Bible* (E. W. Bullinger), Albert Barnes, "Gehenna of fire" (even more obscure!).

**5:23 Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar,<sup>a</sup> and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee;**

23a **"bring thy gift to the altar"**

1. You can't apply this to a Christian doctrinally, for we have no altar to bring anything to.
2. An altar implies either a temple or a tabernacle and there are neither in this dispensation. There will a temple and an altar in the tribulation and in the Millennium (Ezekiel 40-48).

**5:24 Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother,<sup>a</sup> and then come and offer thy gift.**

24a Take care of reconciling with your brother voluntarily, else you could find yourself being forced to by a judge, and he may impose harsh conditions in forcing you to reconcile.

**5:25 Agree with thine adversary<sup>a</sup> quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge,<sup>b</sup> and the judge deliver thee to the officer,<sup>c</sup> and thou be cast into prison.**

25a **"adversary"** An opponent in a court of law.

25b **"deliver thee to the judge"**

1. Avoid going to court at all costs and never involve lawyers! If you go to court, the judge may impose a settlement that neither side will like but they will be compelled to agree to. Decisions of a judge are always unpredictable. It might be better for you to resolve your issue and take a loss than to risk a judge imposing a harsher sentence.
2. If you have a dispute with someone, do everything you can to resolve it between yourselves.

25c **"officer"** Bailiff.

**5:26 Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.<sup>ab</sup>**

26a **"uttermost farthing"** or "last farthing", "every single farthing"

1. In hell, you never can pay that last farthing, so you never get out.
2. If a judge imposes a harsh sentence on you, you will be compelled to fulfill it to the letter.
3. The Church of Rome uses verses 25 and 26 for a proof-text to support their unscriptural doctrine of purgatory.
4. A **farthing** is an insignificant copper coin, of very little value.

26b Judgments and punishments in the Millennium will be more thorough and more severe since they are executed by judges under the King and are based on perfect and absolute righteousness and justice.

AV	ESV	LSV
26 Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost <b>farthing</b> .	26 Truly, I say to you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny.	26 “Truly I say to you, you will not come out of there until you have paid up the last quadrans.

“**farthing**” The LSV uses “quadrans”, which is a word no one uses today.

## 19. Adultery 5:27,28

**5:27 ¶ Ye have heard that it was said<sup>a</sup> by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery:<sup>b</sup>**

27a “**Ye have heard it said**”

1. It's odd that the Lord phrases it this way, for the prohibition against adultery is part of the written scripture in Exodus 20:7 “**Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.**”
2. The Lord is rather dealing with the erroneous traditional interpretation of the elders here.

27b Exodus 20:14 “**Thou shalt not commit adultery.**” This wasn't just “said” as this is one of the Ten Commandments. The problem will be the traditional application of this commandment.

AV	ESV	LSV
27 Ye have heard that it was said by <b>them of old time</b> , Thou shalt not commit adultery:	27 “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’	27 “You have heard that it was said, ‘YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY’;

“**them of old time**” This phrase is used in Matthew 5:21 where the ESV translates as “those of old” and by the LSV as “the ancients”. Both translations omit it here. Both translations use it again in Matthew 5:33. The Darby translation omits the phrase.

**5:28 But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh<sup>a</sup> on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.<sup>b</sup>**

28a “**looketh**”

1. This is directed towards the men, despite that women are just as guilty in initiating adulterous relationships as men are.
2. The “looking” is more of a male thing than a female one, for men are drawn to what they see and women are drawn to what they hear. Women's fashions and the cosmetics industry have always been designed to make a man want to look at a woman.
3. Sins of the flesh usually begin with the eye gate, when a man sees what he ought not.

28b There must have been some error of the scribes and Pharisees that Jesus had to correct about adultery. They probably gave this a very narrow interpretation and application, probably limiting it to the physical act and even then with a narrow definition. But Jesus broadened both the interpretation and application.

The Old Testament deals with the act, the New Testament as a motivation of the act.

1. No penalty is associated with this “mental adultery” in the New Testament. If the Old Testament penalties were still being enforced today, we would all be stoned.

2. Adultery was a major problem in this day, especially among men. A man would expect his wife to be morally pure but society held the husband to no such standard.

The Lord places the burden here on the man, not the woman, to avoid adultery. This showed the Greek influence of the day. The Romans never tolerated divorce or adultery. But then Rome conquered Greece militarily, and Greece responded by conquering Rome morally.”<sup>69</sup>

3. This loose attitude toward the family and sexual morality eventually corrupted the Jews. The Jewish rabbis held that a man was guiltless who did not commit the act.

## **20. Removing Occasions to Sin 5:29,30**

**5:29 And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee:<sup>a</sup> for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.**

29a The idea is to remove stumbling blocks and occasions to sin. This won’t keep you out of hell, but it may make it easier for you to stay out of hell by removing such opportunities to sin.

**5:30 And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee:<sup>a</sup> for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.**

30a The “church father” Origen (one of the greatest and most destructive heretics in church history) interpreted these verses literally (one of the few passages he did not spiritualize) and castrated himself to prevent looking upon women with lust. The problem is that you can cut off the offending “member”, but lust starts in the heart, not in your physical anatomy.

## **21. Divorce 5:31,32**

**5:31 It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement:<sup>a</sup>**

31a The Lord references the requirements of divorce in Deuteronomy 24:1-4 “**When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house. And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife. And if the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and giveth it in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, which took her to be his wife; Her former husband, which sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife,**

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<sup>69</sup> John Phillips, *Exploring the Gospel of Matthew*, page 102.

**after that she is defiled; for that is abomination before the LORD: and thou shalt not cause the land to sin, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance.”**

1. Divorce became cheap and easy in the Lord's day (just like today) due to the corrupting influence of the Greeks. It is just as cheap and easy in our day due to the influence of humanism and secularism.
2. It is easy in Islam where a man can simply say to his wife “I divorce you” three times and the marriage is dissolved.
3. It is also very easy and common in America.
4. The Lord made it clear that He hated divorce (Malachi 2:16 **“For the LORD, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away: for one covereth violence with his garment, saith the LORD of hosts: therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously.”**). Yet it was allowed, again for the hardness of men's hearts.
5. But it should have been a rare thing, something drastic. But here, it was reduced to a simple piece of paperwork, where a man could divorce his wife for the most trivial of matters.
6. The wife had no such power to initiate a divorce.

**5:32 But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication,<sup>a</sup> causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.**

32a Fornication is a grounds for divorce. Since the act of sexual intercourse is what “marries” two people (in flesh joining flesh), the fornicating parties have “married” each other even if they were already married to someone else. See the book of Hosea as an example of God divorcing Israel for their spiritual fornication, only to be taken back by God. While divorce is permitted under such a circumstance, it is not required. Simply because you may have grounds to sue for divorce does not mean that you should. Broken marriages result in broken homes and damaged children. My parents were divorced when I was five years, although they remarried six years later. But the damage it did to me was significant. It is hard for a five-year old boy to grapple with the truth that his parents do not love each other any more and he is forced to take sides against two of the people he loves more than anyone else. The child then blames himself for the divorce of his parents, that somehow, he did something to cause the split. That is how I felt. This can also cause problems later in life when that child is contemplating marriage. Since his parents quit on their marriage, he may be less inclined to put the necessary work into his marriage, and “till death do us part” may seem to be vain words to him because of his earlier experiences.

There will be no cheap and easy divorce in the Millennium. If fornication is a basis for divorce and if fornication can be punished by death in the Millennium (under certain circumstances), then the innocent party would probably be able to remarry since their guilty spouse may have been executed for his/her fornication.

## **22. Swearing Oaths 5:33-37**

**5:33 ¶ Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear<sup>a</sup> thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths:<sup>b</sup>**

33a **“forswear”** From about the year 1000, Middle English “forsweren”, from the Old English forswerian”, from “for” (away from, with intensity) and the Old English “swear” (to make a solemn promise or declaration, usually calling upon God in the process”. Forswearing tends to have an element of deceit or falsehood, as the one doing the it tends not to be completely

honest. Psalm 24:4 speaks of not swearing deceitfully, such as making a vow and not following through on it.”<sup>70</sup> This word only occurs once in the Authorized Version. “It is still in use as a legal term and has been defined as making an oath which the deponent knows to be untrue.”<sup>71</sup>

33a See Deuteronomy 10:20 (“**Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God; him shalt thou serve, and to him shalt thou cleave, and swear by his name.**”) and James 5:12 (“**But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation.**”) . In this day, a man’s word was so worthless that taking an oath was necessary. Thus, the taking of oaths was a very common practice. If a man will not keep a verbal agreement based on his honor, why think he can be trusted if takes an oath? If he breaks his word, he’ll also break an oath.

**5:34 But I say unto you,<sup>a</sup> Swear not at all;<sup>bc</sup> neither by heaven; for it is God’s throne:**

34a “Never mind the misinterpretation of the scribes- here is what it really means...” interpreted by the One Who gave the law.

34b This deals with the Prohibition of oaths in court. How can you presume to swear by God when you do not control God, or have no authority over Him? Or by heaven, since you are not there, and are not the owner of it? It is God’s domain, not yours.

34c “**swear not at all**” “The statement is sure proof of inspiration, for He who made the tongue [and called it “a world of iniquity,” and “untameable” (James 3:5–8)] puts His finger on the exact expressions this member uses. Who has not heard: “Heavenly days!”, “My heavens!!”, “My stars!”, “Thank Heavens!!”, etc...Nor by the earth” goes further into such ejaculations as “My lands!”, “Land o goshen!!”, “Land’s sakes!”, “Land o love!”, etc.”<sup>72</sup> This is called “Christian cussing” but it still a violation of Scripture.

**5:35 Nor by the earth;<sup>a</sup> for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem;<sup>b</sup> for it is the city of the great King.**

35a Since the “**earth is the Lord’s**” and does not belong to us.

1. Exodus 9:29 “**And Moses said unto him, As soon as I am gone out of the city, I will spread abroad my hands unto the LORD; and the thunder shall cease, neither shall there be any more hail; that thou mayest know how that the earth is the LORD’S.**”

2. Deuteronomy 10:14 “**Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens is the LORD’S thy God, the earth also, with all that therein is.**”

3. Psalm 24:1 “**The earth is the LORD’S, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.**”

4. 1 Corinthians 10:26,28 “**For the earth is the Lord’s, and the fulness thereof...But if any man say unto you, This is offered in sacrifice unto idols, eat not for his sake that shewed it, and for conscience sake: for the earth is the Lord’s, and the fulness thereof:**”

<sup>70</sup> Steven J. White, *White’s Dictionary of the King James Language*, volume 2, page 155.

<sup>71</sup> Laurence Vance, *Archaic Words and the Authorized Version*, page 151.

<sup>72</sup> Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer’s Commentary on Matthew*, pages 122-123.

35b Jerusalem will be even more so the “city of the Great King” in the Millennium. But we have no right or authority to swear by God’s city.

**5:36 Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black.<sup>a</sup>**

36a Swearing by one’s self is also forbidden. You are not your own as you are bought with a price, so you have no authority to swear by yourself.

1. 1 Corinthians 6:20, **For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.**

2. 1 Corinthians 7:23, **Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men.**

**5:37 But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay:<sup>ab</sup> for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.**

37a When you say “yes”, let it mean “yes”. When you say “no”, let it mean “no”. Oaths to emphasize this should be unnecessary for the believer. If you are a liar to begin with, swearing by God or anything else will not automatically make you a truthful man. We also should be people of our words. This must be true of God’s people. If you can’t trust a believer to keep his word, then all is lost in our society.

37b Christ allowed Himself to be put under an oath (Matthew 26:63,64) but not by His own choice. It was forced on Him by the High Priest at His trial, and Christ honored it.

### **23. “Eye For An Eye” 5:38-42, see also Luke 6:27-36**

**5:38 ¶ Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth:<sup>a</sup>**

38a Referencing:

1. Exodus 21:23-25 **“And if any mischief follow, then thou shalt give life for life, Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, Burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.”**

2. Leviticus 24:18-20 **“And he that killeth a beast shall make it good; beast for beast. And if a man cause a blemish in his neighbour; as he hath done, so shall it be done to him; Breach for breach, eye for eye, tooth for tooth: as he hath caused a blemish in a man, so shall it be done to him again.”**

3. Deuteronomy 19:18-21. **“And the judges shall make diligent inquisition: and, behold, if the witness be a false witness, and hath testified falsely against his brother; Then shall ye do unto him, as he had thought to have done unto his brother: so shalt thou put the evil away from among you. And those which remain shall hear, and fear, and shall henceforth commit no more any such evil among you. And thine eye shall not pity; but life shall go for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.”**

4. The Lord is dealing more with personal avenging than with the State’s prosecution of criminal activity.

**5:39 But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil:<sup>a</sup> but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.<sup>bc</sup>**

39a “**resist not evil**”

1. When people smite us, Matthew 5:39
2. When people sue us, Matthew 5:40
3. When people seize us, Matthew 5:41
4. Jesus does not forbid the judicial application of the law, but personal revenge, such as was common among the Jews. Instead of turning upon those who injure us, and becoming a party to personal broils, it is the duty of Christians to suffer meekly.

39b “**turn to him the other also**”

1. A hard thing to do because of pride, but a (spiritually) strong man can turn the other cheek to prevent further strife.
2. The Lord did this as His trial in John 18:22,23 “**And when he had thus spoken, one of the officers which stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, Answerest thou the high priest so? Jesus answered him, If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me?**”

39c Taking the law into your own hands will not be permitted in the Millennium. This is often done today as the judges and law enforcement often fail to execute proper justice on the guilty, so the offended party has to seek justice on his own. But you will not have to worry about corruption or any “miscarriage of justice” in the Millennium.

**5:40 And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also.<sup>a</sup>**

40a We should go beyond what the Law might require.

1. You have been wronged? The Law might allow you to take vengeance or revenge, but it does not force you to do so.
2. Grace will give you an alternative- love, grace, peace and forbearance.
3. If you have a debt that you are not paying that required the debtor to sue you for what you rightfully owe, you are to pay it back.
4. A man's cloak could be held by a creditor in Exodus 22:26,27 (“**If thou at all take thy neighbour's raiment to pledge, thou shalt deliver it unto him by that the sun goeth down: For that is his covering only, it is his raiment for his skin: wherein shall he sleep? and it shall come to pass, when he crieth unto me, that I will hear; for I am gracious.**”), but it had to be returned to him for the evening so that the man could keep warm.

**5:41 And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile,<sup>a</sup> go with him twain.**

41a “**mile**”

1. The old Roman mile, about a thousand paces or 1,520 yards.
2. According to Roman law, a man could be impressed to service if the state required it. See the example of Simon the Cyrenian in Matthew 27:32/Luke 23:26, where he was compelled to help Jesus bear His cross. In order to transport goods from one place to another, a Roman soldier had the right to requisition a person to carry his things. But to protect the conquered citizens from injustice, the Roman law said that a soldier could



compel one to carry his burden for only one mile. Christ is saying to fulfill your obligations, and then “go the extra mile”.

3. Various navies would do this when they encountered a private vessel. They would literally kidnap any able-bodied men they might find and force him into service. Such service is naturally despised, but if it is our lot, we are to fulfill these obligations as best we can. The British navy would do this to American ships after American independence.

**5:42 Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.<sup>a</sup>**

42a When asked for help, offer it if you can.

1. If lending money, do so without charging interest.
2. 1 John 3:17 says that such liberality is a true test of Christian love (“**But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?**”)
3. Israel was swarmed with blind, lepers, and maimed, who were dependent on charity.

**24. Love Thy Neighbor 5:43-47**

**5:43 ¶ Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour,<sup>a</sup> and hate thine enemy.<sup>b</sup>**

43a “**love thy neighbor**”. The Jews gave the command a very limited application and they certainly didn’t apply it to Gentiles. For Christ’s application, see parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:30-37.

43b “**hate thy enemy**”. The Jews used Deuteronomy 23:6 (“**Thou shalt not seek their peace nor their prosperity all thy days for ever.**”) to justify hatred for a perceived enemy. The Old Testament never directly says that anyone should hate his enemy. This shows that, in his “ye have heard” statements, Jesus is correcting not the Old Testament itself but only the misinterpretations of it.

**5:44<sup>a</sup> But I say unto you, Love your enemies,<sup>b</sup> bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you,<sup>c</sup> and persecute you;**

44a Our Biblical duty to our enemies:

1. Love them
  - A. Matthew 5:44 “**But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;**”
  - B. Luke 6:27 “**But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you,**”
2. Bless them
  - A. Matthew 5:44 “**But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;**”
  - B. Luke 6:28 “**Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you.**”

3. Do good to them
  - A. Matthew 5:44 **"But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;"**
4. Pray for them
  - A. Matthew 5:44 **"But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;"**
  - B. Luke 6:28 **"Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you."**
5. Lend to them
  - A. Luke 6:34,35 **"And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil."**
6. Be kind to them
  - A. Luke 6:35,36 **"But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil. Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful."**
7. Be merciful unto them
  - A. Luke 6:36 **"Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful."**

None of this is easy. The flesh likes to lash out at our enemies and punish them since they offend our pride. The only way any of this is possible is through the power of the Holy Spirit in the life.

44b We are to forgive our enemies, but we are not told to forgive God's enemies. We have no authority to do that. God's enemies should be our enemies as well.

1. Psalm 139:21 **"Do not I hate them, O LORD, that hate thee? and am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee?"**

44c Doing good to those who use you spitefully will turn their own hate back upon them and will serve as a good Christian witness for forgiveness. But at the very least, with will heap "coals of fire" upon their heads (Proverbs 25:22 **"For thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head, and the LORD shall reward thee"** and Romans 12:20 **"Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head."**). Such acts of charity against our enemies will do more to convert him than your lashing into him and treating him as an enemy or by taking vengeance. This is also a test of Christian character and maturity. Any sinner can treat his enemy as bad as he treats him, but only a Spirit filled Christian can return good for evil. These coals of fire will melt him down and make him ashamed. Such kindness will either remove his hatred or demonstrate how irrational it is. Kindness shown to an enemy is the best revenge.

AV	ESV	LSV
44 But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully	44 But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,	44 "But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,

use you, and persecute you;		
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The ESV and LSV omit half the verse, “**bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you... which despitefully use you,**” The Darby translation has half of the verse in italics.

**5:45 That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.<sup>a</sup>**

45a The sending of rain on the just and the unjust occurs today, but in the Millennium, no rain will come on unjust kingdoms (Zechariah 14:17,18 “**And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain. And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, that have no rain; there shall be the plague, wherewith the LORD will smite the heathen that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles.**”).

By terms of application, God does give the common benefits to sinners. He makes it rain on their fields. They have their successes and joys of life just like Christians do. Yet this “goodness of God” is supposed to lead them to repentance (Romans 2:4 “**Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?**”). But it doesn’t always work as sinners are ignorant where their blessings come from (they may think it comes from their own hard work) or just take such blessings for granted.

**5:46 For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?<sup>ab</sup>**

46a We are to go beyond the sinner (tax collectors in this context) in these things. Anyone can do that. It takes no special grace to do this. Sinners do it, why can’t we? And why can’t we do it better than the sinner?

46b “**publicans**” Tax-collectors. They worked for Rome and usually were involved in corruption. Many were Jews, which made them very unpopular, and they were deemed to be unpatriotic. The idea is that Christians should not just act as unbelievers would but should exceed them in conduct.

**5:47 And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so?<sup>a</sup>**

47a Anyone can salute a friend, but can you salute an enemy? If you only salute your friends, you are no better than a publican. Christians should always outdo sinners and the world, and that is something that world should rightly expect from us. The Jews usually would avoid speaking to or even acknowledging a Gentile if possible. They also tended to ignore “sinners”. They would only salute other orthodox Jews.

AV

ESV

LSV

47 And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more <i>than others?</i> do not	47 And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do	47 “And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing <i>than others?</i> Do
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even the **publicans** so?

not even the Gentiles do the same?

not even the Gentiles do the same?

**“publicans”** The ESV, LSV and Darby use “Gentiles”. But a publican can be a Jew just as easily as he can be a Gentile.

## **25. “Be Ye Perfect” 5:48**

**5:48<sup>a</sup> Be ye therefore perfect,<sup>b</sup> even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.**

48a This is a verse listed by O. Talmadge Spence in his *Quest For Christian Purity* that he lists as a “guiding verse” for that quest. This is a verse that deals with some aspect of the Christian’s growth and pursuit of God.

48b **“perfect”**

1. Not sinless perfect but maturity and a complete and perfect love toward God.
2. It must be possible for us to attain a state of spiritual perfection, else why would God command it of us?
3. Compare with the call to Abraham in Genesis 17:1, **“.And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.”**

**“Perfection”** in Biblical Theology:

1. Noah was perfect
  - A. Genesis 6:9 **These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God.**
2. Abraham was called to be perfect
  - A. Genesis 17:1 **And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.**
3. We are called to be perfect with God
  - A. Deuteronomy 18:13 **Thou shalt be perfect with the LORD thy God.**
  - B. Matthew 5:48 **Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.**
  - C. 2 Corinthians 13:11 **Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.**
  - D. Philippians 3:15 **Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.**
  - E. Hebrews 6:1 **Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God,**
4. God’s work is perfect
  - A. Deuteronomy 32:4 **He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.**
5. God’s way is perfect

- A. 2 Samuel 22:31 **As for God, his way is perfect; the word of the LORD is tried: he is a buckler to all them that trust in him.**
- B. Psalm 18:30 **As for God, his way is perfect: the word of the LORD is tried: he is a buckler to all those that trust in him.**
- 6. God makes my way perfect
  - A. 2 Samuel 22:33 **God is my strength and power: and he maketh my way perfect.**
  - B. Psalm 18:32 **It is God that girdeth me with strength, and maketh my way perfect.**
- 7. Our heart is to be perfect with God
  - A. 1 Kings 8:61 **Let your heart therefore be perfect with the LORD our God, to walk in his statutes, and to keep his commandments, as at this day.**
- 8. People who did not have a perfect heart with God
  - A. Solomon
    - 1. 1 Kings 11:4 **For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father.**
    - 2. 1 Chronicles 29:19 **And give unto Solomon my son a perfect heart, to keep thy commandments, thy testimonies, and thy statutes, and to do all these things, and to build the palace, for the which I have made provision.**
  - B. Abijam
    - 1. 1 Kings 15:3 **And he walked in all the sins of his father, which he had done before him: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father.**
  - C. Amaziah
    - 1. 2 Chronicles 25:2 **And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, but not with a perfect heart.**
- 9. People with a perfect heart with God
  - A. Asa
    - 1. 1 Kings 15:14 **But the high places were not removed: nevertheless Asa's heart was perfect with the LORD all his days.**
    - 2. 2 Chronicles 15:17 **But the high places were not taken away out of Israel: nevertheless the heart of Asa was perfect all his days.**
  - B. Hezekiah
    - 1. 2 Kings 20:3 **I beseech thee, O LORD, remember now how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore.**
    - 2. Isaiah 38:3 **And said, Remember now, O LORD, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore.**
  - C. David's men of war
    - 1. 1 Chronicles 12:38 **All these men of war, that could keep rank, came with a perfect heart to Hebron, to make David king over all Israel: and all the rest also of Israel were of one heart to make David king.**

- D. "The people"
  - 1. 1 Chronicles 29:9 **Then the people rejoiced, for that they offered willingly, because with perfect heart they offered willingly to the LORD: and David the king also rejoiced with great joy.**
- E. Jehoshaphat commanded it
  - 1. 2 Chronicles 19:9 **And he charged them, saying, Thus shall ye do in the fear of the LORD, faithfully, and with a perfect heart.**
- F. Job
  - 1. Job 1:1 **There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil.**
  - 2. Job 1:8 **And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?**
  - 3. Job 2:3 **And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause.**
- G. The Lord's Servant
  - 1. Isaiah 42:19 **Who is blind, but my servant? or deaf, as my messenger that I sent? who is blind as he that is perfect, and blind as the LORD'S servant?**
- 10. Serve God with a perfect heart
  - A. 1 Chronicles 28:9 **And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: for the LORD searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever.**
- 11. God shows Himself perfect
  - A. 2 Chronicles 16:9 **For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him. Herein thou hast done foolishly: therefore from henceforth thou shalt have wars.**
- 12. God will not cast away a perfect man
  - A. Job 8:20 **Behold, God will not cast away a perfect man, neither will he help the evil doers:**
- 13. Be careful of declaring yourself to be perfect
  - A. Job 9:20 **If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me: if I say, I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse.**
  - B. Job 9:21 **Though I were perfect, yet would I not know my soul: I would despise my life.**
- 14. God's knowledge is perfect
  - A. Job 36:4 **For truly my words shall not be false: he that is perfect in knowledge is with thee.**

- B. Job 37:16 **Dost thou know the balancings of the clouds, the wondrous works of him which is perfect in knowledge?**
15. God's law is perfect  
A. Psalm 19:7 **The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.**  
B. Isaiah 26:3 **Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.**
16. The end of a perfect man is peace  
A. Psalm 37:37 **Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace.**
17. The world hates perfect men  
A. Psalm 64:4 **That they may shoot in secret at the perfect: suddenly do they shoot at him, and fear not.**
18. Resolutions to perfection  
A. Psalm 101:2 **I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way. O when wilt thou come unto me? I will walk within my house with a perfect heart.**
19. Fellowship with perfect people  
A. Psalm 101:6 **Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me: he that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me.**
20. There is a "perfect day" coming  
A. Proverbs 4:18 **But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.**
21. Lucifer was perfect before his fall  
A. Ezekiel 16:14 **And thy renown went forth among the heathen for thy beauty: for it was perfect through my comeliness, which I had put upon thee, saith the Lord GOD.**  
B. Ezekiel 28:12 **Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty.**  
C. Ezekiel 28:15 **Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.**
22. The will of God is perfect  
A. Romans 12:2 **And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.**
23. The Scripture is perfect  
A. 1Corinthians 13:10 **But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.**
24. Perfect cannot be attained by the flesh  
A. Galatians 3:3 **Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?**
25. Striving for perfection  
A. Philippians 3:12 **Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.**
26. The goal of the ministry is to present every man perfect in Christ

- A. 2 Corinthians 13:9 **For we are glad, when we are weak, and ye are strong: and this also we wish, even your perfection.**
- B. Colossians 1:28 **Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:**
- C. Colossians 4:12 **Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.**
- D. 2 Timothy 3:17 **That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.**
27. Christ made perfect through sufferings
- A. Hebrews 2:10 **For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.**
- B. Hebrews 5:9 **And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;**
28. The law cannot bring perfection
- A. Hebrews 7:11 **If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron?**
- B. Hebrews 10:1 **For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.**
- C. Hebrews 11:40 **God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.**
29. God makes us perfect
- A. Hebrews 13:21 **Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.**
- B. 1 Peter 5:10 **But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.**
30. A perfect man does not offend in word and has self-control
- A. James 3:2 **For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body.**
31. Perfect love
- A. 1 John 4:17 **Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world.**
- B. 1 John 4:18 **There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.**

### **Spiritual Applications- Matthew Chapters 5-7**

The "Sermon on the Mount" is the Constitution of the Kingdom but that does not mean that Christians can't get practical benefit in guidelines for daily living from it. The



material in Matthew 5-7 is very practical, which demonstrates that straight living (orthopraxy) is only possible through straight thinking (orthodoxy). The topics the Lord touched upon were wide-ranging. Issues dealt with are (all references are in Matthew):

1. Being poor in spirit 5:3
2. Mourners 5:4
3. Meekness 5:5
4. Hungering and thirsting after righteousness 5:6
5. Being merciful 5:7
6. Being pure in heart 5:8
7. Being peacemakers 5:9
8. Persecution 5:10-12
9. Being salt of the earth 5:13
10. Being the light of the world 5:14-16
11. Jesus fulfilling the law and the prophets 5:17-20
12. Personal righteousness 5:21
13. Anger 5:22-24
14. Defusing problems 5:25,26
15. Adultery and the thought life 5:27,28,32
16. Removing offenses 5:29,30
17. Divorce 5:31,32
18. Swearing and oaths 5:33-37
19. Revenge and submission 5:38-42
20. Love your enemies 5:43-47
21. Be perfect 5:48
22. Doing alms 6:1-4
23. Prayer 6:5-13; 7:7-11
24. Forgiveness 6:14,15
25. Fasting 6:16-18
26. Storing up treasures on earth 6:19-21
27. The light of the eye 6:22,23
28. Serving two masters 6:24,25
29. Worry 6:26-34
30. Judging 7:1-5
31. Pearls before swine 7:6
32. The "Golden Rule" 7:12
33. The Strait Gate 7:13,14
34. Warning against false prophets 7:15-20
35. False professors 7:21-24
36. The test of trials 7:25-27



## **Matthew Chapter 6**

After rejecting the Pharisaic interpretation of the law in Matthew 5, Christ now moved on to show that the Pharisees' practices, arising out of their interpretation of the law, were likewise to be rejected in Matthew 6 and 7.

This section introduces the three chief acts of Jewish piety (Matthew 6:2-18), almsgiving, prayer, fasting.

### **26. Alms 6:1-4**

**6:1 Take heed that ye do not your alms<sup>a</sup> before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven.**

1a These **alms** are gifts given to (poor or needy) people, as in Acts 3:3, 10:2. When you do give money to the needy, do not let others know and do not advertise it.

**6:2 Therefore when<sup>a</sup> thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee,<sup>b</sup> as the hypocrites<sup>c</sup> do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men.<sup>d</sup> Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.**

2a "**When**", not "if". The Lord assumes you give alms.

2b Do not draw attention to yourself or make a scene or a big production of your prayers. Some men actually did this. They would call attention to themselves when they were about to make some large gift or offering, so that everyone would see it and praise them for their spirituality and generosity.

#### **2c,5 "hypocrites"**

1. A hypocrite is literally an actor, a stage-player, one who wears a false face. Here, the hypocrite is a man who makes himself out to be spiritual when he is anything but. He plays the part of a righteous man, but it is just a part to him. Hypocrites certainly pray as do unsaved men.

2. The word "hypocrite" can mean an "actor," or by another derivation "hyper-critical". Both translations suit the individual Pharisee, who personified hypocrisy (Matthew 23:3–23) and was critical to the extreme. They found fault with everything Jesus did and totally ignored the miracles. They were very good at criticizing while they themselves did nothing to further the kingdom of God. They are professional fault-finders who imagine themselves more spiritual and more holy than anyone else. That kind of spiritual arrogance will not result in any power with God in prayer. The hypocrite places all the emphasis on the form of his prayer and is not concerned with its content,

1d "You cannot expect to be paid twice, if therefore you take your reward in the applause of men, who give you a high character for generosity, you cannot expect to have any reward from God." (Charles Spurgeon). If you do good works (praying, preaching, witnessing, giving alms...) just to be seen of men and to demonstrate to everyone just how godly you are, that will be your reward- the praise of men, for however long that lasts. But you will not receive any praise from God. The true test here is "Why am I doing this? To serve and honor God or to make a name for myself?"

**6:3 But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth:<sup>a</sup>**

3a Don't keep a running record of how much you give and don't go bragging about it. As soon as you give it, forget it. Let the Lord keep the ledgers.

**6:4 That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.<sup>a</sup>**

4a That which is done before God is rewarded by God. That which is done before man is rewarded by man.

## **27. The Model Prayer 6:5-15**

**6:5 ¶ And when thou prayest,<sup>a</sup> thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men.<sup>b</sup> Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.<sup>c</sup>**

5a “**when thou prayest**”. The Lord assumes you will pray. You may as soon find a living man that does not breathe, as a living Christian that does not pray.

5b This is a negative example of prayer- how not to do it. We need to be told what not to do as much as we need to be taught what we ought to do.

How do hypocrites pray? They do indeed “pray” after a fashion, with loud, public prayers made in places where everyone can see them and where they can put on a good show. It is not that they love to pray, but they love to be seen praying so that they can cultivate a reputation of being holy and spiritual when, in fact, they are anything but. Jesus does not condemn public prayer but rather the carnal motives behind its abuse.

5c Their reward is the praise of men, whatever that is worth. You want the praise of men? That is exactly what you will get. They prize that more than the praise of God so that is exactly what they will receive. How fickle is the approval of man! One day you are being crowned and the next, you are being crucified. But they who seek the approval of man will never receive the approval of God. And he who has the approval of God will not need the approval of man. I would rather hear a man stammer and stutter in his prayers, as long as they were sincere and honest than to listen to pretty, pre-packaged eloquent prayers that are dead and cold.

**6:6 But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet,<sup>a</sup> and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.<sup>b</sup>**

6a “**enter into thy closet**”

1. Go into a secret place, an inner chamber, where no one can see you. This would be a separate apartment, one's private chamber, a literal closet, or “den” where you can withdraw from the world and shut out the world and commune with God in private. The world is too profane and treacherous to be in on the secret. We must shut the door against it: endeavor to forget it, with all the affairs which busy and amuse it.

2. Prayer requires retirement, at least of the heart. There is a type for public prayer and a time for private prayer.
3. This is exactly the opposite practice of the hypocrites in Matthew 6:5 who seldom prayed in private but always prayed in public.
4. The closet, or secret place, is for:
  - A. Praying
    - i. Some people don't know how to pray in private but they can put on a pretty good show when they pray in public.
  - B. Meditating
  - C. Private Bible reading
  - D. Watching

**6b "reward thee openly"**

1. This is the secret of answered prayer- that which the Lord sees in private He answers and rewards publicly.
2. Do not use this idea to develop any opposition to public prayer (such as in a church service) as that is not what Jesus is condemning.

**6:7 But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions,<sup>a</sup> as the heathen do:<sup>b</sup> for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.<sup>c</sup>**

**7a "vain repetitions"**

1. The best example of this is the Roman Catholic rosary, where over one hundred "Hail Mary's" are said, in addition to other "prayers". Catholics need a rosary to keep track of their repetitious prayers. Catholics are not the only ones. The Lamas in Tibetan Buddhism use a prayer wheel. Muslims just recite their memorized prayers and Koran portions when they "pray".
2. "To repeat a form of prayer a very large number of times has always seemed to the ignorantly religious to be a praiseworthy thing; but assuredly it is not so. It is a mere exercise of memory, and of the organs of noise-making: and it is absurd to imagine that such a parrot exercise can be pleasing to the living God. The Mahometans and Papists keep to this heathenish custom; but we must not imitate them (Charles Spurgeon)."
3. After a Mohammedan funeral in some countries, devout men assemble, and repeat Allah el Allah. "God is God," three thousand times.
4. The Tyndale version translates this as "babble not much" which is a good idea of "vain repetitions". These people think the more you pray, the better your prayer is.
5. Prayer is measured by heart and fervency, not by length or eloquence.
6. Peter's three-word prayer "Lord, save me" in Matthew 14:30 accomplished more than two hours of public prayer by these hypocrites.
7. Acts 19:34 and the "prayers" of the mob at Ephesus would be a good Scriptural example of "vain repetitions". The worshipers of Baal in 1 Kings 18:26 are another good example.
8. Repetition in prayer is not forbidden in itself, but "vain" repetitions are. This does not mean that we should not repeat our prayer. The Lord repeated His prayer three times in Gethsemane (Matthew 26:44), Paul prayed the same prayer three times (2 Corinthians 12:8), and the great multitude in heaven praised God repeatedly with hallelujahs (Revelation 19:1-6). It means that we should not repeat empty words, words spoken in vain.
9. There is a certain evangelist who prays almost the exact same prayer before he preaches in every church that he is in. He seldom varies in the text of that prayer. He

has gotten himself into such a rut that he may not even realize he is using a vain repetition, even if he is praying the same prayer in a different church. He got into the habit of praying that prayer and would have trouble varying from it.

7b **“as the heathen do”** So instead of trusting a Father to fulfill their needs, the “heathen” think they had to badger a reluctant god into taking notice of them.

7c Prayers are not measured by the yard in heaven but by the pound.

**6:8 Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.<sup>a</sup>**

8a If this is the case, then why pray?

1. To express our needs
2. To acknowledge our dependence of God by asking and that we would not depend upon our own power or resources to meet our needs
3. To acknowledge that He is our heavenly Father by asking Him for the things we need
4. To exercise our faith
5. So that He might answer our prayers.

**6:9<sup>a</sup> After this manner therefore pray ye:<sup>b</sup> Our Father<sup>c</sup> which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.**

9a See also Luke 11:2-4.

9b What we should pray for in the Model Prayer:

1. Acknowledgment of the Father
2. Blessing/glorifying His name
3. Yearning for the establishment of the Kingdom
  - A. This is Jewish, but there is no reason why a Christian cannot desire this and ask for it as well.
4. Desiring that God’s will be done in both heaven and earth
5. Asking for personal forgiveness of sin
6. That we would forgive others who have sinned against us
7. Divine protection from temptation and evil
8. This is not the Lord’s Prayer, for that is found in John 17.
9. This is a template for prayer, what our prayers should consist of.

**9c “our Father”**

1. Only believers can pray this prayer as non-believers have no heavenly Father. They have a Creator, but their father is the devil.
2. If we have a Father then it presupposes that we are sons, for I call no man my father on earth except my natural father, my father-in-law, and my God.
3. I certainly would never call a Romanist priest “father” for that would be the height of blasphemy.

**6:10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.<sup>ab</sup>**

10a Our lives and attitudes on earth should reflect those in heaven. What heaven does, we should do. What heaven thinks, we should as well. What they hold to be important we should agree with and what they despise should be what we despise.

10b "It is also worthy of note, that though the Father is addressed in heaven, yet the petitions in the Lord's prayer refer all to earth. The desires are holy; the utmost desire is that the Father's Kingdom may come. Heavenly influence owned, a heavenly Father's Name hallowed, but no heavenly hope. Heaven is looked to, to bring its influence on earth, to give it its character, but no taking man up there (the doxology has no fit sense). It is assumed that God's will is done, and perfectly, in heaven, and it is desired that it may be so on earth. It allies itself perfectly to chapter 24. It is the time evil is in the world (not Adam in Paradise, even in thought), but the desire that it may be gone out of it. Luke is more personal: Father, hallowed be Thy name; Thy kingdom come; give us our needed food for each day; and forgive us our sins, for we forgive every one indebted to us; and lead us not into temptation. This is personal, as to the Father, and personal need as to us, not a Remnant dispensational thing as Matthew ever."<sup>73</sup> Israel was the earthy focus but heaven is still very interested in what happens on earth. Christians can, and should, pray about earthly things even though we are a heavenly people since we still have to leave on this earth.

### **6:11 Give us this day our daily bread.<sup>ab</sup>**

#### **11a "our daily bread"**

1. We are to pray for today's bread, not that which belongs to tomorrow. We can't eat tomorrow's bread. It is all that we can do to worry about today's provision instead of also worrying about the provisions for tomorrow.
2. Also see Matthew 6:34.
3. In the same way God provided daily manna for Israel in the wilderness.

11b In our day, where the provision of food is usually planned and assured for a good time ahead, such immediate dependence seems usual from our experience. In parts of the world today, as in Jesus' time, it is not so. The precarious lifestyle of many first-century workers meant that they were paid one day at a time and a few days' illness could spell tragedy.

### **6:12 And forgive<sup>a</sup> us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.**

#### **12a "forgive"**

1. If we expect and desire forgiveness from God for our sins, we must be willing to extend that forgiveness to others- Matthew 6:15; 18:21-35.
  - A. The parable in Matthew 18:21-35 shows what happens when you refuse to forgive.
2. Sin is likened as a debt and sinners as debtors to God.

### **6:13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.**

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<sup>73</sup> John Nelson Darby, *Notes and Comments*, volume 5.

AV	ESV	LSV
13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.	13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.	13 'And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. [For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.]

Most translations omit **“For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever”**. “All the critical texts wrongly omit this doxology; for, out of about 500 codices which contain the prayer, only eight omit it. It is found also in the Syriac, Ethiopic, Armenian, Gothic, Slavonic, and Georgian Versions.”<sup>74</sup> When you see the party line of “all the earliest and best manuscripts omit”, you know you are dealing with either a liar or an ignorant writer. The guilty parties among the translations include the English Revised Version, American Revised Version, New International Version, New Living Translation, NET Bible, Rheims Douay Version, English Standard Version and the Darby translation.

“Instructing a Way to Pray” By Dr. O. Talmadge Spence<sup>75</sup>

#### My Personal Prayer Manner in My Ministry in Life

1. KNEEL: Take your own habitual attitude of prayer (posture, kneel, sit, bow, stand, etc.)

- Turn away from all duties, play, work, and activity.
- Approach to prayer is the preliminary to prayer.
- Jonah 2:4 "yet I will look again toward thy holy temple" (in the whale's belly).
- Isa. 45:23 & Rom. 14:11 "...every knee shall bow..." ( a difference between bowing the knee and kneeling on the knees: bowing the knee figures a man walking along and turning to an altar and dropping one knee in the initial act and posture of prayer.)
- Psalms 95:6 "Come...let us kneel before the Lord our maker." (approach to prayer.)
- Dan. 6:10 "...he kneeled upon his knees." (after the first knee did bow, then both knees are now pictured postured together. (Still the approach in prayer, NOT prayer itself.)

2. CLOSET: Close all the doors of activities: several moments should pass silently.

- Matt. 6:6 "...enter into the closet, ...shut thy door, ...in secret, ..."

#### APPROACH!

- Hab. 2:20 "The Lord is in His holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him." APPROACH!

3. APPROACH THE LORD GOD: Set the Lord before you. Psalms 141:2 "Let my prayer be set before thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice."

4. THINK: Think about it first; what are the matters which matter today: Think about it FIRST—the agenda of your prayer. (Approach)

<sup>74</sup> Ethelbert Bullinger, *The Companion Bible*.

<sup>75</sup> Straightway, January, 1999.



- a. Mk. 14:72 Peter: "when he thought thereon, he wept."
- b. Phil. 4:8 "Finally brethren, whatsoever things are pure...think on these."

5. SPEAK: (Thus, the prayer actually begins.) Whether coldly or dutifully; but reverently. "About the matters" (The Agenda of prayer begins: acknowledgments of God; events; intercessions; petitions; etc.) THIS IS THE BODY AND CONTENT OF PRAYER.

6. ACCEPT: That God has heard, has accepted, and responded to your prayer. Eph. 3:20 "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us..."

7. WITHDRAW: A reverent close and withdrawal from the interview-prayer; a moment of silence; arising or unclasping of hands; etc., or whatever was the habitual attitude of the prayer. Calmly leave; expectantly. Psalms 19:14 "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer." (appropriate verse)

Daniel 6:10 - Note similarity of his prayer.

1. He went unto his house
2. his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem
3. he kneeled upon his knees
4. three times a day,
5. and prayed,
6. and gave thanks before his God,
7. as he did aforetime.

**6:14 For if ye forgive men their trespasses,<sup>a</sup> your heavenly Father will also forgive you:**

14a **"transpasses"**. A deliberate and willful stepping over a line or a boundary.

**6:15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.<sup>ab</sup>**

15a **"forgive"**

1. For an example, see Jesus forgiving His killers while He was on the cross
  - A. Luke 23:34 **"Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots."**
2. The Lord teaches on the importance of forgiveness in Matthew 18:21-35 in the parable of the servant who was forgiven of an immense debt of 10,000 talents but would not forgive a fellow servant who owed him a few cents.
3. Also see Colossians 3:13 **"Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye."**
4. The Corinthian church forgave the man in incest (1 Corinthians 5) in 2 Corinthians 2:7 **"For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ."**

15b If we don't forgive others, God will not forgive us. What does this mean? Does it mean God won't forgive our sins and He won't save us or will take away our salvation? Neither interpretation is Biblical. It involves a chastening for our sins that God might have otherwise taken away if we had extended forgiveness. We did not so God will bring the judgments for sins upon us. We will be in God's disfavor until we forgive those who have wronged us. There will be no communion, no fellowship, no answers to prayer. God will treat us as a heathen even if we are saved. This man is a hypocrite, wanting God and other men to forgive him while he refuses to forgive others.

The parable of Matthew 18:21-35 is the application of this warning. Matthew 18 may have more of a Kingdom of Heaven application while Matthew 6 may have more of a Kingdom of God application.

An unwillingness to forgive shows a major heart problem, pride and hatred. There is a lack of mercy involved. Someone wronged you and you are going to make sure they know about it and suffer for it. You will feel you are justified in your anger because of what they did to you. It matters not if they repent, you will not forgive them. What if God acted that way toward us in refusing to forgive our sins? We would all be in hell and salvation would be impossible.

## **28. Fasting 6:16-18**

**6:16 ¶ Moreover when ye fast,<sup>ab</sup> be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces,<sup>c</sup> that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.<sup>de</sup>**

16a Summary on fasting:

1. Fasting by Israel

A. Judges 20:26 **"Then all the children of Israel, and all the people, went up, and came unto the house of God, and wept, and sat there before the LORD, and fasted that day until even, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD."**

B. 1 Samuel 7:6 **"And they gathered together to Mizpeh, and drew water, and poured it out before the LORD, and fasted on that day, and said there, We have sinned against the LORD. And Samuel judged the children of Israel in Mizpeh."**

C. 1 Samuel 31:13 **"And they took their bones, and buried them under a tree at Jabesh, and fasted seven days."**

D. 2 Samuel 1:12 **"And they mourned, and wept, and fasted until even, for Saul, and for Jonathan his son, and for the people of the LORD, and for the house of Israel; because they were fallen by the sword."**

E. Nehemiah 9:1 **"Now in the twenty and fourth day of this month the children of Israel were assembled with fasting, and with sackclothes, and earth upon them."**

2. David practiced it while praying for the life of his son.

A. 2 Samuel 12:21-23 **"Then said his servants unto him, What thing is this that thou hast done? thou didst fast and weep for the child, while it was alive; but when the child was dead, thou didst rise and eat bread. And he said, While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept: for I said, Who can tell whether GOD will be gracious to me, that the child may live? But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me."**

3. Used by Jezebel as a pretext to murder Naboth

- A. 1 Kings 21:9,12 **"And she wrote in the letters, saying, Proclaim a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people... They proclaimed a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people."**
4. Used in repentance
- A. 1 Kings 21:27 **"And it came to pass, when Ahab heard those words, that he rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his flesh, and fasted, and lay in sackcloth, and went softly."**
- B. Joel 2:12 **"Therefore also now, saith the LORD, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning:"**
5. Jehoshaphat called for a fast
- A. 2 Chronicles 20:3 **"And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the LORD, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah."**
6. Ezra called for a fast
- A. Ezra 8:21,23 **"Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the river of Ahava, that we might afflict ourselves before our God, to seek of him a right way for us, and for our little ones, and for all our substance. For I was ashamed to require of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy in the way: because we had spoken unto the king, saying, The hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek him; but his power and his wrath is against all them that forsake him. So we fasted and besought our God for this: and he was intreated of us."**
7. Nehemiah fasted
- A. Nehemiah 1:4 **"And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven,"**
8. Esther requested a fast on her behalf
- A. Esther 4:3,16 **"And in every province, whithersoever the king's commandment and his decree came, there was great mourning among the Jews, and fasting, and weeping, and wailing; and many lay in sackcloth and ashes...Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish."**
9. Used to humble the soul
- A. Psalm 35:13 **"But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth: I humbled my soul with fasting; and my prayer returned into mine own bosom."**
10. Used to chasten the soul
- A. Psalm 69:10 **"When I wept, and chastened my soul with fasting, that was to my reproach."**
11. There were fasts that the Lord did not pay any attention to
- A. Isaiah 58:3-6 **"Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not? wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge? Behold, in the day of your fast ye find pleasure, and exact all your labours. Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness: ye shall not fast as ye do this day, to make your voice to be heard on high. Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the LORD? Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of**

**wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?"**

B. Jeremiah 8:5 **"Why then is this people of Jerusalem slidden back by a perpetual backsliding? they hold fast deceit, they refuse to return."**

C. Jeremiah 14:12 **"When they fast, I will not hear their cry; and when they offer burnt offering and an oblation, I will not accept them: but I will consume them by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence."**

12. Jehoiakim called for a fast

A. Jeremiah 36:9 **"And it came to pass in the fifth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, in the ninth month, that they proclaimed a fast before the LORD to all the people in Jerusalem, and to all the people that came from the cities of Judah unto Jerusalem."**

13. Fasting in mourning

A. Daniel 6:18 **"Then the king went to his palace, and passed the night fasting: neither were instruments of musick brought before him: and his sleep went from him."**

14. Used in seeking God

A. 2 Chronicles 20:3 **"And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the LORD, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah."**

B. Daniel 9:3 **"And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes:"**

15. Joel called for a fast

A. Joel 1:14 **"Sanctify ye a fast, call a solemn assembly, gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land into the house of the LORD your God, and cry unto the LORD,"**

B. Joel 2:15 **"Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly:"**

16. Nineveh fasted in the face of judgment

A. Jonah 3:5 **"So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them."**

i. This also involved putting on of sackcloth

ii. It also extended to the animals

17. Traditionalism of fasting

A. Zechariah 7:5 **"Speak unto all the people of the land, and to the priests, saying, When ye fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh month, even those seventy years, did ye at all fast unto me, even to me?"**

B. Zechariah 8:19 **"Thus saith the LORD of hosts; The fast of the fourth month, and the fast of the fifth, and the fast of the seventh, and the fast of the tenth, shall be to the house of Judah joy and gladness, and cheerful feasts; therefore love the truth and peace."**

18. Jesus fasted 40 days

A. Matthew 4:2 **"And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred."**

19. Fasting of hypocrites

A. Matthew 6:16 **"Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward."**

B. Luke 18:12 **"I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess."**

20. Proper fasting

A. Matthew 6:18 **“That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.”**

21. The Pharisees fasted often as did the disciples of John

A. Matthew 9:14 **“Then came to him the disciples of John, saying, Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not?”**

22. Some devils can only be cast out by fasting

A. Matthew 17:21 **“Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.”**

23. Practiced in the early church

A. Acts 13:3 **“And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.”**

16b The Lord assumes we fast. He assumes there are spiritual matters and prayer requests so dear and important to us that we would be willing to fast to get the answers we need from God. The Pharisees fasted to be seen and to be in honor among the people. This should never be the motivation for the child of God.

16c **“a sad countenance...they disfigure their faces”** They really put on a public display so that you know how holy they (holier than you are!) by the fact that they are fasting, and they want everyone to know it, too. And they are miserable when they do it. There is no joy in these religious service.

**“countenance”** from an Old French “contenance” which is from a Middle Latin word “continentia” and “continere” (“con”- with, together, having intensity, and “tenere” to hold), meaning “the way in which one restrains oneself”, a holding together of the face that expresses an attitude or a state of mind.”<sup>76</sup>

16d Their reward is the praise of men, which is one of the most fickle things in this life.

16e If this has a Millennial application, what would it be? What would we be fasting for in the Millennium?

**6:17 But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face;<sup>a</sup>**

**“anoint thy head,,,”** Dress and act as you usually do while fasting.

**6:18 That thou appear not unto men to fast,<sup>a</sup> but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.**

18a **“That thou appear not unto men to fast”**. When you fast, do not put on a religious show. Go about your daily business and your normal routine and don't let it be known to anyone that you are fasting. It is a practice between you and God, not something to do to make everything think you are spiritual. And what you do in secret, in the heart, the Lord will reward openly. I heard a preacher, while visiting a home and when offered something to eat, declined the offer by saying “No thanks, I am fasting”, He could have declined the offer by saying “no thank you” and have just left it at that, but no, he had to try to impress everyone in the room with how spiritual he was. He was a proud man anyway and was one of those pastors who imagined he had some sort of “veto” power over the decisions made by those in his congregation.

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<sup>76</sup> Steven White, *White's Dictionary of the King James Language*, page 282.

## **29. Laying Up Treasures 6:19-21, see also Luke 12:33,34**

**6:19<sup>a</sup> ¶ Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth,<sup>b</sup> where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:<sup>c</sup>**

19a Verses 19-24 all deal with the issues of divided loyalties. Jesus says that no man can have a divided, or a double heart. Such a man is unstable in all of his ways (James 1:8). Man is so built that he cannot “multitask”. He must focus his loyalties and heart on one thing at a time. Spiritually, his heart is directed toward either a spiritual thing or a carnal thing, but never both at once. Many try to be the first to accomplish this. Christian Rock and Southern Gospel “artists” try to use carnal music for spiritual ends. It never works. Church music must be all spiritual or it is not Christian music. Many contemporary churches try to use carnal means to lure carnal people to a spiritual service, which is totally illogical.

1. In verses 19 and 20, make up your mind. Either serve God or mammon. Pick one. You must. But you cannot choose two (Matthew 6:24).
2. In verses 22 and 23 is the teaching on a divided heart. Man must have a single eye, a heart that is focused on one object. You cannot look at two things and the same time, even if you have two eyes.
3. Verse 24 is the classic warning about either being spiritual or carnal. You must be one or the other.

19b I’ve heard and read of some preachers<sup>77</sup> say that they would not take out a life insurance policy based on these verses, assuming that it displayed a lack of faith. How they came to such a conclusion is beyond me and I still do not understand their reasoning. A life insurance policy is designed to help cover your funeral expenses and provide money for your family upon your death. It can be a wise financial investment and I have several policies for the benefit of my family upon my death. We should do what we can to provide for ourselves and our families and then rely on the Lord to do those things that we cannot. That is not a lack of faith, that is wise planning.

19c The treasures that we lay up for ourselves on earth is subject to risk. Thieves may steal it. It may decay. The economy could crash and render it worthless. The government could confiscate your gold like the American government did in 1933. Inflation will eat away at its value like moth and rust. That which we do for the cause of God will surely last and carries no risk. Time is not a reliable vault for treasure. Things can change overnight that destroy the best laid plans of men. Where should men put their faith? Not in things temporal. The person who amasses wealth on earth is too short-sighted. He is building up capital that may be lost and will surely be useless to the capitalist after his death. The post-funeral question, “How must did he leave behind?” has a universal answer: “All of it”.

**6:20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven,<sup>a</sup> where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt,<sup>b</sup> and where thieves do not break through nor steal:**

20a The only “stocks and bonds” Paul had were the ones on his feet and on his hands (Acts 16:24, 26:29). The only way you can be rich in heaven is to send it all ahead. You can’t take it with you for hearses do not come with trailers. Naked you came into this world and naked you

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<sup>77</sup> Like John R. Rice, in his commentary on *Matthew, The King of the Jews*, page 110.

will leave. But the treasures that you invested in heaven can be waiting for you when you arrive if you shipped them there ahead of time.

1. You will store up treasure on earth that will burn one day OR you will store up treasure eternal treasure in heaven that will never corrupt, and that the IRS will never be able to touch.
2. The safest place for treasures is in glory, where the corruptions and sins of this world cannot touch them.
3. There is nothing wrong with laying up treasures as long as they are the right treasures and you lay them up in the right place.

20b “In Bible times much of what was treasured was in the form of costly fabrics- purple and fine twined linen. Alongside that, the Lord laid the word “moth”. Other treasure was in the form of costly metal. Alongside that, the Lord placed the word “rust”. People put their treasures in safe places. Alongside that precaution, the Lord laid the word “thieves”.<sup>78</sup>

### **6:21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.<sup>a</sup>**

21a **“there will your heart be”** That is where your god is. If your desires are on things of the earth, then that is where your heart is and where your god dwells. But if we have the “upward look” and send all of our treasures on ahead, then we have a true God Who dwells in the heavens.

## **30. The “Eye” 6:22,23, see also Luke 11:34-36**

### **6:22 The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.<sup>a</sup>**

22a You need to have a singleness of purpose and focus. Dedicate yourself totally to something, either in a carnal application or spiritual. If God calls you to preach, dedicate yourself to it. If you must an outside job, see it as a means to an end to finance that call.

1. This includes bi-vocational pastors. It is hard to dedicate yourself fully to the ministry if it is necessary to work on the outside to finance your family. You also can’t fully dedicate yourself to your secular job as you are also preaching. It is a difficult situation as you are forced to divide your loyalties in these situations.
2. Even if you have a hobby, dedicate yourself totally to it.
3. No one likes a person who cannot commit to anything, who gads about from Dan to Beersheba (Jeremiah 2:36 **“Why gaddest thou about so much to change thy way? thou also shalt be ashamed of Egypt, as thou wast ashamed of Assyria.”**). Pick something and stick with it. You can only focus on one thing at a time, and you can only fix your gaze on one object at a time. Man cannot multitask well. You will end up taking your gaze off of what you should be looking at to focus on something less important and that is “evil”.

### **6:23 But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!<sup>a</sup>**

23a The **“darkness”** is the polluted motivations corrupt all service and devotion. If the heart is dark (unsaved, full of sin) then every compartment of the life will be dark as well.

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<sup>78</sup> John Philips, *Exploring Matthew*, page 118.

### **31. Serving God or Mammon 6:24**

**6:24 ¶ No man can serve two masters:<sup>a</sup> for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.<sup>bcdefgh</sup>**

24a Elisha challenged the nation of Israel with this in 1 Kings 18:21 (“**And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word.**”). Either serve God or Baal. If Baal is god, then serve him. If Jehovah is God, then serve Him, but make up your minds! Joshua also issued the similar challenge in Joshua 24:15 (“**And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.**”)

24b There are two “masters” that a man may serve:

1. Satan
2. God

A man will serve one. He must. He cannot be neutral. He will pick one and he should be loyal to the master whom he does pick, else he will be guilty of treason. No man can waffle back and forth in his service. If he does, he shows that he is **unstable in all his ways** (James 1:8).

24c Too many people “halt” between two opinions (or masters) as Elijah rebuke the nation for in 1 Kings 18:21. If God is God then serve Him. If Baal or Mammon is God, then serve them. No one respects a man who cannot make up his mind and who plays for two teams. Pick one and stick with it.

24d “**ye cannot serve God and mammon**”

1. But how many try to serve both! They have two loves, serve two masters, live two lives and have two hearts. You cannot sail under two flags. No one has managed to do this in 6,000 years but there is always someone out there who imagines that he will be the first to accomplish this impossible task. Serving two gods will mean that they will eventually come into conflict and you will eventually be required to choose.
2. Here is a double-minded man who is trying to serve both God and mammon. He makes a profession to be a Christian but continually backslides into the world. He is very worldly in his thinking despite sitting under the ministry of the word. He does his religious duties on Sunday then goes back out into the world on Monday. He has no firm loyalty to either God or man as he constantly shifts between them.
3. Churches are like this as well, as they cannot make up their minds where they stand. They have a “traditional service” at 8 AM on Sunday and then their “contemporary service” at 11 AM. They do not know if they are traditional or contemporary. They sing the good hymns of the faith set to drums and electric guitars. They will preach a strong gospel message out of the ESV or some other corrupt modern version. They will talk about spiritual discipline yet will come dressed to church in a slob manner.
4. “**Ye cannot serve God and mammon**” because both will demand your total loyalty and dedication and will not accept or tolerate half-hearted service and devotion.



24e “**serve**” is the Greek word δουλεύειν, Not merely ‘serve,’ but in that closer sense in which he who serves is the δοῦλος of, i.e. belongs to, and obeys entirely.”<sup>79</sup>

24f “**mammon**” material wealth or possessions especially as having a debasing influence, material wealth or possessions especially as having a debasing influence. It comes from Middle English, from Late Latin *mammona*, from Greek *mamōna*, from the word Aramaic *māmōnā* riches.

24g “What do I mean by worship? Above all, I mean sacrifice. That to which you give your life – your time, your dreams, your reputation – is your god. You invest your emotions and efforts in this god. You also expect something in return. It might be happiness, pleasure, fame, power, respect, or any of mankind’s long list of personal goals. Men sacrifice to their gods for the sake of rewards – positive sanctions. A god that offers no rewards is not taken seriously. Men ask themselves, “What’s in it for me?” Then they decide which god to worship. “The worship of any god involves making estimates. Which rewards are worth sacrificing for? Which are actually available? What is the likelihood of non-payment by the god? What is the past performance of the god in question? How much is expected of me? What happens if I promise to pay, but fail to deliver? Then there is the question of loyalty. Is there a bond other than legal between man and his god? Is there a personal relationship? Is there grace? Does a god extend mercy to his worshipers? But there can be no question of service. A god that has no servants is not a god. To gain what man wants from his god, he must serve. He may receive something for nothing from a gracious god, but not everything for nothing. No god extends all of his blessings gratuitously. Jesus made this plain in this passage: choose wisely which god to serve.”<sup>80</sup>

24h “God says, “My son, give me thy heart.” Mammon says, “No, give it me.” God says, “Be content with such things as ye have.” Mammon says, “Grasp at all that ever thou canst. Rem, rem, quocunque modo rem--Money, money; by fair means or by foul, money.” God says, “Defraud not, never lie, be honest and just in all thy dealings.” Mammon says “Cheat thine own Father, if thou canst gain by it.” God says, “Be charitable.” Mammon says, “Hold thy own: this giving undoes us all.” God says, “Be careful for nothing.” Mammon says, “Be careful for every thing.” God says, “Keep holy thy sabbath-day.” Mammon says, “Make use of that day as well as any other for the world.” Thus inconsistent are the commands of God and Mammon, so that we cannot serve both. Let us not then halt between God and Baal, but choose ye this day whom ye will serve, and abide by our choice.”<sup>81</sup>

### **32. Worry 6:25-34, see also Luke 12:22-31**

**6:25 Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?<sup>a</sup>**

25a These are necessary and honorable needs. We must eat, drink and be clothed and make sure that our families are well provided for. But to stay up all night and worrying about it accomplishes nothing. It is much better to trust the Lord to provide those things we need, especially for those needs that we cannot provide for ourselves. How much time, effort and

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<sup>79</sup> Henry Alford, *The Greek New Testament*.

<sup>80</sup> Gary North, *Priorities and Dominion*, pages 139-140.

<sup>81</sup> Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*.

money are invested in the simple act of buying clothes today! But it was even more important during the Lord's day, due to the costs and scarcity of clothes.

**6:26 Behold the fowls of the air:<sup>a</sup> for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?<sup>bc</sup>**

26a **"fowls of the air"** Luke is more specific with "ravens" in Luke 12:24.

26b This does not promote laziness! God feeds the birds, but He does not throw the seed in their nests. And He gives them their needed daily bread, as we are to ask for. They do not plow, sow, reap, harvest or store in barns. Nor do you see birds worrying and fretting as to where their next meal will come from, even in the dead of winter with snow covering the ground.

1. If God puts forth the effort to feed lowly sparrows, how much will He work to feed one of His own children? The birds trust their Creator more than Christians trust their Father! They cannot sow or reap. They are totally at the mercy of God. We can do some work but we should still cast ourselves on the mercy and goodness of God as much as the birds do. My grandmother used to say that God provides for the birds but He doesn't through the food in their nest.

2. God also cares for the oxen

A. 1 Corinthians 9:9 **"For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen?"**

26c **"Are ye not much better than they?"** Yes, man is better than a bird or an animal. God died for men, not for animals. They do not sin so they need no Savior. God has revealed Himself to men, not to animals. They have a soul but no spirit, so they do not worship God. Man can think, reason, dream and worship, things no bird or animal can do. Man has a a dignity that God has not given to animals.

**6:27 Which of you by taking thought<sup>a</sup> can add one cubit<sup>b</sup> unto his stature?<sup>c</sup>**

27a **"taking thought"** or worrying about something.

1. All that work for worry and are you bettered by it? What did it accomplish? None of you can improve your status by worrying about it.
2. Worrying about a lack of food and raiment is like worrying about one's lack of height. How foolish to worry about adding 18 inches to your height!

27b **"cubit"** About 18 inches.

27c **"stature"** Your height.

AV

ESV

LSV

27 Which of you by taking thought can add one **cubit** unto his stature?

27 And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?

27 And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?

**"cubit"** The ESV and LSV have "single hour", which is not the same thing. A cubit is a measure of length, not time. The modern versions may be trying to say you cannot lengthen your life by

worry, but that would be an interpretation and not a translation. There are things you can do to extend your life, but you cannot add to your height, so the Authorized Version is more accurate.

**6:28 And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:<sup>a</sup>**

28a If God is careful to preserve even the unregenerate and to supply their physical needs (Matthew 5:45), will He not much more provide all to those that are trusting Him?

**6:29 And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.<sup>ab</sup>**

The humblest flower is arrayed in greater glory than a man sporting a thousand-dollar suit.

What draws our attention is not the mere survival of these flowers but their magnificence, beyond the best that any human art can achieve. Their survival is not at issue, as they are here today and gone tomorrow. Yet God lavishes on them a craftsman's care which the most ostentatious monarch can only envy and cannot duplicate.

**6:30 Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?<sup>a</sup>**

30a **"O ye of little faith"**. This phrase seemed to be a favorite rebuke of Jesus in connection with Israel at the time of his earthly ministry (Matthew 8:10; 14:31,17:17).

**6:31 Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?<sup>a</sup>**

31a Food and clothing- the two biggest worries of all men.

1. These are honest and legitimate needs, but we are to turn these concerns over to the care of our Father, Who has promised to provide.
2. Do your duty, with a full trust in God that He will see that you do not lack for these things that you need for your daily provision.

**6:32 (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.<sup>ab</sup>**

32a As the Gentiles have no spiritual concerns, so they place all their emphasis on the carnal matters of life. The unsaved run around in a panic as they have to heavenly Father that provides for their needs. Believers do, so we have no reason to fret as the Gentiles do.

32b This is a reassuring promise to all believers. I have needs, problems and burdens and the Lord knows of each one!

**6:33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God,<sup>a</sup> and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.<sup>b</sup>**

33a This is one of the few times Matthew uses “kingdom of God”, that relates to the spiritual elements of the kingdom. Jesus does not say to seek the “Kingdom of Heaven” or the literal, political elements of the Kingdom, as God will usher that in during His own timing. There really isn’t much we can do to hasten the events leading up to the establishment of the Millennium (such as the rapture, the tribulation and the second coming). But we can do something about the spiritual elements of the Kingdom, such as witnessing and preaching. We are to focus on our own spirituality and walk with God and to do all we can to maintain communion with God. We are told to focus on these issues.

33b While the Gentiles are scratching around for food, drink and clothing (and a million other carnal things) the believer is to be putting his primary emphasis on spiritual things.

1. If you put God’s kingdom and His needs first, He will then put our needs first on His list. If we make God’s business our business, then He will make our business His business.
2. This is the great benefit of service the God of the Bible. He offers those who worship and serve Him freedom from want and worry. He does not promise riches on earth (but He does in heaven) but He does promise the security of provision.
3. The greater your faith, the less your worry, and vice-versa.
4. Some people never find the Kingdom because they never seek for it or seek it in the wrong places or do not know what they are seeking for so they don’t recognize it if they see it.

AV	ESV	LSV
33 But seek ye first the <b>kingdom of God</b> , and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.	33 But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.	33 “But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

“**kingdom of God**” The LSV mangles this to “His kingdom”. The ESV surprisingly gets it right. The modern versions are split about 50/50. Some get it right and others mistranslate the verse.

**6:34 Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil<sup>a</sup> thereof.<sup>b</sup>**

34a “evil”

1. Not moral evil or sin, but the “evil” that denotes trouble and affliction.
2. It’s all you have to do to worry about today without borrowing tomorrow’s worries. It is not that I should ignore the needs and burdens of tomorrow. We are not to allow those burdens to consume us.

34b “Some people fail very grievously in this matter because they are always trying to anticipate God; they are always sitting down, as it were, and asking themselves, ‘Now I wonder what God is going to ask me to do tomorrow or in a week’s time or in a year? What is God going to ask of me then?’ That is utterly wrong. Never try to anticipate God. As you must not anticipate your own future, do not anticipate God’s future for you. Live day by day; live a life of obedience to God every day; do what God asks you to do every day. Never allow yourself to indulge in thoughts such as these, ‘I wonder when tomorrow comes whether God will want me to do this

or to do that.' That must never be done, says our Lord. You must learn to trust God day by day for every particular occasion, and never try to go ahead of Him."<sup>82</sup>

### **Spiritual Applications- Matthew Chapter 6**

Several things to note:

1. The importance of forgiveness. God has forgiven us of more than we can imagine. This makes it so important for us to forgive those who have done us wrong, as in the parable of Matthew 18:21-35. Remember what happened at Nickle Mines, Pennsylvania in 2006 where a gunman murdered five Amish girls in a schoolhouse and the families forgave the shooter. No one said forgiveness was easy, but it is necessary.

2. The folly of laying up treasures on earth. People live their lives trying to make money, save money, and spend money. But if the moth and rust don't corrupt it, the government will steal it or inflation will destroy it. The only way to be rich in heaven is to send all your money on ahead. Yes, you need money to live in this world, but money is a cruel master that tends to destroy spirituality.

3. Serving two master, God or mammon. It is impossible to serve both. Find a position on a topic and stick with it. Dedicate yourself to it. Focus on important things in life or in your career and stick to it. Nail down a political position and dedicate yourself to it. The same goes for spiritual things. I have more respect for someone who is wrong about an issue but stands by his position than for someone who tries to be all things to all men because he is trying to please everyone, is trying to offend no one or simply can't make up his mind about what he truly believes. Many churches try to serve God and mammon. There was a nearby Presbyterian church that had a very strong doctrinal statement (you would have thought John Knox wrote it) but their stand was weak. They were thoroughly contemporary with Charismatic music and no personal standards. This is a church that is "facing both ways", like a church that has a "traditional" service at 9 AM on Sundays, followed by a "Contemporary" service at 11 AM. Make up your mind! Get on one or the other side of the road. If you stand in the "middle of the road", you will get hit by the traffic going in both directions.

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<sup>82</sup> D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Studies on in the Sermon on the Mount*.



## **Matthew Chapter 7**

### **33. Judging 7:1-5, see also Luke 6:37-42**

#### **7:1 Judge not, that ye be not judged.<sup>abcde</sup>**

1a The verse has suffered more abuse in the hand of the Liberals than any other passage. By constant repetition of this verse, these apostates have cowed Protestants, Baptists and Bible Believers into shutting their mouths against condemning their sin.

1b This verse must be lined up with other verses that allow and even command judgments:

1. **“He that is spiritual judgeth all things.”** (1 Corinthians 2:15)  
A. So it would be an unspiritual man who refuses to judge anything!
2. **“Why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?”** (Luke 12:57)
3. **“We shall judge angels”** (1 Corinthians 6:3).  
A. We might as well get some practice in now!
4. **“Judge righteous judgment”** (John 7:24)

1c Everyone, saved and unsaved, judges a thousand times a day. We judge which clothes to wear, if an apple is good or rotten, which route to take to work, whether we like a certain song, if we trust a certain salesman, if we believe if a politician is trustworthy, and so on. Christians are not prohibited from judging, just admonished to do it correctly.

1d We will be able to judge better in the Millennium than we can now. We will have glorified bodies and minds, sin and Satan will be restrained and Christ is personally ruling on earth. False judgments and perversions of justice simply will not happen. But until we get to that point, the Lord urges caution in our judgments.

1e The Pharisees loved to judge everyone and everything by their own self-righteous standards, which was the incorrect standard for judgment,

#### **7:2 For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete,<sup>a</sup> it shall be measured to you again.<sup>b</sup>**

2a **“mete”** Measure out, the definition comes by it’s context and nearness to the word “measure”. It comes from Middle English, from Old English metan; akin to Old High German mezzan to measure, Latin modus measure, Greek medesthai to be mindful of.

2b **“with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.”** If you judge others, you will be judged on that same basis. Go ahead and judge but be very careful when you do and do so Biblically and then be ready to submit yourself to the same basis of judgment that you apply to others.

A summary of the Biblical teaching of judgment:

1. The Christian is to judge things in his own life and the lives of others  
A. 1 Corinthians 5:3 **“For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed,”**

B. 1 Corinthians 6:2-4 **"Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life? If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church."**

C. 1 Corinthians 11:13 **"Judge in yourselves: is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered?"**

2. He is not to judge a brother as unsaved if that brother disagrees with him on minor doctrinal points of practice or application.

A. Romans 14:1-13

3. He is not to judge anything hastily or when not required or unmercifully or from an unscriptural standpoint. Judge nothing before the time.

A. 1 Corinthians 4:5 **"Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God."**

4. He is to clearly mark out and avoid preachers and teachers who do not believe the word of God, or who profess to believe it and deny it by their preaching and teaching.

A. Matthew 7:15 **"Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves."**

B. Romans 16:17,18 **"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple."**

C. Philippians 3:18,19 **"(For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.)"**

5. The Christian must be willing to be submitted to the same standard of judgment that he judges by.

A. Matthew 7:2 **"For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again."**

B. Romans 2:1,2 **"Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things. But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things."**

6. The Jews were guilty of much hypocritical judgments, condemning others (especially Gentiles) for sins they were also guilty of.

**7:3 And why beholdest thou the mote<sup>a</sup> that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?**



3a “**mote**”. A small dust mite, something so small you can hardly see it. In this context, a flaw so minor as to be unimportant. Yet we tend to over-emphasize the smallest flaws in other people while overlooking and ignoring the same, and greater, flaws in our own lives.

**7:4 Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye?<sup>ab</sup>**

4a To complain about a minor flaw in another while ignoring the glaring character flaw and sin in your own life is to be guilty of the height of hypocrisy. Before we can preach to others, we must preach to ourselves (Romans 2:21-24 “**Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God? For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written.**”). If we are called upon to tend other people’s vineyards, we must make sure ours is well-kept (Song of Solomon 1:6 “**Look not upon me, because I am black, because the sun hath looked upon me: my mother’s children were angry with me; they made me the keeper of the vineyards; but mine own vineyard have I not kept.**”).

4b Verses 4 and 5 are also an example of divine use of sarcasm.

**7:5 Thou hypocrite,<sup>a</sup> first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother’s eye.<sup>b</sup>**

5a This person is a hypocrite because he criticizes others for minor infractions while ignoring larger problems that he has. He is okay while everyone else is imperfect or not as holy or as spiritual as he is.

5b “**then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother’s eye.**” How can you hope to see anything clearly with a log stuck in your eye?

### **34. Pearls Before Swine 7:6, see also Luke 11:9-13**

**7:6 Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine,<sup>a</sup> lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.**

6a Hyper-Calvinists (not necessarily evangelical Calvinists but those who believe we have no obligation to witness to the lost or that the lost have any “duty” to believe the gospel, like the so-called “Strict Baptists” or “Primitive Baptists”) will sometimes use this as a proof text against evangelism and missions, and that sinners have no “duty” to believe on Christ and that Christians have no “duty” to preach evangelistically to sinners, but mainline Calvinists don’t hold to those errors.

This has the main idea of not to lower the gospel or the things of God to the level of the world. In the zeal to be evangelistic, many contemporary churches will lower the level and spirituality of the preaching, music and standards to the level of the world in an attempt to increase attendance. But we are to be bringing people up to the level of the gospel, not lowering the gospel to the level of the world. Maintain your spiritual standards!

### **35. Principals of Prayer 7:7-12**

**7:7<sup>a</sup> Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:<sup>b</sup>**

7a Three principles of prayer:

1. Ask

A. Prayer involves asking. In order to pray for things, we must first ask for them.

B. Asking implies faith, respect and the belief that the one to whom we are praying is ready, willing and able to answer.

C. Asking involves confidence in that we believe the person we are asking is ready, willing and able to fulfill our requests.

D. We ask as a child would a father

i. The Father is able to answer

ii. The Father is willing to answer

E. Ask. We are beggars at the door of divine mercy. We are destitute of all spiritual good, and it is God alone who can give it to us. We have no claim but what his mercy has given us.

2. Seek

A. To ask is one thing. To seek after the answer is something else.

B. We ask but then we must actively seek out and wait for the answer

C. It has the idea of to seek a thing of value

D. Leave no stone unturned there is no peace until you get your desired answer from God.

E. If prayer is not answered at once we are to seek further by endeavoring to learn more clearly the mind of God in the matter, that we may pray better and more intelligently.

i. Isaiah 26:9 **"With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early: for when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness."**

3. Knock

A. This is persistence in prayer. Knock at the door until someone answers!

B. When I was a boy, my friends and I would often play a game where we would knock on someone's door and then run away. Many of us pray like that.

We ask once, we knock once, then we run away before the Lord opens the door.

C. Knock in earnest. Be importunate in your desires of God.

7b The Lord encourages us in our prayers! Laboring in prayer always carries a reward. The promise is attached to this:

1. If you ask, you will receive

2. If you seek, you will find

3. If you knock, it shall be opened to you

4. There is also a progression here in intensity- ask, then seek, then knocking. The Christian prayer should keep on asking (Philippians 4:6 **"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God."**), seeking (1 Timothy 2:1 **"I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men;"**), and knocking (1 Thessalonians 5:17 **"Pray without ceasing."**).

**7:8 For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.<sup>a</sup>**

8a Assurance given in prayer. God would not so encourage us in prayers and to pray if He did not promise success in our prayers. When God's conditions are complied with, the answer is sure.

**7:9 Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?<sup>ab</sup>**

9a When God answers prayer, He answers in a positive sense and gives only good things to His children, as any earthly father would. This is similar to the temptation in Matthew 4 where Satan tempted Christ to turn stones into bread. Here, we have stones instead of bread being offered. Some stones in Israel look like loaves of bread. God will not give us an answer that looks like what we prayed for but in reality, is something that is inferior. He will give us what we ask for- and better. We need bread. We can use a stone under certain circumstances. God gives us what we need when we need it and gives us things we can use also when we need it.

AV	ESV	LSV
9 Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask <b>bread</b> , will he give him a stone?	9 Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone?	9 "Or what man is there among you who, when his son asks for a loaf, will give him a stone?"

**"bread"** The LSV uses "loaf" (of what?). Would it be so terrible if the LSV would have used "bread" as the Authorized Version and ESV do?

9b **"give a stone...give him a serpent"** To literally do this would be cruel. Would we expect the Lord to act like this?

**7:10 Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?<sup>ab</sup>**

10a Satan and the world would give serpents for fish or stones for bread- the best stuff at the first and then the worse later.

1. God never operates on this principle with His children.

A. He operates according to John 2:10. **"And saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now."**

2. God gives great wine at the beginning and then it keeps getting better.

A. Luke 11:11-13 **"If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?"**

10b A fish is useful for food. Serpents can be poisonous. God will give you fish, something that will sustain you. The world will give you a serpent, something that will destroy you. God will give

you bread, something you need to live. The world will give you a stone, something that cannot sustain you.

**7:11 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children,<sup>a</sup> how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?<sup>b</sup>**

11a God will either give us what we ask for- or better, but not worse. Human fathers, being sinners as they are, know how to give good gifts to their children. How much more then will an infinitely holy God give even better gifts to His children? Human parents, even at their best, are “bad” in comparison with the heavenly Father.

11b No good thing will He withhold to them that walk uprightly (Psalm 84:11 **“For the LORD God is a sun and shield: the LORD will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.”**).

**7:12<sup>a</sup> Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you,<sup>b</sup> do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.**

12a This is a verse listed by O. Talmadge Spence in his *Quest For Christian Purity* that he lists as a “guiding verse” for that quest. This is a verse that deals with some aspect of the Christian’s growth and pursuit of God.

This is the so-called “Golden Rule”, although that term is never used in Scripture. This is how Christ viewed the Law- not as a list of “do’s and don’ts.” The parallel to this is in Luke 6:31 **“And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.”**

### **36. Two Gates 7:13,14**

**7:13 ¶ Enter ye in at the strait<sup>a</sup> gate:<sup>b</sup> for wide is the gate, and broad is the way,<sup>c</sup> that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:<sup>d</sup>**

13a “**strait**” Narrow.

13b See Luke 13:24 **“Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.”**

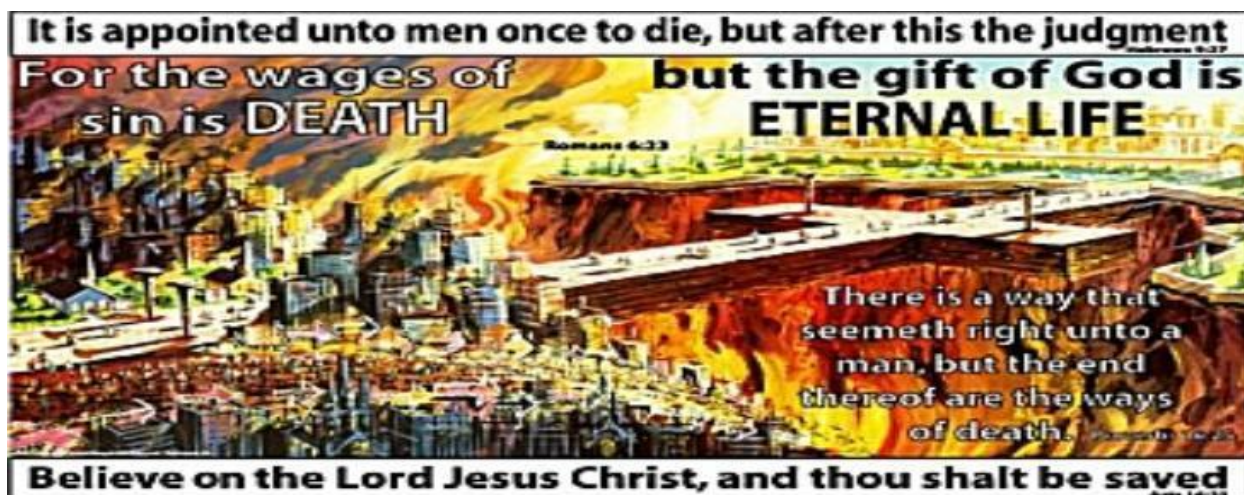
13c **“broad is the way”** Hence our term “Broadway” for the widest street in town.

13d **“many there be which go in thereat”**

1. This “broad way” is a popular way while the “strait way” is unpopular.

2. The crowd, and the majority, are wrong in just about any topic, especially when it comes to matters of faith. Most people believe that if you “live it” and are moral, you’ll be okay and will get into heaven...eventually. The majority do not believe in hell, judgment or the existence of a literal devil. The majority believe in salvation by works or by church membership. The majority believes that Acts 2:38 is the plan of salvation or that speaking in tongues is the initial evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. But the majority is wrong.

3. Consider the following image:



7:14 Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way,<sup>abc</sup> which leadeth unto life,<sup>d</sup> and few there be that find it.<sup>efgh</sup>

14a “**the way**” Jesus identified Himself as The Way in John 14:6.

14b “**narrow is the way**” It is too narrow for you to take in your pride, ego, good works, religion, etc.

AV	ESV	LSV
14 Because strait <i>is</i> the gate, and <b>narrow</b> <i>is</i> the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.	14 For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.	14 “For the gate is narrow and the way is constricted that leads to life, and there are few who find it.

“**narrow**” The ESV misses the meaning with “hard”, The LSV is worse with “constricted”. Both versions could have just agreed with the Authorized Version for a better and more accurate reading. Why is “constricted” (a 3-syllable word) considered a better reading than “hard”?

14c The Lord is elaborating on a familiar doctrine from Proverbs 14:12 and 16:25. Both verses say the same thing, “**There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the ends thereof are he ways of death.**”

14d “**life**” True life is only found in Jesus Christ- John 10:10.

14e There are many professors but few true conversions- those who find the true way. They don’t find it because:

1. They are not looking for it as they have no real interest in it. They don’t want to find it else they become accountable to it. Ignorance is bliss to them, and they think it will protect them from judgment.
2. They are looking in the wrong place. They are looking for the truth in the wrong churches.
3. They don’t know what they are looking for and wouldn’t know it if they found it. But if it sounds good, they follow it.

4. "Few there be that find it" compare with Luke 18:8 **"When the Son of Man cometh, will He find faith on the earth?"** The answer is implied in the negative, meaning few would be truly saved at His coming.

14f The way of truth is:

1. Narrow, not much room to deviate from orthodoxy
2. Unpopular, otherwise more people would be on that way and our churches would be larger
3. Fraught with spiritual dangers
  - A. Compromisers
  - B. Apostates
  - C. Many who would seek to turn us from the way.
4. But look at where it eventually ends- in glory!

By contrast, the way of error is:

1. Wide and broad
2. Easy to travel, even if the way of the transgressor is hard (Proverbs 13:15). The world thinks the way of sin is easy but the saints know better.
3. Popular
  - A. The majority is usually wrong.
  - B. Truth is not determined by popular vote or popular opinion.
4. Crowded

Notice the clear distinction between the two ways. They are different, separate, distinct and cannot be reconciled. You must choose one and you will travel on it to its ultimate destination. And the Lord only identifies two ways, not six or eight or ten. There is true way and a false way only. There is no third way.

14g **"few there be that find it"** The reason that men do not find it is not because it is hard to find, but because men prefer to walk in the broad way or in a way of their own choosing and creation.

14h "The road to Hell is the broad road entered by means of the wide gate. It is a popular road, crowded with the careless throngs of those who are blinded by the world. The broad path offers pleasure, promotion, possessions, power, and piety of a sort; customs and culture; and a varied menu of distractions and delights. Gifted men and great are on this road, as are all kinds of vices, vanities, and violence. Ever amid the violets lurk the vipers.

The broad way gets narrower as it goes along. It is brooded over by a lord whose realm is darkness, whose rule is bondage, and whose reign is characterized by revenge against God—revenge in the form of the ruin and damnation of mankind. This road offers no real joy, no genuine or lasting pleasure, and only fleeting moments of happiness at best... The broad path gets narrower still as old age creeps in with its handicaps and limitations. Ill health becomes the norm, faculties begin to fail, friends die, and the way grows increasingly lonely and frightening. Then death comes and those who reach the bitter end of the broad road discover too late that Jesus was right all the time.

A false gospel circulating today is patterned after the slick advertising of Madison Avenue. One is almost led to believe that Jesus would have us mail out four-color brochures proclaiming to prospective tourists that the way to Heaven is one of guaranteed luxury—wealth and health all the way. Preachers urge us to practice "possibility thinking" and invite us to invest in Disney World-style ventures. The Christian life is presented as a round of fun and frolic—to be poor or sickly is a sign of sin or lack of faith, and God, it would seem, wants us to be like the

rich fool who boasted that he was "rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing" (Revelation 3:17). Such teaching is a Laodicean gospel for a Laodicean church in a Laodicean age.

Not so did the Lord depict the way to Heaven. He said we must begin at the "strait" gate—literally the "narrow" gate. At the entrance there are no giant posters offering material benefits, physical well-being, or escape from peril, persecution, famine, and sword. There is no implied promise that we can have the best of both worlds, no intimation that we can go on living the same old way and still be sure of Heaven."<sup>83</sup>

### **37. False Prophets 7:15-20**

**7:15 ¶ Beware of false prophets,<sup>a</sup> which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.**

15a If there are true prophets, then we would naturally expect Satan to counterfeit them and have his "prophets". They must be marked, warned of, preached against and separated from.

1. Romans 16:17 says **"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them."**

2. Paul would also warn in Acts 20:29-31 **"I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch".**

3. A false prophet is not necessarily a "false foreseer" but is also a teacher of false doctrines. There are such things as false prophets, so you might as well acknowledge that every "preacher" out there is not preaching the truth and not every "church" out there is preaching the gospel.

A. You need to be able to identify these false prophets so you can avoid them and warn others about them. The entire New Testament is greatly concerned with the "false prophets" and with the danger of the Christian being deceived by them. The "Sermon-on-the-Mount" preachers rarely spend any time of this part of the Sermon.

i. See Matthew 23.

ii. Matthew 24:5,11 **"For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many... And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many."**

iii. Luke 6:26 **"Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets."**

iv. 2 Corinthians 11:12-15 **"But what I do, that I will do, that I may cut off occasion from them which desire occasion; that wherein they glory, they may be found even as we. For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works."**

v. See 1 Timothy 4.

vi. See 2 Peter 2.

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<sup>83</sup> John Phillips, *Exploring the Gospel of Matthew*, pages 126-128.

- vii. 1 John 4:3 **"And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world."**
- viii. See Jude 4-18.
- 4. The "false prophet" in the New Testament turns out to be a man (or woman!) who:
  - a. Loves long robes
    - i. Mark 12:38 **"And he said unto them in his doctrine, Beware of the scribes, which love to go in long clothing, and love salutations in the marketplaces,"**
  - b. Loves to be called "father"
    - i. Matthew 23:9 **"And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven."**
      - (a). Of course, this forbids calling any Roman Catholic priest "father".
  - c. Denies the blood atonement
    - i. 2 Peter 2:1,2 **"But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of."**
- 5. They can be spotted by their attitude toward the revealed authority of the word of God
  - a. Genesis 3:1 in questing what God has said.
    - i. Genesis 3:1 **"Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?"**
  - b. Mark 7:1-13
- 6. The false prophet here is classified with (spiritual) dogs (Philippians 3:2 **"Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision."**; 2 Peter 2:22 **"But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire."**; Revelation 22:15 **"For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie."**), yet as such, he parades as a sheep. Note that the warning is not against thieves, harlots, drunkards, dopers, or Communists, but against men who appear as sheep! A sheep would appear innocent, gentle, and meek, and this again accurately describes the men we are to carefully "look out" for. They do not appear as wolves. The ideal false prophet would be a shrewd, slick, talented, well-bred, mild-mannered, polished individual who operated primarily through sophistry, subtlety, scholastic appeal, and flattery. Inside, he is a wolf (John 10:12 **"But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep."**).
- 7. When they come in sheep's clothing, they come in the garb of
  - A. Innocence, with motives as pure as the wind-driven snow.
  - B. Weakness, they wouldn't hurt or deceive anyone!
  - C. Gentleness, with a very pleasant manner and presentation.



Material on false prophets:

1. Old Testament death penalty for false teachers
  - A. Deuteronomy 13:1-3 **"If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, And the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the LORD your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul."**
2. They use visions and divinations to deceive.
  - A. Jeremiah 14:14 **"Then the LORD said unto me, The prophets prophesy lies in my name: I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spake unto them: they prophesy unto you a false vision and divination, and a thing of nought, and the deceit of their heart."**
3. They are often immoral and crooked.
  - A. Jeremiah 23:14 **"I have seen also in the prophets of Jerusalem an horrible thing: they commit adultery, and walk in lies: they strengthen also the hands of evildoers, that none doth return from his wickedness: they are all of them unto me as Sodom, and the inhabitants thereof as Gomorrah."**
4. They often prophesy peace and positive things.
  - A. Ezekiel 13:22 **"Because with lies ye have made the heart of the righteous sad, whom I have not made sad; and strengthened the hands of the wicked, that he should not return from his wicked way, by promising him life:"**
  - B. Micah 3:5 **"Thus saith the LORD concerning the prophets that make my people err, that bite with their teeth, and cry, Peace; and he that putteth not into their mouths, they even prepare war against him."**
5. They are in it for the money.
  - A. Micah 3:11 **"The heads thereof judge for reward, and the priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money: yet will they lean upon the LORD, and say, Is not the LORD among us? none evil can come upon us."**
  - B. 2 Peter 2:3 **"And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not."**
6. They are deceivers.
  - A. Matthew 24:4 **"And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you."**
7. There shall be many deceivers.
  - A. Matthew 24:4 **"And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you."**
8. They shall deceive many

- A. Matthew 24:4,5 **“And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.”**
- B. Matthew 24:11 **“And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.”**
9. Many of them will claim to be Christ.
- A. Matthew 24:4,5 **“And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.”**
- B. Matthew 24:24 **“For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.”**
10. They shall show signs and great wonders.
- A. Matthew 24:24 **“For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.”**
11. Their heresies are damnable.
- A. 2 Peter 2:1 **“But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.”**
12. They come under false pretense- as true men of God who only care about your welfare, while in reality they only care about using you and devouring you spiritually.

Who should we beware of?

1. Men.
- A. Matthew 10:17 **“But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues;”**
2. The leaven (teaching) of the Pharisees and the Sadducees.
- A. Matthew 16:6,11 **“Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees... How is it that ye do not understand that I spake it not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees?”**
3. The scribes.
- A. Matthew 12:38 **“Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee.”**
4. Covetousness.
- A. Luke 12:15 **“And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.”**
5. Dogs.
- A. Philippians 3:2 **“Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision.”**

- i. In context, not literal dogs, but false teachers that have the moral and spiritual qualities of a dog.
- 6. Philosophy.
  - A. Colossians 2:8 **“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.”**
- 7. Vain conceit.
  - A. Colossians 2:8 **“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.”**
- 8. Being led away with the error of the wicked
  - A. 2 Peter 3:17 **“Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness.”**

**7:16 Ye shall know them by their fruits.<sup>abcd</sup> Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?**

16a This is how you spot a false prophet, not by what he says or does, but by the fruit he produces.

- 1. Check their public ministry and doctrine
- 2. Check their private life
- 3. Check out how their churches are operated.

16b What are their activities?

- 1. He may teach solely for gain. It beats manual labor any day. And such ministries can be profitable.
- 2. He may teach solely for prestige. There will be many who will sing his praises.
- 3. He may teach solely to transmit his own ideas. The false prophet is out to spread his version of the truth.

16c Seven Ways False Prophets Are Known:

- 1. By outward general conduct (Matt 7:15; 5:20; 6:1-24; 23:1-33; 2 Tim 3:5)
- 2. By inward state (Matt 7:15; 5:22; 5:28; 23:25-28; Mark 7:21-23)
- 3. By the kind of fruit in works produced (Matt 7:16-20; 23:1-24; 2Cor 11:13-15; Phil 1:15-17; 3:3; 3:17-19)
- 4. By the kind of fruit in doctrine taught (Matt 7:16-20; 12:33-37; 15:1-9; 16:12; 23:1-33; 1 Tim 4:1-6; 6:3-5; 2 Tim 3:1-8; 4:1-4; 4:2 Peter 2)
- 5. By professing to do, not doing the will of God (Matt 7:21; 5:20; 23:1-33)
- 6. By satanic backing (Matt 7:22; 24:24; Acts 8:9-13; 13:6-13; 16:16-24; 2 Cor 11:13-15; 2 Thes 2:8-12; Rev 13:1-18; 16:13-16; 19:20)
- 7. By their destiny (Matt 7:23; 25:41; 25:46; 2 Cor 11:13-15; Rev 19:20; 20:10-15)<sup>84</sup>

16d The basic fault of the false prophet is self-interest. The true shepherd cares for the flock more than he cares for his life; the wolf cares for nothing but to satisfy his own gluttony and his own greed. The false prophet is in the business of teaching, not for what he can give to others, but for what he can get to himself.

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<sup>84</sup> *Dake Reference Bible*, New Testament, page 12.

**7:17 Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.<sup>abc</sup>**

17a See also Luke 6:43-45.

17b If their teaching makes you better, if it makes you love God, if it draws you to holiness, if it inspires you with noble and heroic sentiments, so that you imitate Christ, then listen to them.

17c You must judge fruit. How can you discern good fruit from bad fruit unless you judge the fruit? We do this every time we go to the grocery store, and we must do it in spiritual matters as well. You may visit a church and say "I don't like that church for whatever reason". You have just made a judgment there, whether it was a good or a bad judgment.

**7:18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.<sup>a</sup>**

18a No matter how hard they may try, a bad man cannot bring forth good fruit and a good man will not bring forth bad fruit. A carnal man will not bring forth spiritual fruit either. How can these carnal churches, with the drum sets, "praise and worship bands", "worship leaders" and "pastors" who preach in torn jeans and tennis shoes hope to produce spiritual people? It makes no difference what their doctrinal statement looks like or if they are "King James Only", if they are carnal, they will bring forth carnal fruit. It is not so much your doctrinal statement that defines you as it is your heart.

**7:19 Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.<sup>a</sup>**

19a This can refer to the fact that the unfruitful professor was not really saved, despite any profession he may have made, so he goes to hell. But since this is a dispensational gospel with many doctrinal applications to Israel, the tribulation and the kingdom, this may involve a different kind of judgment than just an unsaved Gentile going to hell.

**7:20 Wherefore by their fruits<sup>a</sup> ye shall know them.**

20a "fruits"

1. Not by their results, the size of the churches, the number of books they have written, how many stations they are on, but their fruits will reveal who they are. People do not judge a tree by its leaves, or bark, or flowers, but by the fruit which it bears. The flowers may be beautiful and fragrant, the foliage thick and green; but these are merely ornamental. The fruit reveals the tree. If I see apples, I know I am dealing with an apple tree. If I see oranges, I know I am not dealing with an orange tree. If I see bad spiritual fruit, then I know I am dealing with a carnal professor. If I see spiritual fruit, I know I am dealing with a spiritual man, regardless of what their theological position might be.

2. Thus the necessity of judgment is seen here. We must judge men who claim to be preachers and teachers, else how will we know if they are true or not? They must be judged by both their lives and their doctrines. Both must align with the Scripture of they are to be accepted as true prophets.

3. If you don't know what kind of tree you are dealing with, just shake the tree and see what kind of fruit falls!
4. This corrupt fruit (and its source) is identified in the context as the work of false prophets; they can be easily spotted by anyone versed in Scripture due to the following traits:
  - A. They minimize sin.
  - B. They humanize God.
  - C. They deify man.
  - D. They teach self-atonement.
  - E. They delay (or deny) repentance.
  - F. They avoid preaching on Hell.”<sup>85</sup>

### **38. False Professors 7:21-23**

**7:21 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven;<sup>ab</sup> but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.**

21a Mere acknowledgment of the lordship of Christ, while necessary, will not get a man saved without faith and repentance.

21b See 2 Peter 1:10. We are told “**to make your calling and election sure.**” Also see 2 Corinthians 13:5, “**Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves.**”

**7:22 Many will say to me in that day,<sup>a</sup> Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils?<sup>b</sup> and in thy name done many wonderful works?<sup>cd</sup>**

22a “**that day**” One of the days of judgment for Israel, like the judgment of the nations in Matthew 25:31-46.

22b “Demons” is never used in the Authorized Version. The word is always rendered “**devils**”.

22c False prophets and lost people can do miracles, just see the exorcisms that Roman Catholic priests profess to be able to perform. They are able to put on good religious shows and can make convincing professions yet be totally lost.

22d This sounds like the Charismatics. They had some spiritual works and some external spiritual fruits they could point to as “proof” they were of God, but they were not saved. Such works and professions are useless and void if they are not accompanied by saving faith.

**7:23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you:<sup>a</sup> depart from me, ye that work iniquity.<sup>b</sup>**

23a “**I never knew you**”

1. Of course God knew them in His omniscience. But He did not know (recognize or acknowledge) them as friends, followers, genuine believers or followers.
2. Compare Matthew 25:41-46.

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<sup>85</sup> Peter Ruckman, *The Bible Believer's Commentary on Matthew*, pages 167-168.

23b The Lord did not acknowledge or recognize their professions or their works and rejected them as any kind of basis for salvation. Despite any profession or spiritual works that they did, they are lost and go to hell. They had no spiritual fruit (John 15) despite their profession. They had plenty of works and results, yet they were not of a spiritual nature. You can do a lot of outward religious works and generate results that look good to the naked eye, but the Lord will judge them all. He will not be fooled as men can be. There are many ministries that generate a lot of activity and boast of their results yet the people behind them are not truly saved. Unsaved people can pastor churches and preach the gospel and can generate impressive results. But only God knows the truth.

Genuine spiritual fruit is important to a convert and to a professor. This is how we determine if someone is really saved.

1. John 15:2,4,5, **As to every branch in me not bearing fruit, he takes it away; and as to every one bearing fruit, he purges it that it may bring forth more fruit... Abide in me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abide in the vine, thus neither can ye unless ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abides in me and I in him, \*he\* bears much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing.**

2. James 2:18, **But some one will say, \*Thou\* hast faith and \*I\* have works. Shew me thy faith without works, and \*I\* from my works will shew thee my faith.**

### **39. Two Foundations 7:24-27, see also Luke 6:47-49**

**7:24 Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:<sup>ab</sup>**

24a There are two spiritual foundations a man can build his life upon:

1. Rock- this is done by building your life on the teachings of Jesus and Biblical revelation. This foundation will last and will be able to stand the storms of life. A man who does this is called a “wise man”.
2. Sand- this is built on religion, philosophy, the teachings of man, etc. This is a weak foundation that would not be able to withstand any storm for very long before it collapses. The man who chooses this foundation is liken to a “foolish man”.

24b “Inspirationally, one may say that the builders were alike in that—

1. They both heard.
2. They both saw the need.
3. They both made an effort.
4. They both were confident they would stand the test.
5. They both were exposed to the testing.

The two builders were different, however, in that—

1. They responded to the message differently.
2. The foundation they chose was different.
3. And the results of the testing naturally differed.”<sup>86</sup>

**7:25 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew,<sup>a</sup> and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.**

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<sup>86</sup> Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer's Commentary on Matthew*, page 171.

**25a “the floods came, and the winds blew”**

1. The storms and trials of life. If Christianity is worth anything in a practical manner, it is worth something in times of storms and trials. But how many professions falter at the first sign or a storm!
2. Storms reveal the type and quality of foundation that the building has. You cannot inspect a foundation just by looking at the house. But when the storm comes, the foundation will be revealed by how well the house withstood the storm.

**7:26 And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:<sup>a</sup>**

26a Hear, and then do. Many hear but do not respond or obey. Hearing but not obeying is disobedience.

**7:27 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.<sup>a</sup>**

27a The storm WILL come, eventually. The wise man will prepare for it, even if the skies and sunny and the weather is fair. The trials and tribulations of life WILL come. The time to spiritually strengthen yourself is in a day of peace.

**40. The Reaction to the Sermon 7:28,29**

**7:28 And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine:<sup>a</sup>**

28a They had never heard preaching like this or a sermon like this! Jesus had the absolute of Scripture for His foundation. The scribes had the shifting sands of human tradition. The scribes always appealed to tradition, not to Scripture, much like the Roman Catholics. But Jesus, as King and Lord, spoke with corresponding authority.

1. The issue is authority, including final authority. Jesus has the authority to exercise judgment.

A. John 5:27 **“And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.”**

2. “Christ’s dogmatic teaching is set in contrast to the “we-may-reasonably-assume” type of instruction dished out by the “scribes”. If the student will borrow (don’t buy!) a set of the Pulpit Commentary or the Interpreter’s Bible, he will be astonished to find the first-century scribe still teaching with no authority, for every page is replete with such unauthoritative guesses as: “we may assume,” “it is supposed,” “in all probability,” “it is highly probable,” “it is not impossible,” “he may have meant,” “it would seem under the conditions,” “perhaps it should have been,” “let us not be dogmatic,” “it would be reasonable to suppose,” and so on into the night. Our Lord Jesus Christ, to the contrary, says: “It is THIS WAY.” There are no “seems,” “supposes,” or “probabilities” about it. It is no wonder that his audience was astonished at this didactic and dogmatic form of discourse. They had been feeding 400 years (Malachi to John the Baptist) on the dried-up husks of the Talmud, Midrashim, Kaballah, Mishna, and Gemara as taught by the “fathers” (Matt. 23:9).<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer's Commentary on Matthew*, pages 171-172.

**7:29 For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.<sup>ab</sup>**

29a They had no source of authority as all they had was the constantly shifting and changing opinions and teachings of men. They have no absolute authority or standard since the scribes rejected the Scriptures by adding human traditions to them. Also see the remarks from the crowds and the officers in John 7:26 (**"But, lo, he speaketh boldly, and they say nothing unto him. Do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ?"**) and John 7:46 (**"The officers answered, Never man spake like this man."**)

29b Unlike other Jewish teachers of that day, Jesus did not quote the Talmud, the Midrash, the Mishnah, or other rabbis. He recognized no written authority but the Old Testament Scripture and even put His own words on a par with Scripture. He quoted no sources, no ancient rabbis, no revered tradition. What He spoke, He spoke on His own authority. That was unheard of among the Jews, who always derived their authority from recognized sources.

**Spiritual Applications- Matthew Chapter 7**

Judging may be frowned upon today, but it is unavoidable. We judge things a thousand times a day. Will I wear this shirt or that one? Which can of peas will I buy? Should I take that road or the other road? Do I believe what this person is telling me or not? Which candidate should I vote for? Which program should I watch? Which religion is correct? The key is to make sure you are judging righteous judgment, based on Biblical principles. You must also be willing to submit yourself to the same standard of judgment that you judge others by. But if judgment is done properly, no sin is involved.

Knocking and seeking in prayer. How many things do you not have because you do not ask for them? "But if God knows what I need or want, why should I ask for them?" To see how badly you want them and to see if you trust Him enough to actually ask for them.

Notice that Jesus taught with authority and the people responded. Preaching must always be with authority. To mumble and dance around the issues is to waste everyone's time. You have an authoritative Bible and based on the divine authority given to you, you may be as dogmatic as the Scripture will allow. People who do not preach with authority either don't know what the Scripture says, don't know what they believe, or are terrified to offend anyone. But things in life must always be done with authority and conviction. Try to hammer a nail without authority and see how far you get!



## Matthew Chapter 8

### 41. Healing of a Leper 8:1-4, see also Mark 1:40-44; Luke 5:12-14

**8:1 When he was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him.<sup>a</sup>**

1a The sermon of Matthew 5-7 really made an impact on the crowds and Christ was now a very popular religious teacher.

**8:2 And, behold, there came a leper and worshipped him, saying, Lord,<sup>a</sup> if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.<sup>b</sup>**

2a The leper realized that the Lord had the power do what He wanted to do. He recognizes Jesus as Lord, worships, and acknowledges His power to heal. This leper's understanding was already far ahead that of the scribes and the Pharisees. The leper does not doubt Christ's power, only His will if He will cleanse him.

The leper calls Jesus "Lord" here, which is the first time in the New Testament we find Him addressed as such. The last man to talk to Him before He died was a criminal, who said: "Lord, remember me...." Lepers and criminals! No wonder it was written that He was **"numbered with the transgressors"** (Isaiah 53:12).

2b The leper may have heard the Sermon and came to believe that Jesus was able to do the impossible in healing his leprosy. This would be a case of **"faith cometh by hearing"** (Romans 10:17)."

AV	ESV	LSV
2 And, behold, there came a leper and <b>worshipped</b> him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.	2 And behold, a leper came to him and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, if you will, you can make me clean."	2 And behold, a leper came to Him and was bowing down before Him, and said, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean."

**"worshipped"** No worship in the ESV and LSV, just a bowing down. Darby has "did him homage" which is too weak.

**8:3 And Jesus put forth his hand, and touched him,<sup>ab</sup> saying, I will; be thou clean.<sup>c</sup> And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.<sup>d</sup>**

3a Jesus violated the law by touching a leper (Leviticus 13:45,46 **"And the leper in whom the plague is, his clothes shall be rent, and his head bare, and he shall put a covering upon his upper lip, and shall cry, Unclean, unclean. All the days wherein the plague shall be in him he shall be defiled; he is unclean: he shall dwell alone; without the camp shall his habitation be."**) but the priests could touch a leper by means of shed blood (Leviticus 14:14 **"And the priest shall take some of the blood of the trespass offering, and the priest shall put it upon the tip of the right ear of him that is to be cleansed, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot:"**)).

3b Also see Mark 1:40-44 (**"And there came a leper to him, beseeching him, and kneeling down to him, and saying unto him, If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And Jesus,**

**moved with compassion, put forth his hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou clean. And as soon as he had spoken, immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed. And he straitly charged him, and forthwith sent him away; And saith unto him, See thou say nothing to any man: but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing those things which Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them") and Luke 5:12 ("And it came to pass, when he was in a certain city, behold a man full of leprosy: who seeing Jesus fell on his face, and besought him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.").**

3c The Pharisees believed all sickness was caused by sin (see John 9) and in order for a sick person, all of his sins had to be forgiven. Christ bypassed that requirement by not even mentioning the sins that this leper must have committed to have had this disease brought on him. Christ just forgave him and that was that.

3d There was no Old Testament precedent for the cleansing of a leper. It simply was unheard of, and no one even considered for a moment that a leper could be healed.

**8:4 And Jesus saith unto him, See thou tell no man;<sup>a</sup> but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest,<sup>b</sup> and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.<sup>cde</sup>**

4a "tell no man"

1. Evangelism forbidden! We are not told why Jesus did not want this healing advertised. It was necessary to go to the priest first for validation of the cleansing anyway.

A. The Lord forbade this kind of telling in other verses in Matthew,.

i. Matthew 9:30 **"And their eyes were opened; and Jesus straitly charged them, saying, See that no man know it."**

ii. Matthew 12:16 **"And charged them that they should not make him known:"**

iii. Matthew 16:20 **"Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ."**

iv. Matthew 17:9 **"And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead."**

2. In Mark's account, we find that this man disobeyed. He was so overjoyed that he went out and told everybody he met. He "blazed it abroad." Consequently, the crowds pushed in on our Lord, and He was forced to retire from the city and stay in desert places.

3. See Leviticus 14:19-24 **"And the priest shall offer the sin offering, and make an atonement for him that is to be cleansed from his uncleanness; and afterward he shall kill the burnt offering: And the priest shall offer the burnt offering and the meat offering upon the altar: and the priest shall make an atonement for him, and he shall be clean. And if he be poor, and cannot get so much; then he shall take one lamb for a trespass offering to be waved, to make an atonement for him, and one tenth deal of fine flour mingled with oil for a meat offering, and a log of oil; And two turtledoves, or two young pigeons, such as he is able to get; and the one shall be a sin offering, and the other a burnt offering. And he shall bring them on the eighth day for his cleansing unto the priest, unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, before the LORD. And the priest shall take the lamb of the**

**trespass offering, and the log of oil, and the priest shall wave them for a wave offering before the LORD:"**

A. Jesus is still following the Law and is giving honor to it here.

4. This was forbidden until the man was officially declared to be healed. He could not enter society until the priest had so declared. To blaze the story abroad as a miracle of Jesus might prevent such a declaration on account of prejudice.

4b **"shew thyself to the priest"** This testimony of the healing power of Jesus would be to the priests, who would have examined the cleansed leper to declare him clean.

4c From the top of the mountains into the lowlands of the mundane and sinners. If you are going to see sinners saved, you have to come off of the mountain and go down into the plains where the sinners are. After the preaching, it was time to put legs to the Sermon on the Mount. All preaching should have some sort of practical application. You should be able to take what you heard on Sunday and do something with it on Monday.

4d Leprosy was usually seen as a judgment of God on the victim, so any attempt to heal the leper was discouraged, since it was thought that he "deserved" it.

1. Leprosy is to the body as sin is to the soul- loathsome and horrible in the extreme. Its treatment was described in Leviticus 13 and 14.

2. "Have you ever stopped to think that this man not only had the physical disease of leprosy but that he had a psychological hang-up that was terrible? I do not know this man's background, but I imagine that one day he noticed a breaking out on his hand. Perhaps he had been out plowing, came in, showed his wife, and she put some ointment on it. The next morning it was just as red as it could be, and he went out and plowed again. This went on for about a week, and his wife started getting uneasy. She suggested he visit the priest. He went to the priest who isolated him for fourteen days. At the end of this period of time the disease had spread. The priest told him he had leprosy. The man asked the priest if he could go and tell his wife and children and say good-bye. The priest said, "I'm sorry, you cannot tell them good-bye. You cannot put your arm around your wife again or hold your children in your arms anymore. When anyone comes near you, you must cry out, 'Unclean, unclean.'" He saw his children grow up from a distance. They would leave food in a certain place, and he would come and get it after they withdrew. He could not touch them. In fact, he had been able to touch no one, and no one had been able to touch him."<sup>88</sup> Sin and leprosy both bring separation.

3. Lepers were not supposed to be touched as their condition was highly contagious.

A. Christ is violating the law (Leviticus 13:46 **"All the days wherein the plague shall be in him he shall be defiled; he is unclean: he shall dwell alone; without the camp shall his habitation be."**); yet the Mosaic priest is allowed to touch the leper by means of shed blood (Leviticus 14:14 **"And the priest shall take some of the blood of the trespass offering, and the priest shall put it upon the tip of the right ear of him that is to be cleansed, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot:"**). Christ bore our infirmities as well as our sins (Isaiah 53:4 **"Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted."**) and Matthew 8:17 **"That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses."**), and as our great High Priest (Hebrews 3:1 **"Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and**

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<sup>88</sup> J. Vernon McGee, *Thru the Bible*.

**High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus;**”), He can apply the remedy for the leprosy of sin.

B. As leprosy is highly contagious, so is sin, as it infects all who come into contact with it.

4. Only Christ can cleanse the leper of sin. The Law couldn’t do it. The dead religion of the Jews couldn’t do it. The leper couldn’t cleanse himself by positive thinking or science or reason or by indulging in “eat, drink and be merry”. Only the touch of the Sinless One could heal him. And he was healed.

A. Christ never had a “dud” or a “misfire” when He healed someone. Every “faith healer” has tons of such misfires.

5. Christ did not fear the disease nor was He embarrassed to be seen with a sinner such as this. He is the Friend of Sinners (Matthew 11:19 **“The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. But wisdom is justified of her children.”** and spent much time with the publicans and harlots as they are the ones who need the physician the most. No matter how far down a sinner has sunk, Christ was willing to come to him in salvation. The “cure” by touching would have been offensive to many but to be healed/saved, the leper/sinner is going to have to endure some offense.

6. Christ said, “I will, be thou clean.” He did not say, as Elisha to Naaman, “Go, wash in Jordan”. Christ did not put him upon a tedious, troublesome, chargeable course for a cure, but only spoke the word and healed him. He was healed without works, just as the sinner is saved without works.

A. It is the will of God to cleanse the sinner in the same way that it is not the will of God that any should perish but that all should be saved (2 Peter 3:9 **“The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”**).

7 In the Old Testament, no provision was made for the cleansing of a leper, as his case was seen to be hopeless. Leviticus 13 and 14 only deal with the ascertaining if a person or an object has been infected with leprosy, but those chapters do not deal with a man or a person who was diagnosed with leprosy.

4e This was an obvious miracle, just as saving of a soul from sin is also a miracle. The greatest miracle you will ever see will be the salvation of a soul from sin. There is none greater. The leper was not just healed but also made clean.

## **42. Healing of the Centurion’s Servant 8:5-13 also see Luke 7:1-10**

**8:5 ¶ And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion,<sup>abc</sup> beseeching him,**

5a Every centurion presented in Scripture is presented as an honorable man.

1. It is a centurion who bears witness to Christ’s righteousness and deity at the crucifixion.

A. Matthew 27:54 **“Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God.”**

B. Luke 23:47 **“Now when the centurion saw what was done, he glorified God, saying, Certainly this was a righteous man.”**

2. It is a centurion who helps trigger the Gentile Pentecost in Acts 10.

3. It is a centurion who is responsible for Paul's release at the time of his "examination by scourging".

A. Acts 22:26 **"When the centurion heard that, he went and told the chief captain, saying, Take heed what thou doest: for this man is a Roman."**

B. He was a Gentile, in a profession that was unfavorable to piety.

4. A centurion built a synagogue.

A. Luke 7:4,5 **"And when they came to Jesus, they besought him instantly, saying, That he was worthy for whom he should do this: For he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue."**

5b "It is sometimes said that religion is not a thing for men.

1. Look at this soldier's faith. It Was the faith of a man; no sign of weakness or effeminacy.

2. Look at this soldier's humility. It was the humility of a man; not mere subservience, which bends before title, wealth, and perhaps not before God. It is an elevating thing to bend before such a God as ours.

3. Look at this soldier's affection. Human affections are not to be sneered at. These are the qualities of true manhood."<sup>89</sup>

5c Luke indicates that the centurion appealed to Jesus through intermediaries (Luke 7:3-6 **"And when he heard of Jesus, he sent unto him the elders of the Jews, beseeching him that he would come and heal his servant. And when they came to Jesus, they besought him instantly, saying, That he was worthy for whom he should do this: For he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue. Then Jesus went with them. And when he was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself: for I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof:"**) because of his own sense of unworthiness (v. 8; cf. Luke 7:7). Matthew makes no mention of the intermediaries.

**8:6 And saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy,<sup>a</sup> grievously tormented.**

6a "palsy"

1. Palsy is a form of paralysis, but this was a very severe case of it as this victim was "grievously tormented".

A. In Matthew 9:2, a palsy victim had to be carried to Jesus as he was confined to his bed, **"And, behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy; Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee."**

B. Also in Mark 2:3 **"And they come unto him, bringing one sick of the palsy, which was borne of four."**

C. Acts 9:33 **"And there he found a certain man named Aeneas, which had kept his bed eight years, and was sick of the palsy."**

2. He was seeking help for a servant, who may have been little better than a slave. But this must have been a very valuable servant for the centurion to seek help for him.

3. The centurion was not a selfish man but had consideration for others under his care and command.

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<sup>89</sup> A. G. Bowman, cited in *The Biblical Illustrator: Matthew*.

AV	ESV	LSV
6 And saying, Lord, my <b>servant</b> lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented.	6 “Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed at home, suffering terribly.”	6 and saying, “Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed at home, fearfully tormented.”

“**servant**” For once, the LSV does not have “slave” for “servant”. The LSV lapses back into this error in Matthew 8:9. The word is *παῖς* in verses 6 and 8 not *δοῦλῳ*, which is used in verse 9.

### 8:7 And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him.

The Lord does not say:

1. I will try to heal him.
  2. I will heal him if he has enough faith.
  3. I will heal him if he gives a special seed-faith offering to my vital, last-days ministry.
- The Lord said none of this because He was not a “faith healing” religious crook.

### 8:8 The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof:<sup>a</sup> but speak the word only,<sup>b</sup> and my servant shall be healed.

8a Military men tend to be proud and arrogant but not this centurion. He recognized that he was in the presence of a Man greater than he and his attitude reflected that.

#### 8b “speak the word only”

1. “When William, Prince of Orange, was invited to come to England and be king, he promised certain offices to his friends, and he gave them written pledges. But when he offered such a pledge to the man who was to be his Lord Chamberlain, that nobleman replied, “Your Majesty’s word is sufficient. I would not serve a king if I could not trust in his word.” That saying pleased the king, and he who showed such faith in him became his favorite minister. Should we not be willing to take the word of the King of kings?”.<sup>90</sup>
2. He recognized the military-type authority of Jesus. As a soldier, he was used to being under authority and being in authority. If he gave an order, he expected his subordinate to respond immediately, without question, as he had been trained to do. Since Jesus was God, the centurion expected the powers under His command to respond in the same way. Jesus refers to this reason as “faith”.
  - A. The matter of authority comes up again, as it did in Matthew 7:29. In Matthew 8:3, Jesus had authority to heal leprosy with a mere touch and a word as He was God.

### 8:9 For I am a man under authority,<sup>a</sup> having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.

9a As a military man, he knew something about authority and submitting to it.

<sup>90</sup> *The Biblical Illustrator: Matthew.*

**8:10 When Jesus heard it, he marvelled,<sup>a</sup> and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.**

10a Christ only marveled at two things:

1. Faith (here). And it was a Gentile's faith that impressed Him. He never reacted this way to a Jew's faith. This Gentile out-did the Jew in reference to his faith!
2. Unbelief- Mark 6:6 **"And he marvelled because of their unbelief. And he went round about the villages, teaching."**

**8:11 And I say unto you, That many<sup>a</sup> shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.**

11a These "**many**" are believing Gentiles, to the exclusion of the Jews, who should have known better and should have out-done the Gentiles when it came to faith and belief. The reference is millennial and references the blessing of the Gentiles in the Millennium. Such a suggestion would be very offensive to the Jews.

**8:12 But the children of the kingdom<sup>a</sup> shall be cast out into outer darkness:<sup>b</sup> there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.**

12a These "**children**" are not Christians as you would have born-again people going to hell if it were true. These would be those born during the Kingdom Age (not the Church Age) who have not made any profession of faith or belief in Christ who are excluded from the Millennium and are cast into outer darkness.

12b "**Outer darkness**".

1. The phrase is used three times in Scripture, each time in Matthew.
  - A. Matthew 8:12 **"But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."**
  - B. Matthew 22:13 **"Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."**
  - C. Matthew 25:30 **"And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."**
2. Observations
  - A. Since term is only used in Matthew, it probably has a dispensational meaning to Israel and the Tribulation period. There would be no church-age application.
  - B. The "**children of the kingdom**" are sent there and this phrase is never used to describe Christians".
    - i. "**Children of the kingdom**" is only used twice and also, only in Matthew:
      - a. Matthew 8:12 **"But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."**
      - b. Matthew 13:38 **"The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one;"**
    - ii. These "children" are "cast out" to this place.
    - iii. They are bound hand and foot before being cast out.
  - C. There is weeping and gnashing of teeth.

D. Unprofitable servants are sent here.

E. The Matthew 8 and 22 references involve an uninvited guest at a wedding supper.

F. The Matthew 25 reference deals with an unprofitable servant who has been judged.

3. Is “**outer darkness**” hell or the lake of fire, or some other related place of judgment?

A. “There will be outer darkness: a region, a place, a habitation, a home of pitch black that forbids any sight whatsoever. A place without light, without gleam or hope of any light whatsoever. It is a place of utter darkness in which one lives completely incapacitated, helpless, and hopeless. It is far away from the splendor and glory and brightness of God’s presence. It is being cast into the gloom and blackness of the outer world. It is misery, the misery of a lost soul.”<sup>91</sup>

4. Other possible cross-references:

A. 2 Peter 2:17 “**These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever**”.

B. Jude 6 “**And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day**”.

C. Matthew 13:42 “**And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth**”.

D. Matthew 24:51 “**And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth**”.

**8:13 And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour.<sup>a</sup>**

13a Another healing with no delay, as in Matthew 8:3

#### **43. Healing of Peter’s Mother-in-Law 8:14,15 see also Mark 1:29-34; Luke 4:38-41**

**8:14 ¶ And when Jesus was come into Peter’s house, he saw his wife’s mother<sup>a</sup> laid,<sup>b</sup> and sick of a fever.<sup>c</sup>**

14a “**his wife’s mother**”

1. The first “pope” was married. The only way to get a mother-in-law is to marry!

2. Since Peter was married, Rome has no justification to insist on a bachelor priesthood.

3. No pope ever followed Peter’s true example of life and ministry for more than 5 minutes.

4. Of course, it is possible that Peter was a widower at this time, with his mother-in-law surviving. But that still does not let Rome off the hook because even if he was a widower, that means he was still married at one time.

14b Being a disciple (and later an apostle) did not exempt Peter from the common trials of life.

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<sup>91</sup> *Preacher’s Outline and Study Bible.*



14c “How do you account for the prevalence of fevers at Capernaum? for it was there, of course, that “Peter’s wife’s mother laid, and sick of a fever.” Fevers are still prevalent in this region, particularly in summer and autumn, owing to the extreme heat acting upon the marshy plains, like that of El Batihah at the influx of the Jordan.”<sup>92</sup>

**8:15 And he touched her hand,<sup>a</sup> and the fever left her:<sup>b</sup> and she arose, and ministered unto them.**

15a Matthew 8:15 is one of the verses that faith-healers use as a proof-text for a “point of contact” to do healings. See also Acts 19:12 (“**So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them.**”). But they overlook the fact that Christ did not need any “point of contact” in Matthew 8:8,13.

15b Every healing was unique and was handled differently. Here, Christ simply touched her hand and the fever left. Luke (4:39) adds that Christ also rebuked the fever.

#### **44. Healing of Many Devil Possessed Persons 8:16-17**

**8:16 ¶ When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick:<sup>ab</sup>**

16a Several things stand out regarding Jesus’ “healing crusades”:

1. There were no failures, misfires or “duds”.
2. Jesus never took up an offering or charged admission.
3. Jesus never rented an auditorium.
4. No “mood music” was playing in the background.
5. No one pre-screened the candidates to make sure they were “easy cases” or to ensure they would make for a good presentation.
6. No one was “slain in the Spirit”.
7. Nothing mentioned about anyone having any “faith to believe” in order to be healed.
  - A. In James 5:15,16 (“**And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.**”) we are told that the fault in a cure lies not with the sick man, but with the man who is praying for him.
8. Jesus didn’t make a big deal about the healings.
9. Fakers and frauds like Benny Hinn or Oral Roberts were never in the running when compared to the Great Physician.

16b Devil activity and possession seemed to be widespread and common in Jesus’ day. Where there is great divine activity in an area, expect Satan to do what he can to counter it. We also see a widespread instance of this in the West today.

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<sup>92</sup> W. M. Thomson, D. D., cited in *The Biblical Illustrator*.

AV	ESV	LSV
<p>16 When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were <b>possessed with devils</b>: and he cast out the spirits with <i>his</i> word, and healed all that were sick:</p>	<p>16 That evening they brought to him many who were oppressed by demons, and he cast out the spirits with a word and healed all who were sick.</p>	<p>16 Now when evening came, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed; and He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were ill</p>

**“possessed with devils”** The ESV, LSV and Darby use “demons” instead, which is inferior to “devils” since “demon” can have a neutral or even a good connotation sometimes, as a muse. The Rheims-Douay version uses “devils” but that is because it was translated in the same era as the King James. All the pre-King James bibles use “devils” while every modern translation uses “demon”. Yet “devil” is the correct translation. The King James never uses the word “demon”. Just look at the word “devil” and you will see that the word itself is “**devil**”.

Gail Riplinger, on pages 218-220 of *New Age Bible Versions*, traces the substitution of “demon” for “devil” to the occultist Madam Blavatsky. Riplinger quotes her as saying “[T]he Church is wrong in calling them Devils. . . [T]he word demon however, as in the case of Socrates, and in the spirit of the meaning given to it by the whole of antiquity, stand[s] for the Guardian Spirit or Angel not a Devil of Satanic descent as Theology would have it... Demons is a very loose word to use, as it applies to... minor Gods;... there are no devils.” Thus the modern versions eliminate all references to “devils” and replace them with “demon”.

Riplinger continues by quoting Noah Webster’s dictionary, “Even Webster would revoke their ‘semantic license’ as the dictionary distinguishes sharply between the two terms.

“demon” 1. A tutelary divinity; a demon. 2... neut. Of daimonios of a divinity

“devil” 1. In Jewish and Christian theology, the personal supreme spirit of evil and unrighteousness. 2. A lesser evil or malignant spirit.”

Riplinger also writes “Clutching to an aura of intellectuality, New Agers attempt to sway their audiences with quotes, such as the following in which Plutarch explains Socrates’ elevated view of demons. ‘Everyone has a demon, a god, or a spirit that swims above and touches the extremest part of man’s head.... the more intelligent, who know it to be without, call it a Daemon. Socrates... taught that he had a daemon, a spiritual something that put him on the road to wisdom. The Greeks meant by the word Demon, a demigod.’”

## 8:17 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet,<sup>a</sup> saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses.<sup>b</sup>

17a And the Scriptures must be fulfilled, as in Isaiah 53:4, **“Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.”**

“The reader is quick to notice the change of quotation. Where Isaiah 53:4 reads: “borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows,” Matthew quotes: “took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses.”... The Holy Spirit, in Matthew, is giving you a second meaning of Isaiah’s words; there is no contradiction. As Matthew quotes the text, it is apparent that healing IS IN the atonement. To avoid this deduction is cowardly. The passage in Isaiah is on the atonement, even if the passage in Matthew is referring to Christ’s “active obedience” in the flesh before the Atonement.

“The Holiness people carry the reasoning a little farther; if healing is in the atonement (as well as salvation from sin), why cannot anyone by faith, avail themselves of it? After all, do we not avail ourselves of salvation by faith? The argument is logical. It is so plausible that it is accepted blindfolded by millions and reinforced with such texts as 1 Corinthians 12:9 and 3

John 2. However, let us not stop here. Let us really examine the atonement. Are healing and salvation the only things Christ took care of when He died? Not quite. When we examine the atonement carefully, we suddenly discover:

1. He died for the curse God placed on nature. Thorns came from this curse, and thorns were jammed on His head.
2. He died for the curse placed on animal life, for animals were vegetarians before the fall, and they return to this state at the Advent (Isa. 11), when the work of the Atonement is complete.
3. He died for the curse placed on the world itself, for He is said to have bought this world (Matt. 13:38, 44) by His blood, as well as the purchase of the redeemed sinner.
4. In short, He died not only for sin, but for sickness, poverty, cruelty, damnation, destruction, and even physical disturbances, which came as a consequence of sin (Rom. 8:20–23).

Now we can find the correct meaning of “healing in the atonement.” Healing is IN THE ATONEMENT, but you cannot get all the benefits of the atonement now. Many of the benefits await the Second Coming (Phil. 3:20–21). You cannot claim a lion (by faith) to start eating straw, but this is in the atonement; you cannot claim (by faith) for your body not to rot in the ground, but a new body is in the atonement (1 Cor. 15); you cannot claim (by faith) that all the earthquakes and tidal waves will stop, but this is in the atonement. In short, God can heal you and may heal you, and praise the Lord if He does. He may do it by medicine (1 Tim. 5:23; Isa. 38:21) or without medicine (Acts 3:7), or He may leave you sick (2 Tim. 4:20; 2 Cor. 12:5–8); but healing is still in the atonement and God is still the author of any healing that is done.”<sup>93</sup>

17b “**Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses.**”

1. Charismatics are forever quoting this verse for today in their belief that physical healing is in the atonement (Isaiah 53:4), but the context is the earthly ministry of Christ. Carnal people stress the physical manifestations and benefits of salvation, but they make little of the greater spiritual benefits. If someone is emphasizing the money and the healing, know that you are dealing with a carnal profession.

A. How many spiritual, genuine Christians have suffered physical infirmities and never received their healing? Were they carnal or backslidden?

2. This is because He was our Great High Priest Who understood our infirmities (Hebrews 4:15 “**For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.**”). Christ did not take away our sicknesses but He “bare” them. He suffered our infirmities and sicknesses, so He could sympathize with us who also suffer from them.

Why just limit this to physical infirmities and physical healings? Carnally-minded people would do that. We also have spiritual infirmities that need divine attention. We have weaknesses, fears, failings, faults and flaws that we must bring to Jesus for His dealing and for our strengthening. What kind of infirmities and weaknesses should we bring to Jesus?

1. Our weaknesses (of character)
2. Our personality flaws and defects
3. Our failures
4. Our fears (2 Corinthians 7:5 “**For, when we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears.**”)
5. Our victories. Yes, we need God to sanctify our successes and victories as much as we need him to strengthen us in our failures and weaknesses.

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<sup>93</sup> Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer's Commentary on Matthew*, pages 181-182.

**XLV. Self-Called Men Examined 8:18-22 see also Luke 9:57-62**

**8:18 ¶ Now when Jesus saw great multitudes<sup>a</sup> about him, he gave commandment to depart unto the other side.**

18a “great multitudes”

1. The crowds came, and Jesus left. They heard of the miracles and the healings and they sought Him out. Some came for the preaching, but most came for the excitement.
2. Jesus did not necessarily welcome the crowds because:
  - A. Crowds tend to be unruly
  - B You can't do “one-on-one” discipleship with a crowd
  - C. Crowds are mainly made up of curiosity-seekers
  - D. Crowds are fickle. They love you one minute, then they turn on you the next.
  - E. Truth is never popular. Unless you are in the middle of a full-blown revival, beware of the crowds flocking to you. Some will come for truth but the numbers will seldom be large. The preacher with the crowd has usually drawn them with something besides truth.

**8:19 And a certain scribe<sup>a</sup> came, and said unto him, Master,<sup>b</sup> I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.**

19a **Scribes** were the interpreters of the law.

1. Ezra is the best-known scribe in Scripture.
2. The Lord did not outright reject this scribe but He did lay out to him the high cost of discipleship. We are not told of his ultimate reaction.

19b “**Master**” He saw the Lord as a teacher and someone he could learn from, but nothing more. It is nice to have some to volunteer to follow you but do they really know what they are getting into? The Lord picked his disciples, none of them volunteered. He knew what He was looking for. Why do some people volunteer to follow Christ and to go into the ministry?

1. It looks like fun
2. It looks interesting
3. If they are going to the mission field, it is because some like to travel and explore the world
4. It looks easy- only work a few hours a week (!)
5. If a man is religious (but lost) they may see it as a way to “earn” their salvation
6. Some go in for political reasons.
7. If you follow Christ, you might be poorer than birds. Christ did everything He could to discourage this scribe and it seemed to work. This scribe, like many after him, had not counted the cost. Being a disciple of Christ may seem to be exciting and glamorous, until you are told that there is very little glamour in it. Some men may like the limelight, the excitement or the possibility for advancement or recognition, but none of these are good motivations for service and ministry. Here, Christ is discouraging any hope of obtaining riches and a fancy house as some sort of reward for going into the ministry. What a rebuke for the prosperity preachers of our day! They claim Jesus was rich and that every Christian should be rich and that poverty is of the devil. Such preachers are fleshly and carnal, lusting after filthy lucre and blaspheming the Scripture by ripping out

proof-texts to try to justify their greed. These preachers also appeal to carnal, worldly and selfish “Christians”.

8. If we meet a man who thinks he is called to the ministry; he should be given “full disclosure” of what the true ministry is like such as a careful reading of 2 Corinthians. In 2 Corinthians, Paul uses the following words to describe the ministry: “anguish, perplexity, devour, smite, bondage, weak, forsaken, faint, persecuted, sorry, grieved, down, perish, burden, cast down, groaning, poor, chastened, hunger, beaten, perils, pain, infirmity, stoned, reproaches, offended, weariness, mourning, trembling, fear, poverty, affliction, despair, necessities, imprisonments, distressed, destruction, tumults, killed, tribulation, dying, suffering, terrified.” Now, are you still willing to follow the Lord with that insight of the ministry?

AV	ESV	LSV
19 And a certain scribe came, and said unto him, <b>Master</b> , I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.	19 And a scribe came up and said to him, “Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go.”	19 Then a scribe came and said to Him, “Teacher, I will follow You wherever You go.”

“**Master**” The ESV, LSV and Darby demote Jesus from “Master” to just a “Teacher”. A “Master” denotes some authority while a “Teacher” does not.

**8:20 And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man<sup>a</sup> hath not where to lay his head.<sup>b</sup>**

20a “**Son of man**”

1. This phrase is used 83 times in the New Testament, 80 of those are in the gospels. The other three are in Acts 7:56, Revelation 1:13 and 14:14.
2. The Hebrews 2:6 usage is not a reference to Christ.
3. Paul does not use the phrase.
4. The Church worships the “Son of God”, not so much the “Son of Man”.

20b “That it is strange in itself, that the Son of God, when he came into the world, should put himself into such a very low condition, as to want the convenience of a certain resting-place, which the meanest of the creatures have. If he would take our nature upon him, one would think, he should have taken it in its best estate and circumstances: no, he takes it in its worst... Our Lord Jesus, when he was here in the world, submitted to the disgraces and distresses of extreme poverty; for our sakes he became poor, very poor. He had not a settlement, had not a place of repose, not a house of his own, to put his head in, not a pillow of his own, to lay his head on. He and his disciples lived upon the charity of well-disposed people, that ministered to him of their substance, Luke viii. 2. Christ submitted to this, not only that he might in all respects humble himself, and fulfil the scriptures, which spake of him as poor and needy, but that he might show us the vanity of worldly wealth, and teach us to look upon it with a holy contempt; that he might purchase better things for us, and so make us rich, 2 Cor. viii. 9.”<sup>94</sup>

Jesus is saying “If you follow Me, you might be poorer than birds.” There is no guarantee of any financial security if you follow Christ. The only “stocks and bonds” Paul ever had were on his body. This flies in the face of the Prosperity Gospel heretics who insist that Jesus was rich and that poverty is evil and shows a lack of faith.

<sup>94</sup> Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*.

**8:21 And another of his disciples said unto him, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.**

**8:22 But Jesus said unto him, Follow me;<sup>a</sup> and let the dead bury their dead.<sup>b</sup>**

22a **“Follow me”** “One of the sad realities of our day is that men make professions of being born again and then refuse to leave their paths of living to follow where Christ seeks to lead them. On several occasions in the Gospels, the Lord called individuals saying, “Follow me” (Matthew 8:22; 9:9; Mark 2:14; Luke 5:27; 9:23). A variety of responses are recorded. Jesus told the rich, young ruler to sell all that he had, give it to the poor, and then “come and follow me” (Matthew 19:21). However, the young man’s possessions meant more to him than Christ. With confident boasting, others claimed they would follow Him, but instead, gave excuses for delay (Luke 9:57-62). In contrast, there were those who straightway left whatever they were doing and immediately followed Him. The glory of His presence and Word captivated their lives and brought their hearts to a clear resolution to follow Him (Matthew 4:20, 22; 9:27; Mark 1:18; 2:14).

“Today, so many professing Christians are endeavoring to mix this command of Christ with their own independent, carnal desires to do “their own thing.” They inwardly proclaim, “Not Christ, But I.” It is rare now to find one who will truly forsake all to follow the Lord, even to the ends of the earth. Christ’s first two disciples, Andrew and John, began to follow Him after John the Baptist declared, “Behold, the Lamb of God.” Likewise, we must behold the Lamb of God in all His glory and then be willing to follow Him to the end of our days. Our hearts must ever be proclaiming, “Not I, But Christ.”<sup>95</sup>

22b He would follow Christ after his father died and fulfill his family obligations before following Christ. Family obligations are important, but they should not hinder spiritual obligations we should have to serve and follow Christ. This seems rude and insensitive by the Lord but many have used some sort of family obligation to wiggle out of a clear call of God. After all, his father could have lived another 30 years! And then this man would have been willing to follow Jesus. It is like many men who say, “I’ll serve God when I retire or when I get the mortgage paid off or when the kids are through college”, but they just never get around to it. I had to take care of my mother during the last 3 years of her life, which including moving into her house and providing for her 24 hours a day, but the only Sunday I missed church was on the day of her death, as she died on a Sunday afternoon.

#### **XLVI. Jesus Calms the Storm 8:23-27 see also Mark 4:35-41; Luke 8:22-25**

**8:23 ¶ And when he was entered into a ship, his disciples followed him.**

**8:24 And, behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves:<sup>a</sup> but he was asleep.<sup>b</sup>**

24a Sudden, violent storms were common on the Sea of Galilee, as the winds would sweep down the surrounding mountains.

1. Just because you are a Christian and have the presence of Christ does not mean you will be exempt from the storms of life. Ignore the ramblings from the prosperity

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<sup>95</sup> H. T. Spence.

preachers and the “health and wealth” crowd. They have no idea what they are talking about.

2. How many young converts have been lied to by unfaithful ministers into believing that once they are saved, all their troubles would be over, and that they would get a big promotion at work, a new car, physical healing, their debt paid off, etc. In reality, if you truly get saved, you will probably have more trouble AFTER your salvation than you had in the days of your sin! Just ask Paul!

3. Blessed is that man who can truly follow the example of Christ and not fret when the storms of life arise. This also shows the full humanity of Christ- He slept! He was weary and tired and needed rest as any other man.

24b **“he was asleep”** This shows the humanity of Christ in that He got weary and needed sleep. He was so tired that even the storm did not wake Him.





**8:25 And his disciples came to him, and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us:<sup>a</sup> we perish.<sup>b</sup>**

25a **“Lord, save us”**

1. It was a good prayer:

- A. He went to the right person
- B. He made a good request
- C. He recognized the danger

25b Luke has them saying **“Master, we perish”** in Luke 8:24. Some of the disciples were crying out “Lord” while others (probably including Judas) were using “Master.”



**8:26 And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?<sup>a</sup> Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea;<sup>b</sup> and there was a great calm.**

26a Little faith equals much fear.

26b No doubt there was a certain divine dignity and calmness in the Lord's manner here. He had created the sea and the storms and was not awed by either, but made it clear He was their Master and they both were under His full control and authority. Only Christ can bring great calm in the midst of great storms.

AV	ESV	LSV
26 And he saith unto them, <b>Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?</b> Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm.	26 And he said to them, <b>"Why are you afraid, O you of little faith?"</b> Then he rose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm.	26 And He *said to them, <b>"Why are you so cowardly, you men of little faith?"</b> Then He got up and rebuked the winds and the sea, and it became perfectly calm.

The LSV has the Lord accusing the disciples of being cowards. The ESV avoids this error and reads as the Authorized Version.

**8:27 But the men marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this,<sup>a</sup> that even the winds and the sea obey him!<sup>b</sup>**

27a **"What manner of man"**. What manner of man indeed! He is a man, but He is more than just a man, He is the God-Man, the Son of God, Second Person of the Godhead. Christ is certainly more than "the Great Physician" or "the Great Teacher" or "Our Great Moral Example" or something like that. He is clearly God and any other title that does not infer that is an insult to His deity.

27b **"even the winds and the sea obey Him"**. That is because He is their Creator and is still God over all the earth. Christ also had power over roosters (Matthew 26:34, 74, 75), fish (John 21:6), fig trees (Mark 11:12-14, 20, 21) and death (John 10:17, 18).

**47. Healing of Two Men of the Gergesenes 8:28-34 see also Mark 5:1-27; Luke 8:26-37**

**8:28 ¶ And when he was come to the other side into the country of the Gergesenes,<sup>a</sup> there met him two possessed with devils,<sup>b</sup> coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way.<sup>c</sup>**

28a This is on the eastern side of the Sea of Galilee.

28b "You will notice that while Matthew tells you about "two possessed with devils", Mark tells you only about one (Mark 5:2). You will find a similar thing in the story of "blind Bartimaeus" (Mark 10:46, cf. Matthew 20:30). Infidels will present these accounts as "contradictions" in the Scriptures. Obviously, Mark is giving you the details of one individual while Matthew is giving you the full account. Such a practice is not a contradiction; it's a cause of personal

perspective.”<sup>96</sup> One of these two men was dominant so both Mark and Luke concentrate on him while Matthew mentions them both.

28c Characteristics of devil-possessed people:

1. They are fierce.
2. They hang around dead things.
3. They interfered with the lives of other people.
4. They recognized the Lord and acknowledged Him as the Son of God. No devil is an atheist! In this regard, every devil is more intelligent than any atheist or humanist.
5. They desired to possess a body and did not want to be cast out. They’d rather be in pigs than in the pit, or to be disembodied.
6. They knew they were going to be tormented and judged by the Lord. They were not universalists in thinking that everyone would eventually be saved, a belief that is popular in apostate churches and in society today.
7. The possessed person wants help.

**8:29 And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?<sup>a</sup>**

29a These devils believed- and trembled (James 2:19 “**Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.**”) showing that mere head belief in the deity of Christ is not enough for salvation. It must go beyond the head into the heart.

AV	ESV	LSV
29 And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, <b>Jesus</b> , thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?	29 And behold, they cried out, “What have you to do with us, O Son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the time?”	29 And behold, they cried out, saying, “What do we have to do with You, Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?”

“**Jesus**” The ESV, LSV and Darby omit “Jesus”.

**8:30 And there was a good way off from them an herd of many swine feeding.<sup>a</sup>**

30a This was a Gentile area as Jews wouldn’t be keeping pigs. Or they were backslidden Jews who were keeping the pigs, with the intent of selling them to Gentiles.

**8:31 So the devils besought him, saying, If thou cast us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine.<sup>ab</sup>**

31a The devils knew that it was better in pigs than in the pit.

1. Devils want to be in a body more than in a spiritual state without a body.
2. How humiliating it must have been for these unclean spirits to have to beg permission from the Lord to possess pigs, a despised animal!

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<sup>96</sup> Peter Ruckman, Ruckman Reference Bible, page 1248.

31b John Phillips has a rather weird remark here: "Why do demons crave embodiment? We are not told. One supposition is that they are actually disembodied spirits of an alien race who at some time in remote and unrecorded history lived on the earth. Because of their extraordinary wickedness they were unclothed of their bodies by an act of divine judgment."<sup>97</sup>

**8:32 And he said unto them, Go.<sup>a</sup> And when they were come out, they went into the herd of swine:<sup>b</sup> and, behold, the whole herd of swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and perished in the waters.**

32a The Lord wastes no time with the devils, but only gives them the benefit of a single word.

32b The first case of deviled ham. The pigs did not appreciate or tolerate the possession even for a minute. Men tolerate devil possession than pigs do. But suicide is a common side effect of devil possession.

**8:33 And they that kept them fled, and went their ways into the city, and told every thing, and what was befallen to the possessed of the devils.<sup>a</sup>**

33a You are not going to be able to keep something like that quiet for long.

**8:34 And, behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus: and when they saw him, they besought him that he would depart out of their coasts.<sup>a</sup>**

34a The residents cared more for the pigs and the property than for the miracle and the deliverance of these two men.

1. The residents lost a lot of money in the death of the pigs and in order to reduce further loss, they begged the Lord to leave them.
2. Every town in America would make a similar request of the Lord if He had done a similar miracle among them. The Lord is too controversial. He causes too much trouble and excitement. He is too disruptive. He is hurting business. Notice the Town Fathers would never complain about the local pornographers, dope peddlers, liquor merchants, head-bangers, prostitutes and lawyers. But the Lord can't stay!
3. See Acts 16:19-23 for a similar reaction to the power of God and the preachers in Philippi.

### **Spiritual Applications- Matthew Chapter 8**

Jesus associated with lepers when no one else dared to. They were cast-outs, rejected by society for something that was not their fault. But Jesus never pushed one away when He encountered one. In the ministry, you are going to have to deal with people that are below your social class. They will be outcasts and rejects but they need Christ, too. A preacher cannot have a prejudice against anyone. One of the best things any preacher can do is to preach in the jails and rescue missions. That will broaden your horizons. And then go pass out tracts and visit in the parts of your town that are on the "wrong side of the tracks".

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<sup>97</sup> John Phillips, *Exploring the Gospel of Matthew*, page 157.

The centurion in this chapter shows why military men make such good Christians and ministers. They understand about being under submission and what it is like to take orders. They understand the concept of duty, honor and enduring hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. The New Testament generally speaks quite well of such men.

**“Outer darkness”** One complaint we have with the failure of commentaries is that on some difficult passages, they are useless. No commentary consulted offers any real insight on the unique phrase. It may just be another term for hell, but the fact that only Matthew uses it shows an insight to Israel and the Tribulation period, something that one really explores. Peter Ruckman is closest to the truth but even his remarks leave much to be desired. *The Preacher’s Outline and Sermon Bible* has the most useful comments. This is why we consult commentaries, to gain insights and to look at truth from various angles. I think one reason behind this is that the commentator is afraid to present an unorthodox comment on a difficult or obscure passage for fear of being criticized, so many of them “play it safe” and pass over such verses.

## **Matthew Chapter 9**

### **48. The Healing of the Man With The Palsy 9:1-8 see also Mark 2:1-12; Luke 5:17-26**

**9:1 And he entered into a ship, and passed over, and came into his own city.<sup>a</sup>**

1a Capernaum (“City of Nahum”), which was the “headquarters” for the Lord during His Galilean ministry. Capernaum never realized or appreciated the honor bestowed unto it by the Lord that He chose it to be “His own city”. Yet the city rejected Him, provoking the Lord’s condemnation in Matthew 11:23 **“And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.”**

**9:2 And, behold,<sup>a</sup> they brought to him a man sick of the palsy,<sup>b</sup> lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith<sup>c</sup> said unto the sick of the palsy; Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee.**

2a When the Holy Spirit inserts a “behold! look at this!”, then it would be worth our while to stop and take a look at it.

2b **“palsy”**

1. Some sort of paralysis. See notes under Matthew 8:6.
2. It was the faith of his friends that Jesus saw, not the faith of the sick man, as in Mark 2:3-12. Compare this with the vicarious faith of Galatians 2:20, **“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.”**
3. The Lord had a quick eye to spot manifestations of faith and He never failed to call attention to it.

2c **“their faith”**

1. The faith of the sick man’s friend. The sick man may have been too sick to exercise much faith himself, but the faith of his friends did the trick.
2. His friends had concern enough to get him to Jesus for a healing.

**9:3 And, behold, certain of the scribes said within themselves, This man blasphemeth.<sup>a</sup>**

3a **“This man blasphemeth”**

1. This was the most frequent charge brought against the Lord.
2. Blasphemy is the charge brought against Christ at His trial.
  - A. Matthew 26:65 **“Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy.”**
  - B. John 19:7 **“The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God.”**
3. If Jesus had not been God, they would have been correct. But since He was still God while on earth, they were the ones who were blaspheming.

4. They dare not make the accusation verbally, but it made no difference, as the Lord still knew about it.

**9:4 And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?<sup>a</sup>**

4a “**Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?**” Jesus still maintained a level of omniscience while on earth. He knew what they were thinking. Omniscience might not have been necessary if one understood how religious hypocrites thought. Probably even seeing the look on their faces would have told anyone what was really in their hearts.

**9:5 For whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and walk?<sup>a</sup>**

5a For God, it was as easy to do one as it was to do the other. No man really couldn’t say either one as man cannot forgive sin and no man could have healed this man.

**9:6 But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith<sup>a</sup> he to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house.<sup>b</sup>**

6a Jesus never laid hands on the man- no “point of contact” was necessary here.

6b Jesus “put His money where His mouth was”. Not only did He claim to be God and to be able to forgive sins, but He then demonstrated that authority by healing this man. Talk is cheap, but if you can follow up your claims with actions, then that means something. If the claim that only God could forgive sins was valid, then Jesus demonstrated He was God by not only forgiving this man’s sins, but then healing him, something the Jewish religious leaders could not do.

**9:7 And he arose, and departed to his house.<sup>a</sup>**

7a This paralytic was brought to the Lord by others, but he went home by himself, now able to walk. This indicates that it is not that the sinner can go to the Lord, but that the sinner can go from the Lord by the Lord’s salvation.

**9:8 But when the multitudes saw it, they marvelled, and glorified God, which had given such power unto men.<sup>a</sup>**

8a How widely known was it at this point that Jesus was not only man, but also God? And as God, He already had such power.

AV	ESV	LSV
8 But when the multitudes saw <i>it</i> , they <b>marvelled</b> , and glorified God, which had given such power unto men.	8 When the crowds saw it, they were afraid, and they glorified God, who had given such authority to men.	8 But when the crowds saw <i>this</i> , they were afraid, and glorified God, who had given such authority to men.

**“marvelled”** Both the ESV and LSV had that the crowds were “afraid.”

**49. The Calling of Matthew 9:9 see also Mark 2:14-22; Luke 5:27-39**

**9:9 ¶ And as Jesus passed forth from thence, he saw a man, named Matthew,<sup>a</sup> sitting at the receipt of custom: and he saith unto him, Follow me.<sup>b</sup> And he arose, and followed him.**

9a Most publicans were too ashamed to sit publicly at the receipt of custom like this- they would hire someone to do it for them, someone who didn't care about public opinion or his own reputation.

1. Matthew does mention is call but only devotes one verse to it. Many Christians would have written a 500-page book describing how they “left all” of Christ and what great “sacrifices” they made.
2. “Mark and Luke call him Levi; it was ordinary for the same person to have two names: perhaps Matthew was the name he was most known by as a publican, and, therefore, in his humility, he called himself by that name, rather than by the more honourable name of Levi. Some think Christ gave him the name of Matthew when he called him to be an apostle; as Simon, he surnamed Peter. Matthew signifies, the gift of God, Ministers are God's gifts to the church; their ministry, and their ability for it, are God's gifts to them.”<sup>98</sup>
3. Matthew would have been the most controversial and unpopular choice to be a disciple. He was a crooked man, collecting taxes that were oppressive and unfair for the hated Romans. According to the rabbis, there was no hope for a man like Matthew. He was excluded from all religious fellowship. His money was considered tainted and defiled anyone who accepted it. He could not serve as a witness. The Rabbis had no word of help or encouragement for the publican. He was considered to be unclean. Yet Christ chose Him. There is no one with a history so bad or a current lifestyle so sinful that he cannot be redeemed by the grace of God.

9b Matthew's call:

1. The call
  - A. It was a call of grace.
    - i. Jesus has a way of calling men the world never would. Men look for personality, qualifications, education and talent. God overlooks all human qualifications and bases His calls on other things that He does not always reveal. There was something in Matthew that God saw that no other man would have seen.
    - ii. No doubt the other disciples were taken aback by Jesus selecting Matthew, a hated tax collector, the lowest rung on the ladder in Jewish society! But a man so ostracized by “polite company” can reach others who are in the same circumstance better than anyone else could.
  - B. It was a royal call.
    - i. When the King calls you to service, you respond!
    - ii. When Jesus calls you to service, you respond!
  - C. It was a personal call.
    - i. It was not the general call of Isaiah 6.
    - ii. Matthew's call personally called by name by Christ. Christ specifically wanted him.

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<sup>98</sup> Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*.

- iii. Similar to the calls to Peter and Andrew in Matthew 4:18-22.
- D. It was an “ordinary” call.
  - i. There were no miracles, visits by angels, shining lights, “foxhole” conversions or anything out of the ordinary- just a simple verbal call.
- E. It was a call to a busy man.
  - i. Satan may tempt the lazy, but Christ only calls diligent men.
- F. It was a passing call
  - i. Jesus only passed by once and offered the call once. If Matthew had turned down the call or did not respond, there may never have been another call or opportunity. He certainly never would have written the gospel that bears his name.
- 2. The response
  - A. Matthew’s response was a daring one.
    - i. He did not say “**let me bury my father first**” (Matthew 8:21). He did not say “What about my business?” or “Do you offer a good retirement plan? What are the hours?” Matthew sacrificed any future money and income in responding to this call. He may have had severe financial obligations and debts to Rome, but he considered following Christ to be more important.
    - ii. Jesus said nothing to Matthew about anything- nothing about the suffering, the persecution, the martyrdom. Matthew had no idea what he would be walking into. All he knew was that the Son of God wanted him. Matthew responded in faith.
  - B. Matthew’s response was an immediate one.
    - i. This reminds us of a Moravian, when approached about going to Greenland as a missionary responded that he would go. When asked when he would be ready to go, he said “As soon as my shoes come back from the cobbler”. When his shoes were ready, he went.
    - ii. He did not say “I will come when I retire, or when the kids are through school or when I get my mortgage paid off”.
    - iii. Matthew did not “**consult with flesh and blood**” (Galatians 1:16).

## **50. Calling Sinners, Not the Righteous 9:10-13**

**9:10 ¶ And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house,<sup>a</sup> behold, many publicans and sinners<sup>b</sup> came and sat down with him and his disciples.<sup>c</sup>**

10a This took place at Matthew’s house. None of the religious leaders would have come for they would never have set foot in the house of a tax collector. But Matthew knew a lot of rough characters and they had no such prejudices for they saw themselves no better (or worse) than Matthew was.

10b “**sinners**”

1. Also see Matthew 11:19, where Jesus identifies Himself as a “**friend of sinners**”, as He demonstrated here and throughout His ministry, and which He still demonstrates today.
2. These were people who were excommunicated from the synagogue for whatever reason. No one was supposed to have any associations with these people.
3. The term “publicans and sinners” shows that the Jewish religious leaders classified only the lowest class of people as sinners, like, the fallen woman (Luke 7:39 “**Now when**



**the Pharisee which had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him: for she is a sinner.”)** and the blind man (John 9:31,34 **“Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth...They answered and said unto him, Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out.”)**).

4. “Sinners,” in Bible language (and this accounts for the tremendous antipathy found among cultured people to the Bible), means the envious, the lazy, exaggerators, gluttons, the self-righteous, the proud, the deceitful, the stubborn, and those who refuse to recognize Truth. In our text, Christ had truly “gone to eat chicken dinner with a sinner,” but who is not a “sinner,” but Christ only?”<sup>99</sup>

10c Matthew had brought a lot of his friends and associates to meet and hear Jesus. This is the best form of evangelism. This is also a good sign of a genuine conversion as Matthew begins bearing spiritual fruit. Matthew does not come right out and say this was in his house or that he threw this feast, but no doubt he did. No doubt some of Matthew’s fellow tax-collectors were also present and this would put Jesus in a bad situation with Jewish public opinion as tax collectors were considered little better than traitors since they collected the taxes imposed by the hated Roman Empire.

1. As a former tax collector, Matthew would have had access to this class of despised people that none of the other disciples would. This is why the Lord calls men and women from all walks of life, so He can access people in all walks of life. A Harvard-educated preacher would not have much of a ministry among the “down and outers” at the rescue mission, just as the uneducated mountain “hick” would not be that successful preaching in Washington D.C.<sup>100</sup>

2. Jesus had a good ministry among such people. The religious and the educated tended to reject Him, but the overlooked, despised and shunned tended to respond better. I think Jesus enjoyed ministering among such people more than He did dealing with the religious hypocrites in Jerusalem.

### **9:11 And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples,<sup>a</sup> Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?**

11a In their cowardice, they asked the disciples rather than the Lord Himself.

1. A better question, that could have been asked of these Pharisees, would have been “why don’t you?” The Pharisees thought themselves too good to associate with such rabble, especially with men like Matthew. The Lord then rebukes this haughty and arrogant attitude in verses 12 and 13. This question indicates that the self-righteous Pharisees did not know the grace of God. They thought that God deals with man only according to righteousness, that the man had to make himself righteous before God would have any dealing with him. Since these “publicans” and “sinners” were unrighteous in the eyes of the Pharisees, why would Jesus be dealing with them if He claimed to be God? They expected Jesus to confirm to their ideas of what God would do and how He would act according to their misunderstandings of God’s character.

2. These Pharisees did not participate in this meal, but they were watching it from a safe distance, lest they contaminate themselves.

<sup>99</sup> Peter Ruckman, Bible Believer’s Commentary on Matthew, page 195-196.

<sup>100</sup> I knew of one “southern” IFB-type preacher who went to Boston, Massachusetts and tried to have southern-style revival/tent meetings on Boston Common. It just won’t work in that type of New England culture. The IFB/hyper-evangelical model simply won’t work everywhere.

3. It was unthinkable to them that a religious teacher would associate with such rabble. If Jesus really was a rabbi, why did He shun their company to associate with publicans and sinners, who were below Him in social class?

**9:12 But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician,<sup>a</sup> but they that are sick.**

12a “physician”

1. If Jesus likened Himself to a physician, it shows that going to doctors and using medicine is not sinful but is also a God-appointed and God-approved way of treating sickness.
2. This also shows that Jesus never had anything bad to say about physicians and other medical men, although many modern-day “faith healers” do. It is no sin to go to a doctor, especially if your medical treatment is accompanied by prayer.
  - A. Being anointed with oil and praying for the sick are commanded by Scripture (James 5:14,15, **“Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.”**).
3. This would render the quack “faith-healers” as unnecessary.
4. Paul had Luke, who was a physician, on his missionary team and you know Paul used Luke’s services frequently, knowing the physical issues Paul suffered from.
5. This is like a doctor who won’t go to sick people. A preacher who refuses to go to where the sinners are is not of much use to God or man.
6. The sick must realize they are sick, and they need to call upon the Great Physician for spiritual healing through the new birth, but how few do! Why don’t they call for the Doctor?
  - A. They don’t know they are sick or won’t admit they are.
    - i. They deny it. Many self-righteous sinners deny that have any sin problem at all. Or they can be like the so-called “Christian Scientist” who deny sin altogether.
    - ii. They reject it. They know there is something wrong with them but just don’t want to bring themselves to admit to the reality of an unpleasant truth. It is like being diagnosed with cancer, but it won’t go away if you deny it or ignore it.
  - B. They don’t trust the diagnosis. Some people think all doctors are quacks and that they can’t be trusted. These are the ones who don’t acknowledge Jesus as God, so they don’t trust His diagnosis of their spiritual condition.
    - i. These people may trust Mohammad, or the Buddha or the pope more than they do Christ to diagnose their condition.
  - C. They don’t like the treatment.
    - i. If they do accept the diagnosis, they reject the plan of treatment and the medicines offered.
  - D. They don’t trust doctors
    - i. Many people think doctors don’t really know what they are talking about.
      - a. That may have been a legitimate issue in this day as medical science and knowledge was very primitive.

- ii. Many people think that Bible preachers don't know what they are talking about, that they are all frauds or fakes, just after your money.

**9:13 But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous,<sup>a</sup> but sinners to repentance.<sup>b</sup>**

**13a “the righteous”**

1. The self-righteous would respond anyway as they do not see themselves as sinners in need of the grace of God. They are not really righteous, but they imagine themselves to be.
2. Jesus did not need their sacrifices, but He wanted them to display mercy.
3. "Go ye and learn," the Lord added, applying a well-known rabbinic formula used by Jewish teachers when confronted with superficial knowledge. His critics thought they knew so much about the law, and Jesus said, "Go ye and learn"! He directed them to Hosea 6:6 and repeated the gist of it: "I will have mercy, and not sacrifice."<sup>101</sup>

**13a “sinners to repentance”**

1. Jesus did not call sinners to mere belief or mental assent, as the devils also believe (James 2:19) but without repentance.
2. Belief is the foundation of salvation, but it must be accompanied by repentance from sin and evidence of that inward heart change.
3. Jesus called sinners to repentance. Repent from what? Sin, unbelief, rebellion and associated works of the flesh.
4. This shows yet again that repentance of sin is necessary for salvation, despite what certain hyper-evangelicals and the moderns versions say (below).
5. There can be no call to salvation with a call to repentance. They are related and one depends on the other,

AV	ESV	LSV
13 But go ye and learn what <i>that</i> meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.	13 Go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.' For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners."	13 "But go and learn what this means: 'I DESIRE COMPASSION, AND NOT SACRIFICE,' for I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

**“to repentance”** is omitted in the ESV, LSV and Darby. Like many modern Independent Fundamental Baptist preachers, the new versions don't like repentance.

**51. Old Wine and New Wineskins 9:14-17 see also Mark 2:18-22; Luke 5:33-39**

**9:14 ¶ Then came to him the disciples of John, saying, Why do we and the Pharisees fast<sup>a</sup> oft, but thy disciples fast not?<sup>b</sup>**

**14a “fast”**

<sup>101</sup> John Phillips, *Exploring the Gospel of Matthew*, page 163.

1. Fasting is never directly commanded in Scripture, but it is still a good practice, if done Scripturally.
2. The Jews had reduced it to a ritualistic religious practice, done on schedule and not as needed. It had degenerated to nothing more than a tradition.
3. It should be practiced when there is a spiritual need that is so strong that you are willing to deprive yourself of necessary food so that you can concentrate on prayer regarding the issue.
4. There was no set time for the length of the fast.

14b "...**thy disciples fast not.**" Implying they weren't spiritual. But when you fast, you must fast for the right reasons, not simply because it is "time to fast" or just to be seen of men. John had demanded repentance in connection with his baptism, and fasting coupled with prayer was a sign of that repentance. With this practice the Pharisees were in full agreement. Neither the Pharisees nor the disciples of John could understand why the disciples of Jesus did not practice fasting with prayer since Jesus like John had called for repentance.

**9:15<sup>a</sup> And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bridechamber<sup>b</sup> mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? but the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them,<sup>c</sup> and then shall they fast.<sup>de</sup>**

15a "From here on, the ministry of our Lord is marked by constant questions of religious controversy. They never let Him rest a minute; from here, till the great debates and questions of the "Passion Week," Jesus is constantly being "put on the spot."<sup>102</sup>

15b "**bridechamber**" A room or hall where wedding ceremonies were performed.

15c "**taken from them**" By force, against his will.

15d Jesus was not against fasting but now wasn't the time for it. No one fasts when they are full of joy. Fasting is reserved for times of grief, sorrow, repentance after sin or to seek the will of God. No one fasts at a banquet or a wedding. While Jesus was with them, there was no reason to fast. But after his ascension, when He would leave them, then there would be plenty of reasons to fast.

15e Prophetically, Israel will do much "weeping and fasting" during the tribulation, until the Bridegroom returns in the Second Coming.

**9:16<sup>ab</sup> No man putteth a piece of new cloth unto an old garment, for that which is put in to fill it up taketh from the garment, and the rent is made worse.<sup>c</sup>**

16a Verses 16 and 17 are usually interpreted as speaking to the incompatibility of the Old Covenant with the New. The new wine of the upcoming Gospel dispensation in the Church Age is not compatible with the Law and the Jewish, Mosaic Covenant, despite the eternal attempts of the Seventh-Day Adventists and other Galatian-type groups (such as many of the Messianic Jewish groups) to merge the two, something Paul condemned in Galatians.

16b Luke calls this a "parable" in Luke 5:36.

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<sup>102</sup> Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer's Commentary on Matthew*, page 198.

16c You do not take an old, worn-out garment and put a new patch on it. It is not worth the effort. You discard the old garment for a new and better one.

AV	ESV	LSV
16 No man putteth a piece of <b>new cloth</b> unto an old garment, for that which is put in to fill it up taketh from the garment, and the rent is made worse.	16 No one puts a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment, for the patch tears away from the garment, and a worse tear is made.	16 “But no one puts a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; for the patch pulls away from the garment, and a worse tear results.

“new cloth” The ESV and LSV use “unshrunk cloth”, which is no improvement.

**9:17 Neither do men put new wine into old bottles: else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish: but they put new wine<sup>a</sup> into new bottles, and both are preserved.<sup>b</sup>**

17a “new wine” Unfermented, non-alcoholic wine.

17b Christ did not come to reform a worn-out and broken religious system (the Judaism of His day) but to introduce something new, the New Covenant.

## **52. Power Over Death 9:18-26 see also Mark 5:22-43; Luke 8:41-56**

**9:18 ¶ While he spake these things unto them, behold, there came a certain ruler,<sup>a</sup> and worshipped him,<sup>b</sup> saying, My daughter is even now dead: but come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live.**

18a Luke 8:41 says he was the ruler of the local synagogue.

18b When someone does worship Christ, He does not refuse it. Christ always accepts worship as the natural and right thing since He is God.

A. Matthew 14:33 “**Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God.**”

B. Matthew 28:17 “**And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted.**”

C. John 9:38 “**And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him.**”

D. John 20:28 “**And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.**”

**9:19 And Jesus arose, and followed him, and so did his disciples.**

**9:20 ¶ And, behold, a woman, which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years,<sup>a</sup> came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment:**

20a We are not given any further details about her blood condition but it was serious.

**9:21 For she said within herself, If I may but touch his garment,<sup>a</sup> I shall be whole.<sup>b</sup>**

21a This is the idea of a “point of contact”, which is so popular with so-called “faith healers” false prophets.

21b “The other Gospels add details regarding the woman's condition. She had spent all her money trying to find a cure. Luke, who was a doctor, said that no physician had been able to heal her (Luke 8:43). Mark, looking at the case from a layman's point of view, was more caustic; he said that she “had suffered many things of many physicians... and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse” (5:26). The doctors had taken her money, treated her inadequately, caused her unnecessary pain, built up her hopes, dashed them, and left her worse than they had found her. Now she made up her mind to come to the great physician who never lost a case and never charged a fee. The woman's disease rendered her ceremonially unclean and, according to Mosaic law, excommunicated her (Leviticus 12:1-7). Everything she touched was considered unclean (15:19-33). The same Levitical law gave the husband of such a woman the right to divorce her (Deuteronomy 24:1).”<sup>103</sup>

**9:22 But Jesus turned him about, and when he saw her,<sup>a</sup> he said, Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour.**

22a With the throng pawing and manhandling Him, Jesus was still able to discern that one needy person touched Him. The physicians were unable to help her, so she touched Jesus' garment. He then realized that someone gave Him a “special touch” and He asked who touched Him, when hundreds were touching Him at that time.

**9:23 And when Jesus came into the ruler's house, and saw the minstrels<sup>a</sup> and the people making a noise,<sup>b</sup>**

23a “minstrels”, flute-players, pipers.

23b The funeral party, with the hired mourners, which was common.

**9:24 He said unto them, Give place: for the maid is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn.<sup>a</sup>**

24a It *did* seem like an insensitive remark. Everyone knew she was dead, and it was apparent that she was dead. They responded with a nasty, insulting laugh.

**9:25 But when the people were put forth,<sup>a</sup> he went in, and took her by the hand,<sup>b</sup> and the maid arose.**

25a Christ would not work with these mockers and unbelievers present.

25b Just a simple touch was used in this raising. There was no religious show, mood music or bucking dance involved. After the healing, Jesus did not write a book nor did He solicit for donations to his “vital ministry for this apostate hour”.

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<sup>103</sup> John Phillips, *Exploring the Gospel of Matthew*, page 167.

**9:26 And the fame hereof went abroad into all that land.**

**53. Power Over Doubt 9:27-31**

**9:27<sup>a</sup> ¶ And when Jesus departed thence, two blind men followed him, crying, and saying, Thou Son of David,<sup>b</sup> have mercy on us.**

27a This event is recorded only by Matthew.

27b **“Thou Son of David”**

1. It is interesting they use this title in addressing Christ. These blind men had seen something about Christ that the religious leaders had not.
2. This is a messianic term, so the idea that Jesus was the long-prophesied Messiah was starting to take hold among the people.
3. These blind men saw what the sighted persons could not.

**9:28 And when he was come into the house, the blind men came to him: and Jesus saith unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this?<sup>a</sup> They said unto him, Yea, Lord.**

28a A key question Christ asks of all of us when we bring prayer requests to Him.

**9:29 Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you.<sup>a</sup>**

29a No faith would yield no results and you probably wouldn't pray to begin with. But if you pray and then do not believe that God will answer, then what was the point in praying?

**9:30 And their eyes were opened; and Jesus straitly charged<sup>a</sup> them, saying, See that no man know it.<sup>b</sup>**

30a Severely or intently charged. The Lord gave strict and definite orders that they were not to speak of this.

30b **“See that no man know it.”**

1. Evangelism forbidden.
2. While events like this would increase interest in Jesus' ministry, it would also increase the opposition. The danger was that now they might start talking about the miracle instead of the Messiah.
3. News of these healings would also spread then idea that Jesus was more of a healer than a teacher and the Messiah.

**9:31 But they, when they were departed, spread abroad his fame in all that country.<sup>a</sup>**

31a **“spread abroad his fame in all that country”**

1. They ignored His strict orders of Matthew 9:30.
2. This would have contributed to the popular notion that Jesus was more of a healer than a teacher and preacher. This will not do.

3. Jesus is the Great Physician, but that is all some people see Him for, just as a glorified doctor or financial consultant or psychologist.
4. If He is not recognized as God first and foremost, then He is not receiving the proper glory and recognition that He deserves.

#### **54. Power Over Devils and Dumbness 9:32-35**

**9:32 ¶ As they went out, behold, they brought to him a dumb man possessed with a devil.<sup>a</sup>**

32a Sometimes, but not all the time, dumbness, inability to speak and deafness are caused by devil possession, but we would obviously not imply that all deaf or dumb people are possessed by devils.

**9:33 And when the devil was cast out, the dumb spake: and the multitudes marvelled, saying, It was never so seen in Israel.**

**9:34 But the Pharisees said, He casteth out devils through the prince of the devils.<sup>a</sup>**

34a This is blaspheming the Holy Spirit (the Unpardonable Sin)- attributing the works of God to Satan.

1. It was an illogical charge anyway- see Matthew 12:25-29, **“And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand: And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand? And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? therefore they shall be your judges. But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you. Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house.”**
2. The Pharisees had to try to discredit the miracle somehow, and this is the best they could come up with- “Jesus is in league with devils, which is why they obey Him!” But it would have been just as likely that Jesus had power over the devils because He was God and had power over them.

**9:35 And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.<sup>a</sup>**

35a Healing was associated with the Jewish Gospel of the Kingdom.

1. We don't preach this today, which is why we don't expect such healings today.
2. The Gospel of Grace, preached during this Church Age, has no mention of physical healing (see 1 Corinthians 15:1-4) and physical healing is not associated with it.
3. It was more valid during the Lord's ministry and during the transitional period of Acts 2-7 and we may see a renewed emphasis on it in the tribulation, but it is not of primary importance now.
4. This shows that if physical healings are associated with the Gospel of the Kingdom, then it is dispensational in nature.



- A. Modern-day faith-healers are correct in their doctrine, but they are applying it to the wrong dispensation.
- B. This shows that many doctrinal errors in the church today stem from improper dispensational applications.

**55. The Prayer For Laborers 9:36-38 see also Mark 6:6-13 and Luke 9:1-6**

**9:36 ¶ But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion<sup>a</sup> on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.**

**36a “compassion”**

1. Compassion usually starts with seeing first.
2. These were people with no spiritual shepherd to guide them, feed them or protect them. They were easy prey for the spiritual wolf.
3. There are so many towns in the United States and Canada that do not have a good Bible-preaching church and a true Biblical pastor nearby to provide these spiritual services to that area. What a blessing it is when God has put such a church and man in a town, but 99% of the population cares nothing for it.
4. One attribute of God is compassion upon the weak, sick, lost. We should also adopt that for our lives as well.
5. Christ was also “moved with compassion” in:
  - A. Mark 1:41 as He cleansed a leper.
  - B. Mark 5:19 where he healed a man possessed with a devil.
  - C. Luke 7:13, with the raising of son of the widow in Nain.
  - D. Matthew 20:31 when He healed the two blind beggars.
6. “The Lord saw lost people as having no real goals. They were “scattered abroad”—like sheep. Sheep are neither strong, nor smart, nor swift. They are somewhat stupid, having a propensity to go astray and wander aimlessly farther and farther away. Lost sheep have no goal, no instinctive sense that will bring them back to the fold. Jesus saw lost people as sheep wandering here and there through life, with no sense as to where it all leads and where it all ends. He also saw them as having no real guides, “as sheep having no shepherd.” What did they have? They had the Pharisees, Sadducees, scribes, and rabbis. But those men were as lost as the people they were attempting to lead.”<sup>104</sup>

**9:37 Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few;<sup>a</sup>**

37a Much work to do but few people willing to get out into the fields and do it. There were many who had no one to watch over their souls or express any spiritual concern over their lives.

**9:38 Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers<sup>a</sup> into his harvest.**

**38a “he will send forth labourers”**

1. God must call them. The church does not call these laborers. Their families do not call them. Bible colleges do not call them, nor do mission boards. It must be the Holy Spirit who identifies them, burdens them, equips them, confirms them and sends them (Acts

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<sup>104</sup> John Phillips, *Exploring the Gospel of Matthew*, page 174.

13:2 **“As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.”**).

2. What kind of laborers are they? God calls all sorts of people to ministries such as pastoring, working on a pastoral staff, evangelists, teachers, missionaries and laymen in the local church that can undertake the more “menial” ministries (which is the work of a deacon) to assist the pastor and to take some of the day-to-day burdens off of him (Acts 6:2,3 **“Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.”**).

3. What is the harvest? Any time of ministry that involves evangelism or confirmation and strengthening of believers and local congregations.

### **Spiritual Applications- Matthew Chapter 9**

Matthew’s call to the ministry shows that God calls all kinds of men, from all sorts of background. Matthew would have had a unique access to others in his former profession, something Peter and John could not have access to. God calls all kinds of men because there are all kinds of sinners who need to be saved. I have a Roman Catholic background, endured the divorce of my parents when I was a boy and dealt with a drunken father. This would give me some advantage in dealing with sinners who were raised in similar situations that I was, that other preachers might not have. Your background is unique, and God expects you to use it in your witnessing ministry.

The prayer for laborers to work in the harvest is just as valid and necessary today as it was when Jesus uttered it. How many more preachers do we need today! There are far too many churches that do not have a pastor since there are so few men who are willing to go into the ministry. In Christian universities, the smallest school tends to be the School of Religion and the ministerial class shrinks every year. Yes, the ministry is tough, full of discouragement and lack of appreciation. There are long hours and the pay is not good. The attacks and sniping from the “brethren” is constant. Paul talked about the difficulties of the ministry in 2 Corinthians, which is the real book on the Christian ministry<sup>105</sup>. Yet the call is still there and has not been rescinded or canceled.

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<sup>105</sup> Not the Book of Acts. That dispensational model is very popular among Charismatics and hyper-evangelical Baptist neo-Fundamentalists.

## **Matthew Chapter 10**

Matthew 10 is one of the most dispensational chapters in the Bible, which should be no surprise since Matthew is a dispensational gospel. Most of the doctrinal applications in this chapter are applicable to Israel in the tribulation period. There are still several verses in this chapter that are challenging to properly interpret and apply.

### **56. The Sending of the Twelve 10:1-15**

**10:1 And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power<sup>a</sup> against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease.<sup>b</sup>**

1a The power granted to them by the Lord:

1. Against unclean spirits, including casting them out
2. To heal all manner of sicknesses and diseases

1b This is dispensational as Paul mentions none of this in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 as he defines what the New Testament/Church Age gospel is. This kind of ministry will also reappear during the tribulation period.

**10:2 Now the names of the twelve apostles are these;<sup>a</sup> The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother;**

2a This list of apostles is also given in Mark 3:16-19 and Luke 6:14-16.

1. They are listed by twos, as they went out in pairs, which is always the best way to work, for **two are better than one** (Ecclesiastes 4:9).
2. An "apostle" is "one sent with a commission". We get our word "postal" from this.
3. Peter is mentioned first as he was the most prominent, until Paul's ministry really got started.
4. Peter, James and John were the "inner circle" of the disciples.
5. "There are two facts about men which are bound to strike us at once."
  - A. They were very ordinary men. They had no wealth; they had no academic background; they had no social position. They were chosen from the common people, men who did the ordinary things, men who had no special education, men who had no social advantages. It has been said that Jesus is looking, not so much for extraordinary men, as for ordinary men who can do ordinary things extraordinarily well. Jesus sees in every man, not only what that man is, but also what he can make him. Jesus chose these men, not only for what they were, but also for what they were capable of becoming under his influence and in his power. No man need ever think that he has nothing to offer Jesus, for Jesus can take what the most ordinary man can offer and use it for greatness.
  - b. They were the most extraordinary mixture. There was, for instance, Matthew, the tax-gatherer. All men would regard Matthew as a quisling, as one who had sold himself into the hands of his country's masters for gain, the very reverse of a patriot and a lover of his country. And with Matthew there was Simon. Luke (Luke 6:16) calls him Simon Zelotes, which means Simon the Zealot.

- i. Josephus (Antiquities, 8. 1. 6.) describes these Zealots; he calls them the fourth party of the Jews; the other three parties were the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Essenes. He says that they had "an inviolable attachment to liberty," and that they said that "God is to be their ruler and Lord." They were prepared to face any kind of death for their country, and did not shrink to see their loved ones die in the struggle for freedom. They refused to give to any earthly man the name and the title of king. They had an immovable resolution which would undergo any pain. They were prepared to go the length of secret murder and stealthy assassination to seek to rid their country of foreign rule. They were the patriots par excellence among the Jews, the most nationalist of all the nationalists.
- ii. The plain fact is that if Simon the Zealot had met Matthew the tax-gatherer anywhere else than in the company of Jesus, he would have stuck a dagger in him. Here is the tremendous truth that men who hate each other can learn to love each other when they both love Jesus Christ. Too often religion has been a means of dividing men. It was meant to be--and in the presence of the living Jesus it was--a means of bringing together men who without Christ were sundered from each other."<sup>106</sup>

**10:3 Philip, and Bartholomew; Thomas,<sup>a</sup> and Matthew the publican;<sup>b</sup> James the son of Alphæus,<sup>c</sup> and Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddæus;<sup>d</sup>**

3a This is Thomas, nicknamed "Doubting Thomas".

3b "**Matthew the Publican**" Matthew gives himself that title. He may have done it to remind himself what kind of life he came from and to remind others that no one is beyond the grace of God, no matter how bad their life is. Mark and Luke listed Matthew before Thomas (Mark 3:18; Luke 6:15), but Matthew, the writer of this gospel, listed himself after Thomas, showing his humility.

3c "**James of Alphaeus**" He is listed in Acts 1:13, is most certainly not the "Lord's (half-)brother," although this one could possibly be a cousin, and Judas, his brother, also a cousin. Since eleven names are listed in Acts 1:13, these must be the eleven apostles that are left after the apostasy and defection of Judas Iscariot. Consequently, it follows that they must match the list in Matthew 10. Lebbaeus whose surname is Thaddaeus is the only one who can fill the bill; therefore, the "Judas" ("not Iscariot") must be this man. This leaves us with three James'.

1. James Zebedee, John's brother.
2. James of Alphaeus, Christ's cousin.
3. James the less, the brother of the Lord, by Mary.<sup>107</sup>

3d "Lebbaeus" He is undoubtedly the "Judas" of Luke 6:16, called "Judas...not Iscariot" in John 14:22.

**10:4 Simon the Canaanite,<sup>a</sup> and Judas Iscariot,<sup>b</sup> who also betrayed him.**

**4a "Canaanite"**

1. Not a racial Canaanite but a member of a certain political affiliation.

<sup>106</sup> William Barclay, *The Gospel of Matthew, The Daily Study Bible*, volume 1, pages 358-359.

<sup>107</sup> Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer's Commentary on Matthew*, page 211.

2. "The Zealots formed a fourth party in Israel, the other three being the Pharisees, the Sadducees and the Essenes. Zealous for the law, Simon's party cited the example of Phinehas (Numbers 25:7,8) and Elijah (1 Kings 18:40) as their authority for taking the law into their own hands. They punished and lynched people they considered offenders. As the time approached for the fall of Jerusalem, the Zealots went to great lengths to enforce their will and, perhaps more than any others, brought about the destruction of the city. They refused to give anyone the title of king...In their ambition to rid their country of Roman rule, the Zealots were prepared to assassinate anyone. If Matthew had met Simon the Zealot before they both met Christ, Simon would have been quite prepared to kill him."<sup>108</sup>
3. For Christ to call a man who was opposed to His claims of Kingship is as fascinating as Christ calling Judas, the man He knew would betray Him.

**4b "Judas Iscariot"**

1. The Son of Perdition (John 17:12; 2 Thessalonians 2:3), called "a devil" by Christ. (John 6:70).
2. He is listed last in every list of the apostles.
3. His name has 13 letters in our English language and "13" is the Biblical number for rebellion.
4. Judas was the only disciple from Judea. The rest were from Galilee.

**10:5 These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans<sup>a</sup> enter ye not:**

**5a "Samaritans"**

1. They would go to the Samaritans and Gentiles later in the book of Acts. This would later change by Acts 8.
2. The Samaritans were half-breed Jews, imported into the land of the northern kingdom during the Assyrian invasion in 722 B.C. They were hated by the Jews.
3. The Samaritans had developed a synergistic religion that combined Judaism and pagan teachings and practices.

**10:6 But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.<sup>a</sup>**

**6a "To the Jew first"**. They would later go to the Gentiles in the book of Acts, but not at this time.<sup>109</sup>

**10:7 And as ye go, preach,<sup>a</sup> saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.<sup>b</sup>**

**7a** Preaching is always the most important ministry, that does the greatest good.

**7b "The kingdom of heaven is at hand"**

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<sup>108</sup> John Philipps, *Exploring the Gospel of Matthew*, page 186.

<sup>109</sup> Some men, like the late Jewish evangelist Jacob Gartenhaus, taught that Jewish missions must supersede Gentile missions. If a church didn't have Jewish missions at the top of their list and if they weren't prioritizing Jewish missions above all, then that church was being disobedient to this verse and others like it. But that is not what Jesus is teaching here. The gospel DID go to the Jew first in the gospels and in the Book of Acts. After Israel rejected it, the Church focused on the Gentiles. Even the "Great Commission" of Matthew 28 doesn't give a Jewish emphasis.

1. We do NOT preach this today, except prophetically. This is not the message of the New Testament Church. It deals with the tribulation and the events leading up to the Second Coming and the establishment of the Millennial Kingdom of Christ.
2. This kingdom is “at hand” since it would have started if Israel had either accepted the offer of the Kingdom during Christ’s earthly ministry or the second offering during the book of Acts.
3. Any attempt to make the gospel of Matthew 10:7 equal to the gospel of 1 Corinthians 15:1-4; Galatians 1:6-12 and Ephesians 3:1-13 will result in hopeless theological confusion, garbling of texts, and mangling of passages.
4. There is more than one gospel in the Bible. We talk about “the gospel” in reference to the gospel of grace that the Church preaches today, but there are dispensational gospels.
  - A. The Gospels in the Bible:
    - i. The gospel of the grace of God, Acts 20:24 **“But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.”**
      - a. We preach this today.
      - b. Paul would refer to this as “my gospel”. It is not that he originated it or that it belonged to him, but this was the message he promoted and identified with.
        - i. Romans 2:16 **“In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.”**
        - ii. Romans 16:25 **“Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began,”**
        - iii. 2 Timothy 2:8 **“Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel:”**
    - ii. The gospel of the kingdom, Matthew 4:23 **“And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.”**
      - a. This was preached by John, Jesus and the early church up until Acts 8.
      - b. It is Jewish in nature and deals with the Millennial Kingdom.
    - iii. “The everlasting gospel”, Revelation 14:6 **“And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people”.**
      - a. Preach by an angel toward the end of the tribulation after the Two Witnesses ascend into heaven.
5. Dispensational observations about preaching that the “kingdom” was “at hand”:
  - A. No Gentiles are to be preached to.
  - B. The message is to the House of Israel.
    - i. Acts 2:36-38 **“Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in**

**their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."**

C. The message is not the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (1 Corinthians 15:1-4).

A good summary of the "Second Offer", by J. Sidlow Baxter in *Explore the Book*: "Such plain speaking cannot be misunderstood. Had there been a national repentance and acceptance of Jesus as indeed Israel's Messiah-Saviour-King, the return of our Lord in public glory would have happened without further postponement. In other words, the second coming of Christ was contingent upon Israel's reaction to the new message through the apostles. Very clearly, then, we can see why, when the disciples asked, "Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6), He replied, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in His own power." To have known the day and hour in advance would have been to know Israel's reaction before ever the renewed offer of the kingdom was made. Truly, in the words of James: "Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world" (Acts 15:18); and it is in the light of His perfect foreknowledge that He preadapts and prearranges and predetermines. Thus, while He never leaves His ultimate purposes at the mercy of human uncertainty, in the outworking of things to the predetermined end He recognizes the free-will of man all through, and prearranges according to His foreknowledge of what man will do. Thus it is that events are allowed in the main to take their natural course, while at the same time God foreknows and overrules all to the fulfillment of His ultimate purpose. Thus, in all genuineness, the renewed offer of the Messianic kingdom was made to the Jews, as recorded in the Acts; and the return of Christ was for the time being contingent upon their reaction. This has a bearing upon the Epistles. In those to the Thessalonians the second coming of Christ is represented as though it might have burst into sudden occurrence in the imminent future. In some of the other Pauline epistles there is a noticeable shift of emphasis: the wondrous hope still gleams ahead, but there is not the same impression of impending fulfilment. This has been a problem to thoughtful readers; but once again, when we see the Acts as distinctively the renewed offer of the kingdom to Israel the problem evaporates. The period covered by the Acts, we repeat, was a suspense-period. So long as the kingdom was being re-offered to the nation the return of the Lord could have happened without any delay upon the fulfilment of the conditions. The offer was real; the promise was true; the crucified but ascended Son of Man was indeed "standing at the right hand of God," ready to descend again in kingdom blessing. Would Israel respond, repent, receive? That was the suspense-point. Now it is in those epistles which were written during this suspense-period of the Acts, when there was still hope of Israel's repentance, that we find the seeming imminence of the Lord's return. Of those epistles, the earliest were 1 and 2 Thessalonians (written A.D. 53). 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Romans, were written four or five years later, when Jewish antipathy was becoming more firmly crystallized, but when to assemblies of believers all over the Roman world the hope of Christ's return was still that which filled the immediate horizon (hence such words as Romans 13:11,12; 1 Corinthians 7:26,29, 15:52,58, 16:22; 2 Corinthians 4:14). When we turn over to Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus,

however, there is a noticeable new emphasis. The grand prospect of the Lord's return is still there, and still as bright: but there is not just the same sense of importance. A great new conception swings into commanding prominence, taking the precedence for the time being, and claiming the soul's wonder—that is, the CHURCH as the mystic body and bride and temple of the eternal Son. These epistles were not written until A.D. 64 (or possibly even later), i.e. after the culminating pronouncement of Acts 28:28. We do not say that there is a hard-and-fast division between these two groups of epistles. The hope of the Lord's return is found in both; but there is modification as the later developments recorded in the Acts clarify the situation. Similarly, the Church is found in both; but there is profounder conception of it as the wonderful Divine "mystery" is more fully revealed. We do not say there is a rigid demarcation between the two groups; yet the difference of emphasis is distinctly there; and the explanation is found in a true understanding of the Acts as the further offer of the kingdom to Israel. Another point on which it is well to be precise is that the two Thessalonian epistles, although they certainly give the impression that the Lord's return was expected in the very near future, do not anywhere actually state that it was thus impending. With that more-than-human genius which everywhere characterizes the Scriptures a fine point of balance is maintained, so that while the sense of expectancy is stressed and even encouraged, there is no actual commitment as to the "day" or the "hour." In this connection it is important to distinguish between what Paul thought and what Paul taught. Maybe Paul himself thought that the Lord's return was close at hand; but he never actually wrote so. We do not claim inspiration and infallibility for all that the apostles thought; but we do claim it for all that they taught. Thus, these two Second Advent letters to the Thessalonians preserve a kind of sensitive poise between an encouraged expectancy on the one hand and a careful indefiniteness as to time on the other. Does this seem unfair to those early believers? Actually, it was the very opposite. Looking at things from the human side, our Lord's return might have happened then; for as we have seen, it was a contingent prospect. Looking at things from the Divine side (which the now-completed Scriptures permit us to do) there could have been no renewed offer of the kingdom without this contingent promise. Certainly, the further Jewish refusal lay in the foreknowledge of God, but so did His larger purpose through the Church and the eventual return of Christ after the calling in of the Church's elect members. In keeping with this, the great hope was set before those early believers so that they might have—along with all who have followed them—this sanctifying intelligence concerning the eventual consummation."

Summary:

1. All the Old Testament prophets spoke of the Millennial Kingdom (hundreds of verses- too many to list here).
2. Christ offered the Kingdom to Israel and was rejected.
3. The Kingdom is offered again here in Acts 3.
4. It will be offered again by Stephen in Acts 7.
5. Israel rejects both offers. Christ sits back down at Stephen's death. He arose because He would have returned if the nation had repented at Stephen's message.
6. God now withdraws the offer, and the gospel goes to the Samaritans in Acts 8.



7. The apostle to the Gentiles is saved in Acts 9.
8. The Gentile Pentecost takes place in Acts 10.
9. The first mission to the Gentiles starts in Acts 13.
10. The Jerusalem Conference in Acts 15 defines Gentile salvation.
11. Acts 28:28 wraps up the current state of the “kingdom offer” and the status of Israel up until the rapture and tribulation period.

**10:8 Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils:<sup>a</sup> freely ye have received, freely give.<sup>bc</sup>**

**8a “Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils”**

1. All this is dispensational. Christ does heal but healing is not part of the Church Age gospel. Neither is casting out devils.
2. The Christian “Science” cult uses this passage in their logo, showing how ignorant they are of Scripture.
3. Many Charismatics also “double down” here, showing they are unable to rightly divide the word of truth dispensationally. This would change in Luke 22:35,36 **“And he said unto them, When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye any thing? And they said, Nothing. Then said he unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one.”**
4. Here, the disciples were told not to make any provision or preparations for themselves as they went on their preaching tour. Now, after Luke 22, they are told to make as many provisions for themselves as they could, as the dispensation was changing.
5. We would see a resumption of such ministries in the tribulation by the 144,000 as they will no doubt have apostolic signs and wonders to demonstrate of Israel in that day.

**8b “freely as ye have received, freely give”**

1. This means exactly what it says. Make no charge at all for any of your services or ministry. Don’t charge “admission fees” for your services. Give all of your books and CDs away for free. This would also forbid offering “gift offer 666” which is a ball-point pen with “Jesus Saves” written on the side of it for a “gift” of \$25 to this “vital, last days ministry”. If this passage was in effect during the church age, 99.9% of all ministries would be in violation of this command.
2. No modern-day fakirs who claim to be following the instructions of Matthew 10 observe this, for they are all in it for the money. Can you imagine a modern false preacher going on a three-week preaching tour and not take his wallet, check-book or any of his credit cards? And then to accept no financial gifts?

8c Modern day preachers who claim to be able to do any of these four activities should be able to do all four! The disciples were to do to all four and they were able to do all four. You can’t cherry-pick this. If you are a true apostolic preacher, you must be able to all four of these or you are a fraud.

**10:9 Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses,<sup>a</sup>**

9a There would be divine provision for the disciples with this mandate and they would be totally dependent on the Lord for their supplies. This was changed by Luke 22:35,36. Church Age work requires money and provisions and we either have to provide it ourselves or have it supplied to us by missionary support. As the Church Age would soon begin, the disciples are

there told to make as many preparations and to take as many provisions as they can for their future work. We wish we were back in a day when God would make supernatural provisions for His work and He still does. But now, the worker must plan, save, invest and make preparations to finance the work.

AV	ESV	LSV
9 Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses,	9 Acquire no gold or silver or copper for your belts,	9 “Do not acquire gold, or silver, or copper for your money belts,

The ESV and LSV give the idea that they were not to accept any payment for their services while the Authorized Version says they were not to take any money with them.

**10:10 Nor scrip<sup>a</sup> for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves:<sup>b</sup> for the workman is worthy of his meat.<sup>cd</sup>**

10a “**script**” Any paper currency. The company stores in coal-mining towns used to pay their workers in script that could only be spent at the company store. Canadian Tire (a hardware and auto supply chain in Canada) gave “Canadian Tire Money” whenever you make a purchase, that can be redeemed in their stores for discounts. It was also used to refer to money in theaters where the American military was active, such as Occupied Japan after World War II and in Korea during the Korean War or in Vietnam during the Vietnam War.

10b “**staves**” A walking stick, very popular and useful if you are going on a long walk. It serves as protection and to make walking easier.

10c “**for the workman is worthy of his meat**” And God will provide the needs for His workman.

10d We are going to make a lot of tribulation applications in this chapter because doctrinally, much of this teaching simply cannot be applied to the Church Age. The 144,000 would not be able to provide much for their ministries in terms of finances during the first half of the tribulation, so they would have to rely upon the provision of God and of sympathetic hearers.

**10:11 And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, inquire who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go thence.<sup>a</sup>**

11a Are there any believers here? Are there any godly people in this town who might receive us, our ministry and message?

**10:12 And when ye come into an house, salute it.<sup>a</sup>**

12a People would house visitors in private homes, as the modern idea of a hotel and motel were unknown in this day.

**10:13 And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you.<sup>a</sup>**

13a Is this a household of believers? Do they support your ministry? Do they honor God? If so, then bless that house. If you have managed to stumble into a household of non-believers, you are under no spiritual obligation to bless it. In the Tribulation, if they are against God, they are against you and they may very well betray you to the forces of the Antichrist in order to save their own skins.

**10:14 And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet.<sup>a</sup>**

14a **“shake off the dust of your feet”**

1. This would be kicking the heels of the sandals together, to bang the dust out of them, or better still, for the rejected messenger to walk to the front door (or city gate), remove his sandals, bang the soles of them together till the dust came out like a beaten rug, and then put them back on and walk off. If that town rejected the message of the evangelist, then this act demonstrated the Lord rejecting that town in return.
2. In the tribulation, many towns, both Jews and Gentiles would probably reject the preaching of the 144,000 while some would accept it.

**10:15 Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city.<sup>a</sup>**

15a This is also mentioned in Matthew 11:24 in relation to the rejection of the Lord's ministry in Capernaum. This is because Sodom and Gomorrah did not receive the witness that these cities would receive. Angels did visit Sodom but did not preach there and gave no warning or call to repentance. Nineveh was visited by Jonah but these cities had no visit by a prophet. There are degrees of punishment and judgment, both here on earth and in the lake of fire.

1. In tribulation Israel, the geographic location of Sodom and Gomorrah are not too distant, so any of the tribulation preachers could simply point “down the road” to remind the villages that rejected their message of these consequences. Sodom was destroyed for receiving less light than you did! Same with Jerusalem, which is called “Sodom” spiritually in Revelation 11:8. Jerusalem may reject the preaching of the 144,000 in the tribulation (as they rejected and killed every other prophet that was sent to them (Matthew 23:37 **“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!”**)). If God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, then Jerusalem, which had many greater witnesses (even visits by the Lord Himself) would certainly not escape judgment.
2. This shows that the Lord considered the events of Genesis 19 to be historical.

## **57. “Beware of Men” 10:16-40**

**10:16<sup>a</sup> ¶ Behold, I send you forth as sheep<sup>b</sup> in the midst of wolves:<sup>cd</sup> be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.**

16a Four animals listed in this verse:

1. Sheep- a type of the believer
2. Wolves- a type of false teachers
3. Serpents- a type of Satan, devils and false teachers

4. Doves- a very clean animal

16b **“sheep”** But don't be stupid or naïve! Be “worldly-wise” about your generation. You may to be “sneaky” like Paul was in Acts 16:37 (**“But Paul said unto them, They have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast us into prison; and now do they thrust us out privily? nay verily; but let them come themselves and fetch us out”**); Acts 22:29 (**“Then straightway they departed from him which should have examined him: and the chief captain also was afraid, after he knew that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him.”**) and Matthew 23:6 (**“But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question.”**) . You have to learn to use the laws and the ways of the world against the world at times (in an honorable manner without sin) to get the gospel out at times.

16c **“in the midst of wolves”**

1. In the tribulation, the 144,000 will be going out into the worst conditions possible. The Church is gone. The Holy Spirit is also not active in the earth as He was in the Church Age. There is no spiritual restraint at all. The Antichrist is present and growing stronger every day. They will need all their wits and talents just to stay alive during such a dangerous period.

2. “When Ernest Shackleton proposed his march to the South Pole he asked for volunteers for that trek amidst the blizzards across the polar ice. He expected to have difficulty, but he was inundated with letters, from young and old, rich and poor, the highest and the lowest, all desiring to share in that great adventure. It may be that the Church must learn again that we will never attract men to an easy way; it is the call of the heroic which ultimately speaks to men's hearts.”<sup>110</sup>

16d Jesus offered His disciples three kinds of trial:

1. The state would persecute them; they would be brought before councils and kings and governors. When Christ's apostles were brought to court and to judgment, they were not to worry about what they would say; for God would give them the necessary words. God had promised Moses the same thing in dealing with Pharaoh in Exodus 4:12 (**“Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say.”**). It is not the humiliation which we may dread, not even the pain and the agony or torture. We may fear our own unskillfulness in words and in making our defense in which we might injure rather than commend the faith. It is the promise of God that when a man is on trial for his faith, the words will come to him.

2. Religion would persecute them. They would be scourged in the synagogues. Religious leaders do not like to be upset and has its own ways of dealing with disturbers of the peace.

3. The family would persecute them; their nearest and dearest would think them mad and shut the door against them. Sometimes the Christian is confronted with the hardest choice of all--the choice between obedience to Christ and obedience to kindred and to friends.

**10:17 But beware of men:<sup>a</sup> for they will deliver you up to the councils,<sup>b</sup> and they will scourge you in their synagogues;**

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<sup>110</sup> William Barclay, *Gospel of Matthew*, The Daily Study Bible, volume 1, page 375.

17a **"Beware of men"** is always wise counsel.

17b **Councils** (especially religious ones in Acts 3 and 4) are generally noted for persecuting the saints and/or spreading false doctrine (and then persecuting those who do not accept decisions of such a council). If this can be applied to the tribulation, will Jews persecute Jews during that period?

**10:18 And ye shall be brought before governors and kings<sup>a</sup> for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles.**

18a This would be applied to Paul in Acts 9:15. The tribulation preachers will endure the same fate, by both the unbelieving Jews and the Gentiles. Persecution and death will be their lot.

**10:19 But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak.<sup>a</sup>**

19a The Lord will provide "on-the-spot" inspiration when it would be needed. It's like "dying grace"; you don't have it until you need it. This involves the promise of John 14:26 ("**But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.**") where the Holy Spirit will bring to our remembrance the words of Jesus when we need them the most but might otherwise forget them or not think of them.

**10:20 For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.<sup>abc</sup>**

20a Verses 19 and 20 shows a precious promise for anyone suffering for Christ's sake in any dispensation. In such a situation, it will amaze us at the wisdom of our responses, things we never could imagine we would be wise enough or have the knowledge to say in our defense. You may say "I have no idea what I would do if I was on trial for my life" and that is to be expected. God will give you words and wisdom you never would have thought you had since you never had needed them before.

20b We often talk about "dying grace" and if you don't have "dying grace" now, it means you don't need it as you are not about to die. The same here. You may feel tongue-tied and unable to speak in your own behalf in defense of the gospel, but just wait until you are "put on the spot" in a situation like this. You will be amazed as the words the Lord will give you in that day.

20c **"the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you"** This is primarily a tribulation application for the 144,000 Jewish preachers, who will have divine aid as they preach. These apostles would need it as well in their upcoming preaching mission.

**10:21 And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death.<sup>a</sup>**

21a Family ties mean nothing in the tribulation.

1. We see this even today. If an orthodox Jew converts to Christ, his family will disown him and have a funeral for him.

2. I know of Christians who suffered similar fates, especially Roman Catholics who leave the church for Biblical Christianity. In many of these cases, they were also disowned by their families.

**10:22 And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake:<sup>a</sup> but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.<sup>b</sup>**

22a Tribulation preachers will be universally hated as they will stand against the Antichrist and his universal following. We should also expect similar treatment even today. Something is very, very wrong with any preacher or ministry that receives praise and support from this wicked and adulterous generation.

22b **"endure to the end"**

1. Also see Matthew 24:13, which is the same meaning. This is tribulation in context. It has nothing to do with New Testament salvation, but rather, with the Jewish believer enduring faithful until the end of the Tribulation without falling away. The Church Age saint does not need to "endure to the end" for fear of losing his salvation for he is eternally secure in Christ if he is genuinely born again.

2. The "end" of what? It would refer to the end of the age, Second Coming, the end of the tribulation period. The doctrinal and prophetic application is to the Jew in the tribulation. When an unsaved Jew goes into the tribulation, he has to "endure" all the way until the Second Coming when he will see Jesus physically descending from the clouds in Revelation 19. He has to accept any tribulation gospel message preached at this time (by the 144,000 for example) and resist believing The Lie that the Antichrist is god. He also has to avoid being killed by any of the tribulation judgments. If he makes it all the way through the tribulation, he will see Christ coming and a nation (Israel) will be born in a day as all Israel will be saved in that day (Isaiah 66:8 **"Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children."** and Romans 11:26 **"And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:"**). This then has no doctrinal application to a Christian in the church age.

**10:23 But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another:<sup>a</sup> for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come.<sup>b</sup>**

23a Avoid martyrdom if you can. It is no shame to flee persecution. You can often do more when you are alive than if you are dead. **A living dog is better than a dead lion** (Ecclesiastes 9:4).

23b **"Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come."**

1. What exactly this phrase means baffles the commentators and I have no real good answer either. It probably has a tribulation context, maybe in relation to the ministry of the 144,000? They will all be martyred anyway but stay alive for as long as you can for you can do more good alive than dead!

2. "There is a chance that the 11 Apostles will return to fulfill this passage. Moses, Elijah and Judas Iscariot will return for the Tribulation."<sup>111</sup>

**10:24 The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord.<sup>a</sup>**

24a The Lord suffered persecution, even to the death. If they have done so to the Master, why should the disciples expect any better treatment? If they crucified God in the flesh, they will not fear to subject you to the same fate.

AV	ESV	LSV
24 The disciple is not above <i>his</i> master, nor the <b>servant</b> above his lord.	24 "A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master.	24 "A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a slave above his master.

**"servant"** The LSV continues in its error in using "slave" for "servant", also in Matthew 10:25. The ESV reads correctly. Darby has "bondman".

**10:25 It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub,<sup>a</sup> how much more shall they call them of his household?**

**25a "Beelzebub"**

1. The **"prince of devils"** in Matthew 12:24.
2. If they call Jesus the "Prince of Devils" or the "Lord of the Flies", what do you think they will do to His disciples? We may expect worse treatment. Since this is a Jewish gospel, this goes right into the anti-Semitism of the church age, where unsaved Gentiles accuse Jews of all manner of sin and evil. This will be especially true of the Jewish remnant in the tribulation period. There will be saved Jews in the tribulation, so someone is attacking them. It could be unsaved Gentiles, agents of the Antichrist and even other unsaved Jews, accusing them of treason, or worse. Their blasphemies against the Lord in the tribulation will be like nothing we have ever heard as the filth of fallen human nature will come to fruition.

**10:26 Fear them not therefore: for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known.<sup>a</sup>**

26a It will all come out in the judgment and all will be dealt with by God.

**10:27 What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops.<sup>ab</sup>**

27a The preacher should keep nothing back. What God tells us in your devotions and in our quiet time with Him in the closet, should be proclaimed from the housetops. A test of a true preacher is how well and how effectively he can deliver an unpopular message.

1. The 144,000 in the tribulation will proclaim the most unpopular message of all at the worst possible time to preach it- that Jesus is the Messiah and the Antichrist is a false

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<sup>111</sup> David Hoffman, *The Common Man's Reference Bible*, page 1419.

messiah. Will they be able to deliver such a burden faithfully, knowing the penalty that awaits them?

2. What Samuel went through in 1 Samuel 3:1-18 is a good example of this.

3. Radio, television and internet are great ways to fulfill this “preaching from the housetops”, to preach so as to be heard by many people over a wide area. In the Lord’s day, you would climb on your roof and preach. Today, you can set up a website almost for nothing or buy airtime.

27b **“housetops”** The roof in most houses was flat, and thus could be used for storage or even as an extra room. People would spend a lot of times on their rooftops as it was a good place to see what was going on in your area.

**10:28 And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.<sup>a</sup>**

28a The soul is not killed but is destroyed (or ruined) in hell. This does not mean annihilation but being ruined and unusable for its intended use. You have only One Person to fear ultimately, and that is God, Who is able to cast both body and soul into hell. All man can do is kill the body but no man, or religious system, can put you into hell. The Roman Catholic imagined that it had the authority to put people in hell when they would taunt a martyr with “I separate thee from the Church Militant and the Church Triumphant” or some other blather. Yet that faithful martyr split heaven right open, despite and pronouncement by any deluded religious fool on earth. The 144,000 in the tribulation will be facing the Devil Incarnate in the person of the Antichrist, but all he can do is kill the body, therefore do not fear him, no matter how fearful he is!

1. The soul is not the body and the body is not the soul. Man is a trinity, made up of three parts:

A. Body- his physical part

B. Soul- his personality, will, intellect. You are a soul.

C. Spirit- God-consciousness. You are a soul that possesses a spirit.

2. **“destroy”** is not “annihilate”. To go to hell and the lake of fire is not to be annihilated but destroyed. To destroy something is to ruin it, make it unfit for any use or for an intended use. Souls are immortal and are not annihilated. Mark 9:44,46 gives an idea of what the destruction of a soul would be like, if the final state of a condemned soul is a worm. If the saved receive a glorified body that is fitted for eternity in glory, what sort of an “unglorified” body do the lost receive when they go into the lake of fire? It is a terrifying thought!

**10:29 Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing?<sup>a</sup> and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father.**

29a **“Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing?”** They are of so little worth that you need two of them to get any value. Yet God knows of them and cares and provides for them.

AV	ESV	LSV
29 Are not two sparrows sold for a <b>farthing</b> ? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without	29 Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your	29 “Are not two sparrows sold for an assarion? And <i>yet</i> not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father.



your Father.	Father.	
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**“farthing”** We have an idea of what a “farthing” or a “penny” (ESV) are, but what in the world is an “assarion” that the LSV uses?

**10:30 But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.<sup>a</sup>**

30a God knows more about you than anyone else ever will, or even that you will ever know about yourself. He keeps track of His people and His preachers, even if forgotten by the world. Many saints are suffering horribly in North Korea and yet probably no American can name a single North Korean saint and we probably do not know the full extent of their suffering. But God knows ALL about it and He will never forget them.

**10:31 Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.<sup>a</sup>**

31a Sparrows have a value, just not much, two sparrows for a farthing or two for five (get one free! They are on sale.). But man has an infinite value to God and the very Son of God paid the ultimate price to redeem him from sin. Christ died for sinful man, and made salvation possible for him at the cost of His own blood.

**10:32 Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven.**

**10:33<sup>a</sup> But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.<sup>b</sup>**

33a Verses 32 and 33 illustrate the principle of the reciprocal, both in a positive and in a negative way. Deny Christ on earth and He will deny you at the judgment. Confess Him on earth and He will confess you in heaven.

33b There is a good tribulation application to this as well. Can you confess Christ in the face of a generation that is following the Antichrist and murdering saints wholesale? Can you confess Christ even if it means unspeakable sufferings, accompanied with great cost? It is easy to confess Christ during a revival or in days of no persecution, but the acid test of discipleship comes if you can do it when it will cost you your life.

**10:34 Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.<sup>a</sup>**

34a Christ divides- He does not unify, also in Matthew 10:36. This is a fact that the ecumenical movement has never understood or accepted. All these religious and political leaders who are continually praying for “world peace” (outside the establishment of the millennial kingdom) also fail to grasp the meaning of the verse and are anti-Biblical in their thinking. In His first coming, He did NOT come to bring “**peace of earth**” (Luke 2:14) but rather controversy and division. “Peace on earth” will not come until after His second coming when He establishes the millennial kingdom. That is coming but only after the Second Advent.

Where this leaves the pope, the Ecumenical Movement and the World Council of Churches is easy to see; hung out to dry. These religious groups that constantly prattle on about “world peace” show that they never read this verse, or any of the many related verses.

**10:35 For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law.<sup>a</sup>**

35a The gospel even splits even the closest of earthly bonds- family ties. The ultimate fulfillment of this will be among Jewish households during the tribulation period where they will turn on each other in their attempt to stay alive in the face of the assaults of the Antichrist against all believers and Jews.

**10:36 And a man's foes shall be they of his own household.<sup>ab</sup>**

36a This is quoted from Micah 7:5,6, and is expressed again in Mark 8:34-38. This is also commented on under Matthew 10:21.

1. Micah 7:5,6 **"Trust ye not in a friend, put ye not confidence in a guide: keep the doors of thy mouth from her that lieth in thy bosom. For the son dishonoureth the father, the daughter riseth up against her mother, the daughter in law against her mother in law; a man's enemies *are* the men of his own house."**

36b Two of the nastiest, meanest and most condescending letters I've gotten in my ministry haven't been from atheists or Moslems, but from two Fundamental, Independent Baptist evangelists. One of them introduced me to my wife and participated in our wedding.

**10:37 He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.<sup>a</sup>**

37a "This "hating" is defined in Genesis 29:30–31 and Deuteronomy 13:6, 33:9, and it brings up an interesting moral and ethical speculation that the sophists of our universities have never considered: namely, "What is WRONG with loving your MOTHER?" The answer is: "Plenty, if you believe what Jesus said about His Deity and power to save and your mother doesn't."<sup>112</sup> Or if you love your mother (or father, wife, husband, kids, dog...) more than Christ.

**10:38 And he that taketh not his cross,<sup>a</sup> and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.<sup>b</sup>**

38a **"take...up his cross"**

1. To take the cross is to take the shame and reproach that comes with it. This is the true meaning of discipleship. Without taking the cross, there can be no true discipleship or Christian life.
2. This is a personal cross. You must take your unique, individual cross. You cannot take someone else's nor can anyone take yours. Discipleship and a Christian life is a personal thing.
3. It is also a volitional act. You must do this deliberately. No one takes up a cross by accident.
4. If anyone refuses to do this, they cannot be Christ's disciple (Luke 14:27 **"And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple."**).
5. This is done daily (Luke 9:23,24 **"And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For**

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<sup>112</sup> Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer's Commentary on Matthew*, page 229.

**whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it.”), showing this is a daily, continual way of life.”**

6. What is the Cross?

- A. The giving up of worldly pleasures and fame
- B. The endurance of reproach or poverty.
- C. The suffering of losses and persecutions for Christ's sake.
- D. The consecrating all to Jesus at the cost of the things of this world
- E. The endurance of my heavenly Father's will.

7. What do we do with the Cross?

- A. I am to deliberately to take it up.
- B. I am to boldly to face it.
- C. I am to patiently to endure it, for I have only to carry it a little way.
- D. I am to cheerfully to resign myself to it, for my Lord appoints it.
- E. I am to obediently to follow Christ with it.

8. What should encourage us in this?

- A. Necessity: I cannot be a disciple without cross-bearing.
- B. Society: better men than I have carried it.
- C. Love: Jesus bore a far heavier cross than mine.
- D. Faith: grace will be given equal to the weight of the cross.
- E. Hope: good to myself will result from my bearing this load.
- F. Zeal: Jesus will be honored by my patient endurance.
- G. Experience: I shall yet find pleasure in it, for it will produce in me much blessing. The cross is a fruitful tree.
- H. Expectation: glory will be the reward of it.

9. What does it mean to take the Cross?

- A. Take the shame
- B. Take the reproach
  - i. Criminals were crucified in Jerusalem. It was the custom for the condemned person to carry his own cross. To identify with the cross was to identify oneself as a criminal in the eyes of the world. It is to voluntarily identify with a horrible, violent death.
- C. Take the rejection
- D. Take the pain
- E. Take the death
  - i. Galatians 2:20, **“I am crucified with Christ.”**

38b **“not worthy of me”** No sinner is worthy of Christ. The closest a man can get to being considered “worthy” in a human sense if he is saved and is following Christ as a disciple.

**10:39 He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.<sup>a</sup>**

39a Save your life now and you will lose it at the judgment. Spend your life for Christ now and you will find it at the judgment and be rewarded.

### **58. Receiving a Prophet 10:40-42**

**10:40<sup>a</sup> ¶ He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.<sup>b</sup>**

40a Verses 40-42 are in anticipation of the disciples being sent out on their preaching tour in chapter 11.

40b If you receive an ambassador or a representative of someone, then you also receive the person or organization that sent him. This also applies if you reject that same person.

**10:41 He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward.**

**10:42 And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.<sup>a</sup>**

42a Even a seemingly insignificant offering or token of service will not be ignored or unrewarded. There are many Christians who cannot do much to advance the gospel due to lack of resources or talent. But everyone can do something, no matter how seeming insignificant it may seem. And the Lord will take notice of it and reward it. This should be a great encouragement to us all!

### **Spiritual Applications- Matthew Chapter 10**

What a word of encouragement in verse 31! God places a value on the lowest Christian that is greater than any king or billionaire on earth. He cares about the insignificant, forgotten, overlooked, despised Christian, minister and local church more than we realize.

The exhortation to take up the cross shows that the Christian life is nothing like what is presented by the false prosperity preachers. They know nothing of suffering, labor and sacrifice. They believe only good things happen to Christians and that no evil will ever land on our doorstep. Tell that to those languishing in prison for the gospel's sake! Tell that to the martyrs! Our personal crosses are designed to develop character and spirituality in our lives and to force us to draw nearer to God than we ever could or word during days of prosperity. The disciple has a cross and he must bear it and there are no exceptions.

## **Matthew Chapter 11**

### **59. The Sending of the Twelve 11:1-6, see also Mark 6:14-16; Luke 9:7-9**

**11:1 And it came to pass, when Jesus had made an end of commanding his twelve disciples, he departed thence to teach and to preach in their cities.<sup>a</sup>**

1a This is the first preaching tour. These cities are probably ones around the Sea of Galilee.

**11:2<sup>ab</sup> Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples,**

2a See Matthew 14:1-12 and Luke 7:18-35 for more background on John's arrest.

2b "Herod Antipas of Galilee had paid a visit to his brother in Rome. During that visit he seduced his brother's wife. He came home again, dismissed his own wife, and married the sister-in-law whom he had lured away from her husband. Publicly and sternly John rebuked Herod. It was never safe to rebuke an eastern despot and Herod took his revenge; John was thrown into the dungeons of the fortress of Machaerus in the mountains near the Dead Sea. For any man that would have been a terrible fate, but for John the Baptist it was worse than for most. He was a child of the desert; all his life he had lived in the wide-open spaces, with the clean wind on his face and the spacious vault of the sky for his roof. And now he was confined within the four narrow walls of an underground dungeon. For a man like John, who had perhaps never lived in a house, this must have been agony...John must have been like that; and there is nothing to wonder at, and still less to criticize, in the fact that questions began to form themselves in John's mind. He had been so sure that Jesus was the One who was to come. That was one of the commonest titles of the Messiah for whom the Jews waited with such eager expectation (Mark 11:9; Luke 13:35; Luke 19:38; Hebrews 10:37; Psalms 118:26). A dying man cannot afford to have doubts; he must be sure; and so John sent his disciples to Jesus with the question: "Are you he who is to come, or shall we look for another?" There are many possible things behind that question."<sup>113</sup>

**11:3 And said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?<sup>abc</sup>**

3a John was human. Sitting in prison, the devil had time to work on him and introduce doubt into his mind, which led to self-doubt, questions and ultimately offense. John had borne witness of Christ back in Matthew 3 and in John 1:26-36, but now, he had doubts and probably some depression and needed a strengthening and a reassuring. Although he was the greatest man born of woman, he was still human. Or was he starting to get offended, as per the context in Matthew 11:6?

3b John R. Rice, in his commentary on Matthew<sup>114</sup> has a major problem when he says, "This is the hardest temptation Christian workers face after the stress of a great revival campaign is over". John was not involved in some revivalist-style evangelistic campaign. John wasn't even a Christian or a part of the Body of Christ in his role as a "friend of the Bridegroom" in John 3:29.

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<sup>113</sup> William Barclay, *The Gospel of Matthew, The Daily Study Bible*, volume 2, pages 1-2.

<sup>114</sup> Page 164.

Rice tries to make John a *Sword of the Lord*-type revivalist evangelist, which he certainly was not.<sup>115</sup> If John were alive today, the *Sword* under Sheldon Smith wouldn't publish any of his sermons nor invite him to preach in any Sword Conference since John was not an Independent, Fundamental Baptist. And why does Rice limit this only to those involved in "great revival campaigns"? Evangelists are not the only ones to suffer these kinds of discouragements and let downs. All Christian workers suffer from such periods, not just Rice-style evangelists. This is not the context of John's question. Ask any pastor and missionary about this kind of stress in the ministry. Rice always had an annoying habit of trying to elevate evangelists over pastors, missionaries and teachers.

3c Some think that the question was asked, not for John's sake, but for the sake of his disciples. It may be that when John and his disciples talked in prison, the disciples questioned whether Jesus was really he who was to come, and John's answer was: "If you have any doubts, go and see what Jesus is doing and your doubts will be at an end."

AV	ESV	LSV
3 And said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?	3 and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?"	3 and said to Him, "Are You the One who is to come, or shall we look for someone else?"

"he" Both the ESV, LSV and Darby use the New Age/occult terms "the one" or "the One". See notes under Matthew 1:20.

#### **11:4 Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see:<sup>a</sup>**

4a There is no word of rebuke from the Lord, only confirmation and encouragement.

#### **11:5<sup>a</sup> The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them.**

5a Evidences of Christ's messiahship (His signs and wonders) included:

1. The blind receive their sight
2. The lame walk
3. Lepers are cleansed
4. The deaf hear
5. The dead are raised
6. The poor have the gospel preached to them
  - A. Probably spiritually poor, not economically poor, although the poor in riches tend to be neglected in visitation at times, so they should never be despised or by-passed.
    - i. A poor man should be as welcomed in the local church as a rich man. Do reject the poor man is to have respect of persons and is sin.
    - ii. This will often involve visitation, street preaching, tract distribution where they are, often on the "wrong side of the tracks".

<sup>115</sup> Rice tried to do the same thing with Jonathan Edwards (based on one sermon that Edwards READ in a monotone!) and Charles Spurgeon.

B. The Old Testament prophets mainly preached to kings and princes, but Christ and His preachers did much of their ministry among the poor.

7. These signs identify Christ as the Prophet like unto Moses (Deuteronomy 18:18 **"I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him."**). Christ also makes a partial quote from Isaiah 35:5,6 **"Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert."**

**11:6 And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended<sup>a</sup> in me.**

6a **"offended"**

1. John was starting to be offended, but here, he is encouraged to keep his faith up.
2. His "offense" included the idea of "He is in jail for preaching the truth. He is in there after heralding the approach and coming of a King-Deliverer. All right, put yourself in John's sandals. "If Christ is the King and Messiah and if I am His forerunner, what on earth am I doing in prison? Did I get it right? Did I miss something? Did I do something wrong?" He did not know about the Church and believed that the Kingdom was coming in very short order. If this was the case, then why was the Herald sitting in prison?

## **60. Jesus Euologizes John 11:7-15, see Luke 7:24-30**

**11:7 ¶ And as they departed, Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind?<sup>a</sup>**

7a Many religious personalities are like this. They have no true convictions but practice religious pragmatism, using any method that works and teaching anything that will draw a crowd, build the numbers of their church and bring in the money.

John was obviously not a reed shaken in the wind. Any man who would "tell a king off" and make him try to live right (Mark 6:20 **"For Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and an holy, and observed him; and when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly."**) is not that kind of man. John had a spine of iron that would not bend or collapse under any circumstance.

**11:8 But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment?<sup>a</sup> behold, they that wear soft clothing are in kings' houses.**

8a **"soft raiment"**

1. The Greek word means "effeminate", sometimes associated with homosexuality.
2. "A man who tells Roman legionnaires where to head-in (Luke 3:14) will hardly be found playing an organ in a cocktail lounge."<sup>116</sup>
3. Today, this would refer to a preacher on a million-dollar platform or on an elaborate set on Trinity Broadcasting Network or Daystar Television, with a \$5,000 suit and a \$500 haircut. He also was not the kind of man who would violate or compromise his principles just to get out of jail or to get in good with the local politicians.

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<sup>116</sup> Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer's Commentary on Matthew*, page 237.

4. Such a man would be a courtier and John was not a courtier. He knew nothing of the courtier's art of the flattery of kings; he followed the dangerous occupation of telling the truth to kings. John was the ambassador of God, not the courtier of Herod.

**11:9 But what went ye out for to see?<sup>a</sup> A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet.**

9a **"what went ye out for to see?"**

1. Why do you go to church? For entertainment? Out of a sense of duty? To meet friends? Or to hear a prophet?
2. If these people went out to see a prophet when they went to see John, the Lord assures them that they indeed saw a prophet, more than a prophet, the greatest Old Testament prophet who was the greatest man born among women. The other Old Testament prophets foretold of Christ, but John was His herald and forerunner, which made him greater than the other prophets.
3. We listed some wrong reasons to "go to church" above. The good reasons to go include:
  - A. To hear a prophet, to hear a man of God.
  - B. To hear the Scripture taught, expounded, applied (2 Timothy 4:2 **"Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine."**)
    - i. Not for the miracles, as John did no miracle (John 10:42 **"And many believed on him there."**).
  - C. For instruction in righteousness (2 Timothy 3:6 **"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:"**)
  - D. As a testimony, when others see you going to church
  - E. For fellowship, as no Christian is an island and we all need encouragement (Proverbs 27:17 **"Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend."**).

**11:10 For this is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.<sup>ab</sup>**

10a This is a fulfillment of several verses:

1. Isaiah 40:3, **"The voice of one that crieth, Prepare ye in the wilderness the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God."**
2. Malachi 3:1 **"Behold, I send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in, behold, he cometh, saith the LORD of hosts."**
3. Malachi 4:5 **"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of the LORD come."**

10b **"Shall prepare thy way before thee"** introduces a curious change of "person," for when we read the text in Malachi (not Isaiah), we find "me" for thee, and "my" for thy. This is tremendously important for the "me-my" of Malachi is Jehovah of the Old Testament. Jesus' quotation of the verse then clearly identifies Him as Jehovah manifest in the flesh. This is what



He professed (John 20:28), and it is what His enemies understood Him to profess (John 10:33, 8:58).<sup>117</sup>

**11:11 Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist:<sup>a</sup> notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.<sup>b</sup>**

11a What a testimonial by God Himself! John's public ministry only lasted about 6 months, but he was greater than Isaiah, Jeremiah, Samuel, Ezekiel, and any other Old Testament prophet.

11b "**notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.**" This is a paradox. John was the greatest Old Testament prophet but the least in the millennial kingdom is greater than John. The exact interpretation of this is difficult, but there is obviously something going on in the millennial kingdom where even the most obscure preacher or minister (or any other kind of spiritual personage) would be considered greater than the greatest Old Testament prophet. Abraham lived to be 175. Moses led Israel for 40 years and David ruled for 40 years. But what John accomplished in 6 months was greater than even these great men!

1. Luke has this as "**the kingdom of heaven**" in Luke 7:28.

**11:12 And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.<sup>a</sup>**

12a "There are several volumes of notes by various commentators seeking to find an explanation. The two main ones which do any amount of justice to the text are: (1) That it takes a violent pressing or determination to accept the message of John the Baptist, and the publicans, harlots, and soldiers represent this "taking by force." (See Luke 16:16, 3:12–14; and Matthew 21:32.) [John 6:15 may explain the attempts of the "violent" to take the kingdom.] The kingdom of heaven, as such, it must be remembered, always refers to the literal, visible, heavenly reign of God over the literal, visible heavens, which will begin again with a literal, physical, visible, Messianic, Davidic King at Jerusalem (Matt. 6:33). Attempts to force the doctrine into any other setting ends where all amillennial and postmillennial reasoning ends—on the ash heap. (2) The only other rendering of the passage is that the "violent" are the unlawful usurpers of the Kingdom: i.e., the priests and Pharisees (Matt. 21:43–46). This may be the case, as verses 12–13 clearly divide the kingdom into three dispensations: A. The Old Testament of the Law and the Prophets, ending at John. B. An interim period of John, until the crucifixion of Christ. C. A future period (Matt. 8:11), at the Second Coming. This further checks with verse 14, a verse always aiming at the Second Advent (Mal. 4:5). John then is the "heading up" of the Old Testament. He is not the first Baptist in the Baptist church; he is the end of the Old Testament Jewish prophets. In connection with this, it may be observed that the "golden rule" goes out with John (Matt. 7:12)—a bitter pill for a man to swallow, who is counting on it for self-justification before God!"<sup>118</sup>

1. "Most governmental policies operate through violence and deceit (Micah 6:12). No product or service should be provided at the barrel of a gun or any kind of violence (Mark 10:42)."<sup>119</sup>

2. There have been groups that have sought to assist God in bringing in the Kingdom. The Catholic Church and many Protestant groups have sought to bring in the Kingdom.

<sup>117</sup> Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer's Commentary on Matthew*, pages 238-239.

<sup>118</sup> Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer's Commentary on Matthew*, page 240.

<sup>119</sup> David Hoffman, *Common Man's Reference Bible*, page 1420.

Every political and economic philosophy is built on this hope. The Munster Prophets of the 16<sup>th</sup> century and the cultic groups also have tried their hand at it. All the wars and miseries of the last 6,000 years have come from man's rejection of God's kingdom and the attempt to establish a replacement kingdom based on humanism. But the kingdom is not brought in by such means.

**11:13 For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John.<sup>a</sup>**

13a John was the last Old Testament prophet of that dispensation. This is why Paul rebaptized some of John's disciples in Acts 19:1-6 as his baptism was not a New Testament baptism.

**11:14 And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come.<sup>a</sup>**

14a John said he wasn't Elijah in John 1:21 (**"And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No."**) but Jesus said he was. Is this a contradiction? No. John may not have fully understood the role he would have played in Israel had accepted his ministry and witness of Christ, or he just did not see himself as any sort of successor to Elijah. Moses and Elijah are both associated with the Second Coming of the Lord to reign and establish the millennial kingdom (Malachi 4:1-5 **"For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall. And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the LORD of hosts. Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments. Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD:"**). In Revelation 11:8, they both appear to announce His coming and both are beheaded (**"And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified."**), as John was beheaded. John is a type of Elijah who will appear later; but he already has appeared in the sense that if Israel had accepted Christ, John would fulfill for the prophecy of Malachi 3:1,2 (**"Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts. But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap"**) and Malachi 4:4,5 (**"Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments. Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD"**). Gradually the "postponement theory" of the millennial kingdom becomes established as a Bible fact, rooted and grounded in both Testaments. John is a type of Elijah, and if the Tribulation had begun with a rapture in Acts 7, all prophecies in the Old Testament would have been fulfilled. The conversion of the Gentiles could have taken place through Israel during a Millennium with Christ on earth, instead of a Church Age with Christ in heaven!

Summary of the Second Offer of the Kingdom to Israel:

1. All the Old Testament prophets spoke of the Millennial Kingdom (hundreds of verses- too many to list here)

2. Christ offered the Kingdom to Israel and was rejected
3. The Kingdom is offered again here in Acts 3
4. It will be offered again by Stephen in Acts 7
5. Israel rejects both offers. Christ sits back down at Stephen's death. He arose because He would have returned if the nation had repented at Stephen's message.
6. God now withdraws the offer and the gospel goes to the Samaritans in Acts 8.
7. The apostle to the Gentiles is saved in Acts 9.
8. The Gentile Pentecost takes place in Acts 10.
9. The first mission to the Gentiles starts in Acts 13.
10. The Jerusalem Conference in Acts 15 defines Gentile salvation.
11. Acts 28:28 wraps up the current state of the "kingdom offer" and the status of Israel up until the rapture and tribulation period.

Also see notes under Matthew 17:11,12.

**11:15 He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.<sup>ab</sup>**

15a These doctrines are too hard or deep or "strange" for many commentators! It requires a dispensational approach to the interpretation of these Scriptures to understand the Lord's teachings, but you must be willing to hear and accept these teachings, even if the go against what you were taught in Bible College!

15b This phrase is used 15 times in Scripture by the Lord. Only the Lord used this phrase, it was never used by a mortal man.

**61. "This Generation" 11:16-19, see also Luke 7:31-35**

**11:16 ¶ But whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the markets, and calling unto their fellows,<sup>a</sup>**

16a All generations are like this, but especially the Lord's generation. They were one of the worst. Christ stepped into human history in a very bad day, in the days of Herod and Rome.

**11:17 And saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented.<sup>a</sup>**

17a The world expects you to do the same thing they do and to behave the same way they do.

**11:18 For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil.<sup>ab</sup>**

18a John didn't dance. He wasn't necessarily a "people person". He wasn't a social mixer. He was rough in spirit and language. He could be harsh. He didn't always use deodorant and sometimes his tie didn't match his shirt. He split his infinitives when he preached, used double negatives and dangled his participles. He never read the book *How to Win Friends and Influence People*. He didn't know how to "tiptoe through the tithers" and he was no good at navigating the treacherous waters of church politics. John was no "fair-haired evangelist". So, he "had a devil" was the verdict passed against him.

18b “Some claim the AV 1611 should have used the word ‘demon’ instead of ‘devil’ in certain places, as in Matthew 11:18. However, ‘demon’ was used very little in early modern English and, of the times it was used, it often meant a ‘supernatural being’ or ‘an indwelling spirit’ or a ‘cruel animal or person’, and only on rare occasions ‘an evil spirit’. This last meaning only took hold in English literature starting in the 1700s. Until then, ‘devil’ was the common word for Satan himself and any of the fallen angels who joined with him.”<sup>120</sup>

**11:19 The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous,<sup>a</sup> and a winebibber,<sup>b</sup> a friend of publicans and sinners.<sup>cd</sup> But wisdom is justified of her children.**

19a **“gluttonous”**- a man with no self-control, one who eats to excess, a man of gross appetites

19b **“winebibber”** a drunkard, one who cannot control his taste for wine. “Jesus undoubtedly lived according to the general customs of the people of his time. He did not affect singularity; he did not separate himself as a Nazarite; he did not practice severe austerities. He ate that which was common and drank that which was common. As wine was a common article of beverage among the people, he drank it. It was the pure juice of the grape, and for anything that can be proved, it was without fermentation.”<sup>121</sup>

19c **“a friend of publicans and sinners”**

1. The world is no friend to sinners, and neither is Satan. There is no true love in the world. You see some occasional examples of compassion and pity but no true divine love. You may save a man from a burning house, but there is no love of God unless you attempt to save him from the fires of hell. Satan has no care for those in his thrall. They are going to hell and it bothers him not in the least. Sinners are forever telling each other to “go to hell” or they mock and jest at the idea of eternal punishment. A man may live and die in this world alone and have none but the gravedigger as his pallbearer. But if a man knows Christ in a saving way, he is never alone, even if his mother and father forsake him. He also has the brotherhood of millions of Christians in the world. The saint has a friend **that sticketh closer than a brother** (Proverbs 18:24).

2. The **“sinners”** is the generic term for any sinner, even the “moral” and “respectable” ones, but the **publicans** are the lower-class of sinners that even “regular” sinners would despise. Matthew would appreciate this as he was a “publican” and Jesus showed love and mercy toward him. Today, this would include those in jail and rescue missions, dope addicts, drunkards and others who are socially “undesirable”.

3. An example of this friendship is seen in Matthew 9:10, where the Lord sat down to eat and fellowship with the publicans and sinners, and the Pharisees couldn’t understand why He was so friendly with them.

4. Consider Romans 5:7 **“For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.”** Men might die for a friend or for some great cause, but it is a rare brand of man who would die for his mortal enemy. In contrast to the selfishness of the natural man, Christ died for His enemies, so they might be His friends. Who would die for an enemy? Who would give his life knowing that the person would not appreciate the sacrifice and would vilify the memory of the man who died for him? Christ did! He died for the sin of the world, knowing full well

<sup>120</sup> Stephen J. White, *White’s Dictionary of the King James Language*, volume 1, pages 331-332.

<sup>121</sup> Albert Barnes.

(ahead of time- foreknowledge) that the majority of men would reject that sacrifice and would remain His enemy. Yet Christ died for His enemies as well as for those who would become His friends. This is called "divine love". Human love will not suffer for an enemy but divine love does so gladly in the hopes that he who was once an enemy may become a friend.

5. Christ died for sinners not saints. He died for all men and not just the "elect". The elect would certainly be the righteous and there is no question that Christ died for them. But Christ also died for sinners and for His enemies! Get this down- Christ died for "reprobates!" Christ died for all men- "elect" and "non-elect." Limited atonement, as presented by orthodox Calvinism, is a heresy and the universal extent of the atonement is a theological fact.

19d You are damned if you do, damned if you don't. You can't win with this generation. Jesus was everything John was not. Jesus was sociable and good with people. So they accused Him of being a winebibber and gluttonous who liked to hang out with the wrong class of people. You simply have to learn to ignore the criticism and be who you are and do what God calls you to do, regardless of public opinion, because you will be criticized no matter what you do or how you do it.

## **62. "What If" 11:20-24, also see Luke 10:12-15**

**11:20 ¶ Then began he to upbraid<sup>a</sup> the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not:**

20a "**upbraid**", to criticize severely : find fault with, to reproach severely : scold vehemently. From Middle English upbreyden, from Old English ūpbregdan, probably from ūp up + bregdan to snatch, move suddenly. This was a very serious rebuke because of their unbelief, even when the apostolic signs and wonders were demonstrated right in front of their face.

The English word has the idea of a braided whip, which is used as a verbal "lash" or attack. The Lord would give these cities a verbal whipping or "tongue-lashing" because they refused to repent of their sins, despite the personal visit and ministry of the Lord in their cities. They heard and saw and refused to believe and repent.

**11:21 Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida!<sup>a</sup> for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.**

21a Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum are singled out for condemnation. These cities were visited by the Lord and they heard Him preach and saw His miracles, and still did not respond. They had a burning and a shining light for a witness and did nothing with it. This is why Sodom, Tyre and Sidon would receive a lesser judgment. They didn't have nearly the witnesses these cities had. Jesus never personally visited either Tyre, Sidon or Sodom. All three were judged and rightly so, but they would be beaten with fewer stripes than would Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum. This same principle applies to other nations as well as individuals. The United States will receive a harsher judgment than Bolivia as we had a much greater gospel witness, with revivals, great evangelistic movements and hundreds of thousands. Both countries will be judged (Matthew 25 and the Judgment of the Nations) but the nation with the greater witness receives the greater condemnation.

1. This also shows again that just because you may be able to do great signs and wonders, that is no guarantee that people will repent. This goes contrary to the idea of

“power religion”, that teaches that if you can show people signs, wonders and miracles, you’ll see a great number of conversions. But Jesus did these miracles and did not see many conversions. John did no miracle (John 10:41 **“And many resorted unto him, and said, John did no miracle: but all things that John spake of this man were true.”**) but accomplished great things.

2. They could have repented and chose not to. They had free will and used it to reject God. These three cities resisted the Holy Spirit and God holds them accountable for it. A lack of repentance always brings judgment.

**11:22 But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon<sup>a</sup> at the day of judgment, than for you.**

22a Tyre and Sidon did not have the witnesses from the Lord as the three cities above did. They would also be judged but less severely (see notes under Matthew 11:24).

**11:23 And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.<sup>a</sup>**

23a As in 11:14, Jesus, in His omniscience, knows the outcomes of the ‘what-if’ scenarios. Can you imagine that about Sodom? The Lord knew that if He had visited them as He did Capernaum, Sodom would have repented like Nineveh did under Jonah’s witness. This makes Capernaum a worse city than Sodom, although I am sure Capernaum didn’t have a tenth of the vice Sodom did. Your city doesn’t have to be a Sodom to be a Capernaum to receive this kind of judgment. We are not told why the Lord did not give Sodom a better than what they got, but they did not respond to what little witness they did receive. If they had shown any indication of responding to the dealings of God, God would have sent them more light. But if there is no reaction, then the Lord is just as liable to abandon that person, or city, and no more witness will be given.

1. See the grace of God in all of this, that He even gave these cities a witness at all, and any chance to repent at all!

2. Ezekiel 16:53-55 says that in the Millennium, **“Sodom and her daughters shall return to their former estate”**. What exactly does that mean? In some manner, Sodom and the other cities nearby will be restored, but in what form, as desolations to remind all of the judgment of God, or to the state they were in before God judged them?

**11:24 But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee.<sup>abcd</sup>**

24a This is repeated from Matthew 10:15.

24b Sodom was in the same situation as Tyre and Sidon in Matthew 11:22. Sodom had an angelic visitation (but only to get Lot out) and they had a righteous man living there (Lot) who offered little, if any witness. Sodom did not have the level of witness that Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum had. All the cities listed in this passage will be judged (and some already were) but the severity of the judgments will depend on the level of witness they received. If Sodom was destroyed in the manner that it was with the very small witness it received, how much more severe will the judgments against Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum be? Sodom had little or no witness and they were destroyed. These cities received a greater witness and rejected it, so their judgment will be greater.

24c Luke 12:47 and 48 shows the degrees of punishment, with people being beaten with either few stripes or many stripes (**“And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.”**) Just as there are degrees of blessedness in heaven (to be determined at the Bema Seat Judgment), there will also be degrees of punishment in hell, dependent upon the amount of light and witness they received and rejected.

24d The obvious application can be made to modern nations. The United States will suffer extreme judgment in that day as seen in the massive gospel witness this country has had through its entire history. Yet we have continually rejected God and have refused to repent of our national sins. Some areas of the United States may receive greater judgment than others. Consider New England, with the great gospel witness it had up through the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Look at New England today. Consider cities like Pensacola or Greenville or Memphis or Atlanta, in the supposed “Bible Belt”. Cities like that have churches on every corner. While visiting Memphis in 1990, I counted over 600 Baptist churches in the city (listed in the yellow pages) and that did not include all the other types of churches. Yet Memphis (or any city in the so-called “Bible Belt”) is as much of a spiritual hellhole as Pyongyang or Calcutta. Now of those three cities, which one will receive the greater condemnation? All three will be judged, but Memphis will be beaten with many stripes while the other cities would be beaten with few stripes.

Dunn, North Carolina, where I went to seminary, is the birthplace of the Pentecostal movement and has a church on every corner.<sup>122</sup> Yet the residents voted in “liquor by the drink” (after resisting it for many years but that opposition finally broke down). They also tolerated strip clubs. There was a place called “Café Risque” on the south side of Dunn (near a Pentecostal Bible College) that brazenly advertised on a billboard on Interstate 95 on the north end of Dunn (near another Bible College), catering to the truckers on Interstate 95. That upholstered sewer eventually closed down, but it should never have been tolerated by that “Bible Belt” town. The number of liquor stores and other sins is just as great in Dunn as in any northern or midwestern city and many of the residents listed in rock, country and rap music. Yet a few miles north of town sits Foundations Bible College and Church, founded by one of the godliest men in the Twentieth-Century Fundamentalist movement, O. Talmadge Spence. That church had an AM radio station for a while in the 1990s and has been a constant witness to that area since 1974, but to what effect? The second president of Foundations, H. T. Spence, lived in Dunn but got so disgusted by its “Christian” residents that he moved out of town limits.

Burlington, North Carolina is another example of a city with a great witness that is bound for judgment. I pastored in nearby Mebane, North Carolina from 1993-1994 and was familiar with Burlington, which was only a few miles down the road. There was a revival in that town in 1925 under Mordecai Ham. The revival was so strong that the jails were emptied, the police force laid off half their officers and the mills shut down early so the workers could attend the meetings. There was an evangelistic --campaign that was passed off as a revival in Burlington in 2016<sup>123</sup> conducted by C. T. Townsend. I was in Burlington a few weeks after that “revival” ended, eating lunch with my two sons at a Golden Corral restaurant. As we ate, no one witnessed to us. No one gave us a tract. I heard no spiritual talk. I drove through the city and

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<sup>122</sup> The Dunn area (especially the area between Dunn and Fayetteville) is the birthplace of seven historic Pentecostal denominations. I got a history of the area while attending Foundations Theological Seminary from 1992-1994.

<sup>123</sup> The so-called “Burlington Revival”.

every liquor store was open and ungodly music was blaring from the radio. Burlington did not profit from its supposed “visitation” from God.

Atlanta has to be the home of more mega-church ministries than anywhere else (with the possible exception of Dallas). Drive through the Atlanta area and you will find it to be no better than Babylon when it comes to morality and spirituality.

Smyrna, Delaware, where I currently pastor (as of 2025) saw a revival in 1807 when Frances Asbury preached on the church at Smyrna to a Methodist Society and a revival broke out. The town was originally called Duck Creek Crossing but the residents petitioned the state legislature to change the name to Smyrna in honor of that sermon.<sup>124</sup> Yet Smyrna is just as wicked and godly today as any town. The same can be said for the American cities and universities that were visited by God during the First and Second Great Awakenings. We have forgotten God and ignorant of our spiritual history (or have just chosen to ignore them). Every American city will share the same fate as Tyre, Sidon, Sodom, Capernaum, Chorazin and Bethsaida. God judged those cities, as He did Ephesus in Revelation 2:5 **“Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.”**

Why, in our arrogance, do we imagine that America, which has had more spiritual light than all these ancient cities combined, will be spared the judgments of God? We are already seeing them today, if we will open our eyes and take a good, hard, honest look!

### **63. Revealed to Babes 11:25-27**

**11:25 ¶ At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.<sup>a</sup>**

25a **“The world, by wisdom, knew not God** (1 Corinthians 1:21).” There are many spiritual truths you will not learn in Bible college from “doctors” using your intellect. If God doesn’t reveal them to you, you’ll never get it and if He doesn’t unfold it to you, you’ll never understand them. It takes a humble and child-like attitude to become a genuine God-led student of the Scriptures. Heart attitude is more important than head knowledge. But the wise and prudent were too smart, too clever for God so God bypasses them. But He will reveal Himself to anyone with an open heart, regardless of education or intelligence. This is what the “scholars” can’t stand, how an uneducated hillbilly can often times outdo them in terms of Scriptural knowledge and relationship with God. There are Christians “up in the hills” who can barely read yet they believe their Bibles and have more theological understanding than the teaching staffs of many “Christian” schools.

My first (and only) pastor, Allen Dickerson, who pastored Maranatha Baptist Church in Elkton, Maryland was an eighth-grade dropout who ran away to exercise race horses before World War II. He got drafted, served in the Navy, came home, got married, had a son and went to work for General Motors. Then he got saved and God called him to preach. He couldn’t go to any Bible college or institute, so he learned to preach during lunch hours at General Motors in Wilmington, Delaware. His mother gave him a Scofield Reference Bible and a set of Matthew Henry Commentaries and all of this served as his theological seminary. Yet he did a good job in studying the Bible and pastored his church for over 50 years.

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<sup>124</sup> In a show of either spiritual ignorance or historical revisionism, the Wikipedia article on Smyrna claims that the town was renamed after a “Greek seaport” in 1806, mentioning the sermon on Revelation afterwards as “another account”. The primary explanation makes no mention as to why the name was changed to Smyrna and Ashbury is not mentioned, not is the connection with the Second Great Awakening.



**11:26 Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight.<sup>a</sup>**

26a This shows the sovereignty of God.

**11:27 All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.<sup>a</sup>**

27a There is a level of knowledge and intimacy between the Father and Son which no man is privy to and that we can never know. This leads to the truth that in order to know the Son, you must know the Father, and vice versa.

#### **64. The Great Invitation 11:28-30**

**11:28 ¶ Come unto me,<sup>a</sup> all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest<sup>bcdef</sup>**

28a **“Come unto Me...”**

1. This is invitation language, given to all and without any limitation or exclusion.
  - A. Not just an invitation for salvation but also one for sanctification and for living the Christian life, to stop your works-based attempts to justify yourself and to earn God's favor, as so many believers do. They are toiling in the mines of legalism and religion, with no rest in sight.
2. This is expressed an urgent appeal NOW- why linger to go to Christ? Are you lost? Why linger until the bitter end and hope to be saved on an uncertain death-bed? Are you a saint needing comfort or forgiveness or cleansing or heart purity? Why linger? Why not deal with those needs now? What is the profit in delay?
3. This invitation is given to Jews who are laboring under the lash of the legalism of the scribes and Pharisees, with their 613 precepts of the law and the multitude of traditions which were impossible to fully catalogue, much less obey.
4. We must come, willingly and voluntarily, to Jesus for the rest in salvation and sanctification. He will not drag us or force us. We must want this rest and the blessings that come with it and we go to the right source of this rest, Jesus Himself, Who alone can provide this rest.
5. We are invited to come to Christ, not to any church, denomination, theological system, preacher or creed or confession. We are not told to come to Mary, any pope, the Church of Rome or any church, the Five Points of Calvinism or the Westminster Confession, the “Baptist Distinctives” or any such thing. All of these are poor, powerless substitutes for Christ, but this is what man often does, puts someone or something in the place of Christ.

28b What other “religious leader” would dare say this? Allah never said it, nor did his boy Mohammad. The Buddha never said it, nor did any of the millions of God of the Hindus. Not even any other Bible character would dare utter such an invitation. See the exclusiveness of Christ here. He recommends no other save Himself as the object of such an invitation.

28c The context is those who are weighed down with religious burdens, trying to earn their way to heaven. There are multitudes making pilgrimages, doing novenas and “stations of the cross”,

washing in the Ganges River, peddling magazines door-to-door, keeping the Law and the Sabbath, abstaining from pork and caffeine, getting baptized in every baptistery in town, keeping the Golden Rule, etc., etc., etc., Christ invites these people to cease from their own strivings and works, come unto Him, rest in His finished work and let Him handle their salvation. This "rest" does not imply any sort of spiritual laziness, for after you have come to Jesus and have been saved, you will work for Him, but not to get saved, but because out of gratitude that you are saved.

28d "Jesus spoke to men desperately trying to find God and desperately trying to be good, who were finding the tasks impossible and who were driven to weariness and to despair. He says, "Come unto me all you who are exhausted." His invitation is to those who are exhausted with the search for the truth. The Greeks had said, "It is very difficult to find God, and, when you have found him, it is impossible to tell anyone else about him." Zophar demanded of Job: "Can you find out the deep things of God?" (Jb.11:7). It is Jesus' claim that the weary search for God ends in himself. W. B. Yeats, the great Irish poet and mystic, wrote: "Can one reach God by toil? He gives himself to the pure in heart. He asks nothing but our attention." The way to know God is not by mental search, but by giving attention to Jesus Christ, for in him we see what God is like. He says, "Come unto me all you who are weighted down beneath your burdens." For the orthodox Jew religion was a thing of burdens. Jesus said of the Scribes and Pharisees: "They bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men's shoulders" (Matt. 23:4). To the Jew religion was a thing of endless rules. A man lived his life in a forest of regulations which dictated every action of his life. He must listen for ever to a voice which said, "Thou shalt not."<sup>125</sup>

28e "There is nothing more certain than that all who have ever tried the self-improvement plan have found it an utter failure. They have begun in darkness, continued in misery and ended in despair. Yet, strange to say, in view of the numberless beacons which are ranged before us to warn us of the folly and danger of traveling that road, we are sure at the first to adopt it. In some way or another, self is looked to and worked upon to procure a warrant to come to Christ. "They, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God" (Rom. 10: 3). Nothing can possibly be a more dreary, depressing, hopeless task than "going about to establish one's own righteousness." Indeed, the dreariness of the task must always be commensurate with the earnestness and sincerity of the soul that undertakes it. Such an one will sooner or later have to give utterance to the cry, "O wretched man that I am!" and also to ask the question, "Who shall deliver me?" (Rom. 7: 24). There can be no exception. All with whom the Spirit of God has ever worked, have in one way or another been constrained to own the hopelessness of seeking to work out a righteousness for themselves. Christ must be all; self must be nothing. This doctrine is easily stated, but oh, the experience! The same is true in reference to the grand reality of sanctification. Many who have come to Christ for righteousness have not practically and experimentally laid hold of Him as their sanctification. But He is made of God, unto us, the one as well as the other. "But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption: that according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord" (1 Cor. 1: 30-31). The believer is just as powerless in the work of sanctification as in the work of righteousness. If it were not so, some flesh might glory in the divine presence. I could no more subdue a single lust or trample underfoot a single passion or gain the mastery over a single temper, than I could open the kingdom of heaven or establish my own righteousness before God. This is not sufficiently understood. Hence, many true Christians constantly suffer the most humiliating defeats in their practical career. They know that Christ is their righteousness, that their sins are forgiven, that they are children of God, but they are sorely

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<sup>125</sup>William Barclay, *Matthew* in *The Daily Study Bible*, volume 2, pages 15-16.

put about by their constant failure in personal holiness, in practical sanctification. Again and again, they experience some unhallowed desire or unsanctified temper. Again and again, they are compelled to retire with shame and confusion of face. A person or a circumstance crossed their path yesterday and caused them to lose their temper. Having to meet the same today, they resolve to do better, but sorrowfully, they are again forced to retreat in disappointment and humiliation... True, I can come over and over again and pour into my heavenly Father's ear the humiliating tale of my failure and overthrow. I can confess my sins and find Him ever "faithful and just to forgive me my sins, and to cleanse me from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1: 9). But we must learn Christ as the Lord our sanctification as well as "The Lord our righteousness." Moreover, it is by faith and not by effort that we enter into both the one and the other. We look to Christ for righteousness because we have none of our own, and we look to Christ for practical sanctification because we have none of our own. It needed no personal effort on our part to get righteousness because Christ is our righteousness, and it needs no personal effort on our part to get sanctification because Christ is our sanctification."<sup>126</sup>

28f "Poor sinners, when they are under the sense of sin and wrath of God, are prone to run from creature to creature, and from duty to duty, and from ordinance to ordinance, to find rest; and if they could find it in anything or creature, Christ would never hear of them; but here the Lord sweetly invites them; and to encourage them, he engages himself to give them rest: 'Come,' says Christ, 'and I will give you rest.' I will not show you rest, nor barely tell you of rest—but 'I will give you rest.' I am faithfulness itself, and cannot lie, 'I will give you rest.' I that have the greatest power to give it, the greatest will to give it, the greatest right to give it, 'Come, heavy laden sinners, and I will give you rest.' Rest is the most desirable good, the most suitable good, and to you the greatest good. 'Come,' says Christ, that is, 'believe in me, and I will give you rest'; I will give you peace with God, and peace with conscience; I will turn your storm into an everlasting calm; I will give you such rest, which the world can neither give to you nor take from you."<sup>127</sup>

**11:29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me;<sup>a</sup> for I am meek<sup>bc</sup> and lowly in heart:<sup>d</sup> and ye shall find rest<sup>e</sup> unto your souls.<sup>f</sup>**

29a The greatest study for human scholarship is the study of the person and work of Christ. Theology used to be known as the "Queen of the Sciences" and all other academic disciplines radiated out from it as spokes on a wheel. But no more.

29b "meek"

1. Meekness is strength under control. It is the feeling of patient, submissive humbleness, the disposition to be patient and long suffering. It is a bending under pressure but not breaking.
2. It comes from the Middle English, of Scandinavian origin; akin to Old Norse mjúkr "gentle"; akin to Welsh esmwyth "soft". Meekness is not produced by self-effort but by Spirit effort.
3. Only the Holy Spirit can produce meekness in the heart of a yielded Christian.
4. To be meek means not to resist the world's opposition but to suffer it willingly.
5. If we are meek, willing to suffer the world's opposition in this age, we will inherit the earth in the Kingdom Age.
6. Biblical revelation about the "meek":

<sup>126</sup> C. M. Mackintosh, *Expository Writings*, volume 2.

<sup>127</sup> Thomas Brooks, *Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices*, Works of Thomas Boston, volume 1, page 147.

- A. Moses was the meekest man on the earth
  - i. Numbers 12:3 **Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.**
- B. The meek shall eat and be satisfied
  - i. Psalm 22:26 **The meek shall eat and be satisfied: they shall praise the LORD that seek him: your heart shall live for ever.**
- C. God will guide the meek in judgment
  - i. Psalm 25:9 **The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way.**
- D. The meek shall inherit the earth
  - i. Psalm 37:11 **But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.**
  - ii. Matthew 5:5 **Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.**
- E. God lifts up the meek
  - i. Psalm 147:6 **The LORD lifteth up the meek: he casteth the wicked down to the ground.**
- F. The meek will be beautified with salvation
  - i. Psalm 149:4 **For the LORD taketh pleasure in his people: he will beautify the meek with salvation.**
- G. God will judge and reprove for the meek
  - i. Isaiah 11:4 **But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.**
- H. The meek shall increase their joy in the Lord
  - i. Isaiah 29:19 **The meek also shall increase their joy in the LORD, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.**
- I. The meek are to seek the Lord
  - i. Zephaniah 2:3 **Seek ye the LORD, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the LORD'S anger.**
- J. The Lord is meek
  - i. Matthew 11:29 **Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.**
  - ii. 2 Corinthians 10:1 **Now I Paul myself beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, who in presence am base among you, but being absent am bold toward you:**
- K. The Lord came in His triumphal entry meekly
  - i. Matthew 21:5 **Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.**
- L. Women are to have a meek and quiet spirit
  - i. 1 Peter 3:4 **But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.**
- 7. What are some characteristics of a meek man?
  - A. He is humble
  - B. He is gentle of spirit
  - C. He is patient with others
  - D. He is longsuffering
  - E. He is quick to forgive a wrong

F. He is content with his lot in life

G. He is everything a proud man is not and is nothing that a proud man is. He is the polar opposite of a proud man.

5c "What, then, is meekness? I think we can sum it up in this way. Meekness is essentially a true view of oneself, expressing itself in attitude and conduct with respect to others. It is therefore two things. It is my attitude towards myself; and it is an expression of that in my relationship to others. You see how inevitably it follows being 'poor in spirit' and 'mourning'. A man can never be meek unless he is poor in spirit. A man can never be meek unless he has seen himself as a vile sinner. These other things must come first. But when I have that true view of myself in terms of poverty of spirit, and mourning because of my sinfulness, I am led on to see that there must be an absence of pride. The meek man is not proud of himself, he does not in any sense glory in himself. He feels that there is nothing in himself of which he can boast. It also means that he does not assert himself. You see, it is a negation of the popular psychology of the day which says 'assert yourself', 'express your personality'. The man who is meek does not want to do so; he is so ashamed of it. The meek man likewise does not demand anything for himself. He does not take all his rights as claims. He does not make demands for his position, his privileges, his possessions, his status in life. No, he is like the man depicted by Paul in Philippians 2. 'Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.' Christ did not assert that right to equality with God; He deliberately did not. And that is the point to which you and I have to come. Then let me go further; the man who is meek is not even sensitive about himself. He is not always watching himself and his own interests. He is not always on the defensive. We all know about this, do we not? Is it not one of the greatest curses in life as a result of the fall - this sensitivity about self? We spend the whole of our lives watching ourselves. But when a man becomes meek, he has finished with all that; he no longer worries about himself and what other people say. To be truly meek means we no longer protect ourselves, because we see there is nothing worth defending. So we are not on the defensive; all that is gone. The man who is truly meek never pities himself, he is never sorry for himself. He never talks to himself and says, 'You are having a hard time, how unkind these people are not to understand you'. He never thinks: 'How wonderful I really am, if only other people gave me a chance.' Self-pity! What hours and years we waste in this! But the man who has become meek has finished with all that. To be meek, in other words, means that you have finished with yourself altogether, and you come to see you have no rights or deserts at all."<sup>128</sup>

29d How odd that God should be "**lowly in heart**"!

1. This is the only usage of this phrase in Scripture.

2. As the Son of Man, He was humble, meek, unassuming, compassionate.

A. Isaiah 42:1-3 "**Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth.**"

B. Matthew 12:19,20 "**He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets. A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory.**"

3. As a man, He would not be haughty, proud or arrogant. He would have the heart of a child.

A. Psalm 131:1,2 "**LORD, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty: neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for**

<sup>128</sup> D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Studies in the Sermon on the Mount*, pages 57-58.

**me. Surely I have behaved and quieted myself, as a child that is weaned of his mother: my soul is even as a weaned child."**

4. Zechariah 9:9 **"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass."**

5. Christ made Himself lowly in His incarnation.

A. Philippians 2:7,8 **"But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."**

6. When threatened, He does not lash out, avenge Himself of return reviling for reviling. For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:

A. 1 Peter 2:22,23 **"Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously:"**

29e **"rest"** Rest from what?

1. Striving against sin
2. Working for your own salvation
3. Trials and burdens of your everyday duties of life
4. Worry, about the future, provisions, salvation...

Also see Hebrews 4:9 for the **"rest"** given to the people of God. This is a rest that has not yet been realized, but that is promised. It is still waiting for us. Ultimately, it is a millennial rest, where God's people can finally rest against the assaults and attacks of the world, the flesh (old sin nature) and the devil, all three of which will be rendered inoperative in the Millennium and beyond. We are not there yet, but that time of rest is promised unto us and it is something that every child of God should be longing for.

1. Spiritually, this rest is a rest from our works in order to try to earn favor from God or to try to show how spiritual we are. When one comes into a correct understanding of the atonement and the grace of God, that person will stop trying to earn his favor or acceptance from God and will simply rest in the finished work by Christ on the cross. People tend to do this when they have little or no relationship with God. They have to try to rest on their works in order to earn the favor of God, instead of on the completed and finished and accepted work of Jesus.

2. Christ is the One Who ultimately gives us the rest that we desire and seek- Matthew 11:28-30 **"Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."**

3. This rest remains only for the people of God. It's interesting that the phrase people of God is used here. The Church and Christians are never referred to by this term in Paul's epistles or in the Book of Acts, which leads us to believe that the doctrinal implication an interpretation of this passage is tribulational and is directed towards tribulation believers, not to modern day Christians. We can make any spiritual application that we want, but the doctrinal application is probably beyond the Church Age.

This rest is reserved for the "people of God", for believers only. This rest is not promised to or provided to the world that is in rebellion against God. They have no peace and no rest (Isaiah 57:20,21 **"But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked."**). This is why this generation (and every generation before it) is so restless and unsatisfied, in stark contrast with God's people.

29f Rest for the soul, not the spirit. The soul is what we are, our will, our consciousness, our emotions, our intellect. This is what Christ gives a spiritual rest to if we come to Him for salvation.

1. Hebrews 4:9 ("**There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.**") doesn't apply here doctrinally but it can devotionally.

### **11:30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.<sup>ab</sup>**

#### **30a "yoke is easy, and my burden is light:**

1. Certainly so, especially compared to the yokes of works laid upon the followers of every single religion besides Biblical Christianity. Do this, that, the other thing, every day, for the rest of your life, and MAYBE you'll go to heaven when you die, but we just can't really be sure! Have you done enough works? For long enough? Did you do then well enough? The poor man trying to work his way to heaven never knows and can never have assurance as the religion he is following does not want to give him that kind of assurance. This keeps the poor soul in bondage to that religious system, with both his loyalty, attendance to services and money.
2. The Christian life is the easiest life there is, for "**the way of the transgressor is hard** (Proverbs 13:15)." They think they have it easy, with their philosophy of "eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we die". But they are living life the hard way, under the harsh and constant lash of the world, the flesh and devil, none of which ever take a day off or lessen their demands on the sinner. They go through life bearing their own burdens, for they have no invisible means of support. By contrast, the Christian life is the easiest and greatest kind of life there is. I have been living it since 1978. I have a heavenly Father and a great Elder Brother in Christ. I have the constant indwelling of the Holy Spirit to guide and direct. I have a Holy Bible to instruct me and to comfort me. I count over 13,000 promises in that Book that I can claim. I have the fellowship and prayers of innumerable saints around the world. My Father owns the cattle on a thousand hills and His divine Son has promised never to leave me or forsake me. And at the end of all this, I have the promise of heaven, eternal life, a glorified body and eternal fellowship with God, the saints and the heavenly beings forever. But I hear a critic say "But you cannot wallow and engage in the delights of the world. You don't smoke, drink, chew go to the theater, or indulge in the lusts of the flesh." Are those supposed to bring me sorrow? I delight that I have no such desires. I was delivered from the hog-pen at my salvation. Why should I desire to return to such a low and generate "life" when Christ came to give me **life and that more abundantly** (John 10:10)?
3. But there is still a yoke and a burden in the Christian life, the yoke of service and the burden of sanctification and a Christian walk. Both are made easier and bearable by Christ.
  - A. It seems a contradiction that we can rest while wearing a yoke, for yokes are for work.
  - B. The yoke is easy, the burden light.
    - i. The yoke of legalism and religion are heavy, but Christ's yoke is easy. We must wear one yoke. We either try to earn our own salvation and justification or we accept that which is found in Christ. We can do it the hard way or the easy way.
    - ii. The burden is light. The burden of legalism and religion is so heavy as to crush many and drive them wither to despair or a form of hyper-

legalism. But Christ's burden is no burden at all as it is fitted by love and grace.

30b We must come to a rest about our Christian works and living the Christian life. We must come to despise trying to live the Christian life on our own, through the power of the flesh and the spiritual weariness that brings. People try and try and work and work, trying to earn God's favor by their own works and holiness, only to fail. They have good intentions, but they believe they must work and work instead of resting in the work Christ has done for them. Why try to earn that which is given to you freely?

1. Many put the emphasis on works in order to earn God's favor. They pray, go door-to-door and work on bus routes, busy themselves around the church, because they are told that work is the greatest thing a Christian can do. While we ought to labor for the Lord, it is not those works that sanctify. But many will use works as a substitute for sanctification. Since they have no walk with God and have no burden for a walk with God (probably because their pastors never taught them about this truth), they believe the only way they can earn the favor of God is by works and results. The more souls you win, the more God favors you. The larger your church is, the closer you are to God. But nothing could be further from the truth!

I heard the voice of Jesus say,  
"Come unto me and rest;  
Lay down, thou weary one, lay down  
Thy head upon my breast."

I came to Jesus as I was,  
Weary and worn and sad;  
I found in Him a resting place,  
And He has made me glad.  
(Horatius Bonar)

### **Spiritual Applications- Matthew Chapter 11**

There will always be someone to criticize you regardless of what you say and do. You cannot move without producing friction. Jesus was criticized that He was either too stern or too friendly and outgoing, too much of a social butterfly. This type of criticism means you are accomplishing something. But you cannot win with these people, so the best thing to do is to ignore them. There will be an occasional truth that your critics may notice that can be profitable to you, but most of their carping is just that.

Teddy Roosevelt understood this, with this excerpt of his speech "Citizenship in a Republic" in 1910 (it is not a very good speech as it leans toward socialist and fascist ideas, but this is a good, oft-quoted paragraph from that speech):

"It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the



end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat. Shame on the man of cultivated taste who permits refinement to develop into fastidiousness that unfits him for doing the rough work of a workaday world. Among the free peoples who govern themselves there is but a small field of usefulness open for the men of cloistered life who shrink from contact with their fellows. Still less room is there for those who deride or slight what is done by those who actually bear the brunt of the day; nor yet for those others who always profess that they would like to take action, if only the conditions of life were not exactly what they actually are. The man who does nothing cuts the same sordid figure in the pages of history, whether he be cynic, or fop, or voluptuary. There is little use for the being whose tepid soul knows nothing of the great and generous emotion, of the high pride, the stern belief, the lofty enthusiasm, of the men who quell the storm and ride the thunder. Well for these men if they succeed; well also, though not so well, if they fail, given only that they have nobly ventured, and have put forth all their heart and strength. It is war-worn Hotspur, spent with hard fighting, he of the many errors and the valiant end, over whose memory we love to linger, not over the memory of the young lord who "but for the vile guns would have been a valiant soldier."

We also see that the "yoke of Christ" (Matthew 11:29,30) is easier than the yoke of the world. **The way of the transgressor is ha** (Proverbs 13:15). People think the Christian life is hard, but it is the easiest life to live because you get divine help in living it. Living a sinful life in this world is much harder because it is hard, rough, unforgiving, demanding. The world is very demanding. It will squeeze all it can out of you, then cast you aside like an empty soda can when it is through with you. The sinner struggles with and in his sin constantly while **there is a rest for the people of God** (Hebrews 4:9). And following Christ leads to a soft deathbed while the sinner faces darkness and terrors in his deathbed.



## Matthew Chapter 12

### 65. The Lord of the Sabbath 12:1-9, see also Mark 2:23-28; Luke 6:1-5

**12:1 At that time Jesus went on the sabbath day through the corn;<sup>a</sup> and his disciples were an hungred, and began to pluck the ears of corn, and to eat.<sup>b</sup>**

1a The corn would be planted in long, narrow strips and the land between the rows was considered a right of way.

1b This was legal and not considered to be stealing, as long as they only used their hands and no other instruments (Deuteronomy 23:25 **“When thou comest into the standing corn of thy neighbour, then thou mayest pluck the ears with thine hand; but thou shalt not move a sickle unto thy neighbour's standing corn.”**).

AV

ESV

LSV

1 At that time Jesus went on the sabbath day through the corn; and his disciples were an hungred, and began to pluck the **ears of corn**, and to eat.

1 At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath. His disciples were hungry, and they began to pluck heads of grain and to eat.

1 At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath, and His disciples became hungry and began to pick the heads of grain and eat.

**“ears of corn”** All the modern versions have “ears of corn” as “heads of grain”. “The standard interpretation is that this is not real corn since real corn was unknown in Egypt or Palestine, and therefore must refer to general grain, such as wheat or barley. This (as nearly all perversions of the 1611 text) is a common error. The “corn” may refer to other grain, since John 12:24 defines the word “corn” as a “kernel” or “grain” of any crop (more unsearchable riches of the 1611!). However, “ears of corn” are found in Genesis 41:5–7 and “corn in the ear” is found in Mark 4:26–29. To make matters worse for the people that keep insisting on perverting the plain English, we find that in Rawlinson’s *History of Ancient Egypt* (Vol. 1, p. 162), that real corn was reaped in Egypt by cutting the stalk off below the ear; that is exactly how it was reaped. A reference is found in Deuteronomy 23:25.”<sup>129</sup>

**12:2 But when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto him, Behold, thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the sabbath day.<sup>ab</sup>**

2a The Pharisees jumped at this, as if they were following Jesus and His disciples, just waiting to pounce the minute they did something they could exploit and use against the Lord.

2b **“which is not lawful to do upon the sabbath day”**

1. It was deemed to be unlawful since it involved physical labor.
2. “The Sabbath Law was very complicated and very detailed. The commandment forbids work on the Sabbath day; but the interpreters of the Law were not satisfied with that simple prohibition. Work had to be defined. So thirty-nine basic actions were laid down, which were forbidden on the Sabbath, and amongst them were reaping,

<sup>129</sup> Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer’s Commentary on Matthew*.

winnowing and threshing, and preparing a meal. The interpreters were not even prepared to leave the matter there. Each item in the list of forbidden works had to be carefully defined. For instance, it was forbidden to carry a burden. But what is a burden? A burden is anything which weighs as much as two dried figs. Even the suggestion of work was forbidden; even anything which might symbolically be regarded as work was prohibited. Later the great Jewish teacher, Maimonides, was to say, "To pluck ears is a kind of reaping." By their conduct the disciples were guilty of far more than one breach of the Law. By plucking the corn they were guilty of reaping; by rubbing it in their hands they were guilty of threshing; by separating the grain and the chaff they were guilty of winnowing; and by the whole process they were guilty of preparing a meal on the Sabbath day, for everything which was to be eaten on the Sabbath had to be prepared the day before."<sup>130</sup>

**12:3 But he said unto them, Have ye not read what David did,<sup>ab</sup> when he was an hungred, and they that were with him;<sup>c</sup>**

3a When confronted, Jesus is always taking His accusers back to the Old Testament. "Have ye not read"? You should. You are EXPECTED to know the Old Testament well enough to teach it, yet you missed this simple lesson?

3b Jesus compares Himself to David here, which has obvious messianic implications.

3c Jesus appeals to two Scriptural facts to answer the charges of Sabbath breaking.

1. David broke it (1 Samuel 21:1-6 **"Then came David to Nob to Ahimelech the priest: and Ahimelech was afraid at the meeting of David, and said unto him, Why art thou alone, and no man with thee? And David said unto Ahimelech the priest, The king hath commanded me a business, and hath said unto me, Let no man know any thing of the business whereabout I send thee, and what I have commanded thee: and I have appointed my servants to such and such a place. Now therefore what is under thine hand? give me five loaves of bread in mine hand, or what there is present. And the priest answered David, and said, There is no common bread under mine hand, but there is hallowed bread; if the young men have kept themselves at least from women. And David answered the priest, and said unto him, Of a truth women have been kept from us about these three days, since I came out, and the vessels of the young men are holy, and the bread is in a manner common, yea, though it were sanctified this day in the vessel."**).

2. The priests themselves break it as they fulfill their temple duties on the sabbath (12:4,5, citing Numbers 29:32 **"And on the seventh day seven bullocks, two rams, and fourteen lambs of the first year without blemish:"**). Work done for God on the Sabbath is no profanation of the Sabbath.

**12:4 How he entered into the house of God, and did eat the shewbread, which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the priests?**

**12:5 Or have ye not read in the law,<sup>a</sup> how that on the sabbath days the priests in the temple profane<sup>b</sup> the sabbath, and are blameless?<sup>c</sup>**

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<sup>130</sup> William Barclay, *Matthew*, The Daily Study Bible, volume 2, page 22.

5a The Lord hits them with another “have ye not read?” implying they were very ignorant of the Scriptures they were expected to be experts on.

5b “**profane**” “Our Eng. word “profane” = far from the temple. The Greek word here = to trample down and thus treat as common. Cp. Acts 24:6.”<sup>131</sup> From Middle English prophanen, from Anglo-French prophaner, from Latin profanare, from profanus

5c The priests had to break the Sabbath every day in their tabernacle and temple work, yet they were not punished for it.

**12:6 But I say unto you, That in this place is one greater than the temple.<sup>a</sup>**

6a The Lord of the Sabbath was greater than the Sabbath and the Lawgiver was greater than the Law He gave. The author and builder of the building is always greater than the building (Hebrews 3:3-5 “**For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house. For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God. And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after;**”). The building may be great, but it is the designer and builder that gets the credit.

AV	ESV	LSV
6 But I say unto you, That in this place is <i>one</i> greater than the temple.	6 I tell you, something greater than the temple is here.	6 “But I say to you that something greater than the temple is here.

The ESV, LSV and Darby have it that there is someTHING rather than someONE (Christ) greater than the temple there,

**12:7 But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless.<sup>a</sup>**

7a See Hosea 6:6 “**For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.**”

**12:8 For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day.<sup>a</sup>**

8a Especially on the Sabbath day since He created the Sabbath day!

AV	ESV	LSV
8 For the Son of man is Lord <b>even</b> of the sabbath day.	8 For the Son of Man is lord of the Sabbath.”	8 “For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.”

The ESV, LSV and Darby omit “**even**”.

**12:9 And when he was departed thence, he went into their synagogue.<sup>a</sup>**

<sup>131</sup> Ethelbert Bullinger, *Companion Bible*.

9a **"Their synagogue"**, not just "the synagogue", a note of disapproval here.

**66. Healing on the Sabbath 12:10-13, see also Mark 3:1-6; Luke 6:6-11**

**12:10 ¶ And, behold, there was a man which had his hand withered. And they asked him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath days? that they might accuse him.**<sup>abc</sup>

10a Christ had just finished preaching on the Sabbath, then the Jews turn right around and test Him on it! They used this poor man with the deformity as an excuse to accuse the Lord of violating their interpretation of the sabbath. They had no concern or compassion for the man's condition and the Lord had no concern or compassion for their misunderstanding of the sabbath.

10b The Pharisees never denied Christ's power to heal. They attacked the way He healed, without regard to their laws and rituals. They admitted His power to heal without acknowledging it.

10c Christ's seven miracles on the Sabbath:

1. Matthew 12:10-13 (this account)
2. Mark 1:23-27 **"And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God. And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. And when the unclean spirit had torn him, and cried with a loud voice, he came out of him. And they were all amazed, insomuch that they questioned among themselves, saying, What thing is this? what new doctrine is this? for with authority commandeth he even the unclean spirits, and they do obey him."**
3. Mark 1:29-31 **"And forthwith, when they were come out of the synagogue, they entered into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. But Simon's wife's mother lay sick of a fever, and anon they tell him of her. And he came and took her by the hand, and lifted her up; and immediately the fever left her, and she ministered unto them."**
4. Luke 13:10-13 **"And he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath. And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself. And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity. And he laid his hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God."**
5. Luke 14:1-4 **"And it came to pass, as he went into the house of one of the chief Pharisees to eat bread on the sabbath day, that they watched him. And, behold, there was a certain man before him which had the dropsy. And Jesus answering spake unto the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath day? And they held their peace. And he took him, and healed him, and let him go;"**
6. John 5:2-9 **"Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the**

**water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had. And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years. When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole? The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me. Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath."**

7. John 9:11-14 **"He answered and said, A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash: and I went and washed, and I received sight. Then said they unto him, Where is he? He said, I know not. They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind. And it was the sabbath day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes."**

**12:11 And he said unto them, What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out?<sup>a</sup>**

11a Any of them would, out of sympathy for a helpless animal, or to prevent an economic loss.

**12:12 How much then is a man better than a sheep?<sup>a</sup> Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the sabbath days.<sup>b</sup>**

12a **"How much then is a man better than a sheep?"**

1. This refutes the animal rights/PETA crowd, as a man is worth more than a sheep.

After all, Christ died for men, not for sheep or animals.

2. If you would help a wounded animal on the Sabbath, why not a wounded man, who is worth more than a sheep?

12b If you can't do good deeds and help people (and animals) on the sabbath day, then what good is the sabbath?

**12:13 Then saith he to the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it forth; and it was restored whole, like as the other.<sup>ab</sup>**

13a The Lord went out of His way to violate the inaccurate interpretation of the Sabbath that was currently being taught.

13b Mark 3:5 adds that Jesus was angry when He said this. Unbelief and hardness of heart are two things that anger the Lord.

## **67. Opposition to Jesus 12:14-21, see also Mark 3:7-12**

**12:14 ¶ Then the Pharisees went out, and held a council against him, how they might destroy him.<sup>ab</sup>**

14a The signs of a religious hypocrite include a violent reaction whenever their rituals are ignored, and their authority is not acknowledged.

14b “The synagogue was too hot for the Pharisees, and so they went out. Utterly routed, they retire from public gaze, hating the man who had so completely baffled them. They could not silence him, and so they would slay him.”<sup>132</sup>

**12:15 But when Jesus knew it, he withdrew himself from thence: and great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all;<sup>ab</sup>**

15a This was a strategic withdrawal. It is not a sign of cowardice to do this. It was not yet His time to die or to be put to death. When that time did come, He did not withdraw or shirk from it. You retreat to minister another day.

15b “**He healed them all**” A true faith healer will have a 100% success rate, with no duds or misfires. The fakir can blame the ‘lack of faith’ of the person involved or other excuses, but Jesus had no such problems. A true healer will heal a man and you could follow up with him six months later and find that the man is still healed.

**12:16 And charged them that they should not make him known:<sup>a</sup>**

16a Evangelism forbidden by the Lord here. There are occasions where the Lord did not want a healing to be made publicly known.

**12:17 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying,<sup>a</sup>**

17a Verses 17-21 are quoted from Isaiah 42:1-4 “**Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law.**”

**12:18 Behold my servant,<sup>a</sup> whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall shew judgment to the Gentiles.**

18a Isaiah’s view of Christ

1. “**My servant**” is obviously Jesus Christ.
2. “**whom I have chosen**” Jesus was the “elect” of the Father.
  - A. Isaiah 42:1 “**Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.**”
  - B. 1 Peter 2:6 “**Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.**”
3. Christ is the Beloved of the Father.
4. The Father is well pleased with the Son.
5. The Father will put His Spirit upon Him.

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<sup>132</sup> Charles Spurgeon, *The Gospel of the Kingdom*, page 178.



A. Interesting that Isaiah does not say that the Father will put His Spirit “in Christ” but rather “on Him”.

B. John 3:34 **“For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.”**

6. He shall show judgment to the Gentiles.
7. He shall not strive.
8. He shall not cry.
9. His voice will not be heard in the streets.

**12:19 He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets.<sup>abc</sup>**

19a Christ’s public ministry was quiet, dignified, moderate. This would come as a shock to many modern preachers who put on a show and play the fool when they preach. He was not a rabble-rouser or a trouble-maker.

1. This is in contrast with many so-called “Independent Fundamental Baptists”. They major much of “preaching” as they define it, but their sermons are all noise, bluster and emotionalism (“Billy Sunday (supposedly) preached that way so that must be a good way to preach!”) with little theological content or true exposition. Since they have little theology and must fill up 45-60 minutes of preaching time, so they tell many stories as filler, and, of course, they are always the hero in their stories. These men equate volume with spirituality.
2. Christ preached strongly and forcefully but He relied on the content of His sermons to make their impact, not in the way He preached them.
3. A man can preach quietly yet forcefully and truthfully, if he is preaching in the power of the Holy Spirit. Volume does not equal spirituality or content in a sermon. So-called “red hot preaching” is just so much bluster that usually provides sparse spiritual results on the part of the congregation.

19b The Lord did not aim at raising himself in the esteem of the multitude by successfully contending with the Pharisees; for his method was of another sort. Not by might, nor by power, but by the Spirit of the Lord, and the force of truth, would he prevail. The wrath of man in controversy, the frenzy of wild rhetoric, the torrent of popular declamation; all these he left to mere pretenders. Too many men thrive on controversy to promote themselves, but Christ would have us wait on God if we would see such successes and promotions.

1. “Isaiah predicted that Messiah would minister with gentleness and humility. He would not present Himself arrogantly or brashly. He would be very compassionate (v. 20). He would not advance His own program by stepping on others. He would bring salvation finally to the harassed and helpless (9:36) as well as to the weary and burdened (11:28) without crushing the weak. This concept of Messiah was much more gentle than the one Jesus’ contemporaries held. They expected Him to crush all opposition...Consequently the Gentiles would put their trust in Him (v. 21).”<sup>133</sup>
2. “The word that is used for to cry aloud is the word that is used for the barking of a dog, the croaking of a raven, the bawling of a drunken man, the uproar of a discontented audience in a theatre. It means that Jesus would not brawl with men. We know all about the quarrels of conflicting parties, in which each tries to shout the other down. The hatred of theologians, the *odium theologicum* is one of the tragedies of the Christian Church. We know all about the oppositions of politicians and of ideologies. In Jesus

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<sup>133</sup> Thomas Constable, *Constable Study Notes on the Bible*.

there is the quiet, strong serenity of one who seeks to conquer by love, and not by strife of words.”<sup>134</sup>

3. “Religious extroversion has been carried to such an extreme in evangelical circles that hardly anyone has the desire, to say nothing of the courage, to question the soundness of it. Externalism has taken over. God now speaks by the wind and the earthquake only; the still small voice can be heard no more. The whole religious machine has become a noisemaker...The old question ‘What is the chief end of man?’ is now answered ‘To dash about the world and add to the din thereof.’ And all this is done in the name of Him who did not strive nor cry nor make His voice to be heard in the streets (Matthew 12:18-21). We must begin the needed reform by challenging the spiritual validity of externalism. What a man is must be shown to be more important than what he does... While the moral quality of any act is imparted by the condition of the heart, there may be a world of religious activity which arises not from within but from without and which would seem to have little or no moral content. Such religious conduct is imitative or reflex. It stems from the current cult of commotion and possesses no sound inner life...The desire to be dramatically active is proof of our religious infantilism; it is a type of exhibitionism common to the kindergarten.”<sup>135</sup>

19c “The doctrine here laid down is full of comfort and consolation. There are thousands in every church of Christ to whom it ought to speak peace and hope. There are some in every congregation, that hear the Gospel, who are ready to despair of their own salvation, because their strength seems so small. They are full of fears and despondency, because their knowledge, and faith, and hope, and love, appear so dwarfish and diminutive. Let them drink comfort out of this text. Let them know that weak faith gives a man as real and true a saving interest in Christ as strong faith, though it may not give him the same joy. There is life in an infant as truly as in a grown-up man. There is fire in a spark as truly as in a burning flame. The least degree of grace is an everlasting possession. It comes down from heaven. It is precious in our Lord’s eyes. It shall never be overthrown.”<sup>136</sup>

**12:20 A bruised reed<sup>a</sup> shall he not break, and smoking flax<sup>b</sup> shall he not quench,<sup>c</sup> till he send forth judgment unto victory.<sup>d</sup>**

20a “bruised reed”

1. The “bruised reed” is the wounded man, maybe one who has suffered some loss in his service to God. Paul would qualify as such a man as per 2 Corinthians 4:8-15. The Lord will not wound a wounded man.
2. Man tends to judge, be harsh and condemn others in these seasons of life but God instead takes pity and compassion on us, knowing that we are dust.

20b “smoking flax” The “smoking flax” is a man who was once “on fire” for God but has since cooled off and is backslidden. He might be like Jeremiah in Jeremiah 20:9 (“**Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay.**”) He was fed up, discouraged and wanted to quit but God sustained him through his discouragement. The Lord will not discourage a discouraged man.

<sup>134</sup> William Barclay, *Matthew*, The Daily Study Bible, volume 2, pages 33-34.

<sup>135</sup> A. W. Tozer, “The Root of the Righteous” cited in *The A. W. Tozer Bible*, page 1130.

<sup>136</sup> J. C. Ryle, *Expository Notes on The Gospel of Matthew*.

20c Look at how Christ dealt with those men who were defeated, discouraged, beaten down:

1. Elijah in 1 Kings 19 after his success on Mt. Carmel.
2. Peter in John 21:9-17 after his denials.
3. Paul in Acts 18:9, **“Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace:”**
  - A. Which of us have not been in a position of failure, uncertainty, despair or depression, especially in the ministry?
4. Psalm 103:8-14 is the Psalm that speaks to us during these times, **“The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger for ever. He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.”**

20d **“till he send forth judgment unto victory”**. Is this a second advent application?

## 12:21 And in his name shall the Gentiles trust.<sup>a</sup>

21a And we do, as seen by the growth of the Church! Many Gentiles trusted Christ during His earthly ministry and many more after His death and resurrection. More Gentiles would trust in His name than the Jews would, until the Millennium.

AV	ESV	LSV
21 And in his name shall the Gentiles <b>trust</b> .	21 and in his name the Gentiles will hope.”	21 “AND IN HIS NAME THE GENTILES WILL HOPE.”

**“trust”** The ESV, LSV and Darby have “hope”.

## **68. A Kingdom Divided Against Itself 12:22-30, see also Mark 3:22-27; Luke 11:14-23**

**12:22 ¶ Then was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb: and he healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw.<sup>a</sup>**

22a These physical conditions are sometimes (but not always) caused by devil possession. Don’t automatically assume every deaf or blind person is devil possessed. This poor man was struck blind and dumb, utterly helpless and in a miserable state. Devils care not what misery they bring to their hosts, as long as they have a body and can avoid the pit.

AV	ESV	LSV
22 Then was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb: and he healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both	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.	22 Then a demon-possessed man <i>who was</i> blind and mute was brought to Jesus, and He healed him, so that the mute man spoke and saw.

spake and saw.		
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The ESV and LSV cannot agree if the man was “demon possessed” or “demon oppressed”. The Authorized Version has “possessed” as there is a difference in being oppressed by a devil and being possessed by a devil.

**12:23 And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the son of David?<sup>a</sup>**

23a This question was unacceptable to the Pharisees. They could not let this exaltation of Christ go unchallenged. They could not deny the miracle, so they sought to slander it.

**12:24 But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils.<sup>a</sup>**

24a **“This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils.”**

1. This is illogical. Why would Satan cast out Satan? Why would he work against himself?
2. The objections of the Pharisees can only be traced to one cause: they cannot understand how the miracles could be anything but of devil origin, since the man that is doing them will not keep their interpretation of ceremonial sabbath.
3. This was the only position they could take. Since the Pharisees rejected Christ since He did not acknowledge their authority, they could not acknowledge that His power was divine. If it didn't come from God, then it must come from Satan. There was no other explanation they could come up with.
4. The Pharisees could not deny the miracle, so they attacked the power behind the miracle. This was a new line of attack they decided to use against the Lord but He easily rebuffed it.
5. Christ's power is not denied. Instead, it is attributed to the power of Beelzebub.

**12:25 And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand:<sup>a</sup>**

25a Jesus, as omniscient Deity, “knew it all,” but He confined to a body of flesh. He sometimes was limited in energy, thought, and perception by His humanity, as in John 4:6, **“Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour.”**

**12:26 And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand?<sup>a</sup>**

26a Satan does have a kingdom and he is not going to destroy his own kingdom.

**12:27 And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out?<sup>a</sup> therefore they shall be your judges.**

27a Jesus was casting out devils the same way the Jews were.

1. If Jesus was doing it by the power of the Devil, then how were the Jews doing it?

2. "The thought is: "When your sons return after a 'casting out' and talk with you about it and you tell them what I have been doing, they will decide for themselves whether it is God or Satan doing the casting out, and they'll 'eye you' close if you imply that it is Satan that is doing it; that will reflect on them."<sup>137</sup>

**12:28 But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you.<sup>a</sup>**

28a Either-or. Take your pick, but you must choose one! There is no neutrality or third option.

**12:29 Or else how can one enter into a strong man's<sup>a</sup> house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man?<sup>a</sup> and then he will spoil his house.**

29a The "**strong man**" is a devil (or devils) that is possessing a man. In order for a thief to rob a house, he must be stronger than the guard of the house or its owner. In order for Jesus to cast out devils, He must be stronger than Satan. Satan could not give Christ a power greater than what he himself possessed.

**12:30 He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.<sup>a</sup>**

30a The impossibility of neutrality when it comes to Christ. You are either for Him or against Him. To declare neutrality is to be against Him.

1. "There are three things which make a man seek this impossible neutrality.

A. There is the sheer inertia of human nature. It is true of so many people that the only thing they desire is to be left alone. They automatically shrink away from anything which is disturbing, and even choice is a disturbance.

B. There is the sheer cowardice of human nature. Many a man refuses the way of Christ because he is afraid to take the stand which Christianity demands. The basic thing that stops him is the thought of what other people will say. The voice of his neighbors is louder in his ears than the voice of God.

C. There is the sheer flabbiness of human nature. Most people would rather have security than adventure, and the older they grow the more that is so. A challenge always involves adventure; Christ comes to us with a challenge, and often we would rather have the comfort of selfish inaction than the adventure of action for Christ."<sup>138</sup>

## **69. Blaspheming the Holy Spirit 12:31-33, see also Mark 3:28-30; Luke 12:10**

**12:31 ¶ Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost<sup>a</sup> shall not be forgiven unto men.<sup>b</sup>**

31a The Holy Spirit is a person, not a force or an influence. This truth is one of the primary doctrines of the faith. To deny the Holy Spirit is a person is to attack the doctrine of the trinity, which is also a necessary Christian doctrine.

<sup>137</sup> Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer's Commentary on Matthew*, pages 260-261.

<sup>138</sup> William Barclay, *Matthew*, The Daily Study Bible, volume 2, page 40.

1. He is spoken of in the masculine pronoun
2. He has will
3. He has personality
4. He has emotion
5. He is separate and distinct from the Father and the Son

31b The definition of the Unpardonable Sin.

1. Verse 32 says it involves speaking against the Holy Spirit, so it is not necessarily a thought-based sin but is something that is verbally spoken.
2. The “unpardonable sin” occurs at the crisis of the kingdom when Christ was on earth showing His Messianic credentials.
3. It is recorded that the sin is committed (or was nearly committed—see Mark 3:29 (**“But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation:”**)) by the Pharisees. A number of them rejected Christ fully and finally here and never repented, even after His resurrection.
4. There are always people today who are worried that they have committed this sin and thus can’t be saved. Yet most of these people couldn’t accurately define what this sin is or what the reference is that describes it. And they don’t seem to worry about committing other sins.
  - A. Professing Christians who do not believe in the security of the believer (like most Pentecostals) also worry about committing this sin and thus losing their salvation.
  - B. I had a man with a Mississippi phone number (whom I had never met and he never identified himself) call me here in Delaware and he wanted to know if he had committed the “unpardonable sin”. After I defined to him what it was, he did not seem convinced and he hung up. It is almost as if he wanted to think he had committed this sin. People act very oddly when considering this sin.
5. Mark 3:30 says that the Pharisees claimed that Jesus Christ had an unclean spirit. As to how this can be applied to the Church Age, “this side” of the resurrection, is a problem. No one would be tempted to say it; if they have, it has been such a rare occurrence that it is not mentioned in any church history, any gospel tract, or any set of sermons published by anyone, in the last 400 years.
  - A. Job 7:16–19 is abundant proof that telling God to “get away” and leave you alone and quit dealing with you is not the “unpardonable sin.” (**“I loathe it; I would not live alway: let me alone; for my days are vanity. What is man, that thou shouldest magnify him? and that thou shouldest set thine heart upon him? And that thou shouldest visit him every morning, and try him every moment? How long wilt thou not depart from me, nor let me alone till I swallow down my spittle?”**)
  - B. Ultimately, this sin could be committed during the Lord’s earthly ministry or during the Millennium, since this is dealt with in Matthew, the Gospel of the Kingdom.
6. People (usually shallow or Charismatic-type Christians) who worry about the “unpardonable sin” usually seem not to be so concerned with committing other sins.
7. It is not failing to accept Christ as Saviour. I have heard several Fundamental preachers try to define the unpardonable sin as a failure to get saved before death and thus going to hell. But that is a result if an act of disobedience or unbelief. In this context, this sin has nothing to do with evangelism, but it does deal with one’s attitude toward the Holy Spirit while Christ was on earth in trying to “explain away” His miracles and signs as being made possible by the work of Satan rather than the Holy Spirit.

AV	ESV	LSV
<p>31 Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy <i>against the Holy Ghost</i> shall not be forgiven unto men.</p>	<p>31 Therefore I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven people, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven.</p>	<p>31 "Therefore I say to you, any sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven people, but the blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven.</p>

**"Holy Ghost"** "Holy" is correctly supplied by the Authorized Version but is missing from the ESV, LSV and Darby.

**12:32 And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.**

**12:33 Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit.<sup>a</sup>**

33a Words reveal what is in our heart. If we utter hateful or blasphemous, it reveals how dark our hearts are.

1. **"The heart is the root, the language is the fruit"** (v. 33); if the nature of the tree be good, it will bring forth fruit accordingly.
2. **The heart is the fountain, the words are the streams** (v. 34); Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks, as the streams are the overflowings of the spring. A wicked heart is said to send forth wickedness, as a fountain casts forth her waters, Jer. vi. 7.
3. **The heart is the treasury, the words are the things brought out of that treasury** (v. 35); and from hence men's characters may be drawn, and may be judged of.<sup>139</sup>

## **70. Condemned or Justified By Your Words 12:34-37**

**12:34 O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.<sup>a</sup>**

34a The quality and the purity of the water from a pump depends on the well from which it was drawn from. The pump doesn't change the quality of the water, it only delivers what is put through it.

**12:35 A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.<sup>a</sup>**

35a A man's heart will eventually be revealed by his words.

<sup>139</sup> Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, pages 1266-1267.

**12:36 But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.<sup>a</sup>**

36a “**In the multitude of words, there wanteth not sin**” (Proverbs 10:19). The more you talk, the greater the opportunity to sin with your tongue. The police always warn a criminal “Anything you say can be used against you in a court of law”. The Lord operates on the same principle in that what we say today may come back to bite us at the judgment. Be careful what you say, especially when you are attacking the Lord and trying to attribute His miracles to Satan.

**12:37 For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.<sup>a</sup>**

37a This is associated with blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.

### **71. The Sign of Jonah 12:38-42, see also Luke 11:24-32**

**12:38 ¶ Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee.<sup>a</sup>**

38a “**Master, we would see a sign from thee.**”

1. “**Master**”, not “Lord”.

2. The gall! Ordering Christ to do a miracle, just for them! They wouldn’t believe anyway, just as the past miracles of Christ had done them no good. They had just seen a healing (and thus, a sign) but they rejected that one since they accused Jesus of doing that sign by the power of Beelzebub in Matthew 12:24). If they rejected that sign, what right did they have to ask for another? And why would they believe a second sign if they rejected the first sign? They didn’t believe the signs that Christ had already provided, they would not believe any future signs He might provide. Israel had a right to ask for the apostolic signs and wonders if Jesus was the Messiah (Exodus 4:9-30). But even if they had seen them (and they did and would again), they still refused to accept them or Him, so what was the point?

A. The main problem here is they had already been presented with numerous signs and had rejected all of them (Matthew 8:4, 14, 16, 34, 9:6, 22, 26, 30, 10:8, 11:5,6, 23, 12:13). The question is one of a bigoted hypocrite, with his mind already made up. It is like the saying: “I’ve got my mind made up; don’t confuse me with a lot of facts (or truth).”

**12:39 But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it,<sup>a</sup> but the sign of the prophet Jonas:<sup>b</sup>**

39a Israel would only get one sign- the resurrection, as evidenced by Jonah.

39b “**An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign**”

1. A fitting verse for charismatics and other sign-seekers. Gentiles have no business asking for messianic signs and wonders because:

A. We are to walk by faith,

B. We are not looking to establish the messianic credentials of Jesus.

2. **Adulterous** in the sense of immoral, unfaithful, apostate.



A. Israel was guilty of spiritual adultery from God by their formalism and spiritual blindness, substituting their own narrow and legalistic interpretations of the law for the true meanings and applications of the law.

B. Many people today are guilty of the same sin of “sign seeking” in failing to put their total trust in the written Scripture. The Bible is not sufficient for them, so they need something external to “prove” the Bible or to strengthen their faith.

C. Who is guilty of this?

i. Charismatics. Obviously, with so many Charismatic preachers continually harping on signs and wonders, physical healings, financial blessings, etc.

ii. Revivalists. Many Independent Fundamental Baptists are continually harping on “revival”. They read about the various moves of God in history (as in the First and second Great Awakenings) and declare that we need God to “do it again” so we can have a great number of “souls saved” and see an increase of excitement and interest in our churches. To them, “normal” preaching and “normal” Christianity is not enough, and God can’t do His work unless we can somehow coax Him to “send down a mighty revival”. So they try their best to “earn it” and “work for it”. They are looking for a sign of something they would call a “revival” to somehow justify and vindicate their ministries and to demonstrate that they are true and genuine “men of God”. But do we need “revival” to accomplish that? Wouldn’t “normal” moves and workings of God accomplish that, and more? Have they turned “revival” into some sort of religious “fetish” (like bus ministries and their versions of “soulwinning”)?

**12:40 For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.<sup>a</sup>**

40a As Jonah was 3 literal days and nights in the whale’s stomach, so Christ would be in three literal days and nights in the heart of the earth.

1. Jesus took the account of Jonah as literal history, so shall we. Some observations about the incident with Jonah:

2. Scripture does not say Jonah stayed alive while in the whale’s belly. The “sign” turns out to be the sign of the resurrection. Jonah was not alive three days and nights. He was dead.

A. Jonah 2:2, 6 **“And said, I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the LORD, and he heard me; out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardest my voice... I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth with her bars was about me for ever: yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption, O LORD my God.”**

B. Acts 2:27,29,31 **“Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption... Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day...He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption.”**

3. There are historical accounts of whales that have swallowed men and disgorged them long after three days, and there are whales big enough to keep a man alive three days.

4. Since Christ turns out to be in the earth an exact even three days and an exact even three nights, there is no need to compromise with the “good Friday” Catholic fiction, by

reducing the days to one and one-half. The Scriptural days listed from Palm-Sunday to Christ's burial are Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday—6 p. m. There is no way Christ could have been crucified on a Friday.

A. He came in Sunday morning (Mark 11:11).

B. He slept at Bethany Sunday night (Mark 11:12).

C. He cursed the fig tree Monday morning and saw it withered Tuesday (Mark 11:20).

D. Tuesday evening at 5 was two days before the Passover (Mark 14:1).

E. Passover was eaten after 6 Thursday (Matt. 26:1). Disciples went out to find a room on Tuesday (Luke 22:7).

F. Tuesday evening at the end of the third day of the week the Passover is killed—not eaten (Matt 26:1).

i. The Bible lists no extra day between Sunday and Wednesday morning at 9 o'clock, when He is crucified. The plain truth is that Christ is crucified Wednesday and is in the tomb at 6 p.m., making exactly three nights of twelve hours each and three days of twelve hours each in the tomb. He comes out the first day of the week—Saturday night at 6 p.m. The angel descends at midnight Saturday night and the women come at 5:30 a.m., Sunday morning.

G. Many of the commentators wrongly try to re-time this to one or two days. William Barclay, in his *Daily Study Bible* on Matthew<sup>140</sup> claims that "The fact is that Matthew understood wrongly the point of what Jesus said; and in so doing he made a strange mistake for Jesus was not in the heart of the earth for three nights, but only for two. He was laid in the earth on the night of the first Good Friday and rose on the morning of the first Easter Sunday. The point is that to the Ninevites Jonah himself was God's sign, and Jonah's words were God's message." A man writing under divine inspiration is not going to make any such mistake, but a liberal, writing under the crippling effects of critical scholarship, like Barclay, would make such a mistake. Barclay can be occasionally useful, but he must always be read with much discernment because of his liberalism and neo-orthodoxy. A man writing under divine inspiration and who was a physical disciple of Jesus who heard His teachings over a three-year period "misunderstood"? It is much more likely that Barclay misunderstood! Barclay is very arrogant to assume Matthew makes such a mistake instead of considering the very real possibility that it is Barclay who made the mistake. This is the standard position of the Scholar's Union. If there is something in Scripture that they cannot understand, they assume the problem is with the text instead of with their meager three-pound brain or their "education".

**12:41 The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here.<sup>a</sup>**

41a The people of Nineveh repented when they heard the preaching of Jonah. The Lord's generation received a greater witness that Nineveh did and they would not repent. These Jews would be judged harsher than the heathen in Nineveh.

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<sup>140</sup> Volume 2, pages 49 and 50.

AV	ESV	LSV
41 The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas <i>is</i> here.	41 The men of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, something greater than Jonah is here.	41 “The men of Nineveh will stand up with this generation at the judgment, and will condemn it because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, something greater than Jonah is here.

Both the ESV and LSV have this “greater than Jonas” as a “something” rather than a “someone” (Christ). Also see in Matthew 12:42.

**12:42 The queen of the south<sup>a</sup> shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here.**

42a This is the Queen of Sheba.

1. This believing Gentile would condemn unbelieving Israel at this judgment. She traveled hundreds of miles, uninvited, at great expense to hear Solomon, based on a mere report of his fame. This generation wouldn't walk across the street to hear a Greater Than Solomon. She came uninvited, on a mere report and at a great expense to hear Solomon.
2. It would cost these Jews nothing to hear the Lord, but they did not take advantage of their opportunity.

## **72. The Danger of Exorcisms 12:43-45**

**12:43 When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none.<sup>a</sup>**

43a It seems unclean spirits like wet places and the human body is about 90% water. Unclean spirits do not like to be disembodied.

**12:44 Then he saith, I will return into my house<sup>a</sup> from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished.<sup>bc</sup>**

44a “The foul fiend calls the man, “My house.” His audacity is amazing. He did not build or buy that house, and he has no right to it. He speaks of his leaving the man as a mere coming out: “I came out.” He says, as if it were an easy matter, “I will return.” Evidently, he considers that he has the freehold of man's nature and can go and come at his pleasure. If Satan quits a man of his own will, he is sure to return just when it suits his purpose. Only the divine force which ejects him can secure his non-return. Reformations which are not the work of conquering grace are usually temporary, and often lead up to a worse condition in after years.”<sup>141</sup>

<sup>141</sup> Charles Spurgeon, *Gospel of the Kingdom*, page 192.

44b The heart of the man is swept from certain grosser sins and garnished with some pretty morality or religion; but the Holy Spirit is not there, and no divine change has been wrought, and therefore the unclean spirit is as much at home there as ever he was. The devil may appreciate that his former house has been improved in his absence with a good cleaning and a new coat of paint.

44c “**garnished**” decorated, arranged.

**12:45 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.<sup>a</sup>**

45a If an unsaved man has devils cast out of him, he stands in danger of being re-possessed by even more devils unless he gets saved. The devil is cast out in Matthew 12:43 but he leaves a spiritual void in the life and body of the person unless that person is saved and has the Holy Spirit come in to fill that void. Otherwise, the “house” is swept, varnished and clean but it is empty, ready for a new occupant. If this person does not accept Christ, the devil may decide to return to the body of his previous victim and the victim would become possessed again, and probably with an even greater number of devils, so his new condition would be worse than his first possession.

### **73. Who is My Mother? 12:46-50, see also Mark 3:31-35; Luke 8:19-21**

**12:46 ¶ While he yet talked to the people,<sup>a</sup> behold, his mother and his brethren<sup>b</sup> stood without, desiring to speak with him.**

46a Christ was always being interrupted!

46b “**brethren**”

1. Mary had at least 4 half-brothers and 2 half-sisters, born after Him. The Romanist teaching of the “perpetual virginity” of Mary is a myth.
2. Jesus is called Mary’s firstborn in Matthew 1:25 and Luke 2:7. This presupposes she had other children.
3. Jesus was an alien to His mother’s children- Psalm 69:8,9.
4. James is called the Lord’s brother in Galatians 1:19.
5. There is no reference to Joseph as he was dead by this time.

**12:47 Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee.**

AV	ESV	LSV
47 Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee.	(omitted)	47 Now someone said to Him, “Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside seeking to speak to You.”

This verse is omitted from the ESV but it is included in the LSV and in the Darby translation.

**12:48 But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother?<sup>a</sup> and who are my brethren?<sup>b</sup>**

48a “**who is my mother?**”

1. Anti-Romanist teachings on Mary worship.
2. No Biblical writer ever encouraged the practice of worshipping Mary or elevating her in any way.

48b There are no special favors or recognition for family, not even for Mary.

**12:49 And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren!<sup>a</sup>**

Spiritual ties are often stronger than family ties. You will often have stronger relations with other Christians in your home church than you will with your own blood relatives.

**12:50 For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.<sup>a</sup>**

50b It is not family ties that grant any sort of special relationship with Christ. It is doing the will of God that grants that sort of relationship that transcends family. There is no nepotism in the Kingdom.

### **Spiritual Applications- Matthew Chapter 12**

The first part of the chapter deals with the Sabbath. Christians are not bound by Sabbath regulations, despite what Christian-Jewish groups try to teach. The Sabbath is a sign between Israel and God. It was never given to or applied to the Gentiles or the Church. I do not believe in applying Sabbath-type regulations on Christians. Some Christians treat Sunday like a Sabbath in that they will not buy or eat at restaurants. Those are more convictions than principles. If you don't want to eat out after Sunday services, that is fine, but you have no Biblical basis to condemn another believer that does. Romans 14:5 applies here. The only requirement we have regarding Sunday is church attendance. Other than that, there are no Sunday regulations for a Christian to observe. I have always tried to sanctify Sunday as a special day by trying to abstain from certain worldly activities, but I have also tried not to treat Sunday in a legalistic manner.

Do not dismiss the reality of devilish activity in the world. Satan is real and his angels are quite busy. I have personally dealt with people who are either possessed with or controlled by devils. I am convinced that much of the tattooing and body piercing of today is inspired by devils, as well as the sexual experimentation, homosexuality and trans-genderism that is so widespread. I am convinced that much of the nonsense we see in our generation today is caused by devilish activity, such as the trans-genderism and sodomy that is so widespread, as well as political turmoil and war.



### **Matthew Chapter 13**

#### **74. Parable of the Sower 13:1-9, see also Mark 4:1-20; Luke 8:4-15**

The problem with evangelism is what do you do with the converts? You hope they attend a good church and start to grow spiritually but that is not always the case. Sometimes you get just a verbal profession with no real change of heart. People may make a profession in the heat of an emotional moment that quickly wears off. Some may have no good church to attend or may start going to a weak or compromised church where they will end up servicing the apostasy. The cults may pick off some of the converts. They have a true gift of spotting a young convert who is not able to defend themselves against their errors. Only a handful will truly go on with God. Look at all the multitudes that followed Jesus at various times in His ministry. Yet there were only a handful of people at the cross. The Parable of the Sower below describes all this in more detail.

These seven parables can correspond with the seven churches in Revelation 2-3: “A careful reading of Matthew 13 will yield a striking comparison as the seven parables of the kingdom also seem to match the history of the church.

“Beginning with Matthew 13:3 we have the parable of the sower. This corresponds to the Ephesus period (Revelation 2:1-7) when the good seed is being sown from Jerusalem to the uttermost parts of the earth. There were to be four areas of sowing — wayside, rocky ground, thorny ground and good ground. The early church carried the gospel to four areas — Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost part of the earth. The Lord forewarns (Matthew 13:18-23) that only a small portion of the seed will bear true fruit and teaches that Satan’s work in this age will be to hinder the work of the gospel.

Next comes the parable of the tares (Matthew 13:24-30) which corresponds to the church in Smyrna. Here we learn that the enemy is at work mingling his children among the saints (vv. 27-40). They look the same, but their fruit is different. It is during this time that the church “fathers” introduce the heresies that will cripple the church throughout the age.

The third parable is that of the mustard seed (Matthew 13:31-32) which matches the Pergamos period. The plant of this parable becomes something of a monstrosity. It is first an herb but then becomes a tree. The same picture is set forth in Ezekiel 31:3-14 by the Assyrian kingdom and again in Daniel 4:10-19 by the Babylonian kingdom. The similarity of the tree mentioned in those passages, as the representation of an earthly kingdom, to the tree spoken of in the parable can scarcely be doubted. In each case the earthly kingdom was:

1. The enemy of God’s people.
2. The habitation of the fowls of the air.
3. Cut down in destruction by the Lord.

How incredible then that so many commentators have sought to teach this tree as the spread of the gospel and the birds as people everywhere coming to Christ. The very first parable in Matthew 13 was interpreted by the Lord Jesus who told us the fowls of the air were Satan’s agents to devour the word of God. In the Pergamos period these

birds found a home in the church. Christianity in its beginning was comparatively insignificant; like **a grain of mustard seed**, which was proverbial among the Jews as **the least of all seeds**; but in this parable, it is seen to outstrip itself and become a tree, in the shelter of whose branches the birds of heaven lodge.

The common teaching is that this represents the triumph of the church. Instead it pictures a spiritual and other-worldly body becoming a secular kingdom. This occurred during the Pergamos period.

Next comes the parable of the leaven (Matthew 13:33). Again, the commentators take the positive approach and miss the runway. The majority of them make leaven the gospel, the woman the church, and see in the picture the spread of Christianity until the whole world is converted. Throughout the Bible leaven stands for corruption. The Corinthian epistle instructs the churches to purge the leaven from their congregations. Ignoring this truth, during the Thyatira period, the woman, called in Revelation Jezebel and the mother of harlots, corrupts the church by introducing multitudes of “traditions” into the bread of life.

The fifth parable is that of the hidden treasure (Matthew 13:44) which corresponds to the Sardis church period or the time of reformation. The treasure was in the field. They walked by it or over it every day until at last someone stumbled upon it and brought it out for all to see. This pictures Luther’s finding of the doctrine of justification by faith in a Bible which had been available to monks like himself for centuries. God’s people survived as a remnant through the dark ages of papal rule and these “few names” were used by the Holy Spirit to bring rediscovered truth to light during this time. (Consider the treasure of Exodus 19:5 in this typical context).

In the parable of the pearls (Matthew 13:45-46) we see wealth and materialism being sacrificed to purchase living stones. This matches the time of the Philadelphia church when countless lives and fortunes were laid down at the feet of Jesus to proclaim the truth that once was lost but now was found. It is remarkable to read of the ways God used the great financial and industrial booms of this time period to finance the greatest missionary movement since the days of the apostles.

The last parable is that of the drag-net (Matthew 13:47-50). With the sea representing peoples, nations or multitudes, this parable pictures the gathering into judgment at the close of the church age. The Laodicean period will end with the Lord gathering in the good and casting the bad into a furnace of fire.”<sup>142</sup>

**13:1 The same day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the sea side.**

**13:2 And great multitudes were gathered together unto him, so that he went into a ship, and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore.<sup>a</sup>**

2a “It shows a definite turning-point in the ministry of Jesus. At the beginning of his ministry, we find him teaching in the synagogues; but now we find him teaching on the seashore. The change is very significant. It was not that the door of the synagogue was as yet finally shut to him, but it was closing. Even yet in the synagogue he would find a welcome from the common people; but the official leaders of Jewish orthodoxy were now in open opposition to him. When he entered a synagogue now, it would not be to find only an eager crowd of listeners; it would

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<sup>142</sup> James Knox, *The Christ Honoring Commentary on Revelation*, volume 1, pages 70-72.



be also to find a bleak-eyed company of Scribes and Pharisees and elders weighing and sifting every word to find a charge against him, and watching every action to turn it into an accusation words.”<sup>143</sup>

**13:3 And he spake many things unto them in parables,<sup>a</sup> saying, Behold,<sup>b</sup> a sower<sup>c</sup> went forth to sow;<sup>def</sup>**

3a A “**parable**” is something thrown alongside something else for comparison. These stories are thrown beside truth to illustrate and to help us better understand these truths.

3b “**Behold...**” As Jesus was preparing to preach this sermon, He may have seen a man working in a nearby field, and He directed the attention of His audience to that man to develop this parable.

3c The **sower** is Christ. The seed is the word of God. The soulwinner may distribute the seed but only the Lord can sow it into the heart. I can give out a tract or talk to someone but only the Lord can sow that seed in the heart. So much depends on the Lord despite everything I do. The fowls of verse 4 are devils sent by Satan. The ground represents the heart of a man by the wayside. He is lost. The “stony place” hearers, where there is no “earth,” are those that “joyfully receive the word” (Matthew 13:20) and believe, without a “root” taking place in the heart. They pass off as Christians until either persecution, affliction, or temptation put them to the test and expose him.

3d Four soils, or types of hearts:

1. Wayside- no effect of the seed/word at all
2. Stony- Can’t take root, no soil
3. Thorny- choked by cares of this world
4. Good, leads to salvation

3e “Theoretically, the seed, being the Word of God, should produce the same kind of fruit regardless of the spiritual condition of those who scatter it; but it does not work that way. The identical message preached to the heathen by men of differing degrees of godliness will produce different kinds of converts and result in a quality of Christianity varying according to the purity and power of those who preach it. Christianity will always reproduce itself after its kind. A worldly minded, unspiritual church, when she crosses the ocean to give her witness to peoples of other tongues and other cultures is sure to bring forth on the other shores a Christianity much like her own. Not the naked Word only but the character of the witness determines the quality of the convert. The church can do no more than transplant herself. What she is in one land she will be in another. A crab apple does not become a Grimes Golden by being carried from one country to another. God has written His law deep in all life; everything must bring forth after its kind.”<sup>144</sup>

3f “The great interest of this chapter is that here we see Jesus beginning to use to the full his characteristic method of teaching in parables. Even before this he had used a way of teaching which had the germ of the parable in it. The simile of the salt and the light (Matthew 5:13-16), the picture of the birds and the lilies (Matthew 6:26-30), the story of the wise and the foolish builder (Matthew 7:24-27), the illustration of the garments and the wine-skins (Matthew 9:16-

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<sup>143</sup> William Barclay, *Matthew*, The Daily Study Bible, volume 2, pages 53-54.

<sup>144</sup> A. W. Tozer, “Of God and Man” cited in *The A. W. Tozer Bible*, page 1132.

17), the picture of the children playing in the market-place (Matthew 11:16-17) are all embryo parables. They are truth in pictures. But it is in this chapter that we find Jesus' way of using parables fully developed and at its most vivid. As someone has said, "Whatever else is true of Jesus, it is certainly true that he was one of the world's supreme masters of the short story." Before we begin to study these parables in detail, let us ask why Jesus used this method and what are the great teaching advantages which it offers."<sup>145</sup>

**13:4 And when he sowed, some seeds<sup>a</sup> fell by the way side,<sup>b</sup> and the fowls came and devoured them up:<sup>cd</sup>**

4a The seeds are the various applications of the word of God. Sometimes, we give the word but it has no effect on the sinner to whom it is given. This includes most people, who simply have no interest in spiritual things.

4b When Christ sowed, some seeds fell by the way side: even when the Chief Sower is at work, some seed fails. We know he sows the best of seed, and in the best manner; but not always in the best of soils. Some of it falls on the trodden path, and so lies uncovered and unaccepted of the soil.

What is the "way side"? Besides the usage in this parable, the term is used in:

1. Genesis 38:21 **"Then he asked the men of that place, saying, Where is the harlot, that was openly by the way side? And they said, There was no harlot in this place."**
2. Matthew 20:30 **"And, behold, two blind men sitting by the way side, when they heard that Jesus passed by, cried out, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou Son of David."**
3. Luke 18:35 **"And it came to pass, that as he was come nigh unto Jericho, a certain blind man sat by the way side begging:"**

The "way side" is the side of the way, a road or other thoroughfare. We might say it is the "shoulder" of a highway. Only here does the seed fall in the way side. Why here? Is this prospect not "in the way" but "off the beaten track"? The seed may have been sown "in the way" but somehow ended up next to the road where it was not seen by anyone except the birds.

4c These fowls are types of unclean spirits. Once the word is presented to a person, it does nothing and makes no impression upon him. It is like trying to sow seed on concrete. There is no soil, so the seed just lies there, exposed, visible for the birds to eat it since there was no soil for it to sink into. Sometimes the witness never gets a chance to take any root from the beginning. The witness often may blame himself for the lack of any response or interest in the prospect, but there are simply some men who want absolutely nothing to do with the Gospel. The fault is not in us but in the prospect in these cases.

4d Matthew 13:19 expands on this hearer, **"When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side."**

1. He does not understand it.
2. The wicked one comes and snatches the word from the heart.
  - A. Mark uses "Satan" in Mark 4:15 and Luke uses "the devil" in Luke 8:12.
3. This man receives the word "by the way side".

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<sup>145</sup> William Barclay, *Matthew*, The Daily Study Bible, volume 2, page 54.

A. The soil next to the road is usually hard-packed and not conducive for any seed to grow.

B. There is traffic on the way side as it is usually safer to walk on the side of the road than to walk in the road, so any seed that might fall here is trodden down, as in Luke 8:5.

**13:5 Some fell upon stony places,<sup>a</sup> where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth:**

**5a “Stony places”**

1. This may not have been a field full of rocks, but ground that had a shallow layer of topsoil that covered a hard, rocky foundation underneath. There was some soil, but not much and not enough for any seed to take root. There may be an initial interest in the gospel, but it does not last as the spirit of this age quickly chokes the seed.

2. Some converts are like this. They hear the gospel and make a quick profession. They are very excited and full of zeal. But the excitement of this “new thing” can only be maintained for so long before it wears off, and the converts cool down and return to his old life.

**13:6 And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away.<sup>ab</sup>**

6a Was this seed sown in a night season or on a cloudy day? In a time when there was no hot, glaring sun? Alas, when the sun did arise, its heat killed the new plant because it had no root to draw water and not enough shade to protect it from the heat and light of the sun, or the cares of this world.

6b Matthew 13:20,21 interprets the parable.

1. He hears the word.
2. He receives it with joy.
3. He endures for a while.
4. The seed has no depth of soil to work with so it cannot put down any roots.
5. When reversals come, and they will, the prospect will abandon his profession.
  - A. Many victims of shallow evangelistic techniques are like this, such as those “saved” by faith healers or prosperity preachers. These “converts” were promised a physical healing, a financial gain or some other carnal benefit if they “got saved” according to whatever message was being offered them. They accepted the message, but when the promised benefit did not come, they were “offended: and abandoned any profession they might have made.
  - B. I led a man to Christ in the prison once. In dealing with him after his profession, I warned him “Tomorrow may be the worst day of your life as the devil will try to shake your faith in what you just did”. I saw him the next week and asked him how things were going. He responded “Preacher, I’m glad you warned me! I had a very bad week, But I’m still saved!”.

**13:7 And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them:<sup>ab</sup>**

7a The third “hearer,” is a man who hears and evidently receives, for he had a possibility of bearing fruit. Further, “he becometh unfruitful,” indicating that at one time he did bear fruit. The word is in him. He has some fruit that is not perfected. Three things keep this man from being a

fruitful Christian, and they are listed by Luke as: “cares...riches, and pleasures.” Mark lists them as: “cares,” “deceitfulness of riches,” and “other things.” He is too wrapped up in the affairs of his life to waste time on spiritual things. How telling of modern life where we get too busy to pray or consider spiritual things. We have college, career, marriage and pleasures that keep us out of church and away from the prayer closet. So many today are just too busy and wrapped up in things of this world to stop and give the gospel any serious consideration. They also claim to be too busy to go to church but they always seem to find the time to take their boat out on the lake or go on a trip with their Recreational Vehicle or camper.

7b Matthew 13:22 interprets this.

1. The seed was received.
2. The word was heard.
3. The seed was choked by:
  - A. The care of this world
  - B. The deceitfulness of riches
    - i. 1 Timothy 6:17 **“Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy;”**
4. The seed was choked and became unfruitful.

**13:8 But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold.<sup>abcd</sup>**

8a The fourth hearer is described as “ground that has been well prepared for planting”. He understands and “bears fruit”, with both Matthew and Mark showing varieties of “fruitfulness” among the saved—30, 60, 100. This hearer keeps the word and brings “forth the fruit with patience”. If you can’t bring forth 100-fold, at least strive to bring 30-fold.

1. For every 4 people that hear the gospel, only 1 will genuinely accept it and be saved. And for every 3 men that do respond, only 1 will bear fruit a hundredfold. So only about 1 out of every 7 people who hear the gospel will respond in the best way possible. But there will be a harvest! You may only be able to glean a partial harvest from all the seed that was sown, as drought, bugs, disease and the rabbits will devour some of the seed, but faithful sowing will result in a harvest. It may not be as large as we would hope but there will be some fruit of our labors, even if we do not see it.
2. We must never rush the harvest or else we will pick unripe fruit. The harvest comes on nature’s timetable, not ours. It may take decades for the seed of the gospel to germinate in the heart of a man. This is a day of the quick conversion and getting people saved between traffic lights. I have seen claims by hyper-evangelicals of leading a man to Christ in ten minutes, as they knock on his door, rush through the Romans Road and pry some sort of profession or prayer out of the prospect in less time than it takes to eat a hamburger. These people are then claimed as “converts” although few will show any sign of a genuine conversion. We may have instant coffee and instant potatoes, but instant conversions are a thing foreign to the spirit of Scripture. There is always a period of preparation of the soil before any harvest can be expected. Today’s evangelists have no patience to wait for the Holy Spirit to do His work in the heart. In better days, this work of conviction and conversion could take months or even years, but the fruit was strong and genuine.

8b “When a man sows the seed of the word, he does not know what he is doing or what effect the seed is having. H. L. Gee tells this story. In the church where he worshipped there was a

lonely old man, old Thomas. He had outlived all his friends and hardly anyone knew him. When Thomas died, Gee had the feeling that there would be no one to go to the funeral so he decided to go, so that there might be someone to follow the old man to his last resting-place. There was no one else and it was a wild, wet day. The funeral reached the cemetery; and at the gate there was a soldier waiting. He was an officer, but on his raincoat, there were no rank badges. The soldier came to the graveside for the ceremony; when it was over, he stepped forward and before the open grave swept his hand to a salute that might have been given to a king. H. L. Gee walked away with this soldier, and as they walked, the wind blew the soldier's raincoat open to reveal the shoulder badges of a brigadier. The brigadier said to Gee: "You will perhaps be wondering what I am doing here. Years ago, Thomas was my Sunday School teacher; I was a wild lad and a sore trial to him. He never knew what he did for me, but I owe everything I am or will be to old Thomas, and today I had to come to salute him at the end." Thomas did not know what he was doing. No preacher or teacher ever does. It is our task to sow the seed, and to leave the rest to God."<sup>146</sup>

8c "The harvest was not equally great on every spot of fertile soil: it varied from an hundredfold to thirtyfold. All good ground is not alike good; and, besides, the situation may differ. Harvests are not all alike in the same farm, in the same season, and under same farmer; and yet each field may yield a fairly good harvest."<sup>147</sup>

8d Matthew 13:23 interprets this.

1. The seed was received into good ground.
2. This person had good ground as he had a receptive heart.
3. He understood the word.
4. The seed bore fruit:
  - A. A hundredfold
  - B. Sixtyfold
  - C. Thirtyfold

### **13:9 Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.<sup>a</sup>**

9a You can hear it if you want, or you can reject the message. The choice is up to the hearer. The preacher delivers the message, but after that, the results and reception are out of his control.

## **75. Why Parables? 13:10-17**

### **13:10 And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables?<sup>a</sup>**

10a Why not just give the crowds truth, straight, direct and unvarnished? It would have a lot of time and it would prevent a lot of misunderstanding!

**13:11 He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven,<sup>abcde</sup> but to them it is not given.**

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<sup>146</sup> William Barclay, *Matthew* Volume 2, The Daily Study Bible, pages 62-63.

<sup>147</sup> Charles Spurgeon, *Gospel of the Kingdom*.

11a The parable is explained to the disciples in private but not to the crowds in public. The crowds would not believe or receive these mysteries, so these truths are withheld.

11b **"It is given unto you to know."**

1. This statement implies that God Himself is selective and selects and gives to certain people what He does not to others. If a child learns his arithmetic right, he will be given a chance at math. If he learns this right, he will be given a chance at algebra, etc. If a man goes by the truth God gives him and believes what God has said about fundamental basic things (i.e., sin, death, judgment, and salvation), then God will increase his ability to learn greater truths, and he may go deeper into revelation. The disciples have obeyed "John's Baptism," and they have followed Christ and listened to Him, thus far, without criticism or "hardness of heart." They are going to learn something the Pharisees are not going to be able to learn because God will not show them.

2. It must also be remembered that God is not under obligation to reveal the truth to a man who doesn't want it (John 7:17 **"If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself."**). To some "it is not given" because they don't want it and care nothing for it.

11c "The outstanding thing one can learn from this first parable is that, contrary to scholarly tradition, every parable has an exact meaning for everything in it. Since most Bible scholars from 1600–1960 were unable to handle the parable of the prodigal son and the parable of the lost coin, they have adopted the curious and apologetic dictum that "a parable cannot be used to teach doctrine, but only presents a central truth." Far from being an honest statement, this is merely a frank admission that a man with two legs of different length has a hard time walking (see Prov 26:7). Jesus deliberately assigns a DETAILED meaning to every detail He named of the only two parables He ever explained." (Matt. 13:18–23, 37–42)."<sup>148</sup>

11d "The parable always makes truth concrete. There are very few people who can grasp and understand abstract ideas; most people think in pictures. We could for long enough try to put into words what beauty is, and at the end of it no one would be very much the wiser; but if we can point at someone and say, "That is a beautiful person," no more description is needed. We might try for long enough to define goodness and in the end leave no clear idea of goodness in people's minds; but everyone recognizes a good person and good deed when he sees them. In order to be understood, every great word must become flesh, every great idea must take form and shape in a person; and the first great quality of a parable is that it makes truth into a picture which all men can see and understand."<sup>149</sup>

11e Matthew uses the term **"Kingdom of Heaven"** to identify these parables as Jewish, especially with a tribulation application, as they deal with the Millennial kingdom and the events leading up to it. As such, they would not have a direct theological application to Christians or the Church Age, although you can always make a spiritual application to anyone. Luke does this in Luke 8:10 by using the term **"Kingdom of God"**. The doctrinal application is ultimately to the tribulation period and the millennial kingdom but there are spiritual applications for our dispensation as well.

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<sup>148</sup> Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer's Commentary on Matthew*, pages 282-283.

<sup>149</sup> William Barclay, *Matthew* Volume 2, The Daily Study Bible, page 54.

**13:12 For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath.<sup>a</sup>**

12a Reception of the gospel will make a good man better and rejection of it will make a man with a bad heart worse.

**13:13 Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.<sup>a</sup>**

Christ used parables to keep the truth from the masses. Most of the masses followed Jesus because of the excitement He generated, or because they wanted to witness a miracle. Few followed Christ because He was God or because they were really interested in His teachings.

**13:14 And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias,<sup>ab</sup> which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive:**

14a See Isaiah 6:9,10, **“And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.”**

1. This passage is quoted four times in the New Testament:

- A. Matthew 13:14,15
- B. John 12:40
- C. Acts 28:25
- D. Romans 11:8

14b “This prophecy of Isaiah is referred to so many times in the New Testament that it merits the closest examination. It is cited in John 12 immediately before the Last Supper and the Crucifixion, and it is cited again in Acts 28, following the rejection of the risen Messiah by Jews of the dispersion. These three places are not Scriptural “misfits.” In Matthew 13 the unpardonable sin has been committed and the mystery form of the kingdom is revealed which will fill the gap between Acts 28 and the Second Coming. In John 12, the final rejection of Christ’s earthly ministry heralds His crucifixion, and the passage in Isaiah 6, from whence the verses are taken, heralds the great tribulation (see Isa. 6:6–13). In Acts 28, the citation heralds the spread of the gospel to the Gentiles and the calling out of that great body of Believers known as the Church (1 Cor. 12:13).<sup>150</sup> It also speaks of the rejection of Christ by Israel in the Church Age.

**13:15 For this people’s heart is waxed gross,<sup>a</sup> and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.**

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<sup>150</sup> Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer’s Commentary on Matthew*, pages 287-288.

**“Waxed gross”** implies grown heavy in the sense of thick layers of fat covering the heart so that it cannot function properly or rendering it incapable of receiving spiritual truths. Spiritual rebellion and rejection of revealed truth will result in this kind of heart.

**13:16 But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear.**

**13:17 For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.<sup>a</sup>**

17a The disciples had spiritual advantages not available to Abraham, Moses, or any other Old Testament character. Today, we have even greater advantages with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and a completed Bible, not to mention good-sized theological libraries that most of us have. I have a bigger and better theological library than any of the “great teachers and preachers” in church history ever had. This is due largely to the proliferation of books in electronic format that are either free or at a very small cost. I carry an entire theological library on my phone or tablet.

## **76. The Parable of the Sower Explained 13:18-23**

**13:18 ¶ Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower.<sup>a</sup>**

18a 13:18-23 The four responses:

1. 19- outright rejection
2. 20- a shallow, temporary profession that fades away at the first trial
3. 22- a reception that suffers due to worldliness and carnality
4. 23- a genuine conversion that results in fruit bearing

Or:

1. The word is ignored by the indifferent.
2. It is listened to and discussed, but, then, is discarded or neglected.
3. It is accepted, but, then, later, disobeyed.
4. It brings forth fruit in three categories: thirty, sixty, and “an hundredfold” (Matthew 13:23). By implication, some would bring forth no fruit as well.

**13:19 When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side.**

**13:20 But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it;**

**13:21 Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.<sup>a</sup>**

21a High-pressure evangelism often results in shallow professions. The “soulwinner” is under so much pressure to produce results (conversions) that he resorts to similar high-pressure tactics to wrangle some sort of a profession from the “prospect”. As long as he can get a verbal profession or some sort of prayer out of the sinner, he counts it as a conversion, despite the fact that the sinner has little, if any, idea of what he did. I’ve seen video presentations where the



“soulwinner” knocks on a door of a prospect and “leads him to Christ” after a ten-minute “presentation”. How can you lead a sinner to Christ in ten minutes if they have never had a clear presentation of the gospel before? There is so much spiritual truth to process, and you have to give the Law time to do its work in the heart of the sinner. It can take years to get a genuine profession out of a sinner. Any “profession” under these circumstances is shallow at best and is not permanent.

AV	ESV	LSV
21 Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is <b>offended</b> .	21 yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while, and when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately he falls away.	21 yet he has no root in himself, but is <i>only</i> temporary, and when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he falls away.

“**offended**” Both the ESV and LSV have that they “fall away”, implying apostasy, but that is not the idea of the Authorized Version.

**13:22 He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.**

**13:23<sup>a</sup> But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.**

23a In summary:

1. The sower is Christ.
2. The seed is the word of God.
3. The fowls of Matthew 13:4 are devils.
4. The ground represents the heart of a man by the wayside. He is lost as the word never takes root in his heart.
5. The “stony place” hearer, where there is no “earth,” are those that “joyfully receive the word” (Matthew 13:20) and believe but without a “root” taking place in the heart. They pass off as Christians until either persecution, affliction, or temptation put them to the test (like in the parable of the tares). The persecution that reveals their true nature is connected with “**because of the word**” in Matthew 13:20,21.
6. The third “hearer,” in Matthew 13:7, is a man who hears and evidently receives, for he had a possibility of bearing fruit (John 15:1-7). However, “he becometh unfruitful,” showing that at one time he did bear fruit. Further, the word is in him (Mark 4:19) and he has some fruit that is not perfected (Luke 8:14). Three things keep this man from being a fruitful Christian, and they are listed by Luke as: “cares...riches, and pleasures.” Mark lists them as: “cares,” “deceitfulness of riches,” and “other things.”
7. The fourth hearer is described as “ground that has been well prepared for planting”. He understands and “bears fruit” (Matthew 13:23). Both Matthew and Mark show varieties of “fruitfulness” among the saved—30, 60, 100. This hearer keeps the word (Luke 8:15; John 15:7-10) and brings “**forth the fruit with patience**” (Luke 8:15).

## **77. The Parable of the Wheat and the Tares 13:24-30**

**13:24 ¶ Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field:**

**13:25 But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.**

**13:26 But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.**

**13:27 So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares?**

**13:28 He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up?**

**13:29 But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them.**

**13:30 Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.**

### Summary

1. 13:24 The kingdom of heaven is like a man sowed good seed in his field.
  - A. This sower would be Christ.
  - B. Matthew 13:38 says the field is the world.
2. 13:25 While he slept, an enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, then left.
  - A. Men slept, not God. He knew and saw what the enemy did but He allowed it anyway.
    - i. Why didn't the Lord stop, or prevent it? Who likes tares in his garden? The Lord deliberately allowed false professors to infiltrate His churches and even take many of them over. And He does nothing about it until the time of the harvest. Why? Why not keep His churches pure? Genuine local churches are pure, even if not everyone in them are saved or dedicated. The Lord allows this "mixed multitude" to keep His people vigilant against the works of the enemy.
  - B. The tares were planted in secret, while men slept. The destructive forces within the churches are planted there by "the devil" while believers sleep or are otherwise unawares. This is why spiritual diligence is required for all Christians, especially church leaders.
  - C. Apostates and other bad actors crept in unawares in Jude 4, **For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.**
  - D. "His enemy"
    - i. The Lord has a definite enemy and it is Satan and those who follow him.
  - E. "tares"
    - i. Tares are not weeds. A weed is easy to spot in any garden. A tare resembles a good plant but it is counterfeit, not easy to identify.

- ii. You can dig up a weed with little or no damage to the good plants, but if you uproot tares, you will do damage to the good plants. They get harvested together and then are separated.
  - iii. Satan and his agents are in the midst of believers and in the churches, trying to destroy the work by a counterfeit.
    - a. Exodus 12-15 shows an example of this work in the “mixed multitude” that departed from Egypt, many of them with no change of heart to match the believers with them.
  - iv. “Tares” is from Middle English; probably akin to Middle Dutch tarwe wheat, also from Anglo-French, from Old Italian tara, from Arabic ṭarḥa, literally, that which is removed.
  - v. Some translations and commentaries translate “tares” as “darnel” but that does not improve the text nor does it help in understanding the parable.
    - a. The ESV uses “weeds”.
  - vi. The tares were not discovered until the harvest. Tares were a weed called bearded darnel (*Lolium Temulentum*). In their early stages the tares so closely resembled the wheat that it was impossible to distinguish the one from the other. When both had headed out it was easy to distinguish them; but by that time their roots were so intertwined that the tares could not be weeded out without tearing the wheat out with them. The Jews called the tares “bastard wheat”. The wheat and tares could not be safely separated when both were growing, but in the end they had to be separated, because the grain of the bearded darnel is slightly poisonous. It causes dizziness and sickness and is narcotic in its effects, and even a small amount has a bitter and unpleasant taste. In the end it was usually separated by hand. The picture of a man deliberately sowing darnel in someone else's field is by no means only imagination. That was actually sometimes done. To this day in India one of the direst threats which a man can make to his enemy is “I will sow bad seed in your field.” And in codified Roman law this crime is forbidden and its punishment laid down.”<sup>151</sup>
- 3. 13:26 After a while, both the wheat and the tares sprung forth.
    - A. The tares always follow the fruit. You are not going to be to have one without the other, no matter how hard you try to keep the tares out.
  - 4. 13:27 The servants were surprised and did not know who sowed the tares.
    - A. It is surprising that the servants were surprised and that they did not know who planted the tares or where they came from.
  - 5. 13:28 The sower knew that an enemy had sowed the tares among the wheat.
    - A. The sower (Lord) knows who the enemy is, what he motives are and can spot his work, even if his servants cannot.
  - 6. 13:29,30 The servants asked if they should pull the tares but the sower said not to, lest the wheat be pulled up as well. Let them both grow together until the harvest- Matthew 13:29,30
    - A. The Lord is the one who will eventually separate the wheat and the tares as only He can discern between them properly. He can see the heart, not just the outward appearance.
  - 7. 13:30 At the time of harvest, the tares will be gathered, bound into bundles and burned while the wheat would go into the barn.
    - A. There are unbelievers alongside believers in every church and it can be difficult to tell them apart. Even the pastor may have difficulty in doing this.
      - i. The percentage may run as high as 90% unbelievers in some churches.
    - B. “time of harvest”

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<sup>151</sup> Summarized from William Barclay, *Matthew*, Volume 2, The Daily Study Bible, pages 72-73.

- i. This is at the end of the age, in this Jewish context, the end of the tribulation.
- ii. At the end of the Church Age, leading up to the rapture, there would be many spiritual counterfeits in the churches that make a very credible public profession of Christianity but who are not saved. At the end, our churches will be stocked with a mixed multitude, the lost mixed in with the saved, and it will be difficult to tell the saved from the lost. The spiritual state of local churches will grow worse and worse the closer we get to the rapture, not better.
- iii. Any post-millennial idea that the world and the church will gradually improve through time is an idea that has no scriptural support.

8. Both this parable and the parable of the net in Matthew 13:47-50 both involve a separation of good and bad at the end of the age.

9. The Lord explains this parable in Matthew 13:36-43. This was something He usually did not do but the meaning must have been important enough to warrant an explanation.

#### 13:26 AV

#### ESV

#### LSV

26 But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the <b>tares</b> also.	26 So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared also.	26 "But when the wheat sprouted and bore grain, then the tares became evident also.
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**"tares"** The ESV uses "weeds" which is the wrong word. Tares resemble the plants they grow among, making them difficult to detect. Weeds are weeds and are easy to identify. Darby uses the obscure "darnel", which is no improvement over the traditional reading.

#### 13:27 AV

#### ESV

#### LSV

27 So the <b>servants</b> of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares?	27 And the servants of the master of the house came and said to him, 'Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have weeds?'	27 "The slaves of the landowner came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?'
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**"servants"** The LSV continues in its error, inspired by John MacArthur, of substituting "slave" for "servant". Darby uses "bondmen".

### **78. The Parable of the Mustard Seed 13:31,32, see also Mark 4:30-32; Luke 13:18,19**

**13:31 ¶ Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field:**

**13:32 Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.**

#### Summary

1. 13:31 The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that a man sowed in his field.
  - A. 13:38 The field is the world.
  - B. 13:32 It is the least of all seeds.

- C. 13:32 When it does grow, it is the greatest among herbs and becomes a tree.
- i. Trees grow slowly but herbs grow quickly. Due to its rapid growth, the mustard tree does not develop the strength of a woody trunk as a tree would.
  - ii. Great things always start from small ideas, even apostasy and error.
    - a. The early church started with 120 people in an upper room.
    - b. The nation of Israel began with one couple.
    - c. The Mormon cult began with one man who was a treasure hunter.
    - d. The birth of the modern missions movement was credited to one man, William Carey.
    - e. One man, Charles Finney, did more to damage evangelism than any one man in modern church history.
  - iii. If one sinner can destroy much good (Ecclesiastes 9:18), also consider how much good one saint can do. What can one man do? What can one small church do? More than we can imagine, both for good or ill.
  - iv. The herb can get too big and can attract demonic attention and activity- the birds.
    - a. The development of the Kingdom starts small but soon grows to be larger and greater than all other kingdoms.
    - b. There were millennia where the idea of a literal, political Jewish kingdom was absurd and few believed it. Israel was scattered among all the nations of the earth and the land of Israel was a desolate wasteland. But the progress of the Kingdom grows through time and at the fulfillment, it will dominate all the other kingdoms of the earth in the Millennium.
- D. In Matthew, the faith is “**in the world**” (John 1:3-10). This “faith,” although classified as an “herb” in Matthew 13:32, becomes a tree.
- i. Trees in Scripture are assorted in ethical and moral values.
    - a. The wicked is a bay tree.
    - b. The righteous is a palm tree.
    - c. Self-righteousness is a fig tree.
    - d. Israel is an olive tree.
    - e. Christ is likened to an apple tree (Song 2).
  - ii. The “birds lodging in the branches” classify in an evil context.
    - a. The birds of the air are devils.
  - iii. This tree is identified with a tree like the one in Daniel 4.
    - a. As a type of Antichrist and the Antichrist’s kingdom itself, this tree is a religious monstrosity shading pigs, bears, bats, snakes, and wolves, instead of sheep and it is associated with a heathen government.
  - iv.. We can also compare the church at Pergamos in Revelation with a church that allowed itself to be corrupted by Satanic influences.

**13:32 AV**

**ESV**

**LSV**

32 Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among <b>herbs</b> , and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.	32 It is the smallest of all seeds, but when it has grown it is larger than all the garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.”	32 and this is the smallest of all seeds, but when it is fully grown, it is the largest of the garden plants and becomes a tree, so that THE BIRDS OF THE AIR come and NEST IN ITS BRANCHES.”
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“herbs” is a better rendering than “garden plant” as not all herbs grow in gardens.

## **79. The Parable of the Leaven 13:33, see also Luke 13:20,21**

**13:33 ¶ Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven<sup>a</sup> is like unto leaven, which a woman<sup>bc</sup> took, and hid in three measures of meal,<sup>d</sup> till the whole was leavened.**

### Summary

1. Matthew 13:33 The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal until the whole was leavened.

A. A “woman” This woman is false religion.

i. Zechariah 5:9-11 **Then lifted I up mine eyes, and looked, and, behold, there came out two women, and the wind was in their wings; for they had wings like the wings of a stork: and they lifted up the ephah between the earth and the heaven. Then said I to the angel that talked with me, Whither do these bear the ephah? And he said unto me, To build it an house in the land of Shinar: and it shall be established, and set there upon her own base. ) and her leaven is false doctrine as she sows it into the good churches.**

B. “There are women in the Scriptures engaged in religious activities, but the woman of the Thyatira church (which incidentally matches this fourth parable) is an adulteress (Rev. 2:20), and the woman of Revelation 17:1–5 is a whore. Worse than that, she is defined by the Holy Spirit, apart from private interpretation, as being a city built on seven mountains, who murders Christians, and whose symbol is a golden cup and who loves purple and scarlet (Rev. 17:3–4, 6, 18). No reasonable man in his sound mind would have any trouble identifying the woman from Scripture, if he were allowed the American, Christian privilege of reading it and believing what he reads. The Woman is that old purple clad mother of abominations, the Papal Roman “Church.” All reformers understood this. All premillennialists understand it. No born-again Christian in any denomination has any trouble identifying it if the passages are read aloud, without comment. The only way the pope can bury this stinking corpse that clings to his religious organization is to pretend that Revelation 17 refers to past history and pagan Rome, thus dissecting the passages from the Second Advent. This accounts for the entire Protestant system of amillennialism, which is in line with Roman tradition.”<sup>152</sup>

C. Why “three measures?”

i. Peter Ruckman<sup>153</sup> has it as representing the three main branches of Christianity, the Roman Catholic Church, the Orthodox churches and the Protestant churches. But since Baptists and Baptist-type churches are not included in any of these three groups, if Ruckman is correct, the apostasy and error in Christianity does not come from Baptist and Remnant churches, but rather from the errors in the doctrinal teachings and practices of the Roman Catholics, the Orthodox and the Protestant churches. But that does not shield these remnant churches from apostasy. We wonder about that as much apostasy has come from the Baptists and today, they are as much involved in and responsible for the last-days apostasy as any other group.

<sup>152</sup> Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer's Commentary on Matthew*, page 296.

<sup>153</sup> Pages 298-299 in his commentary on Matthew.

**13:33 AV**

**ESV**

**LSV**

<p><b>33</b> Another parable spake he unto them; <b>The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.</b></p>	<p><b>33</b> He told them another parable. <b>"The kingdom of heaven is like leaven that a woman took and hid in three measures of flour, till it was all leavened."</b></p>	<p><b>33</b> He spoke another parable to them, <b>"The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three sata of flour until it was all leavened."</b></p>
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**"measures"** What is a "sata" that the LSV uses? How is that any sort of improvement over "measures"?

**80. Why Parables, Part 2? 13:34,35**

**13:34 All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them:**

**13:35 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet,<sup>a</sup> saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world.**

35a "That is a quotation from Ps.78:1-3, and in it the Psalmist knows that what he is saying will be understood, and that he is recalling men to truth that both they and their fathers have known.

"The truth is that the words of Isaiah, and the use that Jesus made of them, must be read with insight and with an attempt to put ourselves in the position both of Isaiah and of Jesus. These words tell of three things.

"(i) They tell of a prophet's bewilderment. The prophet brought a message to people which to him was crystal clear; and he was bewildered that they could not understand it. That is repeatedly the experience of both the preacher and the teacher. Often when we preach or teach or discuss things with people, we try to tell them something which to us is relevant, vivid, of absorbing interest and of paramount importance, and they hear it with a complete lack of interest, understanding, and urgency. And we are amazed and bewildered that what means so much to us apparently means nothing at all to them, that what kindles a fire in our bones leaves them stone cold, that what thrills and moves our hearts leaves them icily indifferent. That is the experience of every teacher and preacher and evangelist.

"(ii) They tell of a prophet's despair. It was Isaiah's feeling that his preaching was actually doing more harm than good, that he might as well speak to a brick wall, that there was no way into the mind and the heart of this deaf and blind people, that, as far as any effects went, they seemed to be getting worse instead of better. Again, that is the experience of every teacher and preacher. There are times when those whom we seek to win seem, in spite of all our efforts, to be getting further away from, instead of nearer to, the Christian way. Our words go whistling down the wind; our message meets the impenetrable barrier of men's indifference; the result of all our work seems less than nothing, for at the end of it men seem further away from God than they were at the beginning.

"(iii) But these words tell of something more than a prophet's bewilderment and a prophet's despair; they also tell of a prophet's ultimate faith. Here we find ourselves face to face with a Jewish conviction apart from which much of what the prophet, and of what Jesus, and of what the early Church said is not fully intelligible."<sup>154</sup>

<sup>154</sup> William Barclay, *Matthew*, Volume 2, The Daily Study Bible, pages 69-70.

## **81. The Parable of the Tares Explained 13:36-43**

**13:36 Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house:<sup>a</sup> and his disciples came unto him, saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field.<sup>b</sup>**

36a Jesus goes back to the house and explains what He was teaching in the field privately to the disciples. The disciples apparently did not ask for the interpretation of the other parables that Christ gave in this chapter, but He gives the interpretations anyway.

36b The parable summarized:

1. "The field is the world."
2. The enemy is the devil.
3. The tares are counterfeit believers.
4. **"The children of the kingdom,"** can't refer to Christians so it must refer to a group of people in the tribulation who are not truly "saved" (in respect to the salvation requirements of the tribulation). These **"the children of the kingdom"** in Matthew 8:12 are also said to go into "outer darkness".
5. **"The harvest is the end of the world"** (Matthew 13:39) which would be the end of the tribulation period.
6. **"While men slept."** Men slept, not God.
  - A. The pastor-watchmen let the enemy slip in the tares. Either they were lazy, incompetent, busy with non-spiritual things or were co-operating in this act of sabotage.
7. The separating of the tares is indicated in a unique way. "Gather ye together first the tares." This gathering is done with reference to a future burning, but it takes place before the burning (Matthew 13:40), and it takes place before the wheat goes into the garner. A study of Hosea 10:10; Matthew 3:12; Zephaniah 3:8; Isaiah 9:11; Zechariah 12:3; and Zechariah 14:2 will help at this point.
  - A. Isaiah 9:11 **"Therefore the LORD shall set up the adversaries of Rezin against him, and join his enemies together;"**
  - B. Hosea 10:10 **"It is in my desire that I should chastise them; and the people shall be gathered against them, when they shall bind themselves in their two furrows."**
  - C. Zephaniah 3:8 **"Therefore wait ye upon me, saith the LORD, until the day that I rise up to the prey: for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy."**
  - D. Zechariah 12:3 **"And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it."**
  - E. Zechariah 14:2 **"For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city."**
  - F. Matthew 3:12 **"Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."**



8. **“Children of the wicked one”**. Everyone is most certainly not a child of God. Satan not only has “children,” (John 8:44) but he has a specific “seed” (Genesis 3:15) to imitate the Messiah.

**13:37 He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man;**

**13:38 The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom;<sup>a</sup> but the tares are the children of the wicked one;**

38a The “**children of the kingdom**” are not Christians, so this phrase identifies the parable as a Kingdom parable.

**13:39 The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world;<sup>a</sup> and the reapers are the angels.**

39a The “**the end of the world**” is the end of the age at the Second Coming, not the rapture.

**13:40 As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire;<sup>a</sup> so shall it be in the end of this world.**

40a Hell fire? It is obvious that the tares are not truly saved so there is an ultimate judgment for them. Also see Matthew 13:42.

**13:41 The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity;<sup>a</sup>**

41a There are unsaved people in this kingdom, pointing to a Millennial reference, as there will be unsaved people who survive the Tribulation and go into the Millennial Kingdom. Many will be born during the Millennium many will be lost and never get saved.

**13:42 And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.<sup>a</sup>**

42a “**furnace of fire**” A reference to hell. This phrase is also used in Matthew 13:50.

**13:43 Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.<sup>a</sup> Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.<sup>b</sup>**

43a What is this time reference? Millennial? Or after? I would think this would refer to the Eternal State after the Millennium, since the righteous are shining as the sun,

43b This is a common phrase, meaning that many will hear the parable but will not accept it, consider it or act upon it. To “hear” is to listen with comprehension with the goal of applying the truths of what was taught. Few hearers will do this. With these people, it is literally “in one ear and out the other”.

## **82. The Parable of the Hidden Treasure 13:44**

**13:44 ¶ Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field;<sup>ab</sup> the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.**

### Summary

1. The kingdom of heaven is like a hidden treasure in a field. When a man finds it, he rejoices, sells everything he has and buys that field, coming into possession of it.
2. "In the ancient world there were banks, but not banks such as ordinary people could use. Ordinary people used the ground as the safest place to keep their most cherished belongings. In the parable of the talents the worthless servant hid his talent in the ground, lest he should lose it (Matt. 25:25). There was a rabbinic saying that there was only one safe repository for money--the earth. This was still more the case in a land where a man's garden might at any time become a battlefield. Palestine was probably the most fought over country in the world; and, when the tide of war threatened to flow over them, it was common practice for people to hide their valuables in the ground, before they took to flight, in the hope that the day would come when they could return and regain them. Josephus speaks of "the gold and the silver and the rest of that most precious furniture which the Jews had, and which the owners treasured up underground against the uncertain fortunes of war."<sup>155</sup>
3. What is hidden in the field?
  - A. It's not Christ, as He is not hidden.
  - B. The Christian has nothing for sale, and he cannot buy Christ as He is not for sale. We come without money or price, and you can't salvation, as we are saved by faith in the Church Age.
  - C. Someone hid this treasure in the field and the field is the world (Matthew 13:38), so this treasure is in the world but hidden until discovered by an individual.
  - D. The "treasure" is probably Israel as this is a Jewish parable, given to Jews, in the context of Israel.
  - E. The buying is Christ purchasing not only the church, but the world (with His blood). Christ died for the whole world to make salvation possible and available to all.
  - F. Somewhere in the world is hidden a true remnant of believing Israel that is very precious to the Lord that He will redeem in that day.

## **83. The Parable of the Pearl of Great Price 13:45,46**

**13:45 ¶ Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls:**

**13:46 Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.**

### Summary

1. Matthew 13:45 The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant man seeking goodly pearls.
  - A. "pearl"
    - i. Used in connection with wisdom.

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<sup>155</sup> William Barclay, *Matthew* Volume 2, The Daily Study Bible, page 84.

- a. Job 28:18, **No mention shall be made of coral, or of pearls: for the price of wisdom *is* above rubies.**
  - ii. Do not cast your holy things (pearls) before swine
    - a. Matthew 7:6, **Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.**
  - iii. The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant man seeking pearls.
    - a. Matthew 13:45, **Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls:**
  - iv. Christian women are not to overly adorn themselves with pearls.
    - a. 1 Timothy 2:9, **In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array;**
  - v. The woman of Revelation 17:4 was arrayed with pearls.
    - a. Revelation 17:4 **And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication:**
  - vi. Last days Babylon trafficked in pearls.
    - a. Revelation 18:12,16 **The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble...And saying, Alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls!**
  - vii. Pearly gates of New Jerusalem
    - a. Revelation 21:21 **And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.**
  - viii. Biblical theology only identifies pearls as something that his holy that should not be given to pearls but that is co-opted by Mystery Babylon in the Tribulation.
- B. The “merchant man” is Jesus Christ. We know that Christ did buy something (the Church), and we know what the price of the purchase was.
- i. Acts 20:28 **“Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.”**
  - ii. Ephesians 5:25 **“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;”**
  - iii. 1 Peter 1:18,19 **“Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:”**
- C. More about pearls:
- i. A pearl is organic in nature, unlike other precious stones, which are all inorganic. It comes from a living organism, an oyster.
  - ii. It is the only jewel that would be ruined if it was divided. Other stones can be divided into smaller stones.

- iii. A pearl is found on the bottom of the ocean in a dirty or muddy place for that is where oysters live.
  - iv. It is found in an oyster and is formed by a secretion, which is put forth to cover an injury.
  - v. It is the favorite ornamental jewel for kings and queens.
  - vi. The Jews did not highly regard pearls, but Gentiles did.
2. 13:46 When he finds one pearl of great price, he sells all he has and buys it.
- A. Similar to the merchant in Matthew 13:44.
3. 13:46 The “**pearl of great price**”
- A. If it represents people (and all precious stones do, 1 Peter 2:5; 1 Corinthians 3:10,12), can only refer to one group of people on earth, the Church.
- B. The pearl comes from the body of the oyster just as the Church is likened as the “Body” of Christ. This church is a living organism (1 Corinthians 12), purchased by suffering. The saved sinner thus comes from a muddy place of sin under the wrath of God; he is covered with Christ’s righteousness, which was only made available through the suffering of Christ. Thus, covered by the blood and with the righteousness of God, he is destined to reign as a king (Revelation 1:1-6).
- C. The Great Price is the blood of Christ, which was used to purchase the Church.

#### **84. The Parable of the Net 13:47-50**

**13:47 ¶ Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind:**

**13:48 Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away.**

**13:49 So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just,**

**13:50 And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.**

#### **Summary**

1. Matthew 13:47 The kingdom of heaven is like a net cast into the sea that caught all sorts and kinds of fish.
2. “As the goodly pearl in the last parable can represent the Philadelphia church period in history (Rev. 3), so this last parable may represent the Laodicean period (Rev. 3). It is peculiar indeed that only seven parables are given in this chapter as a warning of the Church Age to come (which no one in the audience would understand until the revelation is given by Paul in Eph. 3), while the remaining five parables occur later in Matthew. This total of twelve hearkens to Israel, and so the remaining five parables all deal with Israel’s situation in the Great Tribulation at the end of the Church Age.”<sup>156</sup>
3. The “sea” usually represents the mass of humanity.
4. The kingdom will include all kinds of men, from all nationalities.

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<sup>156</sup> Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer’s Commentary on Matthew*, page 307.

A. But these are “gathered”, caught in the net. Fish are usually caught in a net, they are not captured willingly. We know that in the Millennium, the kingdom will be a dictatorship and all nations will be compelled to submit to Christ. They will not do so willingly.

5. Matthew 13:48 The problem with dragnet evangelism is that you catch a lot of fish you can't keep. There will be many bad professions, shallow professions and false professions. Using “mass evangelism”, you get all sorts of fish- some good, most are bad. You will have to spread out the net and manually examine each fish, individually, to judge which ones are valuable and which ones are worthless.

A. In the last days of the church age, Laodicean “evangelism” will boast great numbers being saved, but in reality, the number of genuine conversions will be small. Most professions and professors will be spiritually worthless and will have to be “thrown back” to the world. The number of professions will be impressive, but they will be massively inflated.

B. “Good and bad fish” are obviously both saved and lost men.

i. This also applies to nations, as seen in the Judgment of the Nations in Matthew 25.

C. We are allowed to judge professions. The fisherman judges between good and bad fish. He keeps the good ones and discards the bad ones. We must do the same thing spiritually. Not everyone who says “Lord, Lord” is a good fish. We must judge them by their fruits.

6. Matthew 13:49 When this takes place is not recorded. It is not the Judgment of the Nations of Matthew 25:31-46 as that deals with the nations, not individuals. Seeing the dispensational burden of this gospel, it takes place either during the tribulation soon after it. Could it take place between the Second Coming and the start of the Millennial Kingdom? The application probably is Millennial.

7. Matthew 13:50 The results of this judgment for the damned is being cast into a furnace of fire where there will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

A. This is the fate of the “goat” nations at the Judgment of the Nations in Matthew 25:46.

The fact that there are seven parables dealing with the ends times naturally makes us think of the seven church ages of Revelation 2 and 3. We don't know how far we can go in this comparison since the Matthew 13 parables have their primary application to Israel but there are many Church Age applications as we have already seen. But the descriptions of the parables and the corresponding church ages is just too strong to ignore.

CHURCH	PARABLE- Matthew 13	Remarks
Ephesus	Sower 13:3-23	Sowed good seed but later devoured by birds, a picture of devils, lost or cooling love and zeal, the initial sowing of the gospel by the early church, with varying results.
Smyrna	Wheat and tares 13:24-30	Good fruit but Satan was busy sowing the tares of the developing false church
Pergamos	Mustard seed 13:31,32	Mustard seeds are small, but grow to good sized trees, in which the birds of the air (devils) lodge. The church starts small and pure but it

		grows and apostasizes under state favor and control.
Thyatira	The leaven 13:33	Leaven has a negative type in Scripture, the spreading internal corruption of the church. "That woman Jezebel" is active in this church and it is a woman who is putting the leaven in the church.
Sardis	Treasure of the field 13:44	The Reformation church was a buried treasure but was still "in the world", the unfulfilled promise of the Reformation. It was a move of God and ordained of God but it did not live up to its full potential. The true Reformers (the Baptist churches, such as Mennonites, Brethren, Waldensians, etc.) were overwhelmed, overshadowed and generally ignored by historians as to the extent of their contributions- they are "hidden" by history.
Philadelphia	Pearl of great price 13:45,46	A "pearl" of a church age, precious
Laodicea	The net cast into the sea 13:47,48	A mixed multitude from the "sea" or the world. This is an "unseparated" catch. We can apply this to the last days church with its lack of separation (Half-way Covenant of the American Colonial period)

## **85. The Instructed Scribe 13:51,52**

**13:51 Jesus saith unto them, Have ye understood all these things? They say unto him, Yea, Lord.**

**13:52 Then said he unto them, Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder,<sup>a</sup> which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old.**

52a "The "householder" is a steward and as a good steward over a household, he has charge of the "treasures".

1. The treasures are good things in "the heart" (Matthew 12:35).

2. The “old and new treasures” must refer to some kind of a relationship between the Old and New Testaments (Covenants).

**86. Offended in Christ 13:53-58, see also Mark 6:1-6**

**13:53 ¶ And it came to pass, that when Jesus had finished these parables, he departed thence.**

**13:54 And when he was come into his own country,<sup>a</sup> he taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and said, Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works?**

54a His **own country** would be Galilee, where the Lord based His ministry and where He was from.

AV	ESV	LSV
54 And when he was come into his own country, he taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and said, Whence hath this <i>man</i> this wisdom, and <i>these</i> mighty works?	54 and coming to his hometown he taught them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished, and said, “Where did this man get this wisdom and these mighty works?”	54 And He came to His hometown and <i>began</i> teaching them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished, and said, “Where <i>did</i> this man <i>get</i> this wisdom and <i>these</i> miraculous powers?”

“mighty works” The LSV uses “miraculous powers”.

**13:55 Is not this the carpenter’s son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas?**

**13:56 And his sisters,<sup>a</sup> are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things?**

56a Jesus had at least 4 half-brothers and two half-sisters. Mary was never any sort of a “perpetual virgin”.

**13:57 And they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house.<sup>a</sup>**

57a Psalm 69:8 shows Christ as an alien and a stranger even in His own household, “**I am become a stranger unto my brethren, and an alien unto my mother’s children.**” None of His brethren believed on Him until after his resurrection (John 7:5).

**13:58 And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief.<sup>ab</sup>**

58a Christ will not work where He is not welcomed or honored. Since the people in His hometown were scandalized in Him, He would not honor their attitude with any real manifestation of the power of God.

58b The relating of Jesus' rejection shows how honest Matthew is. In any biographical account, the writer always tries to present his subject in the best light possible. But Matthew tells us how Jesus rejected and his unpopularity in some regions. Usually, such negative material like this would not be included in a biography. If Matthew was trying to deceive his readers about the deity of Jesus, he would not have included material such as this.

### **Spiritual Applications- Matthew Chapter 13**

When you are sowing the gospel in your evangelism, it is so easy to get discouraged at the lack of response. But it must be remembered that the success of the seed is dependent on the soil. You may have the best seed in the world but if you plant it on concrete, you will get no crop. There is nothing wrong with the gospel. The issue is in the nature of the hearts that receive it. The hearts of men are hard, especially today. Most will reject the seed but even those that receive it may do imperfectly. They may receive the gospel for selfish reasons, such as in accepting the presentations and presuppositions of the prosperity preachers, so that root may not last or go down very deep. We pray that God will lead us to the right person at the right time, who is ready to receive the gospel unto salvation.

See how unbelief limits God in verse 58. Of course, God can work through the unbelief of man but many times, He chooses not to. He will not honor unbelief with miracles or revelation as unbelief is an insult to him. If a man won't trust Him or believe Him, why should God do anything on behalf of that person? God will honor even Little Faith but will not respond where there is no faith.



## **Matthew Chapter 14**

### **87. The Death of John 14:1-12, see also Mark 6:14-16; Luke 9:7-9**

**14:1 At that time Herod the tetrarch<sup>a</sup> heard of the fame of Jesus,**

1a The Greek word transliterated means a governor over the fourth part of any region; but the word subsequently lost its strict etymological meaning, and came to denote any petty prince not ruling over an entire country.

**14:2 And said unto his servants, This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead; and therefore mighty works do shew forth themselves in him.<sup>a</sup>**

2a Herod was certainly under conviction for killing John.

1. Herod shows an example of:

A. A conscience “awakened” in Mark 6:22 “**And when the daughter of the said Herodias came in, and danced, and pleased Herod and them that sat with him, the king said unto the damsel, Ask of me whatsoever thou wilt, and I will give it thee.**”

B. A conscience “seared” in Mark 6:26 “**And the king was exceeding sorry; yet for his oath's sake, and for their sakes which sat with him, he would not reject her.**”

C. A conscience “dead” in Luke 23:8 “**And when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad: for he was desirous to see him of a long season, because he had heard many things of him; and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by him.**”

2. Herod was also you standard politician, who was afraid of:

A. His wife in Matthew 14:3 “**For Herod had laid hold on John, and bound him, and put him in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife.**”

B. A preacher in Mark 6:20 “**For Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and an holy, and observed him; and when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly.**”

C. The people in Matthew 14:5 “**And when he would have put him to death, he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet.**”

D. Ridicule in Matthew 14:9 “**And the king was sorry: nevertheless for the oath's sake, and them which sat with him at meat, he commanded it to be given her.**”

**14:3<sup>a</sup> ¶ For Herod had laid hold on John, and bound him, and put him in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife.<sup>b</sup>**

3a See also Mark 6:17-29 for a parallel passage.

3b Trying to keep up with the Herods was like trying to untangle a soap opera or the goings-on in the British Royal Family.

**14:4 For John said unto him, It is not lawful for thee to have her.<sup>a</sup>**

4a “After Herod the Great died, his kingdom was divided among three of his surviving sons: Archelaus, Philip, and Antipas. Archelaus was deposed before Jesus came to manhood. He inherited all his father's vices and nothing of his greatness. Philip, the son of the beautiful Cleopatra of Jerusalem, fell heir to the poorest part of the kingdom, the desert region northeast of Galilee and south of Damascus. Antipas, who inherited Galilee and Perea, was the Herod who murdered John and mocked Jesus. Antipas was not a violent man like his brother Archelaus, but he was sly. It was Antipas who founded Tiberias, a city considered unclean by the Jews because it was built partly over a cemetery. On a visit to Rome, Antipas stayed with another of his half-brothers, a man named Herod Philip (not Philip the tetrarch, but another son of Herod the Great). Herod Philip had retired from the Herodian jungle in Palestine and had moved to Rome, where he lived as a wealthy citizen. His wife Herodias, a woman of great beauty and ambition, was the granddaughter of Herod the Great. The marriage was therefore consanguineous, as were so many of the marriages within the Herodian family. Herodias's brother Agrippa was a close friend of Caligula. When Caligula became emperor, he gave the spendthrift Agrippa the Palestinian estates left by Philip the tetrarch upon his death. The emperor also gave Agrippa the right to wear a crown and be called a king. This preferment stirred the fury and jealousy of Herodias. While Antipas was visiting Herod Philip at Rome, Herodias entered into an intrigue with him. She had long since tired of the life of a wealthy Roman matron, and she saw in Antipas an opportunity for excitement and advancement. So she ran away with him to Galilee. Antipas divorced his legal wife, the daughter of Aretas, king of Petra, and married Herodias. Thereby Antipas made an enemy of the Nabateans, made the fortress of Machaerus more necessary than ever, and made himself guilty of entering into a marriage that was both adulterous and consanguineous. John the Baptist denounced the whole affair and consequently earned the implacable hatred of Herodias. Herod Antipas, spurred on by his vengeful wife, arrested John and imprisoned him at Machaerus. But Herod vacillated. On the one hand was the goading of Herodias to get rid of John; on the other hand was the power of John's personality. Herod also hesitated because he did not want to make John a martyr, for he was still popular with the masses.”<sup>157</sup>

**14:5 And when he would have put him to death, he feared the multitude,<sup>a</sup> because they counted him as a prophet.**

5a The fear of man (or the multitude) bringeth a snare (Proverbs 29:25).

**14:6 But when Herod's birthday was kept, the daughter of Herodias danced before them, and pleased Herod.<sup>a</sup>**

6a This was probably a very seductive type of dance. When we see dances like this, something bad is going to happen. In this case, the “greatest man born of woman” lost his head. These dances are usually performed for a purpose- to try to get a man to do something he ordinarily would not do.

**14:7 Whereupon he promised with an oath to give her whatsoever she would ask.<sup>a</sup>**

7a No doubt Herod was enflamed and probably drunk when he said this.

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<sup>157</sup> John Phillips, *Exploring the Gospel of Matthew*, pages 289-290.

**14:8 And she, being before instructed of her mother, said, Give me here John Baptist's head in a charger.<sup>a</sup>**

8a A “charger” is like a deep salad bowl.

**14:9 And the king was sorry: nevertheless for the oath's sake, and them which sat with him at meat, he commanded it to be given her.<sup>ab</sup>**

9a Herod had backed himself into a corner with his public promise and he could not lose face by backing down. He knew he acted stupidly but there was nothing he could do if he was going to salvage what little honor he had.

9b “Here, then, is a perfect example of the attitude, make up, motives, and “religion” of a typical Christ rejecting sinner. He fears EVERYTHING he shouldn't, and NOTHING he should. Herod's conscience is weakened under John's preaching (Mark 6:20), it is outraged at a dance (Mark 6:22), and it is dead by the time Herod is confronted with the decision to receive Christ (Luke 23:8–12). It is significant that where Herod and Pilate cannot be tolerant and broadminded and cooperate in political matters, they can agree that a Scripture-quoting, Bible believing Saviour should be “gotten rid of.”<sup>158</sup>

**14:10 And he sent, and beheaded John in the prison.<sup>a</sup>**

10a Paul would suffer a similar fate.

**14:11 And his head was brought in a charger, and given to the damsel: and she brought it to her mother.<sup>a</sup>**

11a What did she do with John's head? We can image they both looked at John's head with a mix of triumph and victory, mistakenly thinking they finally rid themselves of this troublesome preacher. But this vile act must be accounted for in the day of judgment and no doubt John will be there are their judgment to bear witness against them.

**14:12 And his disciples came, and took up the body, and buried it, and went and told Jesus.<sup>ab</sup>**

12a Wicked people gloated over John's death but honorable men gave John a decent and honorable burial.

12b John still had some disciples at this time, even after telling his followers to follow Jesus instead of him.

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<sup>158</sup> Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer's Commentary on Matthew*, page 315.

**88. “Come Apart and Rest” 14:13,14, see also Mark 6:31-44; Luke 9:10-17; John 6:1-13**

**14:13 ¶ When Jesus heard of it, he departed thence by ship into a desert place apart:<sup>a</sup> and when the people had heard thereof, they followed him on foot out of the cities.**

13a No doubt news of John’s murder shocked the disciples and Jesus was upset by it as well. He knew His disciples needed a break to process the news of John’s death, but the demands of the crowds were constant and insistent. Several of Jesus’ disciples started off with John before being encouraged by John to follow Jesus instead.

1. John 1:36 “**And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!**”

**14:14 And Jesus went forth, and saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion toward them, and he healed their sick.<sup>a</sup>**

14a Seeing sinners, either physically sick or sin sick, always moves the Lord to compassion.

**89. Feeding of the Five Thousand 14:15-21**

**14:15 ¶ And when it was evening,<sup>a</sup> his disciples came to him, saying, This is a desert place, and the time is now past; send the multitude away,<sup>b</sup> that they may go into the villages, and buy themselves victuals.<sup>cd</sup>**

15a The word "evening" occurs in both Matthew 14:15 and 14:23. The Jews had two evenings. The first was from the ninth to the twelfth hour (between 3:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.). The second was a period of thirty to forty minutes after sunset or from sunset until three stars were visible. In Matthew 14:15 the reference is evidently to the first evening. It was late afternoon and soon all the markets would be closed. The disciples had their eyes on the clock, but the Lord had His eyes on the crowd. "Give them something to eat," He said. But that was the problem. The disciples had nothing to give by this time of the day.

15b “**Send the multitude away**” “Galilee must have been a place where it was very difficult to be alone. Galilee was a small country, only 50 miles from north to south and 25 miles from east to west, and Josephus tells us that in his time within that small area there were 204 towns and villages, none with a population of less than 15,000 people. In such a thickly populated area it was not easy to get away from people for any length of time. But it was quiet on the other side of the lake, and at its widest the lake was only 8 miles wide.”<sup>159</sup>

15c The Lord will provide a great feast to His followers from very meager means.

15d In parallel accounts, we can pick up a number of other details.

1. The time was far “passed” as well as “past” (Mark 6:35).
2. The word “bread” is substituted for “victuals” (Mark 6:36).
3. They argued with Jesus in unbelief before He commanded them to bring the food (Mark 6:37; John 6:7-9).

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<sup>159</sup> William Barclay, *Matthew* in the Daily Study Bible, volume 2, page 98.

4. The word “meat” is used in Luke 9:13 for “bread” and “victuals.”
5. The desert place turns out to be not a sandy desert, but a grassy desert (John 6:10). If this seems strange to the inexperienced traveler (and nearly all Hebrew and Greek scholars are “stay at home” folks!), it must be remembered that the word “desert” is kin to “deserted” and means “empty, barren, void of any person”. The Gobi Desert is largely a rock desert, the Sahara a sand desert, and the deserts in Mexico and Arizona cactus and sage brush deserts; nevertheless, they are deserted and qualify as “deserts.”<sup>160</sup>
6. They sat down by companies or ranks (fifty in each rank-Mark 6:39–40).
7. The loaves are blessed and broken before they are given (Matthew 26:26), and this contains a tremendous spiritual truth. The word of God has to be broken to be given out (Luke 24:45). The Christian has to be broken to be a blessing. He has to be blessed by God to endure the breaking which follows (2 Corinthians 12:1-8).
8. John supplies most of the detailed information concerning this feeding of 5,000. Chapter 6 in John’s gospel not only supplies a detailed conversation with Phillip and Andrew, preceding the feeding, but also a tremendous discourse on the “Bread of LIFE” subsequent to the feeding (John 6:15-71).
9. John also records that not only was the multitude completely satisfied in the amount that they had to eat from this feeding, but that the remains were greater than the original amount (John 6:13). The feeding is said, by the Holy Spirit, to be a “miracle” (John 6:14).

**14:16 But Jesus said unto them, They need not depart; give ye them to eat.<sup>a</sup>**

16a How were 12 poor men supposed to feed 5,000 men, not counting the women and children? There could have been over 20,000 people involved. We never think of solutions to problems like this simply because we are not spiritual enough to do so.

**14:17 And they say unto him, We have here but five loaves, and two fishes.<sup>ab</sup>**

17a It was a boy who had this as given in John 6:9 (“**There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many?**”). This meager provision came from an even weaker source, a boy!

**17b “Can God provide a table in the wilderness?”** Psalm 78:19. The answer is an obvious and a resounding “yes!”

**14:18 He said, Bring them hither to me.<sup>a</sup>**

18a Whatever we bring to the Lord for His service and use He will accept and multiply it beyond our comprehension.

**14:19 And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass,<sup>a</sup> and took the five loaves, and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed,<sup>b</sup> and brake, and gave the loaves to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude.**

19a There is always order and design in the workings of God. Having the people sit in groups (by hundreds and fifties, as in Mark 6:40) would make it easier and faster for the disciples to distribute the provisions.

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<sup>160</sup> Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer’s Commentary on Matthew*, page 318.

19b The Lord acknowledged the provision of the food by the Father and the multiplication of that food.

**14:20 And they did all eat, and were filled:<sup>a</sup> and they took up of the fragments that remained twelve baskets full.<sup>b</sup>**

20a All ate and were filled, and the food continued until it was no longer needed. This reminds us of the multiplication of the oil in 2 Kings 4:1-7. The multiplication of the oil ceased when there were no more vessels to hold it. Here, the food ceased when all were filled and satisfied. There were leftovers but the fragments were gathered up so that none were wasted.

20b This is a miracle that some men find it hard to believe, but it is recorded by all four Gospels and the only one told by all four. Matthew notes the miracle here but makes no attempt to try to explain it, for how could he?

**14:21 And they that had eaten were about five thousand men, beside women and children.<sup>a</sup>**

21a "Prophetically, the scene is indicative of the feeding of the remnant of Israel in the Great Tribulation, who also will be fed miraculously from Heaven (Rev. 12:1–15, Micah 7:14–15, Jer. 50:19–20, Ezek. 20:35, Lam. 5:9). It is also significant that this miraculous producing of bread in the wilderness is the first temptation Satan offers Jesus."<sup>161</sup>

**90. Walking on the Water 14:22-33, see also Mark 6:45-53; John 6:15-21**

**14:22 ¶ And straightway<sup>a</sup> Jesus constrained his disciples to get into a ship, and to go before him unto the other side, while he sent the multitudes away.<sup>bc</sup>**

22a "**Straightway**" is one of Mark's favorite terms. Matthew uses it here to describe the quick, effective and business-like approach Jesus used to continue unto His next ministry stop.

22b Matthew did not tell us why the Lord was so insistent now on sending the multitudes away. John told us it was because Jesus "perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king." They were convinced by the miracle that they had just seen that Jesus was "**that prophet that should come into the world**," the Prophet foretold by Moses (John 6:14,15; Deuteronomy 18:15). They realized that a greater than Moses was among them. Moses had fed their fathers with manna in the wilderness, but before their own eyes Jesus had miraculously fed five or six thousand people with a little lad's lunch.

22c "The miracle appealed to the multitude's materialistic concept of the Messiah. In John's Gospel the Lord's sermon on the true Bread of Life follows soon after this miracle; in that sermon He made it clear that He thoroughly rejected any kingship that depended on materialism."<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>161</sup> Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer's Commentary on Matthew*, pages 318-319.

<sup>162</sup> John Phillips, *Exploring the Gospel of Matthew*, page 296.

**14:23 And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray:<sup>a</sup> and when the evening was come, he was there alone.**

23a You can't pray in a crowd. You send them away, then you pray. This is why you go into your closet, or private place, when you pray (Matthew 6:6 **"But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly."**)

**14:24 But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary.<sup>ab</sup>**

24a These sudden storms were common on the Sea of Galilee.

24b Luke omits the incident that follows, but it is found in John 6:16-21 and Mark 6:45-51.

AV	ESV	LSV
24 But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary.	24 but the boat by this time was a long way from the land, beaten by the waves, for the wind was against them.	24 But the boat was already many stadia away from the land, being battered by the waves; for the wind was against <i>them</i> .

**"in the midst of the sea"** The Authorized Version and ESV readings are better than the LSV with its use of the unfamiliar word "stadia".

**14:25 And in the fourth watch of the night<sup>a</sup> Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea.<sup>b</sup>**

25a Toward the breaking of the day, between 3-6 AM.

25b Some writers<sup>163</sup> try to explain it all away by suggesting that Jesus was only walking along the beach and not on the water, an impossible theory unless Matthew's account is legendary. But these were experienced fisherman and would have known if Jesus was walking on waves or sand.

**14:26 And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear.<sup>a</sup>**

26a If it was a spirit, they were afraid it meant certain death for them.

**14:27 But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid.<sup>a</sup>**

27a When in the midst of a storm, we have every reason to be of good cheer when we see Jesus coming.

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<sup>163</sup> Like the liberal William Barclay in his *Daily Study Bible; The Gospel of Matthew*, volume 2, page 105.

**14:28 And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water.<sup>a</sup>**

28a Quite the response from Peter. If that really was Jesus, then He should have no trouble to make it possible for Peter to walk on the water the same way Jesus did. This would verify that this was Jesus and not some “spirit” as a ghost or a phantom could do no such miracle as Peter proposed.

**14:29 And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus.<sup>a</sup>**

29a Peter had “little faith” but was accomplishing a great miracle here. You can criticize Peter all you want but no one else got out of the boat! Peter had an initial success but ultimately failed. It is better to try and fail than to never have tried at all and then criticize those who at least made the effort.

**14:30 But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me.<sup>a</sup>**

30a When Peter took his eyes off of Jesus and looked at the storm around him, the he began to sink. This is also the shortest recorded prayer in the Bible, but it got results as it was prayed in fervency.

**14:31 And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?<sup>a</sup>**

31a Always a searching question of rebuke. Peter had enough faith to get out of the boat but not enough to keep that faith in the midst of the storms. “You were doing just fine, so what caused you to doubt and lose your faith?”

**14:32 And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased.**

**14:33 Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God.<sup>a</sup>**

33a Another confirming sign of His deity. Jesus accepted this worship, and no one was rebuked for offering it.

**AV**

**ESV**

**LSV**

33 Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art **the Son of God**.

33 And those in the boat worshipped him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God.”

33 And those who were in the boat worshipped Him, saying, “You are truly God’s Son!”

“**the Son of God**” is better than the inferior “God’s Son” of the LSV and Darby. “**Son of God**” is a title. “God’s Son” is a description and not a divine title.



**91. Ministry in Gennesaret 14:34-36, see also Mark 6:54-56**

**14:34 ¶ And when they were gone over, they came into the land of Gennesaret.**

**14:35 And when the men of that place had knowledge of him, they sent out into all that country round about, and brought unto him all that were diseased;<sup>a</sup>**

35a The Lord still had the reputation as a healer and as a miracle-worker.

**14:36 And besought him that they might only touch the hem of his garment: and as many as touched were made perfectly whole.<sup>a</sup>**

36a There were no misfires or blaming any lack of healings on the supposed “lack of faith” on the part of the afflicted.

**Spiritual Applications- Matthew Chapter 14**

“Conscience makes cowards of us all” as Shakespeare wrote in *Hamlet*. It did so with Herod. He was responsible for John’s death and when he heard of Jesus, his conscience accused him. Conscience is that constant internal witness you can get away from. You can’t lie to it or reason with it as it simply accuses. It knows what you did and why.

Conscience is from two Latin words “con”, with and “science”, knowledge. It is the build-in, internal knowledge or right and wrong that all people have. It is leftover from the Fall. It is the internal witness of our hearts and of the Holy Spirit that lets us know if we have sinned or are living poorly or are in the wrong concerning an issue.

The word “conscience” only appears in the New Testament and is used 31 times. Below is a presentation of “conscience” using Biblical theology:

1. Older people seem to be affected by it more than younger people
  - A. John 8:9 And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.
2. You can live in good conscience and have a good conscience.
  - A. Acts 23:1 And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day.
  - B. 1 Timothy 1:5 Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned:
  - C. 1 Timothy 1:19 Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck:
  - D. Hebrews 13:18 Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly.
  - E. 1 Peter 3:16 Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ.

- F. 1 Peter 3:21 The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:
3. You can have a conscience "void of offence"
    - A. Acts 24:16 And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.
  4. Conscience bears witness, either good or bad.
    - A. Romans 2:15 Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;)
  5. The Holy Spirit is associated with the conscience.
    - A. Romans 9:1 I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost,
  6. We are to do certain things for the sake of our conscience.
    - A. Romans 13:5 Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.
  7. Weak consciences can be defiled
    - A. 1 Corinthians 8:7,10,12 Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge: for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat it as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled. For if any man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols; But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ.
    - B. Titus 1:15 Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.
  8. Should we be judged according to another man's conscience?
    - A. 1 Corinthians 10:25, 27-29 Whatsoever is sold in the shambles, that eat, asking no question for conscience sake...If any of them that believe not bid you to a feast, and ye be disposed to go; whatsoever is set before you, eat, asking no question for conscience sake. But if any man say unto you, This is offered in sacrifice unto idols, eat not for his sake that shewed it, and for conscience sake: for the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof: Conscience, I say, not thine own, but of the other: for why is my liberty judged of another man's conscience?
  9. We commend ourselves to every man's conscience.
    - A. 2 Corinthians 4:2 But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.
  10. You can have a pure conscience.
    - A. 1 Timothy 3:9 Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.
    - B. 2 Timothy 1:3 I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day;
  11. The conscience can be seared.

- A. 1 Timothy 4:2 Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;
12. A perfect conscience  
A. Hebrews 9:9 Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience;
13. The conscience can be purged from dead works.  
A. Hebrews 9:14 How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?  
B. Hebrews 10:2 For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins.
14. An evil conscience  
A. Hebrews 10:22  
Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.
15. Conscience toward God  
A. 1 Peter 2:19 For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully.

**“Come apart and rest...”** (Matthew 14:13) is absolutely vital, regardless of one’s vocation. God created the Sabbath as a day of rest because man is not built to work seven days a week. Although Christians are not under the Sabbath, the same principle applies. Take the vacation and days off that you are entitled to. Spend time with your family. If you are single, treat yourself to do something you like to do. You will burn out otherwise. How many preachers have lost their families, their ministries and themselves because they would not take a day off or take a vacation. Some will criticize the preacher if he takes a vacation but those critics always take their vacations! Some may think it is a sign of weakness or that you don’t love the Lord if you don’t work an 80-hour week. A man will work Monday through Friday, then work 6-8 hours on the bus route on Saturday, then work all day on the busses on Sunday. He will be shamed by his pastor if he doesn’t keep this kind of schedule. What about his day off to spend with his family, or to recharge?

When I was Academic Dean at Maryland Baptist Bible College, I had a man call me, asking about our school. He said he had been in contact with another school which he did not name (but I am sure it was Hyles-Anderson College), where they told him that as a student, in addition to his classes, he would be expected to work all weekend in the various evangelistic outreaches of the school and church. This was in addition to the 40-hour-plus secular job he would have to work to provide for his tuition and for his family. I told him that even if he didn’t come to our school, don’t attend that school, else he will lose his family, his ministry and himself. I hope he took my advice.

We love the ministry and we love working for God, but God also intends us to live for ourselves as well. Find a hobby that will take your mind off the pressures of the ministry. Even presidents do this. Franklin Roosevelt was a stamp collector and no doubt his collection helped to keep him sane during the pressures of the Depression and World War II.



## **Matthew Chapter 15**

### **92. The Traditions of the Elders 15:1-9, see also Mark 7:1-23**

**15:1 Then came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees,<sup>a</sup> which were of Jerusalem, saying,**

1a These religious leaders had clean hands but dirty hearts. They put all the emphasis on the external and little emphasis on the internal.

**15:2 Why do thy disciples<sup>a</sup> transgress the tradition of the elders?<sup>b</sup> for they wash not their hands when they eat bread.<sup>d</sup>**

2a Notice they complained about the disciples. If they can't find a reason to attack the Lord, they will then go after the disciples.

2b This was another attack against Christ's authority. "Who do you think you are to oppose and criticize the time-honored traditions of the elders?" The religious leaders were more concerned about the tradition than with the Scripture. The Jews were always careful to extensively "wash up" before a meal, something that the disciples were neglecting to do. It was almost like scrubbing up for surgery.

2c "Alfred Edersheim in *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* outlines the most elaborate of these washings. Water jars were kept ready to be used before a meal. The minimum amount of water to be used was a quarter of a log, which is defined as enough to fill one and a half egg-shells. The water was first poured on both hands, held with the fingers pointed upwards, and must run up the arm as far as the wrist. It must drop off from the wrist, for the water was now itself unclean, having touched the unclean hands, and, if it ran down the fingers again, it would again render them unclean. The process was repeated with the hands held in the opposite direction, with the fingers pointing down; and then finally each hand was cleansed by being rubbed with the fist of the other. A really strict Jew would do all this, not only before a meal, but also between each of the courses."<sup>164</sup>

2d Such elaborate washings were never directly commanded in the Old Testament, but they are still a good common-sense approach to health and hygiene.

**15:3 But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment<sup>a</sup> of God by your tradition?<sup>bc</sup>**

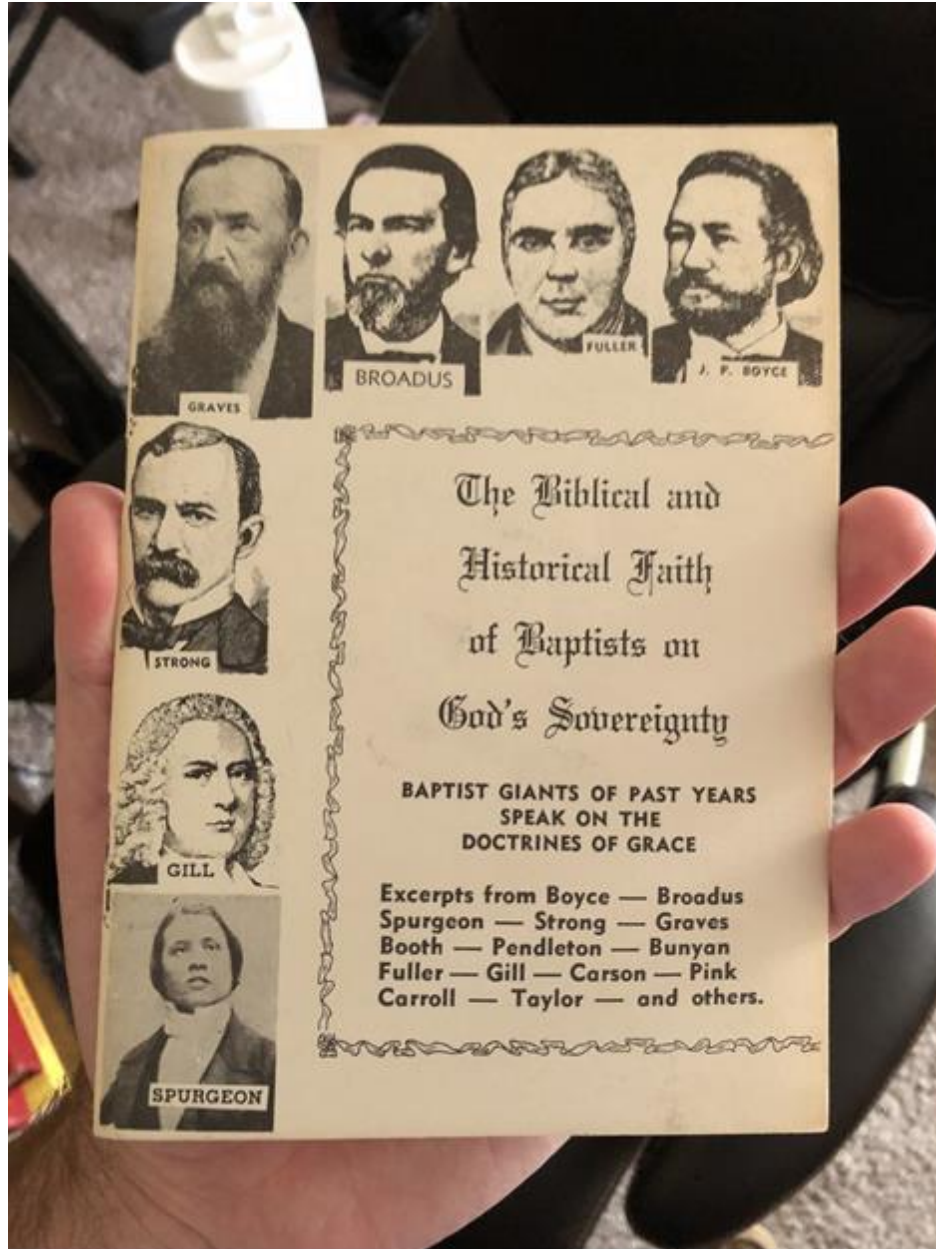
3a A "**commandment**" is always greater than a "**tradition**". It is not wrong to follow a tradition, but it wrong to set up a tradition as an authority.

3b "**Your tradition**". God wanted nothing to do with it. The Lord must have been quite irritated by such a petty complaint, and it took divine patience to answer as politely as He did. Man's traditions seldom agree with God's revelation.

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<sup>164</sup> William Barclay, *Matthew* in The Daily Study Bible, volume 2, page 114.

3c Great men can be, and are often, wrong. Jeremiah 5:5 makes that clear (“**I will get me unto the great men, and will speak unto them; for they have known the way of the LORD, and the judgment of their God: but these have altogether broken the yoke, and burst the bonds.**”). You do or believe something because it is in Scripture, not because “the greats” believed it. For an example of elevating human tradition over Scripture, consider the following book:



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The people responsible for printing this booklet are saying that the reason why you should be a (Baptist) Calvinist (especially their kind of Calvinist) is because Boyce, Graves, Spurgeon, Booth, Fuller, Bunyan, Gill, Pink, et al. were Calvinists. Since "the great men" believed this, you should too. After all, who are you to stand against or disagree with such "Giants of the Faith?" They were "great" (who anointed them as "Baptist Giants" in the first place?) and you are not, so you have no authority to disagree with these men because you are a nobody and you have accomplished anything close to what these men have done. They pastored larger churches than you did, so that makes them "right" and you, as a little preacher of a little church, must submit. This is NOT why you believe something because "great men" can and do err. No man operates under divine inspiration on earth today. This is nothing more than

theological peer pressure. You have liberty to be a Calvinist or not, but makes sure you base your position on Scripture, not on the writings of men.

And yes, it is possible that all these men were wrong.

Baptist Calvinists are the worst. They are the most bigoted and insufferable among the Calvinists. For proof, read any back issues of a magazine called "The Baptist Examiner", which was put out in the 1960s through the 1980s from a Calvary Baptist Church in Ashland, Kentucky. They teach that you cannot be a true Baptist unless you are "their kind" of Calvinist. If you are not a Calvinist, you are an Arminian (despite any profession to the contrary you might make) and probably aren't saved.

I saw this "up close" in 1985 when I started attending Maranatha Baptist Church in Elkton, Maryland. A few members became Calvinists and tried to spread their doctrine in a non-Calvinist church. They published a "periodical" promoting Calvinism and mailed it to everyone in the church (except for the pastor!). The message of their "periodical" consisted of pictures and quotes of Spurgeon, Gill, Pink, Broadus and other prominent Calvinists, with the question "Can so many 'great men of God; be wrong?" The clear Biblical answer was "yes!" but the authors were trying to cudgel you over the head in making you feel inferior or into making you believe that you really weren't a Christian if you disagreed with "the greats".

Calvinists aren't the only ones who try this. Most denominational systems try this tactic. Some of the more extreme Independent, Fundamental Baptists do it with "soulwinning". "How can you oppose such great men like John R. Rice, Jack Hyles, Lee Roberson, etc...? They were great soulwinners and have better results than you do!" This was done in the 1840s and 1850s with Charles Finney, when practically every "evangelical preacher" supported him and his "New Measures" and signed a "treaty of mutual silence" to stop exposing Finney's errors and just to concentrate on soulwinning. Everyone except Asahel Nettleton, who stood firm against Finney. He was attacked relentlessly. Other preachers who stood against Finney were bullied relentlessly. "How can you stand against so many great preachers? How can you stand alone?" Yet he did. Nettleton stood on the teachings of Christ regarding evangelism and against the traditions of men that was promoted by Finney and his followers.

**15:4 For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother:<sup>a</sup> and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death.**

4a Quoting the Fifth Commandment, in Exodus 20:12 "**Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.**"

**15:5 But ye say,<sup>a</sup> Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, It is a gift,<sup>b</sup> by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me;<sup>c</sup>**

5a "God said this in Scripture but ye say..." showing the contrast. The religious leaders were putting what they said through their traditions on an equal plane as inspired Scripture.

5b "**gift**" is the "**Corban**" of Mark 7:11.

5c The idea is that a son may not want to be responsible for taking care of his parents in their old age as it would cost too much and take up too much of his time. He would take the money he intended to spend on his parents, take it to the temple and "dedicate" it to God. This would not make it possible to spend that money on his parents since it had been "dedicated" to God. It was a gift, or "corban". After the death of his parents, the man would then do back to the temple and retrieve his money, after making a nice little donation to the "temple fund". This was an



attitude which violated the spirit of the Fifth Commandment, but it was allowed by just such a non-Biblical tradition that the Lord was condemning here.

**15:6 And honour not his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition.<sup>a</sup>**

6a This was ironic. The very ones who were supposed to be the guardians of the Scripture and who were supposed to be teaching it were the ones who were doing the most harm to it.

**15:7 Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying,<sup>a</sup>**

7a This is quoted from Isaiah 29:13 **“Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men:”**

**15:8 This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me.<sup>a</sup>**

8a They flatter with their tongues, but the heart does not match the mouth. Any pastor is familiar with how this works.

**15:9 But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.<sup>a</sup>**

9a This is the sin of most churches and denominations. When worship is based on human traditions, that worship is vain, empty and accomplishes nothing.

### **93. The Source of Defilement 15:10-20**

**15:10 ¶ And he called the multitude, and said unto them, Hear, and understand:<sup>a</sup>**

10a They were listening but were they really paying close attention? Words can go in one ear and out the other if we are not paying close attention.

**15:11 Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man.<sup>a</sup>**

11a Defilement does not come without, or from failure to observe man-made traditions, but from the darkened and sinful heart of man. This “defilement” was the Jewish ceremonial defilement associated with the ceremonial law.

**15:12 Then came his disciples, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying?<sup>a</sup>**

12a **“Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying?”**

1. So what? Some people live to be offended. The Lord cared nothing for their feelings. The greater the hypocrite, the more easily one is offended. If you preach the truth, someone will always be offended.

2. The disciples seemed shocked that the Lord would go out of His way to offend such a powerful and respected group of religious leaders. He seemed to be adding more contention to an already strained relation He had with them, but the Lord was taking no heed to it.

**15:13 But he answered and said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.<sup>a</sup>**

13a Also see Matthew 23:13,15.

**15:14 Let them alone:<sup>a</sup> they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.<sup>b</sup>**

14a Ephraim was also “**let alone**” in Hosea 4:17 because of the idolatry of that tribe. We have better things to do than to waste our time shooting at jaybirds.

14b Only a fool would follow a blind man and only a fool of a blind man who presume to be able to lead anyone anywhere.

**15:15 Then answered Peter and said unto him, Declare unto us this parable.<sup>a</sup>**

15a It wasn’t a parable but a straight-out declaration of the truth that should have been obvious to all.

**15:16 And Jesus said, Are ye also yet without understanding?<sup>a</sup>**

16a Jesus seemed surprised, or annoyed, at their spiritual dullness.

**15:17 Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught?<sup>a</sup>**

17a Food does not touch the spirit: it passes through the body, but it does not enter the affections, or the understanding, Therefore, it does not defile a man. That which is eaten is material substance and does not come into contact with the moral sense. If someone ate an “unclean” food, it would not defile him. It goes in through the mouth, through the digestive tract and out through the normal process of elimination but it never touches or affects the spirit.

AV	ESV	LSV
17 Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the <b>draught?</b>	17 Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth passes into the stomach and is expelled?	17 “Do you not understand that everything that goes into the mouth passes into the stomach, and goes into the sewer?”

“**draught**” The LSV is clearly wrong, unless you call the large intestine tract a “sewer”.

**15:18 But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man.<sup>a</sup>**

18a Externals do not defile the man but rather that which proceeds from the heart. Defilement is an internal thing that comes from within man.

**15:19<sup>a</sup> For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies:**

19a Surely not a comprehensive list but what a list! The Lord catalogues the following sins that proceed from a defiled heart:

1. Evil thoughts
2. Murders, they all start in the heart
3. Adulteries also start in the heart before manifesting themselves in the flesh (Matthew 5:27,28)
4. Fornications, as with adultery above
5. Thefts, born of a covetous heart
6. False witness, where we bear hate toward other men
7. Blasphemies, this is hate directed toward God
8. This list is what should concern us, not if we have dirty hands at the dinner table!

AV	ESV	LSV
19 For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, <b>blasphemies</b> :	19 For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander.	19 “For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, sexual immoralities, thefts, false witness, slanders.

“**blasphemies**” Why change this to “slander(s)”?

**15:20<sup>a</sup> These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man.**

20a “It is God telling the Pharisee what is going on in his heart, which he will eventually perform. Notice carefully: “evil thoughts” (Matt. 12:25, 24:48, 22:15), “murders” (John 12:10—They were going to murder Lazarus!), “adulteries” (John 8:1–8—Where was the man involved in the adultery? How did they catch the woman without the man? [Lev. 20:10]), “fornications” (the only one in the list not mentioned later), “thefts” (see 21:38), “false witness” (26:60), and “blasphemies” (Matt. 27:41). That is, the religious leaders are guilty on six out of seven counts in the indictment. (In the account in Mark 7:17–23, they are guilty on eleven out of thirteen.) While avoiding entering into Gentile buildings, “lest they should be defiled” (John 18:28), the long-robed “fathers” stain their hands with the blood of a sinless Man and debauch their souls with “handwashing traditions” (15:2). [The attitude has few precedents on earth, unless one remembers that there are twentieth-century Americans who consider it a sin to sing hymns in a Bible-believing church, while at the same time they can prayerfully dump cigarette ashes on their bingo cards!].”<sup>165</sup>

<sup>165</sup> Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer’s Commentary on Matthew*, page 337.

**94. The Healing of the Canaanite's Daughter 15:21-28, see also Mark 7:24-30**

**15:21 ¶ Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon.<sup>a</sup>**

21a Jesus went to the far northern areas, into modern-day Lebanon.



**15:22 And, behold, a woman of Canaan<sup>a</sup> came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying,<sup>b</sup> Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David;<sup>c</sup> my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.**

22a This was a woman no Jew would have had any dealings with, as seen in the reaction of the disciples in Matthew 15:23. She was a Gentile of the worst sort, a member of a cursed and dying race. Could someone like her find grace?

22b Her great need was that which taught her to pray. Tribulation and desperation can make saints of even the worst of us.

22c She referred to Jesus as both “Son of David” and “Lord”, putting her light-years ahead of the Jewish leaders. As a Gentile, she had no claim to use the title “Son of David” but she did in her desperation and in her acknowledgment that Jesus was the Son of David.

**15:23 But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away;<sup>a</sup> for she crieth after us.<sup>b</sup>**

23a **“Send her away”** No Christian should ever utter that phrase if confronted with any sinner who wants to be saved! Shall we only minister to the rich and accepted ones and ignore those who have just as great a need of salvation? The Lord came to seek and save that which was lost, no matter what kind of people they were. The deeper the sinner, the greater attention they received from the Lord.

23b **“Us”?** The disciples were ignoring her. She was trying to get the Lord’s attention, not theirs.

**15:24 But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.<sup>a</sup>**

24a Faith must always be tested to try its genuineness and that is exactly what the Lord is doing here.

**15:25 Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me.<sup>a</sup>**

25a She was bleating like a sheep and the Lord told her to stop her bleating, as He was sent unto the lost sheep of Israel. She didn’t want to argue theology. She had a desperate need- HELP ME! You can’t pray a much better prayer than “Lord, help me!” Luke 11:5-8 and 18:1-8 certainly apply here- keep knocking until someone opens the door.

1. This Gentile dog was just insulted and turned down in an urgent prayer request, and she worshipped Him! Dogs will still lick the hand that hits them in their love, devotion and loyalty.
2. To call anyone a “dog” was just about the worst insult you can give. But the Gentiles in the area were used to hearing this slur from the local Jewish population. Modern racial expressions are even worse. “Dogs” here is the diminutive word for dogs (kunaria) which is used not the street dogs, but the little household pets, very different from the pariah dogs who roamed the streets and probed in the refuse heaps.
3. Her **“worship”** probably involved flinging herself at the Lord’s feet and staying there until she got the answer she needed.

**15:26 But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children’s bread, and to cast it to dogs.**

**15:27 And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters’ table.<sup>a</sup>**

27a The Lord called her a dog and she agreed. In our natural state, we were no better than this woman. To argue our morality or breeding or education to God is of no avail. We are DOGS until we are saved and transformed by the gospel.

““Ye-ee-s.”

“Well, then, Your children didn’t finish their spinach, and they left meat on the drumsticks, and it’s going to the garbage and get wasted, isn’t it?”

“Well, huh, yes.”

“All right, in that case, how about putting some of it right down here where us dogs can get it!!”

And she has Him...She stooped to conquer and was not ashamed to stoop clean under

the table and wait till the family got through with the meal! That kind of faith will get results every time.”<sup>166</sup>

**15:28 Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith:<sup>a</sup> be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.<sup>b</sup>**

28a The Lord loves great faith, and grants to it whatever it appears.

28b Applications to prayer.

1. We are turned down to see if we are in earnest.
2. We are turned down to show us how helpless we are in the face of emergencies.
3. We are turned down until we get the selfish element out of our prayers.
4. A refusal is not always a permanent thing.
5. Continuing in prayer strengthens our faith.

### **95. Jesus Heals Multitudes 15:29-31, see also Mark 7:31-37**

**15:29 And Jesus departed from thence, and came nigh unto the sea of Galilee;<sup>a</sup> and went up into a mountain, and sat down there.**

29a Jesus apparently was avoiding the territory over which Herod Antipas ruled because the Jews were seeking Herod's help in order to destroy Him.

**15:30 And great multitudes came unto him, having with them those that were lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and cast them down at Jesus' feet; and he healed them:**

**15:31<sup>a</sup> Insomuch that the multitude wondered, when they saw the dumb to speak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to see: and they glorified the God of Israel.**

31a There was simply no getting away from the crowds, even if the Lord tried to retire to a more remote location.

### **96. Feeding of Four Thousand 15:32-39, see also 8:1-10**

**15:32<sup>ab</sup> ¶ Then Jesus called his disciples unto him, and said, I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with me now three days, and have nothing to eat: and I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way.**

32a History repeats itself as we see a similar miracle as we saw in Matthew 14. Have the disciples learned anything? Will they put in a better performance this time? What Jesus has done once he can and will do again and again, should the need arise.

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<sup>166</sup> Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer's Commentary on Matthew*, pages 343-344.

32b Some think that the feeding of the five thousand and the feeding of the four thousand are different versions of the same incident; but that is not so. The date is different; the first took place in the spring, the second in the summer. The people and the place are different. The feeding of the four thousand took place in Decapolis. Decapolis literally means ten cities, and the Decapolis was a loose federation of ten free Greek cities. On this occasion there would be many Gentiles present, perhaps more Gentiles than Jews.

**15:33 And his disciples say unto him, Whence should we have so much bread in the wilderness, as to fill so great a multitude?<sup>abc</sup>**

33a This is a repeat of John 6:1-14.

33b No indication that the disciples had made any real spiritual progress here. How many times do they need to see and be told before they, and us, begin to understand?

33c Notice that they do not ask again: “**What are they among so many?**” (John 6:9). They have learned one lesson, at least temporarily.

**15:34 And Jesus saith unto them, How many loaves have ye? And they said, Seven, and a few little fishes.**

**15:35 And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground.**

**15:36 And he took the seven loaves and the fishes, and gave thanks,<sup>a</sup> and brake them, and gave to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude.**

36a Always give thanks for your provision, no matter how small or meager it might be.

**15:37 And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the broken meat that was left seven baskets full.**

**15:38 And they that did eat were four thousand men, beside women and children.<sup>a</sup>**

38a This could have been between 12,000-15,000 people.

**15:39<sup>a</sup> And he sent away the multitude, and took ship, and came into the coasts of Magdala.**

39a Comparison Between the Feeding of the Five Thousand in Matthew 14 and the Feeding of the Four Thousand in Matthew 15:

<b>Matthew 14- Five Thousand</b>	<b>Matthew 15- Four Thousand</b>
A desert place 14:15	Continued with the Lord for three days 15:32
Evening 14:15	In a wilderness 15:33
“Give ye them to eat” 14:16	
Five loaves and two fishes 14:17	Seven loaves and a few little fishes 15:34
Twelve baskets of leftovers 14:20	Seven baskets of leftovers 15:37
Five thousand men plus women and children	Four thousand plus women and children

14:21	15:38
The Lord had compassion on the multitude 14:14	The Lord had compassion on the multitude 15:32

**“Magdala”** Some commentators speculate this is where Mary Magdalene was from.



### **Spiritual Applications- Matthew Chapter 15**

Beware of traditionalism. I was raised in the Church of Rome and saw it magnified above the Scripture (and it still is today). Why do we do what we do in our churches? Usually, it is because of tradition. “We’ve always done it this way!” But why have a Sunday School? It’s not mentioned in the New Testament and historically, it was to give a basic education to kids working in mines, mills or factories who could not go to school. It did not have a spiritual component to it. Why a Sunday morning service at 11 AM? Why a Wednesday night service? What is our Scriptural justification for what we do? Is it simply based on the teachings and examples of men? Can it be justified by Scripture?

Remember your obligation to your parents in verses 5 and 6. When your parents are old and have failing health, it is the responsibility of the children to provide for them and not to abandon them. If I die before my wife, I fully expect my four children to take care of their mother. Do not use your career or your ministry or anything else as an excuse to avoid these family obligations.



## **Matthew Chapter 16**

### **97. The Signs of the Times 16:1-4, see also Mark 8:11,12**

**16:1 The Pharisees also with the Sadducees came, and tempting desired him that he would shew them a sign from heaven.<sup>a</sup>**

1a This is a repeat of Matthew 12:38-40. They have rejected every sign the Lord has given them up to this point and were condemned by the Lord for their attitude back in Matthew 12, but here they are again.

**16:2 He answered and said unto them, When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather: for the sky is red.<sup>a</sup>**

2a Here is Biblical weather forecasting. "Red sky in morning, sailors take warning. Red sky at night, sailor's delight".

**16:3 And in the morning, It will be foul weather to day: for the sky is red and lowring. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?<sup>abcd</sup>**

3a These Jews placed more emphasis on trying to understand the weather than understanding the signs of the times. Many believers just want to be voluntarily ignorant regarding the "signs of the times" so they don't have to worry about it or do anything about it. This involves the "culture war" or politics, two things that Christians must be informed about and involved in.

3b It is absolutely vital that Christians understand the "signs of the times" in his generation. We must know the age, its peculiarities, its tactics and its goals. Once understood, we must know how to live in that age and how to confront it. This involves preaching on everything: politics, culture, current events, philosophy, economics, etc.

There are many preachers and Christians who do not like this. They don't want to hear such sermons on their generation. They cry "just preach the gospel!" "Just preach the simple gospel!" Thus, they are totally ignorant of the sins of their age and they do not know how to live in their age. They do not ask the question that Israel asked in Ezekiel 33:10 "Therefore, O thou son of man, speak unto the house of Israel; Thus, ye speak, saying, If our transgressions and our sins be upon us, and we pine away in them, how should we then live?" As long as they are going to heaven and have a job and an income, they are content.

This is our situation today. Here in 2024, the seeds of 50 years of godlessness are now bearing fruit. Transgenderism is now the norm and is promoted and protected by the government and the media. It is being rammed down the throats of our children in public schools. You can have "Drag Queen Story Hour" in your local public school, but it is forbidden to have a preacher come in and read Scripture to the students. Restrictions and loss of liberties resulting from the COVID-19 "pandemic" has already affected the churches, where some churches having been fined \$150,000 for merely having public services and other churches have been threatened with being bulldozed if they open for their services. There will be further purges of Christians from Facebook, Twitter and other social media. Twitter knock-off Parler was destroyed by Amazon Web Services for refusing to censor conservatives, Christians and Trump supporters. Sodomy and gender dysphoria is the norm. All manner of social insanity is now accepted. Racism and segregation are acceptable again. Fascist groups like Antifa and

Black Lives Matter command the streets. Our public media is totally unreliable. We cannot trust our government, the medical world, the Republicans or the Democrats, our media...no one. How shall you live in this day? How will you respond?

Naïve Christians will post cute little memes on Facebook along the lines of “No matter who is in the White House, Jesus is still King!” or “Not the donkey or the elephant but the Lamb!” Empty platitudes will not save us. What is the point? Preachers will preach on church growth or messages that lead toward “Christians learning how to walk with God” but with no context. Yes, we need to know how to pray and read our Bible, but how does that relate to living in days of gross and deep apostasy? Such messages are preached without context. Preachers don’t want to get their hands dirty by preaching on politics. They imagine that if they can stay above the fray, they will be okay.

I am not saying that every sermon we preach must be along these lines, but such topics cannot be ignored either. If the preacher neglects in training his people how to read and understand the signs of the times, then who will teach them? The world will if we won’t. We will lose our children unless they are trained how to live the days and in the generation that is waiting for them. If the preacher won’t deal with such issues, the world will be more than happy to fill that gap.

3c “It is very true that knowledge given in preaching to the people brings accountability to the people. Judah was now experiencing the consequences of this preaching, **“We pine away in them”** (Ezekiel 33:10). While sin and heresy are destroying our churches, our homes, to say nothing of our communities, our country, and the very world in which we live, still people do not want to be warned about destruction. Preaching produces conviction, and conviction produces guilt, and guilt produces bad feelings, and bad feelings bring discouragement and depression. The question was then asked of the prophet, “How are we then to live?” Perhaps the question was given with no expectation of answer. “The apostasy is so definite, the disease of sin has pervaded to the most advanced stage, how can we even look for deliverance?”<sup>167</sup> These are not pleasant truths. The preacher would rather preach on Christ in every sermon. But the current distress has been forced on us and the faithful preacher is forced to deal with these issues and educate his people about the days they live in. Ignoring them will not make them go away. Claiming these are all the prospects of some far-right-wing-nut conspiracy theory will not protect you. People don’t want to be held accountable through preaching. They don’t want the bad news. They want to hear the God loves them and that they are going to heaven. They want all-night sings and pot-luck fellowships and all the good things of the gospel, without the more militant elements and harder truths. Ignorance will not bring bliss in this context, only unpreparedness.

3d “How should we then live in days of the demise of biblical spirituality? We must come to the Scriptures, to the Christ of Scriptures, and call upon Him for a spiritual, God-wrought work within a broken heart and a contrite spirit...We must pray for the Holy Spirit to empower and live within us! Our inward walk with God in communion must ever be based on the Word of God. We must ever be diligent in the study of true spirituality in the context of the Scriptures, not in feeling or emotions as the manifesting evidence of the experience. We must seek God and pursue a life of holiness and devotion to Him. We must seek a consecrated life. Therefore, in these days of the declared experiences of both false religions and the Neo-Christianity, we must ever remember that it is the “inward religion” of biblical Christianity that is the true “experience” of heaven. True Christianity is the only religion identified and assigned to “the heart,” a heart that has been given by God and to God.”<sup>168</sup>

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<sup>167</sup> H. T. Spence, “Straightway”, May-July 2017, page 6.

<sup>168</sup> H. T. Spence, “Straightway”, August-October, 2017, page 15.

**16:4 A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas.<sup>a</sup> And he left them, and departed.**

4a You had your signs and you rejected everyone. Only one more sign will be given, the sign of the resurrection (as typified by Jonah's being swallowed by a whale, his death and resurrection), and you will reject that sign as well.

**98. The Leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees 16:5-12, see also Mark 8:13-21**

**16:5 And when his disciples were come to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread.<sup>a</sup>**

5a Someone in the apostolic band messed up and forgot to take lunch or make preparations for lunch.

**16:6 ¶ Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.<sup>a</sup>**

6a **Leaven** is a type of false doctrine.

1. Matthew 13:33 "Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened."

2. Matthew 16:12 "Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees."

3. Luke 12:1 "In the mean time, when there were gathered together an innumerable multitude of people, insomuch that they trode one upon another, he began to say unto his disciples first of all, Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy."

4. Galatians 5:9 "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump."

**16:7 And they reasoned among themselves, saying, It is because we have taken no bread.<sup>a</sup>**

7a As usual, the disciples are thinking carnally while the Lord is speaking spiritually. This is also a major theme in John's gospel (especially in chapters 3 and 4).

**16:8 Which when Jesus perceived, he said unto them, O ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have brought no bread?**

**16:9 Do ye not yet understand, neither remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets ye took up?**

**16:10 Neither the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets ye took up?<sup>a</sup>**

10a The disciples still had not learned the lessons from the two recent miraculous feedings of the multitudes.

**16:11 How is it that ye do not understand that I spake it not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees?**

**16:12 Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.<sup>ab</sup>**

12a Also see notes under Matthew 16:6.

12b Jesus took a common, ordinary occurrence (forgetting to take bread) and turned it into a spiritual lesson. He did the same thing with the woman at the well in John 4.

**99. Peter's Great Confession 16:12-20, see also Mark 8:27-30; Luke 9:18-21**

**16:13 ¶ When Jesus came into the coasts of Cæsarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?<sup>a</sup>**

13a Everyone has an opinion of who Christ is. But most of these opinions are wrong.

AV	ESV	LSV
13 When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, <b>Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?</b>	13 Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, <b>"Who do people say that the Son of Man is?"</b>	13 Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He was asking His disciples, saying, <b>"Who do people say that the Son of Man is?"</b>

The ESV and LSV omit "I". Jesus identifies Himself as the Son of Man in the Authorized Version but this is removed in the modern versions.

**16:14 And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias,<sup>a</sup> or one of the prophets.**

14a "**Jeremiah**". Tradition said Jeremiah hid the ark of the covenant before the Babylonian invasion. Before the return of the Messiah, Jeremiah would return with the Ark.

**16:15 He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?<sup>a</sup>**

15a One of the greatest questions ever asked. It demands a great answer and your soul depends on you giving the right answer! Everyone will be asked this question eventually and everyone must give an answer, if not on earth, then at the Great White Throne judgment. Personal, individual confession of Christ is the important issue here.

**16:16 And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.<sup>a</sup>**

16a Peter gives the correct answer, based on the Lord's approval of it. He accepted being called the Son of God because He was!

**16:17 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona:<sup>a</sup> for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.**

17a "**Bar-jona**", Son of Jona(h), who was Peter's father.

**16:18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter,<sup>ab</sup> and upon this rock<sup>cd</sup> I will build my church;<sup>e</sup> and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.<sup>f</sup>**

18a Peter- petros, a small rock. Rock- petra, a large mass of rock. Peter cannot be the rock of the Roman Catholic church since it grammatically impossible. Besides, with such an inconsistent person as Peter was, who would want him for a foundation when you can build on Christ instead? Besides, in Matthew 16:23, Jesus calls Peter "Satan"! Would Christ build His church on Satan? Or on a small stone? Or on a weak and vacillating man?

18b Peter was never any sort of Roman Catholic pope because:

1. He was married and Rome's priests are required to be unmarried.
  - A. Matthew 8:14 **"And when Jesus was come into Peter's house, he saw his wife's mother laid, and sick of a fever."**
2. Peter erred in his practice and had to be corrected:
  - A. by the Lord
    - i. Acts 10:15 **"And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common."**
    - ii. Acts 11:9 **"But the voice answered me again from heaven, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common."**
  - B. by Paul in Galatians 2:11 **"But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed."**
3. He taught that every Christian was a priest, not just an ordained group.
  - A. 1 Peter 2:5.9 **"Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ... But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:"**
4. He never said anything about any sort of a "mass" or worshipping Mary or any of the "saints".
5. He never baptized any infant by pouring water on them.
6. He taught that salvation was by grace without works or water baptism.
  - A. Acts 15:11 **"But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they."**
  - B. 1 Peter 1:18-23 **"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot... Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart**

**fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.”**

7. He never let any man bow down to him.

A. Acts 10:25,26 **“And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him. But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man.”**

8. Jesus never referred to Peter as the “head of the Church”, the “bishop of Rome” or any other title that would even remotely hint at Peter being a pope.

18c A simple concordance study will identify who this “rock” is:

1. 1 Corinthians 10:4 “that Rock was Christ”
2. 2 Samuel 22:2/Psalm 18:2 “the LORD is my rock”
3. Psalm 21:3 “For thou art my rock”
4. Psalm 42:9 “God my rock”

It is clear that the “rock” never refers to Peter but always to God and Christ. The Church of Rome is built on the wrong rock.

18d “The Easy Reading King James Version changes the Greek ‘Elias’ to the Hebrew ‘Elijah,’ ‘Esaia’ to ‘Isaiah,’ and ‘Messias’ to ‘Messiah.’ The Roman Catholic church has long promoted this change because it lends support to their false theory that the book of Matthew and other Gospels were not originally written in Greek but in Aramaic, a type of Hebrew. (Rome does this because the *Greek* text in Matt. 16:18 reveals that ‘Peter’ and ‘rock’ are *two different words*; if the Gospels had been originally written in Aramaic, as Rome pretends, the *two* English words ‘rock’ and ‘Peter’ would have been translated from the *same* Aramaic word, allowing the Roman church’s pet theory that the church was built on Peter and not upon Christ.”<sup>169</sup>

18e Here is the first mention of the Church, but this is not the start of the Church. That will not take place until Acts 2 although the formation documents of the Church would be drawn up here and in Matthew 18:17 **“And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.”**

1. The Lord is looking at the Church in prospect here and in Matthew 18. This is not unusual. Before you start a corporation or an LLC (limited liability company), you draw up the formation documents, lay out the management and operation, establish rules and procedures, appoint officers, directors, owners and managers and then file the paperwork at the appropriate Secretary of State office.

18f **“gates of hell”**

1. Hell has literal gates, but they swing only one way. You can go in but cannot come out.
2. The Church can survive all the attacks of the world, the flesh and the devil but she can be harmed and damaged by the misconduct of her friends and members through carnality.

AV	ESV	LSV
18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell	18 And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail	18 “And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will

<sup>169</sup> Gail Riplinger, *In Awe Of Thy Word*, page 476.

shall not prevail against it.

against it.

not overpower it.

“hell” The LSV and Darby use “Hades”.

**16:19 And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven:<sup>a</sup> and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.<sup>bcd</sup>**

19a Peter is not given the keys to heaven, but to the kingdom of heaven. Peter has nothing to do with anyone going to heaven. He does not sit at the “pearly gates”, determining who gets into heaven. He is given the keys to open up the way of salvation to both Jew and Gentile as he does in Acts 2 (Jewish Pentecost) and Acts 10 (Gentile Pentecost). Keys are used to open and close doors. In Acts 2, Peter (through the Holy Spirit) opens the door of salvation to the Jews. He then does the same thing to the Gentiles in Acts 10.

There are no “keys to the Church” so there is nothing for the Church of Rome or the pope to claim here through Peter

19b Jesus did not assert the supremacy and primacy of Peter, as Romanists contend. Nothing is said about any sort of papacy, that Peter would be the head of the church, nothing like that. Roman Catholics read way too much into these verses in their attempt to establish some sort of Biblical support for the papacy.

19c This binding and loosing is difficult to interpret and apply. These keys are related to the Kingdom of Heaven, so they are Jewish and millennial in nature and do not relate to the church, although the context is close as the church is mentioned in verse 18. But the binding and loosing is related to the millennium and Israel, earthly authority given to the millennial nation that extends into the heavenlies in ways that are not explained in Scripture.

There would appear to be a Church application to the use of these keys, to open the ministry of the gospel to the Gentiles. Keys open and lock doors. Relevant verses would include:

1. Acts 14:27 **And having arrived, and having brought together the assembly, they related to them all that God had done with them, and that he had opened a door of faith to the nations.**

A. God opened a door to minister to the nations.

2. 1 Corinthians 16:9 **For a great door is opened to me and an effectual one, and the adversaries many.**

A. Paul mentioned a great door was opened to him to minister.

3. 2 Corinthians 2:12 **Now when I came to Troas for the publication of the glad tidings of the Christ, a door also being opened to me in the Lord,**

A. Paul mentions that the Lord open a door to him.

4. Colossians 4:3 **praying at the same time for us also, that God may open to us a door of the word to speak the mystery of Christ, on account of which also I am bound,**

A. Paul prayed that God would open a door so that he and his team could speak about the mystery of Christ.<sup>170</sup>

5. Revelation 3:8 **I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an opened door, which no one can shut, because thou hast a little power, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.**

<sup>170</sup> This would refer to the mystery of the Church.

A. God opens the door to the church at Philadelphia.

19d This binding and loosing is repeated in Matthew 18:18. John 20:23 has the idea of remitting and retaining. In 1 Corinthians 5:4,5 we have Paul commanding the church at Corinth to deliver a sinning member over to Satan for the destruction of his flesh that his spirit may be saved. In that context, this binding/loosing and remitting/retaining may have application to church discipline. Second Corinthians 2:10 (**To whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive also: for if I forgave any thing, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the person of Christ;**) will also apply to forgiving church members who may be under discipline.

**16:20 Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ.<sup>a</sup>**

20a Another temporary and situational injunction against evangelism. Sometimes, and in some situations, it is God's will NOT to evangelize and witness.

AV	ESV	LSV
20 Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was <b>Jesus</b> the Christ.	20 Then he strictly charged the disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ.	20 Then He warned the disciples that they should tell no one that He was the Christ.

**"Jesus"** The ESV, LSV and Darby omit.

**100. Jesus' Rebuke of Satan 16:21-23, see also Mark 8:31-33**

**16:21 ¶ From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.<sup>a</sup>**

21a Christ gives another prophecy of His death and resurrection.

**16:22 Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee.<sup>a</sup>**

22a How many times do we rebuke the Lord when He shows us His will and things which must come to pass? And on what authority did Peter assume he had to rebuke the Lord on anything? No doubt he assumed that Jesus was prophesying His death as if He would not be able to avoid it. Peter didn't understand that Jesus MUST die and that the Lord was not trying to avoid anything nor was He being fatalistic about it. Peter might have thought that Jesus was willing or able to avoid His death, not understanding the prophecies that indicated that Jesus MUST die.

AV	ESV	LSV
22 Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee.	22 And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, "Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you."	22 And Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "God forbid <i>it</i> , Lord! This shall never happen to You."



The LSV has Peter saying "God forbid it" when the other versions are milder. We don't think any Jew of the day would use God's name like this.

**16:23 But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan:<sup>ab</sup> thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.<sup>c</sup>**

16a Peter referred to as Satan as Satan was speaking through Peter here. Some foundation for the Roman church! Satan was influencing Peter's attitude and provoked him to make this rebuke of the Lord.

16b Sometimes Satan may use our closest friends and associates to try to turn us away from God's will, and they may not even be aware that they are being used in this manner.

16c Christ was talking about the cross and Satan, through Peter, did not want that discussed. Satan does not like discussions or preaching on the cross since it is the instrument of his defeat. Satan will try to quench any serious discussion, writing or preaching on the cross and its associated doctrines, and he has been very successful in those attempts.

#### **101. Qualifications for Discipleship 16:24-26, see also Mark 8:34-38; Luke 9:22-27**

**16:24 ¶ Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.<sup>a</sup>**

24a Requirements for discipleship:

1. **"If any man"**. Discipleship is voluntary and cannot be forced on them.
2. **"Come after me"** Discipleship is coming after God and following Him wherever He goes.
3. **Deny yourself**. Give up your life, your ambitions, your plans, and turn them all over to the will of God.
  - A. "Self-denial, and patient suffering, are hard lessons, which will never be learned if we consult with flesh and blood (Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, page 1289)."
4. **Take up the cross**, with all of its difficulties, problems, sufferings and persecutions.
  - A. Can you be like Paul in:
    1. 1 Corinthians 4:9-13 **"For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honourable, but we are despised. Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwellingplace; And labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it: Being defamed, we intreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day."**
    2. 2 Corinthians 4:8-12 **"We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are always**

**delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. So then death worketh in us, but life in you."**

3. 2 Timothy 2:3 **"Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ."**

B. You cannot follow Christ without a cross on your back. He always leads toward the cross, never towards money, fame and influence.

C. Luke adds "take up his cross **daily**" in Luke 9:23.

5. **Follow Christ**, wherever He leads and in whatever He would have you to do.

A. You cannot follow Christ and man at the same time just as you cannot serve God and mammon (Matthew 6:24).

B. You cannot follow Christ and theological systems at the same time.

C. If you follow Christ in duty on earth, you'll also follow Him to glory.

**16:25 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.<sup>a</sup>**

25a A man loses his own soul by sin and carnality. It is not taken from him; he gives it up by living a life in the flesh.

**16:26 For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?<sup>ab</sup>**

26a How much is a soul worth? Can you put a price tag on it? One soul cannot be purchased with all the riches of the world, but it can be purchased with the blood of Christ. And how would your soul be benefited if you did gain the entire world but still died lost? The riches, fame and power of the world means nothing at the judgment. Adolf Hitler, Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, Genghis Khan and others like them nearly got the world. Would you want to trade places with them now? The riches of ten thousand worlds will not deliver you from a moment in a single hell.

26b Why would you want the world anyway? What good would it do you in eternity? If you had the world, where would you keep it? You can't have everything because you have nowhere to put it. And with increased riches come increased sorrow. Usually, a poor laboring man sleeps better than any billionaire (Ecclesiastes 5:12 **"The sleep of a labouring man is sweet, whether he eat little or much: but the abundance of the rich will not suffer him to sleep."**)

### **102. Promise of Rewards 16:27**

**16:27 For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.<sup>a</sup>**

27a This may apply to the judgment of the nations in Matthew 25:31-46. Personally, this takes place at the Bema Seat for Christians and at the Great White Judgment for the unsaved.

### **103. Seeing the Coming of the Kingdom 16:28**

**16:28 Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.<sup>a</sup>**

28a At Pentecost in Acts 2? Or is there a preview of this in Matthew 17? This is a difficult verse to interpret and apply.

### **Spiritual Applications- Matthew Chapter 16**

Jesus criticized the religious leaders of not keeping up the signs of times. It is necessary for every Christian to be up to speed on what is going on in his generation. How can you deal with your age and how can you live in your generation if you don't understand your age? If you don't study it, you cannot meet it and deal with it. Preachers need to preach about his generation. He needs to examine it, study it, figure out its master sins and its philosophies and then preach on how to meet it to his congregation. When preachers don't do this, the congregation will not know how to live and will be more susceptible to fall prey to the sins and philosophies of their age. Preachers don't preach these sermons because 1) they don't study their age themselves and 2) they are too busy trying to increase their congregations numerically.

Verse 15 is the most important question Christ ever asked, "Who do you say that I am?" Salvation is an individual thing. God has no grandchildren. It makes no difference if your father or grandfather was a Christian or not. You will be judged on your individual spiritual state.

Verse 18 shows that the Church is the only institution on earth with the promise of this preservation. No matter what is going on in the earth, there will always be Christians. Local churches may "not make it" and shut down for various reasons but there will always be the Church Universal on the earth. Satan cannot destroy it. He can corrupt it but it is self-purifying and will remerge from such attacks. It may grow smaller as we get closer to the Second Coming but it will never disappear until the rapture.

Notice the requirements for discipleship in verses 24-26. Salvation is easy but discipleship takes work and dedication. This weeds out the genuine followers of Christ from the merely curious. The main feature is to renounce the world and take up the cross, the sufferings and disciplines that will be required if you are going to be known as a disciple.



## **Matthew Chapter 17**

### **104. The Transfiguration 17:1-9, see also Mark 9:2-13; Luke 9:28-36**

**17:1 And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John<sup>a</sup> his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart,<sup>bc</sup>**

1a Peter, James and John, the Lord's inner circle. Although the Lord had rebuked Satan through Peter in Matthew 16:23, He still takes Peter with Him on this trip up the mountain.

1b There are traditional locations for this mountain, but we do not know for certain. It must have been somewhat isolated to ensure privacy for the transfiguration. John Gill and John Trapp, in their commentaries, citing Josephus and Jerome, suggest Mount Tabor. Mount Hermon has also been suggested.

1c Luke adds that the reason they went up the mountain was to pray (Luke 9:28). But this prayer meeting turned into something else!

**17:2 And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun,<sup>a</sup> and his raiment was white as the light.<sup>b</sup>**

2a This allowed His divine glory to shine before the disciples.

1. "The face is the most public part of the body, that which we see first and most. His clothing was also affected. Once you get saved, your face will have the countenance of God upon it and your wardrobe will also reflect the glory of God in your life.
3. This glory was internal with Christ, not reflecting an outward source of light or glory.

2b There are 4 times the Lord appeared to men in His glory:

1. At the Mount of Transfiguration- Matthew 17:2
2. To Stephen at his death- Acts 7:55
3. To Saul at his conversion- Acts 9:3-7
4. To John at Patmos- Revelation 1:13-17

**17:3 And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him.<sup>a</sup>**

3a The Law (Moses) and the Prophets (Elijah) are united in their testimony of Christ and both point to Him. We are not told what they were talking about, but no doubt it had something to do with the upcoming death of Christ and their future prophetic roles.

**17:4 Then answered Peter, and said<sup>a</sup> unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here:<sup>b</sup> if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.<sup>c</sup>**

4a Good ol' Peter. He didn't know what to say but he had to say something. As a natural born leader, a "take action" man, he was always the first one to speak up, even at times when he should have been quiet. And notice that when he sees the Lord, he immediately wants to go into a building program! Typical Baptist! He wanted to settle in right there for a while and commune with Moses and Elijah, but the vision was only for a short time before it was time to get back to work.

4b **“it is good for us to be here!”** Indeed, it was but don’t get into a “we four and no more” mentality in wanting to hog all the blessings and not wanting to share them or in letting others in on these blessings. But Peter wanted to be there with Jesus, Moses and Elijah and he desired their company above any earthly company. But what need would Moses or Elijah have of tabernacles, as the physical elements of the world would have no effect on them in their heavenly bodies? And why didn’t Peter suggest building tabernacles for himself, James and John? They would need them more than Moses, Elijah or the transfigured Christ.

4c Peter recognized Moses and Elijah without an introduction. This heavenly body (not yet a glorified body) must carry with it some degree of recognition. And since the resurrection had not yet occurred, these are not glorified bodies, but they must be some form of intermediate heavenly body. Elijah, who went to heaven without dying, must have been translated into this form from his earthly body after his translation to heaven.

1. The two witnesses of Revelation 13, as they both appear here in shadow and type. Enoch cannot be considered. The main reason that Enoch is usually suggested was that he was raptured and did not die in Genesis and since it is appointed unto man once to die (Hebrews 9:27 **“And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:”**), Moses cannot be one of the witnesses as he died in Deuteronomy 34. So it has to be Enoch and Elijah. But Hebrews 9:27 is not saying a man cannot die twice physically as it happened every time someone was raised from the dead. Lazarus died in John 11. He was raised. Do you think he is still alive? What about Dorcas? She died twice. Just because Moses died in Deuteronomy 34 does not mean he cannot come back again in Revelation 13 to join Elijah as one of the Two Witnesses.

2. It’s amazing to see how many people think Moses did not die in Deuteronomy 34, despite the clear testimony that he did in Deuteronomy 34:5-7 (**“So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the LORD. And he buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Bethpeor: but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day. And Moses was an hundred and twenty years old when he died: his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated.”**) and even in Jude 9 (**“Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.”**). Why would Satan and Michael be contending for the body of Moses if Moses were still alive? Peter Ruckman is one of those commentators who think Moses either did not die in Deuteronomy 34 or that he was raised from the dead in Deuteronomy 34.<sup>171</sup> He lays these out in his commentary on Matthew.

- A. Elijah, Moses, and Jesus are all on a mountain (Exod. 24:18; 1 Kings 19:8; Matt. 4:8).
- B. Elijah, Moses, and Jesus are all fasting 40 days and nights (Exod. 24:18; Luke 4:2; 1 Kings 19:8).
- C. Elijah, Moses, and Jesus all stand in the “presence of the LORD” (Exod. 33:21; 1 Kings 17:1; Acts 2:25, 33–35; Heb. 8:1, 12:1–3).
- D. Elijah, Moses, and Jesus were all sent to Israel (Exod. 2–4; 1 Kings 17–18; Luke 4; Matt. 10:1–8).
- E. Elijah, Moses, and Jesus all crossed water miraculously (Exod. 14–15; Matt. 14; 2 Kings 2).
- F. Elijah and Moses ended their lives where Jesus was baptized (Deut. 34; 2

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<sup>171</sup> I believe that Moses did die in Deuteronomy 34:5,6 and that Ruckman would be wrong here.

Kings 2; John 1:28), east of Jordan, at the crossing.

G. Elijah was caught up living, but will die again (2 Kings 2; Rev. 11).

H. Moses was caught up after death, but will die again (Deut. 34; Rev. 11).

I. Moses, Elijah, and Jesus all personally selected a minister to take their place (Deut. 3:24–28; 2 Kings 2; Rom. 15:8–9; Acts 9:15–16).

J. All three destroy enemies by fire, which comes at their spoken command (Num. 16:31–35; 2 Kings 1; Mal. 4; Rev. 11, 19).

K. All three have power over the natural elements (Exod. 5–10; 1 Kings 17:1; James 5:17; Rev. 11:3–6; Matt. 14:31–33).<sup>172</sup>

**17:5 While he yet spake,<sup>a</sup> behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said,<sup>b</sup> This is my beloved Son,<sup>c</sup> in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.<sup>d</sup>**

5a Peter got no acknowledgment of his proposition from Matthew 17:4.

5b The voice of the Father, giving witness to the Son. Also see 2 Peter 1:17 **“For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”**

5c **“This is my beloved Son”** But the Muslims claim that “Allah has no Son”.

5d **“Hear ye Him”**

1. Not any pope, preacher, politician, philosopher... There is only one person to listen to as there is only one God and one Son of God and only one way and one truth (John 14:6). Christ is even greater than Moses (the Law) and Elijah (the Prophets). The Father does not say to have the Law or the Prophets. They both are part of the plan of God both testify of Christ, but Christ has more authority than them both.

2. You may have dealings with Moses and Elijah, but when it is all said and done, you will have your ultimate dealings with Jesus Only. The Law and the Prophets are part of the plan of God but at the end of it all is Jesus only.

**17:6 And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid.<sup>a</sup>**

6a They fell on their faces in worship and fear.

**17:7 And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid.**

**17:8 And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only.<sup>a</sup>**

8a Peter talks about this experience in 2 Peter 1:16-19 (**“For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.”**). While he mentions that it was a great experience, he says that the “sure word of prophecy” is of greater use and value than any experience we might have had.

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<sup>172</sup> Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer's Commentary on Matthew*, pages 391-392.

**17:9 And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead.<sup>ab</sup>**

9a You have to come down off the mount sometime and get back to work. We can't live on mountaintop experiences. They are nice periods, but they do not help you to grow spiritually as the crops are grown in the valley, not on the mountain tops. In Matthew 17:14-21 and Mark 9:14ff, we are told of a multitude at the foot of the mountain, with the possessed child, the powerless disciples and the carping scribes. You may have a mountain top experience in church on Sunday, but then you have to go back to work on Monday!

9b Matthew mentions the resurrection twice in this chapter, in verses 9 and 23. No response is given in Matthew 17:9 but the disciples were very sorry in Matthew 17:23 about this prophecy.

### **105. Elijah and John the Baptist 17:10-13**

**17:10 And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come?<sup>a</sup>**

10a They were correct in this teaching, as per Malachi 4:5 (**"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD:"**). It is interesting that nothing is ever said about Moses having to first come before the Kingdom, although he does return in Revelation 11.

**17:11 And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things.**

11a Elijah does come during the Tribulation and this is in preparation for the Millennium.<sup>a</sup>

AV	ESV	LSV
11 And Jesus answered and said unto them, <b>Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things.</b>	11 He answered, <b>"Elijah does come, and he will restore all things.</b>	11 And He answered and said, <b>"Elijah is coming and will restore all things;</b>

Both the ESV and LSV omit **"shall come first"**

**17:12 But I say unto you,<sup>a</sup> That Elias is come already,<sup>b</sup> and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed.<sup>c</sup> Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them.**

12a **"But I say unto you..."** was the Lord's way of saying "the scribes are correct but not entirely as they are missing an important truth about Elijah..."

12b John would have been Elijah if Israel had accepted his ministry and message- see Matthew 11:14 (**"And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come."**). This involves the "Second Offer of the Kingdom" and the events of what could have taken place anytime between Acts 2-7. The Second Offer of the Kingdom (Millennium) is made in Acts 3:19-21 (**"Repent ye**



**therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.”)** If the nation would repent and accept Christ, the Father would send them Jesus Christ in Acts 3:20.

A good summary of the Second Offer of the Kingdom to Israel, by J. Sidlow Baxter in *Explore the Book*: “Such plain speaking cannot be misunderstood. Had there been a national repentance and acceptance of Jesus as indeed Israel’s Messiah-Saviour-King, the return of our Lord in public glory would have happened without further postponement. In other words, the second coming of Christ was contingent upon Israel’s reaction to the new message through the apostles. Very clearly, then, we can see why, when the disciples asked, “Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?” (Acts 1:6), He replied, “It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in His own power.” To have known the day and hour in advance would have been to know Israel’s reaction before ever the renewed offer of the kingdom was made. Truly, in the words of James: “Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world” (Acts 15:18); and it is in the light of His perfect foreknowledge that He preadapts and prearranges and predetermines. Thus, while He never leaves His ultimate purposes at the mercy of human uncertainty, in the outworking of things to the predetermined end He recognizes the free-will of man all through, and prearranges according to His foreknowledge of what man will do. Thus it is that events are allowed in the main to take their natural course, while at the same time God foreknows and overrules all to the fulfilment of His ultimate purpose. Thus, in all genuineness, the renewed offer of the Messianic kingdom was made to the Jews, as recorded in the Acts; and the return of Christ was for the time being contingent upon their reaction. This has a bearing upon the Epistles. In those to the Thessalonians the second coming of Christ is represented as though it might have burst into sudden occurrence in the imminent future. In some of the other Pauline epistles there is a noticeable shift of emphasis: the wondrous hope still gleams ahead, but there is not the same impression of impending fulfilment. This has been a problem to thoughtful readers; but once again, when we see the Acts as distinctively the renewed offer of the kingdom to Israel the problem evaporates. The period covered by the Acts, we repeat, was a suspense-period. So long as the kingdom was being re-offered to the nation the return of the Lord could have happened without any delay upon the fulfilment of the conditions. The offer was real; the promise was true; the crucified but ascended Son of Man was indeed “standing at the right hand of God,” ready to descend again in kingdom blessing. Would Israel respond, repent, receive? That was the suspense-point. Now it is in those epistles which were written during this suspense-period of the Acts, when there was still hope of Israel’s repentance, that we find the seeming imminence of the Lord’s return. Of those epistles, the earliest were 1 and 2 Thessalonians (written A.D. 53). 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Romans, were written four or five years later, when Jewish antipathy was becoming more firmly crystallized, but when to assemblies of believers all over the Roman world the hope of Christ’s return was still that which filled the immediate horizon (hence such words as Romans 13:11,12; 1 Corinthians 7:26,29, 15:52,58, 16:22; 2 Corinthians 4:14). When we turn over to Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus, however, there is a noticeable new emphasis. The grand prospect of the Lord’s return is still there, and still as bright: but there is not just the same sense of impendence. A great new conception swings into commanding prominence, taking the precedence for the time being, and claiming the soul’s wonder—that is, the CHURCH as the mystic body and bride and temple of the eternal Son. These epistles were not written until A.D. 64 (or possibly even later), i.e. after the culminating pronouncement of Acts 28:28. We do not say that there is a hard-and-fast division between these two groups of epistles. The hope of the Lord’s return is found in both; but there is modification as the later developments recorded in the

Acts clarify the situation. Similarly, the Church is found in both; but there is profounder conception of it as the wonderful Divine “mystery” is more fully revealed. We do not say there is a rigid demarcation between the two groups; yet the difference of emphasis is distinctly there; and the explanation is found in a true understanding of the Acts as the further offer of the kingdom to Israel. Another point on which it is well to be precise is that the two Thessalonian epistles, although they certainly give the impression that the Lord’s return was expected in the very near future, do not anywhere actually state that it was thus impending. With that more-than-human genius which everywhere characterizes the Scriptures a fine point of balance is maintained, so that while the sense of expectancy is stressed and even encouraged, there is no actual commitment as to the “day” or the “hour.” In this connection it is important to distinguish between what Paul thought and what Paul taught. Maybe Paul himself thought that the Lord’s return was close at hand; but he never actually wrote so. We do not claim inspiration and infallibility for all that the apostles thought; but we do claim it for all that they taught. Thus, these two Second Advent letters to the Thessalonians preserve a kind of sensitive poise between an encouraged expectancy on the one hand and a careful indefiniteness as to time on the other. Does this seem unfair to those early believers? Actually, it was the very opposite. Looking at things from the human side, our Lord’s return might have happened then; for as we have seen, it was a contingent prospect. Looking at things from the Divine side (which the now-completed Scriptures permit us to do) there could have been no renewed offer of the kingdom without this contingent promise. Certainly, the further Jewish refusal lay in the foreknowledge of God, but so did His larger purpose through the Church and the eventual return of Christ after the calling in of the Church’s elect members. In keeping with this, the great hope was set before those early believers so that they might have—along with all who have followed them—this sanctifying intelligence concerning the eventual consummation.”

Summary of the “Second Offer”:

1. All the Old Testament prophets spoke of the Millennial Kingdom (hundreds of verses—too many to list here).
2. John the Baptist would have been the forerunner to prepare the way for Christ.
  - A. Matthew 11:10,14 **“For this is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee...And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come.”**
3. Christ offered the Kingdom to Israel and was rejected when Israel had Him crucified.
  - A. John 19:14,15 **“And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King! But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar.”**
4. The Kingdom is offered again here in Acts 3:19,20 and was rejected.
  - A. Acts 3:19,20 **“Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you:”**
5. It will be offered again by Stephen in Acts 7:56 and was rejected.
  - A. Acts 7:56 **“And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.”**
  - B. Christ arose because He would have returned if the nation had repented at Stephen’s message, not because He was “standing to honor the first Christian martyr” or anything like that. Christ sits back down at Stephen’s death when the Jewish leaders killed him.

6. God now withdraws the offer and the gospel goes to the Samaritans in Acts 8.
7. Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles is saved in Acts 9.
8. The Gentile Pentecost takes place in Acts 10.
9. The first mission to the Gentiles starts in Acts 13.
10. The Jerusalem Conference in Acts 15 defines Gentile salvation.
11. Acts 28:28 wraps up the current state of the “kingdom offer” and the status of Israel up until the rapture and tribulation period (“**Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it.**”)
12. Since the Kingdom did not come in Acts, it was delayed until a yet-future date. In the tribulation, Moses and Elijah will return in Revelation to take up their ministry of being the Two Witnesses, only to both be martyred in Revelation 11:7-10.
  - A. Revelation 11:7-10 “**And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves. And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.**”)
  - B. These Two Witnesses are raised and raptured in Revelation 11:11,12.
    - i. Revelation 11:11,12 “**And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them. And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them.**”.

12c “**whatever they listed...**” whatever they wanted or desired. It comes from the Middle English lysten, from Old English lystan; akin to Old English lust desire, lust.

### **17:13 Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist.<sup>a</sup>**

13a John came in the spirit and power of Elijah. If Israel had accepted his message and would have repented on a national level, the kingdom could have started in the gospels. But since Israel did not accept his message, John dies, the Lord goes to the cross, the Church Age comes, ended by the rapture and Elijah must return in Revelation 11.

### **106. The Healing of the Lunatic Son 17:14-21, see also Mark 9:14-29; Luke 9:37-42**

**17:14 ¶ And when they were come to the multitude, there came to him a certain man, kneeling down to him, and saying,**

**17:15 Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is lunatick,<sup>a</sup> and sore vexed: for oftentimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water.<sup>b</sup>**

15a “**lunatick**” Also in Matthew 4:24.

15b There was much devil possession in the New Testament era. We would think there would be just as much today. Maybe we are not looking for it or don't know what to look for. We could ascribe all these self-destructive tendencies people have today to other causes instead of devilish activity. Suicidal tendencies and other self-destructive actions usually suggest devilish activity. This can also manifest itself in tattooing, body piercings, gender-confusion, homosexuality, etc.

AV	ESV	LSV
15 Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is <b>lunatick</b> , and sore vexed: for oftentimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water.	15 said, "Lord, have mercy on my son, for he has seizures and he suffers terribly. For often he falls into the fire, and often into the water.	15 "Lord, have mercy on my son, for he has seizures and suffers terribly; for he often falls into the fire and often into the water.

The ESV and LSV equate "**being lunatick**" with having seizures. It was thought that the moon caused these physical and mental issues. This could have been some form of epilepsy. This is here we see the word "luna" in this word. The word is used only in Matthew 4:24 and here. It is from the Middle English lunatik, from Anglo-French or Late Latin; Anglo-French lunatic, from Late Latin lunaticus, from Latin luna; from the belief that lunacy fluctuated with the phases of the moon.

# **17:16 And I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him.<sup>a</sup>**

16a This was because of the weakness of their faith (Matthew 17:20). Although the Lord had given the disciples power over devils (Matthew 10:1), they failed here. We wonder if the man was instructed to wait until Jesus was gone and to bring his son to the disciples so they could cast out this devil. When they could not, it would have been a public embarrassment to the disciples that the religious leaders could have seized on.

# **17:17 Then Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you?<sup>a</sup> bring him hither to me.**

17a This was directed more at the faithless crowd than it was to the powerless disciples. There was some real frustration and disappointment in His voice as He gave this reply.

# **17:18 And Jesus rebuked the devil;<sup>a</sup> and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour.**

18a Only Jesus can rebuke devils and Satan. We are never told that we ought to do it. The Charismatic false teachers are forever talking about their supposed authority to "rebuke the devil" but Satan laughs at them. He may go along with their religious performance to create the illusion that this false teacher really does have power over devils so more people, who lack spiritual discernment, will follow them and spread their error.

# **17:19 Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out?<sup>a</sup>**

19a They no doubt did everything Jesus did in terms of procedure. But doing the work of God is not based on following some formula but rather working by faith, which they lacked in this case.

**17:20 And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed,<sup>a</sup> ye shall say unto this mountain,<sup>b</sup> Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.**

20a The mustard seed is very small, yet it can yield a large bush or tree. Likewise, small faith can also produce great results if put to a proper use.

20b You could move the mountain but what if a poor widow lived on that mountain? “This mountain” may be the same Mount of Transfiguration that the Lord had just descended from.

To “remove a mountain” was a Jewish metaphor referring to removing a great difficulty. The Lord is saying “If you have faith, then you will not be frustrated or defeated by even the most difficult of circumstances”.

AV	ESV	LSV
20 And Jesus said unto them, <b>Because of your unbelief:</b> for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.	20 He said to them, “Because of your little faith. For truly, I say to you, if you have faith like a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you.”	20 And He *said to them, “Because of your little faith; for truly I say to you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you.

“unbelief” Having “little faith” is not the same as unbelief. Unbelief implies no faith while there is some faith involved if you are of “little faith”.

**17:21 Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.<sup>a</sup>**

21a Some cases require more spiritual work than do others. It also means that not all healings would be instantaneous, as prayer and fasting takes time. Some healings might be stretched out over a period of several months. Jesus, as God, did not choose to use an extended process to cure this child as we may have had to do if we had attempted this.

AV	ESV	LSV
21 <b>Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.</b>	(omitted)	21 [“But this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting.”]

This verse is omitted in modern versions. The LSV puts it in brackets, saying they included it but they don’t really believe it belongs in the text.

**107. Prophecy of Christ's Arrest and Resurrection 17:22,23, see also Mark 9:30-32; Luke 9:43-45**

**17:22 ¶ And while they abode in Galilee, Jesus said unto them, The Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men:**

AV	ESV	LSV
22 And while they abode in Galilee, Jesus said unto them, <b>The Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men:</b>	22 As they were gathering in Galilee, Jesus said to them, <b>"The Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men,</b>	22 And while they were gathering together in Galilee, Jesus said to them, <b>"The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men;</b>

**"betrayed"** The ESV, LSV and Darby omit "betrayed".

**17:23 And they shall kill him, and the third day he shall be raised again. And they were exceeding sorry.**

They did not understand this prophecy of His death and they certainly did not want to hear about it or to even consider the possibility. They certainly did not understand the references to His resurrection, even up until the days after His death. They did not like the idea that the Gentiles would murder their Master or that the Lord would even allow such a thing to take place.

**108. The Question About Tribute 17:24-27**

**17:24 ¶ And when they were come to Capernaum, they that received tribute money came to Peter, and said, Doth not your master pay tribute?**

The "tribute" is not to the temple but "tribute unto Caesar" as per Matthew 22:17 and Luke 20:22. Caesar is "a raiser of taxes" in Daniel 11:20. Caesar is "a king" in John 19:15 and tax is "the king's tribute" as in Nehemiah 5:4 and now. One way that you "Honour the king," is by paying "the king's tribute". Even Jesus had to pay His taxes and give His offerings, even if they were going to support a corrupt temple worship or an ungodly Roman Empire. Tax evasion and tax protests have no Scriptural support. Paul makes this clear in Romans 13:6 that we are to pay tribute to whom it is due. The Lord also furthered this teaching in Luke 20:24. He was asked by the religious leaders if it was lawful to pay tribute to Caesar. If He answered "yes" then Jesus would have been accused of supporting Rome and of being unpatriotic. If He answered "no" then they had Him as a rebel against Rome. But He answered that since Caesar's image was on the coin, it was his coin and all we were doing when paying our taxes was rendering to Caesar the things that belonged to him anyway.

AV	ESV	LSV
24 And when they were come to Capernaum, they that received tribute <i>money</i> came to Peter, and said, Doth not your master pay tribute?	24 When they came to Capernaum, the collectors of the two-drachma tax went up to Peter and said, "Does your teacher not pay the	24 Now when they came to Capernaum, those who collected the two-drachma <i>tax</i> came to Peter and said, "Does your teacher not pay

	tax?"	the two-drachma <i>tax</i> ?"
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**"tribute money"** Both the ESV and LSV confuse the matter by adding "the two-drachma tax". This adds nothing to the understanding of the verse. The Darby version is even worse with "Does your teacher not pay the didrachmas?" All the versions use "teacher" or "master".

**17:25 He saith, Yes. And when he was come into the house, Jesus prevented him, saying, What thinkest thou, Simon? of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children, or of strangers?**

When Israel's religious leaders try to kill Christ, one of the first charges is **"We found this fellow...forbidding to give tribute to Caesar"** (Luke 23:1,2), even after He had talked with them about it and settled the question publicly (Luke 20:21-26 **"And they asked him, saying, Master, we know that thou sayest and teachest rightly, neither acceptest thou the person of any, but teachest the way of God truly: Is it lawful for us to give tribute unto Caesar, or no? But he perceived their craftiness, and said unto them, Why tempt ye me? Shew me a penny. Whose image and superscription hath it? They answered and said, Caesar's. And he said unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which be Caesar's, and unto God the things which be God's. And they could not take hold of his words before the people: and they marvelled at his answer, and held their peace."**).

**"Jesus prevented him"** or "Jesus asked Peter this before Peter could further respond". Jesus wanted to draw Peter's answer out more and expand on it. Sons of royalty were exempt from the temple tribute, but Christ paid it anyway to avoid an offense and to avoid creating an issue.

The word **"prevent"** occurs seven times in the AV. The form "preventist" is found once and the form "prevented" appears nine times. "Prevent" is manifestly not an archaic word but it is used in the AV in an archaic sense. The word is from the Latin "praeventus", from "praevenire", "to come before". Thus, the original meaning of "prevent" was to come or go before, anticipate, meet beforehand, obviate, or precede."<sup>173</sup>

**17:26 Peter saith unto him, Of strangers. Jesus saith unto him, Then are the children free.**

**17:27 Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them for me and thee.**

We pay taxes, so we won't offend and to maintain a good public testimony. And Jesus paid taxes to a heathen and ungodly government, so we must as well. This points out the great truth of the Pauline epistles. It is that the Christian has liberty to do anything since he is not under the law, but for the sake of the weaker brother or the unsaved man, he purposely refrains from conduct that would offend the unsaved.

1. Don't you wish we could all pay our taxes like this? Christ was so poor that He didn't have even this rather meager amount of money on Him and had to resort to this miracle to provide the payment.

<sup>173</sup> Laurence Vance, *Archaic Words and the Authorized Version*, page 269.

2. No one respects tax rebels, especially those who cite religious reasons. Every so often, you meet some nut-case like this. I remember in the 1980s, while living in northeastern Maryland, there was a loon who decided that it was unconstitutional for him to take out a state-issued driver's license and that he did not have tag and register his car in Maryland. He made his own license plates and put them on his car. He had "Free Republic of Maryland" or something on his plates. One day, he was pulled over by the Maryland State Police for obvious reasons and was fined. I don't remember if he was jailed. He was a laughing stock, which would have been worse if he had been a religious laughing stock.

Even when it comes to paying taxes, Philippians 4:19 applies, "**But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus**". In my town of Smyrna, Delaware, our town council recently voted to double our property taxes<sup>174</sup> and even local and state governments are forever raising taxes. Paying the required tax is a "need" that God will help us with.

### **Spiritual Applications- Matthew Chapter 17**

The transfiguration was a great event to witness but too many Christians would be willing to stay there and never move beyond it. There was a preacher in our area who says God healed him of Crohn's Disease. He then made an entire ministry of one event and called it "Walking Miracle Ministries". This was his calling card, one healing event in his life. He never moved past it. He built his whole ministry on one experience. Peter mentions this experience in 2 Peter 1:17-19 but he had progressed beyond it. Peter didn't "live" on the mount and he didn't build his ministry around it. Peter also realized that he had something greater than an experience like this. He had a "more sure word of prophecy". The Scripture is greater than any experience we've had.

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<sup>174</sup> Due to years of financial mismanagement from previous administrations. No one goes to jail but the taxpayers are on the hook.



## **Matthew Chapter 18**

Matthew 18 deals with conduct in the Kingdom:

1. Become like little children (Matthew 18:2-4)
2. Do not set up offenses and do not become a cause of offense (Matthew 18:5-9)
3. Do not despise any believer, including the “little” ones (Matthew 18:10-14)
4. Be willing to listen to others and the church if we need to have our conduct corrected (Matthew 18:15-20)
5. We should be willing to forgive without limit (Matthew 18:21-35)

### **109. The Greatest in the Kingdom 18:1-6, see also Mark 9:33-37; Luke 9:46-48**

**18:1 At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?<sup>a</sup>**

1a This is a millennial question, since it deals with the kingdom of heaven and not the church age. This would be a natural question for a Jew to ask.

**18:2 And Jesus called a little child<sup>ab</sup> unto him, and set him in the midst of them,**

2a The most humble and unassuming type of person you could find is a child. The child was called and quickly and willing came to Christ to be used as this object lesson. Christ must have been a very charming and pleasant person as children do not go to unpleasant persons.

1. Become like a little child- one who is humble, meek, not self-assuming or self-important. The kingdom will have no place for the proud, arrogant and self-important.
2. This is the answer to the disciple's question in Matthew 18:1. Who is greatest in the Kingdom? He who is least, who humbles himself, who has a child-like attitude. On earth, men strive through effort and discipline to achieve greatness in their vocation, but that is not the attitude of the Kingdom.
3. Child-like humility is the first requisite for learning the Bible. God shows nothing to proud and arrogant “students” who are too smart or too educated to be taught or to receive any revelation directly from the Holy Spirit.
4. Converted from your life of sin and unto God. Reform your lives and get it aligned with God. “The apostles were converted in one sense, but even they needed a further conversion. They needed to be converted from self-seeking to humbleness and content. A little child has no ambitious dreams; he is satisfied with little things; he trusts; he aims not at greatness; he yields to command. There is no entering into the kingdom of heaven but by descending from fancied greatness to real lowliness of mind, and becoming as little children.”<sup>175</sup>

2b “Our Lord’s contempt for “brainy wisdom” is clearly shown in the passage. As someone has so aptly commented: “At the time He made these remarks, He was talking to a crowd that had enough brains to fill a good-sized *garbage can*.” We might also learn not to despise the “**small things**” from the lesson (Zech. 4:10). It was a child who showed the Prussian General Blucher a short cut to Waterloo with reinforcements, while old Napoleon was mopping up the British Army. It was a child, also, who told Governor Curtin (of Pennsylvania) of Lee’s intended

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<sup>175</sup> Charles Spurgeon, *Matthew: Gospel of the Kingdom*.

maneuver to go north of Hagerstown, Maryland, and approach Gettysburg. The boy overheard two Confederate generals talking nearly a week before the Southern armies marched north, parallel to the Emmitsburg Road. It is a child that secures Naaman's healing (2 Kings 5), and it is a child that eludes the wrath of Herod, stumps the intellectuals of the first century, and sets the dating of all dates in history from His birth (Luke 2:26,27)."<sup>176</sup>

**18:3 And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.<sup>ab</sup>**

3a A lack of conversion, or unwillingness to be converted, will keep a man out of the Kingdom.

3b "Converting grace makes us like little children, not foolish as children (1 Cor. xiv. 20), nor fickle (Eph. iv. 14), nor playful (ch. xi. 16); but, as children, we must desire the sincere milk of the word (1 Pet. ii. 2); as children, we must be careful for nothing, but leave it to our heavenly Father to care for us (ch. vi. 31); we must, as children, be harmless and inoffensive, and void of malice (1 Cor. xiv. 20), governable, and under command (Gal. iv. 2); and (which is here chiefly intended) we must be humble as little children, who do not take state upon them, nor stand upon the punctilios of honour; the child of a gentleman will play with the child of a beggar (Rom. xii. 16), the child in rags, if it have the breast, is well enough pleased, and envies not the gaiety of the child in silk; little children have no great aims at great places, or projects to raise themselves in the world; they exercise not themselves in things too high for them; and we should in like manner behave, and quiet ourselves, Ps. cxxxi. 1, 2. As children are little in body and low in stature, so we must be little and low in spirit, and in our thoughts of ourselves. This is a temper which leads to other good dispositions; the age of childhood is the learning age (Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*)."

**18:4 Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.<sup>abc</sup>**

4a Verse 4 is an obvious reference to the attitude and heart condition of the genuine convert in any dispensation. It is the natural outcome of a true conversion experience. This is stated in the Psalms for an Old Testament saint (Psalm 131), in the Gospels for a Jewish saint (Luke 10:21 **"In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight."**), and in the New Testament for a Christian (Romans 12:16 **"Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits."**; 1 Peter 2:1-3 **"Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious."**).

4b The Kingdom is exactly the opposite from any other age: the humble are exalted, the weak are strong, those who are the least esteemed are esteemed greatly.

4c "When had David the kingdom given him in possession, but when he was as a weaned child? When was Mephibosheth advanced to David's table, but when he made himself a dog, and therefore fit only to lie under the table, yea, a dead dog, and therefore fit only for the ditch? He that is in the low pits and caves of the earth, sees the stars in the firmament; when they who

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<sup>176</sup> Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer's Commentary on Matthew*, page 418.

are on the tops of the mountains discern them not. He that is most humble seeth most of heaven, and shall have most of it: for the lower the ebb, the higher the tide, and the lower the foundation of virtue is laid, the higher shall the roof of glory be overlaid."<sup>177</sup>

**18:5 And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me.<sup>a</sup>**

5a It takes a humble man to receive Christ and to be saved. Arrogant, proud and self-sufficient men will not humble themselves to accept Christ.

**18:6<sup>a</sup> But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me,<sup>b</sup> it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.<sup>cd</sup>**

6a See also Mark 9:42-48.

6b Christ was never afraid to offend a religious hypocrite, but He was concerned about offending the "little ones". To offend a young and tender believer (and a new believer) to discourage him from following Christ is to invite a severe condemnation from God. This can also refer to doing something stupid in front of an unsaved man who might have otherwise had gotten saved except for his being offended by something you said or done as a Christian. Paul warned not to offend the brethren.

A. Romans 14:21-23 **"It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak. Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin."**

B. 1 Corinthians 8:11-13 **"And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ. Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend."**

6c See Revelation 18:21 (**"And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all."**) to see an example of something that greatly offended, Mystery Babylon, being thrown into the sea and drowning like this kind of a millstone.

6d **"drowned"** "The Jew feared the sea; for him Heaven was a place where there would be no more sea (Rev.21:1). The man who taught another to sin would be better to be drowned far out in the most lonely of all waste places. Moreover, the very picture of drowning had its terror for the Jew. Drowning was sometimes a Roman punishment, but never Jewish. To the Jew it was the symbol of utter destruction. When the Rabbis taught that heathen and Gentile objects were to be utterly destroyed, they said that they must be "cast into the salt sea." Josephus (*Antiquities of the Jews* 14. 15. 10) has a terrible account of a Galilean revolt in which the Galileans took the supporters of Herod and drowned them in the depths of the Sea of Galilee. The very phrase would paint to the Jew a picture of utter destruction."<sup>178</sup>

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<sup>177</sup> John Trapp, *Commentary on the Bible*.

<sup>178</sup> William Barclay, *Daily Study Bible*: Matthew, volume 2, page 179.

## 110. Offences 18:7-9

**18:7 ¶ Woe unto the world because of offences!<sup>ab</sup> for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!**

7a Offenses are inevitable and will come to all men, saved or lost. You can't help being offended but you can make sure that you are not the source or the cause of any offenses. Offenses can come by three different routes: by God's permission, Satan's malice, and man's wickedness.

7b Offences:

1. Those who cause offences are to be marked and shunned.  
A. Romans 16:17. **"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them."**
2. Paul had a conscience void of offence.  
A. Acts 24:16 **"And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men."**
3. It is evil to deliberately cause offence.  
A. Romans 14:20 **"For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence."**
4. Give no offence that would cause damage to the ministry.  
A. 2 Corinthians 6:3 **"Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed:"**
5. There is the offence of the cross.  
A. Galatians 5:11 **"And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? then is the offence of the cross ceased."**

AV

ESV

LSV

7 Woe unto the world because of <b>offences!</b> for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!	7 "Woe to the world for temptations to sin! For it is necessary that temptations come, but woe to the one by whom the temptation comes!	7 "Woe to the world because of <i>its</i> stumbling blocks! For it is inevitable that stumbling blocks come; nevertheless, woe to that man through whom the stumbling block comes!
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**"offenses"** The ESV has "temptations to sin" and the LSV has "stumbling blocks". The ESV is wrong and the LSV is clunky in its reading.

**18:8 Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire.**

**18:9<sup>a</sup> And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire.<sup>b</sup>**

9a The Lord repeats a passage from the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:29,30). Remove occasions or instruments in your life that could cause offense to others from your life, no matter how precious that thing might be to you. I don't think the Lord is talking about physically maiming yourself but if that is what it takes to keep you out of hell in avoiding whatever sin that will destroy your soul, then the Lord said it would be worth it. Any price is worth it and we should be willing to suffer any loss in order to avoid hell ourselves and to ensure that we are not the instruments in causing others to go to hell. To summarize, the Lord is saying "Whatever is keeping you from being converted and believing on me, you'd do better without."

9b It is very clear that the Lord clearly believed in and taught a literal, fiery hell.

### **111. Despise Not One of These Little Ones 18:10**

**18:10 Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones;<sup>a</sup> for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.<sup>b</sup>**

10a It is human nature to look down upon those whom we think are "not up to our level", either socially, economically, educationally or spiritually. But that attitude is foreign to the thinking of the Kingdom, as we should always be looking to esteem our brother more highly than we esteem ourselves (Philippians 2:3).

10b This is usually given as a "proof text" for Guardian Angels, at least for children? Hebrews 1:14 says that angels do minister to saints.

### **112. To Seek and Save That Which Was Lost 18:11-14, see also Luke 15:3-7**

**18:11 For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost.<sup>ab</sup>**

11a This is not an evangelistic parable since no unsaved man is called a sheep. It deals with wayward saints and apostates being reclaimed. The man (any man) who refuses to believe the Bible literally and wanders away from the truth and into false doctrine becomes enmeshed every time in apostate theological system, spiritual perversion and false plan of salvation.

11b The first time Christ came, He did not come to be king but for salvation of the lost through His work on the cross. His kingship is in view at His second coming in Revelation 19.

AV	ESV	LSV
11 For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost.	(omitted)	11 ["For the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost.]

This verse is omitted from the ESV and is in brackets in the LSV. All the versions omit "seek". Why attack such a verse to describe the reason why the Lord came to earth?

**18:12 How think ye? if a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray,<sup>a</sup> doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray?<sup>b</sup>**

12a This sheep is not lost but astray. He has wandered away and backslid. The shepherd brings the sheep back into the fold. This is not a picture of salvation but a restoration after backsliding.

12b Sheep need constant watching due to their tendency to wander away from the shepherd and the flock.

**18:13 And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that sheep, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray.<sup>a</sup>**

13a The Lord cares for and seeks the individual. Christianity is a religion of the individual, not the masses.

**18:14 Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.<sup>a</sup>**

14a This is anti-limited atonement. God wanted them all saved. He is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to salvation (2 Peter 3:9). The Calvinistic teaching is that God sovereignty elects some to be saved and passes others by for salvation, so that God does not desire all men to be saved, only the elect. The Biblical teaching is clearly opposed to that teaching.

### **113. Resolving Church Problems 18:15-18**

**18:15<sup>a</sup> ¶ Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault<sup>b</sup> between thee and him alone:<sup>cd</sup> if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.**

15a This deals with internal disputes within a local congregation since “brethren” are involved. When this happens, the procedure to follow is:

1. Go to the brother alone and try to work things out. The sooner this is done, the better. The longer an issue is dragged out, the harder it will be to resolve it.
2. If that doesn't work, try again with two or three witnesses. This will demonstrate, with witnesses, that you tried to resolve the situation, but the offending brother refused. There need to be at least two separate attempts made at resolution.
3. If the brother still refuses to deal with the disagreement, he is to be brought before the local church and they are to judge the situation.
4. Once a judgment has been rendered, if the offending party refuses to abide by the decision, he is to be turned out of the local congregation via “church discipline”.
  - A. 1 Corinthians 6:1-5 **“Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints? Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life? If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church. I speak to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you? no, not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren?”**

15b Faults

1. David was found to have no fault
  - A. 1 Samuel 29:3 **"Then said the princes of the Philistines, What do these Hebrews here? And Achish said unto the princes of the Philistines, Is not this David, the servant of Saul the king of Israel, which hath been with me these days, or these years, and I have found no fault in him since he fell unto me unto this day?"**
2. Daniel was found to have no fault
  - A. Daniel 6:4 **"Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him."**
3. Dealing with faults among the brethren.
  - A. Matthew 18:15 **"Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother."**
  - B. Galatians 6:1 **"Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."**
4. Some are expert fault-finders
  - A. Mark 7:2 **"And when they saw some of his disciples eat bread with defiled, that is to say, with unwashen, hands, they found fault."**
5. Christ had no faults
  - A. Luke 23:4 **"Then said Pilate to the chief priests and to the people, I find no fault in this man."**
  - B. Luke 23:14 **"Said unto them, Ye have brought this man unto me, as one that perverteth the people: and, behold, I, having examined him before you, have found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse him:"**
  - C. John 18:38 **"Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault at all."**
  - D. John 19:4 **"Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him."**
  - E. John 19:6 **"When the chief priests therefore and officers saw him, they out, saying, Crucify him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Take ye him, and crucify him: for I find no fault in him."**
6. There was a fault among the Corinthians.
  - A. 1 Corinthians 6:7 **"Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?"**
7. The saints in glory have no fault.
  - A. Revelation 14:5 **"And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God."**
8. Cleanse me from secret faults
  - A. Psalm 19:12 **"Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults."**
9. Confess your faults one to another.
  - A. James 5:16 **"Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."**
  - B. We are to confess our faults to our brothers and sisters in Christ and ask for prayer. We confess our sins to Jesus.
10. Suffering for our faults is no real glory.

**A. 1 Peter 2:20 “For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently?”**

15c Offences and disagreements between brethren do happen and are sometimes not our faults. Even if the other person is to blame, we should take the initiative and go to him to try to reconcile the matter, and not to wait for him to make the first move, because he probably will not take that first step.

15d This procedure is seldom followed by Christians. Most of the time, Christians will hear a rumor or make an assumption or jump to a conclusion about something another Christian supposedly said or did and run with it without contacting the other Christian in question privately first and getting clarification. When I was a student at Foundations Theological Seminary in Dunn, North Carolina in 1994, my teacher, O. Talmadge Spence, told us once “Men, when you leave this place and go out into your ministries, you will hear things about Foundations and about me. Some will be good, some will be bad. Some will be true, some will be false. Before you believe anything you hear, please call me and ask me about it first. And if I hear things about you, I will first call you and ask you about it before I believe it”. That is Biblical advice and is a demonstration of Christian character. But it is seldom followed. In my own experience, church members have gotten fighting mad at me something I supposed said or did that could have been easily cleared up if they can come to me privately at the time. I could have explained what really happened and misunderstandings and offenses could have been avoided. And many times, the offended party won’t even approach me. I don’t even know that are offended because they don’t tell me. One man waited three years to finally approach me over something he misunderstood, then all of a sudden, he decided to attack me regarding this incident. Such actions and attitudes are not Biblical Christianity but reveal carnality. Failure to follow this Biblical procedure should result in church discipline against the guilty party.

**18:16 But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.<sup>a</sup>**

16a The “two witnesses to verify a thing” principle.

**18:17 And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church,<sup>a</sup> let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.<sup>b</sup>**

17a This is second mention of the Church, with the first mentioned in Matthew 16:18 (“**And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.**”). The Lord is looking prophetically beyond Pentecost. Neither this or Matthew 16 are the start of the New Testament Church. That will not take place until Acts 2 although the formation documents of the Church would be drawn up here and in Matthew 18:17. The Lord is looking at the church in prospect here and in Matthew 16.

As in any earthly organization, such as a business, the formation documents and by-laws are first drawn up but that does not “create” the corporation. Once drawn up, the formation document of that prospective corporation is sent to a governmental agency, usually a Division of Corporations of a certain state for review, approval and recording. The agency will then assign an identifier to the new corporation and return some sort of confirmation copy. Then the corporation becomes “active”. The Lord is drawing up the formation documents of the Church in Matthew 16 and 18 but the Church does not come into actual existence until the Holy Spirit gives His “approval” and acceptance in Acts 2.



17b **“let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican”** The Amish do this literally with an offending and unrepentant member with the “ban”, which involves a totally cutting off of the offender from and contact with the community, including family. This is designed to try to get the offender to repent and to be restored.

**18:18 Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.<sup>ab</sup>**

18a Local churches have this authority over its members and associated issues. Also see Matthew 16:19 **“And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”**). It is not just given to Peter, as seen by the “ye” pronouns- it is plural.

18b The Church has more power on earth and even in the heavenlies than it might realize, but how little do we realize it and employ that authority!

#### **114. The Power of Two or Three 18:19,20**

**18:19 Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.<sup>a</sup>**

19a A principal of prayer and for getting answers to prayer.

**18:20 For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.<sup>a</sup>**

20a This is a good prayer meeting night verse, or even one for a Sunday night service. Whenever we count our attendance at a church service, we need to add one more, as Christ Himself is also present in our services, although we do not see Him.

What is a local church?

1. A local and visible manifestation of the Body of Christ
2. It is ordained by God and part of His program for this dispensation
  - A. Not seen by the Old Testament prophets
  - B. Was a “mystery”.
    - i. Ephesians 3:3 **“How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words,”**
    - ii. Ephesians 5:32 **“This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.”**
3. It was purchased with the blood of Christ as He died for it.
  - A. Acts 20:28 **“Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.”**
  - B. Ephesians 5:25 **“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;”**

4. It is a “called out assembly” from the Greek word “ekklesia”
  - A. Called out from the world- separation
5. Its head is Christ.
  - A. Colossians 1:18 **“And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.”**
  - B. Not the pope or any man.
6. Its foundation is Christ.
  - A. Ephesians 2:20 **“And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;”**
7. It is built by Christ.
  - A. Matthew 16:18 **“And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”**
8. The gates of hell will not prevail against it.
  - A. Matthew 16:18 **“And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”**
9. Overseen by pastors and elders.
  - A. 1 Peter 5:1-3 **“The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.”**
10. Served by deacon.
  - A. Acts 6:1-4 **“And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration. Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.”**
11. Has a membership. This membership has submitted itself to the discipline of the church and helps administrate the operation of the church.
  - A. Most churches own property. In our modern time, the question is “who owns the property?” Someone has to own the building and the bank accounts. If a church incorporates then the members own the building and property. If not, an individual, usually the pastor, owns the building and that is not the best situation.
    - i. There are many men who tell you that incorporation is of the devil but that simply is not so. I’ve worked in the incorporation/corporate research business for 25 years and it is a “necessary evil” for a church to operate in our day.

12. Practices discipline.

A. Matthew 18:15-18

B. 1 Corinthians 5:1-5 **"It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you. For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed, In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus."**

13. It is not bound to a church building

A. Early churches met in houses.

i. Romans 16:5 **"Likewise greet the church that is in their house. Salute my wellbeloved Epaenetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ."**

ii. Dedicated church buildings did not arise until about the third century.

iii. Meeting in houses is fine but it is better to meet in a "neutral" location.

B. They meet in all kinds of buildings, but the church is the people, not the building.

14. Size of the congregation is unimportant. As long as there are two people involved, that qualifies as a local church.

15. Has a statement of faith, a public declaration of faith and belief.

16. Mission

A. To edify the saints.

i. Ephesians 4:15,16 **"But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."**

B. To evangelize the lost.

i. Matthew 28:19,20 **"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen."**

a. Soulwinning

b. Discipleship

C. To witness for Christ as ambassadors.

i. 2 Corinthians 5:20 “**Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.**”

**115. Forgiving the Brethren 18:21-19:2, see also Luke 17:3,4**

**18:21 ¶ Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?<sup>a</sup>**

21a The rabbis would have said three times. Peter thought seven times was really “going the extra mile”.

**18:22 Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.<sup>a</sup>**

22a This is not a matter of multiplication but rather we must continually forgive a brother no matter how many times he sins against us, in the same manner that the Father forgives us when we continually sin the same sin against Him. How many times will God forgive us for committing the same sin over and over during the course of our lives? What if He stopped forgiving at “seventy times seven?” We would be in very deep trouble in that case.

AV	ESV	LSV
22 Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.	22 Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times.	22 Jesus *said to him, “I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.

The ESV makes a horrible blunder here by reading “77 times” instead of “**seventy times seven**”, which is 490 times. Other critical text translations that make the same error are The New International Version and the New American Standard Version 2020 revision (the original NASV has the correct reading), the New English Translation (NET Bible), the New American Bible,<sup>179</sup> the New Revised Standard Version and the Contemporary English Bible.

**18:23 ¶ Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants.**

**18:24 And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents.**

**18:25 But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made.**

**18:26 The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.**

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<sup>179</sup> A Roman Catholic translation, sometimes referred to as the “St. Joseph edition”. Not to be confused with the New American Standard Version, although they were both translated from the same family of manuscripts.

**18:27 Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt.**

**18:28 But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellow servants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest.**

**18:29 And his fellow servant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.**

**18:30 And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt.**

**18:31 So when his fellow servants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done.**

**18:32 Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me:**

**18:33 Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow servant, even as I had pity on thee?**

**18:34 And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him.**

**18:35 So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.**

Summary, Matthew 18:23-35

1. 18:23 The kingdom of heaven is like a king taking account of his servants.
  - A. Sounds like the Bema Seat judgment, although that is not the doctrinal thrust of this parable.
  - B. Unsaved Jews will not be at the Bema Seat. Those who survive the Tribulation period and who end up believing on Christ must have a judgment, but it is not recorded in Scripture, neither the where, when or how.
2. 18:24 One servant was brought in, who had incurred a debt of ten thousand talents.
  - A. It was owed to the king.
  - B. Ten thousand talents is equal to billions of dollars. One had to wonder how this man got into such a level of debt! But that is our situation before God. We probably have millions to billions of sins on our account and that represents an astronomical spiritual debt before God. And the debt must be paid.
3. 18:25 The servant would be sold into slavery or some other form of indentured servitude to pay the debt.
  - A. We used to have "debtors' prisons" in this county in colonial days, where a creditor could have you arrested and imprisoned if you could not pay off a debt. Spiritually, we are in a similar situation.

- B. We have a debt of sin to God that we cannot hope to repay. Since payment cannot be made, we are “sold” to work off that debt in the prison house of hell. The problem is that it takes eternity to pay off one debt, how long will it take to pay off all of our debts?
- C. This man’s wife and children were also sold with him to pay the debt. His debt affected his family, and they would suffer with him. Our sins also affect our families and may influence them to reject the gospel.
4. 18:26 The plea of the sinner at salvation, where all we can do is plead for mercy and forgiveness.
- A. There is no way we can pay any of our debt since all of our righteousnesses are as filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6) and you can’t pay any debt with a filthy rag.
- B. When was he thinking he could pay off such a debt, and how? The sinner thinks he can pay off his sin debt with any variety of religious works, such as church membership, water baptism, sacraments, penance, saying the rosary, and so on. But none of these acts can pay even the smallest of sins. It is by the shedding of blood in Matthew 26:28 and Hebrews 9:22.
5. 18:27 The Lord forgives any who comes to Him with this heart and bringing this kind of plea.
6. 18:28 **“a hundred pence”**
- A. This would be like pocket change, a trifling amount.
7. 18:29 This is the exact same plea as in Matthew 18:26 but without the same results.
8. This servant must have been a very proud and arrogant man. He had his fellow thrown into a debtor’s prison. This was a very illogical act. If the man is sitting in prison, how is he supposed to be able to work to earn the money to pay off the debt? This man was to be sold by his master, so the master would have gotten something by selling this man and his family. But no money would be had by having this second debtor cast into prison. He was cast into prison by spite.
9. 18:32 A man who refuses to forgive is wicked.
10. 18:34 **“tormentors”**
- A. Spiritually, the “tormentors” would be his punishment and punishers in hell.
- B. Here, it probably means a jailor of a debtor’s prison.
11. 18:34 Is this a form of double jeopardy? The Lord had already forgiven the debt but now he has the servant delivered to pay the debt. It may involve the sins committed after his forgiveness, which still could have been significant since we do not know the exact time interval between verses 27 and 28.
12. 18:34 This verse is usually given as a proof-text by Rome as a basis for their false teaching of purgatory.
13. 18:35 If God could forgive you of your infinite debts, can’t you forgive your brethren whose debt to you amounts to pocket change?

### **Spiritual Applications- Matthew Chapter 18**

Humility is a major Christian virtue, and it is always promoted by Scripture. Nothing is more obnoxious than a proud Christian or preacher. Remember that without Christ, you’d be in hell. You can do nothing without the Holy Spirit. The Church is not the world where you are expected to promote and market yourself. The law of the Kingdom is humility.

There will be problems in the local church. No church is perfect. No Christian is perfect. No pastor is preacher. You will find flaws everywhere because the Church is made up of imperfect saved people who still have their old, fallen nature. Don’t get too

discouraged by that. If it is orthodox and you are being fed the Scripture and if the church is helping you spiritually, stay in that church, warts and all. And make sure you are not the reason why people may be offended in your local church. You are in a local church, you are there to solve problems, not to create them.

Verse 20 is an encouragement for a small church. The Lord will be with your services regardless of the size. There have been services in our church with just my wife and I in attendance, yet the Lord was with us. I was involved in a prison ministry and we went 16 weeks in a row where no one came out to our service. I have often preached to one person. This is why when I am recording our attendance, I also add one to that number because the Lord is also in the service.

An unwillingness to forgive someone who has offended or hurt you is a sign of spiritual immaturity and reveals a lack of grace. I have been lied about, slandered and worse, yet I am not mad at anyone today. I have forgiven those who have done me wrong. The Lord did on the cross. But we often feel justified to nurse a grudge so we refuse to forgive. Or if we do forgive, it is the old line "I'll forgive but I will never forget". This is not forgiveness,





## **Matthew Chapter 19**

### **115. Forgiving the Brethren 18:21-19:2 continued**

**19:1 And it came to pass, that when Jesus had finished these sayings, he departed from Galilee, and came into the coasts of Judæa beyond Jordan;<sup>a</sup>**

1a Did Jesus cross the Jordan river and minister on the east side of the Jordan River?

**19:2 And great multitudes followed him; and he healed them there.<sup>a</sup>**

2a These “great multitudes” were not following Him for spiritual reasons but for carnal ones; many wanted to be healed and many were attracted to the novelty of Christ’s ministry, hoping to see a miracle.

### **116. Teaching on Divorce 19:3-9, see also Mark 10:1-12; Luke 16:18**

**19:3 ¶ The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him,<sup>a</sup> and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?<sup>bc</sup>**

3a “**tempting him**” shows that this question was not asked in a good spirit but rather was designed to attempt to make Christ say something they could use against Him later. They weren’t really interested in what God said about divorce. The Pharisees were using an issue that was controversial (as it is today) to try to get Christ to either contradict Himself or contradict Moses.

3b It was the nature of the Pharisees to always be bringing up these petty questions, to distract and attempt to entrap Christ. That was their “bread and butter”, ask impossible questions and then spend all their time wrestling with them. Questions regarding divorce and remarriage will often do it! There was an ongoing controversy among the scribes concerning this question and they hoped to ensnare Jesus in this controversy. There were two schools of interpretation of the law of divorce. The school of Shammai interpreted the law very strictly, whereas the school of Hillel interpreted it very liberally. Which side would Jesus choose? Whichever side he supported, he would alienate the followers of the other school.

3c For “**every cause**”? No, not for every or any cause. There are a few causes where it is allowed. Can a man divorce his wife for any silly, shallow reason? If she burns the eggs at breakfast, can you divorce her? The right to divorce was highly prized by the Jews. It was considered by the Jews to be a gift from God to them, a gift which He denied the Gentiles.<sup>3</sup> If Christ denied the Jews the right to divorce as the Pharisees suspected He might do, He would alienate Himself from Israel.”<sup>180</sup>

**19:4 And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female,<sup>ab</sup>**

4a The Lord gives His support for the Genesis account of creation and of Adam and Eve.

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<sup>180</sup> Alfred Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, volume 2, pages 332-333.

4b Despite what the insane and devil-possessed people in our current generation say, God only made two genders, not fifty or so. And this gender is fixed and immutable.

**19:5 And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?<sup>a</sup>**

5a **"Twain one flesh".**

1. A marriage then is not the ceremony. That just makes it legal.
2. A marriage is flesh joining flesh, when the act of intercourse occurs. That is what makes fornication and adultery so bad- the guilty party is ALREADY married but then marries another when the act of intercourse takes place. The guilty party is now married to someone else although no divorce has taken place with their spouse.
3. If two unmarried people engage in fornication, they are married in the eyes of God even if no ceremony has taken place.

**19:6 Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.<sup>ab</sup>**

6a But we wonder how many marriages were put together by God.

6b God never supported divorce as He hates it (Malachi 2:16 **"For the LORD, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away: for one covereth violence with his garment, saith the LORD of hosts: therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously."**).

**19:7 They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away?<sup>a</sup>**

7a See Deuteronomy 24:1-3 (**"When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house. And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife. And if the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and giveth it in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, which took her to be his wife;"**). The "writing of divorcement" is "biblion apostasiou" in the Greek-translated literally as an "apostate Bible". When a professing believer "divorces" the Lord through acts of apostasy, God will give him an "apostate Bible." If this apostate is an English speaker, God will send him a spirit of deception and that man will leave off the Authorized Version and start taking up with perverted English versions.

**19:8 He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives:<sup>a</sup> but from the beginning it was not so.**

8a Moses did this but with great reluctance.

**19:9 And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.<sup>a</sup>**

9a Fornication and adultery as a justification for divorce.

1. The rejected “wife” of Deuteronomy 24:1 is given the privilege of going and becoming the wife of another man while the previous husband is still living.

2. Where divorce is allowed:

A. Death

i. Romans 7:1-4 **“Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.”**

ii. 1 Corinthians 7:39 **“The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord.”**

B. Desertion.

i. If the partner abandons the victim on account of the gospel, then that victim is not under bondage.

a. 1 Corinthians 7:15 **“But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace.”**

ii. This only applies if the Christian has an unbelieving spouse who leaves on account of the gospel.

iii. If the unbelieving spouse sues for divorce, citing religious reasons, the Christian is to fight the divorce. But that is difficult in some states where the court would grant such a divorce. In that case, the Christian has done everything he has tried to do to salvage the marriage, but the unbelieving spouse refused and was granted a divorce. Why should a believer be condemned to a life of perpetual singlehood in that case?

iv. We assume that this situation came about because both parties were unsaved when they were marriage, but one got saved afterwards but the other did not. But if a Christian married an unbeliever is violation of Scripture (2 Corinthians 6:14 **“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?”**) and suffers this kind of situation, I would not support his/her right to remarry as they should have never married that unbeliever in the first place.

v. If both parties are Christian, they are to remain married and/or be reconciled. Remarriage is not allowed in that case.

vi. The Christian spouse is not to initiate any separation or divorce from their unbelieving spouse (1 Corinthians 7:14 **“For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy.”**). If the unbeliever departs, then let them (1 Corinthians 7:15 **“But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a**

**sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace.”).**

C. Infidelity

i. If there is adultery in the marriage, as in 1 Corinthians 6:16 (“**What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh.**”). The example is Hosea and Gomer.

ii. Matthew 19:9 allows for remarriage, “**And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.**”

iii. Fornication becomes grounds for divorce and remarriage, although any remarriage is cautioned against in 1 Corinthians 7:27,28 (“**Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife. But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned. Nevertheless such shall have trouble in the flesh: but I spare you.**”)

iv. The only remarriage that is considered illegitimate is where the grounds of divorce are illegitimate.

3. It should be noticed that we never would recommend divorce to anyone since God makes it clear that He hates it. We may recommend a period of separation to revive a troubled marriage, but we would never recommend something that God hates.

**117. Should a Man Marry? 19:10-12**

**19:10 ¶ His disciples say unto him, If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry.<sup>a</sup>**

10a It is true there are problems in marriage that single people don't have to worry about. But the benefits of marriage outweigh these problems.

**19:11 But he said unto them, All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given.<sup>a</sup>**

11a It is natural for a man to want to be married and there is nothing wrong with it. There is also nothing wrong with a man or a woman wanting to stay single so they can devote all of their time and money to the work of God.

**19:12 For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake.<sup>a</sup> He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.**

12a There may be some cases where it is best for a man not to marry. Paul deals with this in 1 Corinthians 7:28 “**But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned. Nevertheless such shall have trouble in the flesh: but I spare you.**”

1. Paul makes it clear that this is his own opinion as he had no direct word from the Lord.
  - a. 1 Corinthians 7:25 “**Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord: yet I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful.**”

2. Paul spoke of the “present distress” in 1 Corinthians 7:26 (“**I suppose therefore that this is good for the present distress, I say, that it is good for a man so to be.**”). This would not apply to “normal situations”.

3. To remain single is better- 1 Corinthians 7:27 “**Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife.**”

A. Paul was not anti-marriage. He is saying that in some situations and in some ministries, it is better to remain unmarried.

B. Domestic problems often come with marriage.

i. 1 Corinthians 7:28 “**But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned. Nevertheless such shall have trouble in the flesh: but I spare you.**”

C. A married man must concern himself about pleasing his wife but a single person only has to concern himself with pleasing the Lord.

i. 1 Corinthians 7:32,33 “**But I would have you without carefulness. He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord: But he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife.**”

ii. Same with women.

a. 1 Corinthians 7:34 “**There is difference also between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit: but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband.**”

D. Some ministries are better to be done by single persons, such as missionary work in dangerous places where it would not be prudent to take a family.

i. A single person can also give full time service to the Lord without having to split their time with domestic duties. He has liberty to marry but a wife and a family will “bog him down”. He (or she!) chooses to remain single so he can dedicate all his time and money to the ministry.

E. Not all men have the gift to remain single.

4. It is not a sin to marry.

A. 1 Corinthians 7:28 “**But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned. Nevertheless such shall have trouble in the flesh: but I spare you.**”

B. 1 Corinthians 7:36 “**But if any man think that he behaveth himself uncomely toward his virgin, if she pass the flower of her age, and need so require, let him do what he will, he sinneth not: let them marry.**”

## **118. Jesus and the Children 19:13-15**

**19:13 ¶ Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put his hands on them, and pray:<sup>ab</sup> and the disciples rebuked them.**

13a Jesus must have had a very attractive personality as children will not go to unpleasant people.

13b Luke 18:15 has “infants”.

**19:14 But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.<sup>ab</sup>**

14a This verse has absolutely nothing to do with infant baptism. The fact that pedo-baptists use this passage to justify the non-biblical doctrine of infant baptism only shows that these men have no real scriptural support for their position.

14b Do not be a hindrance to anyone coming to Christ, even the weakest or the most broken person. The broken, humble, meek person are the ones Christ welcomes, either for salvation or sanctification.

**19:15 And he laid his hands on them,<sup>a</sup> and departed thence.**

15a The Lord gave these children a blessing.

**119. “What Lack I Yet?” 19:16-22, see also Mark 10:13-31; Luke 18:15-30**

**19:16 ¶ And, behold, one<sup>a</sup> came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?<sup>b</sup>**

16a All the gospels tell us that this man was rich. Matthew says that he was young (Matthew 19:20) and Luke says that he was a ruler (Luke 18:18).

16b It is human nature to always want to “do something” to earn or gain God’s favor and salvation. To simply “receive” the free gift of salvation (Ephesians 2:8-10 “**For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.**”) is contrary to human nature. This man had a good desire, but it was obvious that he was not yet saved. A desire to be saved does not equal salvation but it is a good first step. This man had heard the Lord preach and he was interested, and he makes the correct first step. This was a great answer, and we wish sinners would ask this of us more often! It looks like this man is ready to be saved, but the Lord saw something in his heart that no man would have been able to discern. Eventually, every man asks himself this question. He has tried to earn his salvation apart from the grace of God but he will always come up short. He knows he lacks something, but he is not sure what. The gospel supplies the “what”.

**19:17 And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God:<sup>a</sup> but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.**

17a If Christ is God, then He is good, otherwise He is not God. Only God is good. If Jesus is God, then He is good. If He is not good, then He is not God. To say Jesus is “good” without acknowledging Him to be God is not sufficient and is inaccurate.

**AV**

**ESV**

**LSV**

17 And he said unto him,  
Why callest thou me good?  
*there is none good but one,  
that is, God:* but if thou wilt  
enter into life, keep the

17 And he said to him, “Why  
do you ask me about what is  
good? There is only one who  
is good. If you would enter  
life, keep the

17 And He said to him, “Why  
are you asking Me about  
what is good? There is *only*  
One who is good; but if you  
wish to enter into life, keep

commandments.

commandments.”

the commandments.”

Neither the ESV, LSV nor Darby identify who this “one/One” is. The Authorized Version clearly identifies Him as God, but you are left to guess with the modern versions. The King James clearly identifies that God is good, but the modern versions have him asking what is good, not Who is good. This is a major error on the part of the new versions and it clearly reflects their “new age” influences.

**19:18 He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness,<sup>a</sup>**

18a These are the “horizontal” commandments, dealing with our relationship with other people. The 5<sup>th</sup> through 9<sup>th</sup> commandments are given here, showing they are still binding and have not been taken away. This man was “horizontally” perfect with man but was not “vertically” perfect with God. The Lord does not cite the 10<sup>th</sup> commandment about covetousness because He knew that was this man’s master sin, which the Lord hits him with in Matthew 19:21.

**19:19 Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.**

**19:20 The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?<sup>a</sup>**

20a He might have kept them, but he certainly couldn’t make such a claim with regards to the “vertical commandments”, dealing with his relationship with God. There was no doubt that he was a moral man, but morality is not salvation. Morality is human holiness and that is not sufficient for salvation.

1. His works-based religion left him unfulfilled and unsatisfied. This is because you never know if you have done enough or if your works are good enough to be accepted by God.
2. “What lack I yet?” “Well, you lack a payment for sins. You lack a sense of guilt. You lack a knowledge of the laws you have broken. You lack assurance of salvation, and you lack peace of heart and mind. Isn’t that enough? He didn’t lack morals, money, zeal, interest, health, or common sense. Yet in Mark 10:21, our Lord says, “ONE THING thou lackest.”<sup>181</sup>

**19:21 Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me.<sup>abc</sup>**

21a He was unwilling to part with the dearest thing to his heart for God- his money. This is not a “plan of salvation” as it is not required to make oneself poor in order to be saved as a rich man can be saved the same way a poor man can. But of you wanted to be perfect, it would require being willing to give up the one thing that is the most precious to you, as Paul did in Philippians 3:7,8 (“**But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,**”).

<sup>181</sup> Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believers Commentary on Matthew*, page 467.

21b He asked what he had to do and he was told but was not willing to follow through. Multitudes are like this. They may want to be saved but only on their terms and if it is not too expensive. The Lord seemed to try to drive him away, instead of taking him as he was, with his materialism and idolatry. The Lord certainly did not make it easy for this man. I am convinced that in our zeal to see people saved, we often short-cut and truncate the gospel to remove any obstacles that would prevent the prospect from getting saved.

21c You can be saved without being perfect, but you can't be perfect without being saved. You can be saved and not be a disciple, but you will be living a half-Christian life, at best.

**19:22 But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.<sup>a</sup>**

22a Covetousness was his master sin that kept this man from salvation. He was a slave to things, and they were his god. Materialism can be a cruel deity as it is never satisfied. He was unwilling to change his god to worship and follow the true God, and it would cost him his own soul. The Lord asked him if he was willing to part with the dearest earthly possession he had (his wealth) and he was not. He thought Jesus had asked too much of him. Many sinners, when confronted with a genuine presentation of the gospel, may think we are also asking too much of them. Salvation should be quick and easy, with the requirement only to "believe" and nothing else.

AV	ESV	LSV
22 But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.	22 When the young man heard this he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.	22 But when the young man heard this statement, he went away grieving; for he was one who owned much property.

"**great possessions**" do not automatically involve property, as the LSV wrongly implies. One would have "great possessions" and not own any property at all, or just a small amount of it.

**120. Who Can Be Saved? 19:23-26**

**19:23 ¶ Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.<sup>ab</sup>**

23a This is not due to some supposed defect in the gospel in dealing with rich men, but it rather speaks to the heart of the rich man. A rich man has more cares of this world than does a poor man and the rich man has more "stuff" and "things" that he is beholden to. Materially speaking, he may have to give up more of this world's goods than would a poor man.

Riches and materialism obscure faith and spirituality. If the man has all that he needs, what does he have to claim in prayer by faith? Riches hinder humility. Men are quick to find out that it is "power," and why should a powerful man be humble?

23b "Riches have three main effects on a man's outlook.

(i) Riches encourage a false independence. If a man is well-supplied with this world's goods, he is very apt to think that he can well deal with any situation which may arise.



There is a vivid instance of this in the letter to the Church of Laodicea in the Revelation. Laodicea was the richest town in Asia Minor. She was laid waste by an earthquake in A.D. 60. The Roman government offered aid and a large grant of money to repair her shattered buildings. She refused it, saying that she was well able to handle the situation by herself. "Laodicea," said Tacitus, the Roman historian, "rose from the ruins entirely by her own resources and with no help from us." The Risen Christ hears Laodicea say, "I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing" (Revelation 3:17).

If a man is wealthy he is apt to think that everything has its price, that if he wants a thing enough he can buy it, that if any difficult situation descends upon him he can buy his way out of it. He can come to think that he can buy his way into happiness and buy his way out of sorrow. So he comes to think that he can well do without God and is quite able to handle life by himself. There comes a time when a man discovers that that is an illusion, that there are things which money cannot buy, and things from which money cannot save him. But always there is the danger that great possessions encourage that false independence which thinks--until it learns better--that it has eliminated the need for God.

(ii) Riches shackle a man to this earth. "Where your treasure is," said Jesus, "there will your heart be also" (Matthew 6:21). If everything a man desires is contained within this world, if all his interests are here, he never thinks of another world and of a hereafter. If a man has too big a stake on earth, he is very apt to forget that there is a heaven. After a tour of a certain wealthy and luxurious castle and estate, Dr. Johnson grimly remarked: "These are the things which make it difficult to die." It is perfectly possible for a man to be so interested in earthly things that he forgets heavenly things, to be so involved in the things that are seen that he forgets the things that are unseen--and therein lies tragedy, for the things which are seen are temporal but the things which are unseen are eternal.

(iii) Riches tend to make a man selfish. However much a man has, it is human for him to want still more, for, as it has been epigrammatically said, "Enough is always a little more than a man has." Further, once a man has possessed comfort and luxury, he always tends to fear the day when he may lose them. Life becomes a strenuous and worried struggle to retain the things he has. The result is that when a man becomes wealthy, instead of having the impulse to give things away, he very often has the impulse to cling on to them. His instinct is to amass more and more for the sake of the safety and the security which he thinks they will bring. The danger of riches is that they tend to make a man forget that he loses what he keeps, and gains what he gives away."<sup>182</sup>

**19:24 And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.<sup>ab</sup>**

24a I know all about the "camel kneeling down to enter a gate" or "the camel must be unloaded" interpretations and they may be correct, but I would not dismiss the literal figure- a huge camel trying to thread the eye of a needle, which is physically impossible. Saving any man, including a rich man, is humanly impossible. Also see Luke 18:25 **"For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God."**

24b This is not good sign for the filthy lucre-loving prosperity preachers who claim Jesus was rich and that poverty is a sin.

**19:25 When his disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved?<sup>a</sup>**

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<sup>182</sup> William Barclay, *Matthew* in the Daily Study Bible, volume 2, pages 218-219.

25a The disciples were “floored” by the Lord’s words. They realized that all men are rich in something and understood the difficulties involved with the terms of discipleship that the Lord laid down. They were also taught by the Pharisees that riches were a sign of God’s blessings, an error that Jesus corrected here. They knew that all men are rich in something, even of it is pride and self-righteousness. So how can this “rich man” be saved?

**19:26 But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.<sup>a</sup>**

26a Since it is God who is the direct agent in salvation, it is possible. Only God can change the heart of any man, rich or poor, and make him ready and willing to accept the gospel. Our personality and soulwinning techniques and programs cannot do this.

### **121. Rewards of Discipleship 19:27-30**

**19:27 ¶ Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all,<sup>a</sup> and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?<sup>b</sup>**

27a No doubt they had forsaken much, but is there truly a man who forsook all? Maybe Paul, as he laid out in Philippians 3.

27b A man is not thinking as Christian if his first concern is pay. Peter asked: "What do we get out of following you?" Many a man who has earned great rewards, will have a very low place in the Kingdom because rewards were his sole thought. Many a man, who, as the world counts it, is a poor man, will be great in the Kingdom, because he never thought in terms of reward but worked for the thrill of working and for the joy of serving. It is the paradox of the Christian life that he who aims at reward loses it, and he who forgets reward will find it.

**19:28 And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration<sup>a</sup> when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.<sup>b</sup>**

28a The Millennium is called the “regeneration” as the earth will be “born again” and all things will be made new. This shows that there will be millennial rewards for faithful service in this life. A faithful life and faithful service in this life will bring rewards in the next. For the Christian, these rewards will be determined at the bema seat judgment, which takes place after the rapture (Revelation 4:1-3 **“After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter. And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne. And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.”**).

28b The 12 apostles would judge the 12 tribes of Israel after the tribulation. Will this take place at the Judgment of the Nations in Matthew 25 or somewhere else?

**19:29 And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.<sup>a</sup>**

29a What you give up in this life for Christ's sake will be returned to us a hundredfold in the next life. Your rewards are not in this life but are to be reckoned in the next.

**19:30 But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first.<sup>a</sup>**

30a This is completely the opposite of how the world thinks. The world is about "survival of the fittest" and that the strong rule over the weak. But in the Kingdom, we will operate under God's rules and they are the opposite of man's.

### **Spiritual Applications- Matthew Chapter 19**

If you are single, should you marry, especially in the light of Paul's teachings in 1 Corinthians 7? That is something you need to resolve in your own life. It is not a sin to marry, nor is it a sin to remain single. You must follow the will of God in these matters. But be careful. To err in this matter can bring you a lot of grief. An old bachelor was once asked why he never married. He responded, "I would rather want something I didn't have than to have something I didn't want". It is true that in Christian service, a single Christian can do more and go places that a married man probably can't. But raising a family is also part of the will of God.

**"What lack I yet?"** (Matthew 19:20). Down deep, every man knows he lacks something in his relationship with God. There is a God-shaped hold in the heart of every man and men spend their lives trying to fill it with something. But that is trying to fit the proverbial round peg into the square hole. All men spend their lives trying to find some sense, meaning or purpose for their lives, but they will never resolve that need until they become Christians.

**"Who can be saved?"** (Matthew 19:25). I am amazed every time someone is truly born again in this age. The new birth is as much of a miracle as is natural birth. Today, for someone to be born again, he has to fight not only his own inward corruptions, but also the powers of the world and the devil. There are a thousand false religions with their false plans of salvation he has to wade through. He has to battle the deceitfulness of riches. He must avoid the errors of science (falsely so called) and philosophy, which seek to spoil his mind (Colossians 2:8 and 1 Timothy 6:20). For someone to navigate all these nets, traps and snares and still arrive at the truth is a miracle and illustrative of the power of God.

There are rewards of discipleship in verses 27-30, although they really don't pay off until the millennium. The paycheck and pension can be a long time coming, but there can be no doubt that any sacrifices and sufferings you endure in this life for Christ are worth it.



**Matthew Chapter 20**

**122. The Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard 20:1-16**

**20:1** For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard.

**20:2** And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard.

**20:2 AV**

**ESV**

**LSV**

2 And when he had agreed with the labourers for a **penny** a day, he sent them into his vineyard.

2 After agreeing with the laborers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard.

2 "Now when he had agreed with the laborers for a denarius for the day, he sent them into his vineyard.

A **penny** is the daily wage for a working man. This situation and rate of pay was entirely normal. The "denarius" of the ESV, LSV and Darby is no improvement.

**20:3** And he went out about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the marketplace,

**20:4** And said unto them; Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you. And they went their way.

**20:5** Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise.

**20:6** And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle?

**20:7** They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard; and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive.

**20:8** So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the labourers, and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first.

**20:9** And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny.

**20:10** But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny.

**20:11** And when they had received it, they murmured against the goodman of the house,

**20:12** Saying, These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day.

**20:13 But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny?**

**20:14 Take that thine is, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee.**

**20:15 Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good?**

**20:15 AV**

**ESV**

**LSV**

15 Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good?

15 Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or do you begrudge my generosity?

15 'Is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with what is my own? Or is your eye envious because I am generous?'

**20:16 So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen.**

#### Summary

1. 20:1 The kingdom of heaven is like a householder who went out to hire laborers to work in his vineyard.
2. This parable is a very strong justification for free-market economics:
  - A. The householder negotiated directly with his employees- no unions or labor departments.
  - B. The pay scale was "whatever was right", agreed to by the worker. No minimum wage or government interference, Matthew 20:4.
  - C. The workers were paid daily- no withholdings.
3. "These men were hired labourers; they were the lowest class of workers, and life for them was always desperately precarious. Slaves and servants were regarded as being at least to some extent attached to the family; they were within the group; their fortunes would vary with the fortunes of the family, but they would never be in any imminent danger of starvation in normal times. It was very different with the hired day-labourers. They were not attached to any group; they were entirely at the mercy of chance employment; they were always living on the semi-starvation line. As we have seen, the pay was 4 pence a day; and, if they were unemployed for one day, the children would go hungry at home, for no man ever saved much out of 4 pence a day. With them, to be unemployed for a day was disaster."<sup>183</sup>
  - A. This is still done today. Day laborers will go to the local hardware center very early in the morning, hoping to be hired for the day by some contractor. They are general laborers who have few skills and generally do the "grunt work" at a work site.
  - B. The Jewish day began at 6 AM so these first men were hired at sunrise. The work day would usually run from sun-up to sun-down.
2. 20:2 Notice the Master called men to labor in the morning, the third hour, the sixth, ninth and at the eleventh hour. Consider these hours the stages of a man's life God calls men in their youth, some in early adulthood, some during middle age and some in their elder years, yet the

<sup>183</sup> William Barclay, *Matthew* in the Daily Study Bible, volume 2, page 223.

basis for the rewards are the same. A man who served God from the days of his youth is rewarded on the same basis as a man who started serving God when he was 65 years old.

A. I heard of a man who was saved when he was 60. He went to and graduated from Bible college, and then went to Puerto Rico as a missionary when he was 65 years old. God gave him a 20-year ministry as a missionary.

B. This also applies to eras in church history. Some lived and served in the apostolic age. Other ministered during the Dark Ages and into the Reformation or into the Philadelphia Period. Some will get into their ministry in the days just before the Rapture and into the Tribulation. The same principle applies.

3. 20:4 The laborers agreed to this rate of pay. There was no government involvement or regulations involved as there is today.

4. 20:7 Starting your own business and working for yourself did not seem to be a common concept in this day unless you were rich enough and had enough resources to do so.

5. 20:8 Workers got paid daily. No withholding of wages like today. Payday is coming for the laborers and that will be at the Bema Seat for Christians and the other judgments for the Jew.

6. 20:9 This was a day's wages for a working man.

7. 20:12 Their complaint had a point, but the master had agreed with them at a certain rate and he was going to hold them to it and he was going to keep his bargain.

A. We will receive the same rewards, regardless of when we started working or how long we worked, regardless of what generation we live in and worked. Those who ministered in days of revival will be "rewarded" on the same basis as those who were martyred, although the specific rewards will vary from person to person. There are those who believe that since they have been in the ministry for 50 years or have been a member of a church for 50 years that this entitles them to dictate policy and shields them from criticism from younger people. They resent new and young blood that suggests new, different and probably better ways to do things. John the Baptist only ministered for 6 months or so, so he could rest on a "long ministry" to base his authority upon.

B. It makes no difference when you showed up for work. The question is did you do the work and are you on the job?

C. "Here also is the generosity of God. These men did not all do the same work; but they did receive the same pay. There are two great lessons here. The first is, as it has been said, "All service ranks the same with God." It is not the amount of service given, but the love in which it is given which matters. A man out of his plenty may give us a gift of a hundred pounds, and in truth we are grateful; a child may give us a birthday or Christmas gift which cost only a few pence but which was laboriously and lovingly saved up for--and that gift, with little value of its own, touches our heart far more. God does not look on the amount of our service. So long as it is all we have to give, all service ranks the same with God."<sup>184</sup>

D. **"heat of the day"**

i. They labored through periods of persecution, martyrdom, imprisonments, liberalism, modernism, apostasy, indifference, toil, lies, slander, misunderstanding, breaking of friendships and fellowships, aloneness, discouragement, abandonment, betrayal and outright hostility.

8. 20:13 The Christian who served God for 70 years and the one who only was able to serve for 7 weeks will be rewarded on the pay scale.

9. 20:15 This verse is a clear declaration of the sovereignty of God. Everything belongs to Him so He may do with it as He will. And He is good. Everything He does is right and proper.

10. 20:16 This is a definite warning to the Jews. They knew that they were the chosen people. As a result, they looked down on the Gentiles. This attitude threatened to be carried forward into

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<sup>184</sup> William Barclay, *Matthew* in *The Daily Study Bible*, volume 2, pages 225-226.

the Church. If the Gentiles were to be allowed into the fellowship of the Church, they must come in as inferiors. But God made it clear that they would come in as equals, with the full privileges and responsibilities that the Jewish believers enjoyed. The Authorized Version reading is simply better than that of the ESV and LSV.

**123. The Lord Prophesies of His Death Again 20:17-19, see also Mark 10:32-34; Luke 18:31-34**

**20:17 ¶ And Jesus going up to Jerusalem took the twelve disciples apart in the way,<sup>a</sup> and said unto them,**

17a “apart in the way” = privately. The following crowds did not hear this.

**20:18<sup>a</sup> Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death,**

18a The prophecy

1. The Son of man will be betrayed unto the chief priests and the scribes at Jerusalem.
  - A. The Lord was fully aware of what the future held and of His impending death yet He made no effort to avoid it.
2. They shall condemn Him to death.
3. He shall be delivered unto the Gentiles who will mock, scourge and crucify Him.
  - A. Rome would do the actual killing as the Jews did not have the power of capital punishment.
4. He shall rise again three days after His death.

**20:19 And shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him:<sup>a</sup> and the third day he shall rise again.<sup>b</sup>**

19a “And shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him”

Yes, the Romans did all these things but so did the Jews and Rome would not have crucified Christ if not egged on by the Jews. Did Matthew word it this way so as not to offend his Jewish readers?

19b Verses 18 and 19 are about as clear as they can be but the disciples still struggled with it. As unpopular as Jesus was with the religious leaders, you would think that the Lord’s warnings of His arrest and passion would make sense to the disciples.

**124. The Ambition of James and John 20:20-28, see also Mark 10:35-45**

**20:20 ¶ Then came to him the mother of Zebedee’s children with her sons,<sup>a</sup> worshipping him, and desiring a certain thing of him.**

20a The mother of James and John.

**20:21 And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom.<sup>a</sup>**



21a James and John may have discussed their ambitions with their mother but they knew better than try to bring it up with Jesus. But mothers often have no such qualms and will plow ahead where their sons would hesitate. Mothers want the best for their children and often may even embarrass their sons to get it for them.

This was pure ambition on the part of their mother, for what mother doesn't want to see her sons "make good", especially if she can share in the rewards?

1. In Mark.10:35-45 it is James and John who come to Jesus with this request. It may be that they didn't get anywhere with that initial request, so their mother then came in after them and made the same request. She probably motivated her sons to make this request.

2. "my sons" showing she didn't care about the other disciples.

Maybe she thought that if the Lord was going to die shortly, she had better get her request for her sons in as soon as she could. Jesus kept talking about His death so she figured time was short and that she had better act now.

**20:22 But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup<sup>a</sup> that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?<sup>b</sup> They say unto him, We are able.<sup>c</sup>**

22a The "cup" is the cup of suffering. The cup may not involve physical suffering and martyrdom. It may involve the dull routine of life, with all of its daily struggle, its heart-breaks and its disappointments and its tears. The cup may be drunk in one great moment; his cup may be drunk throughout a lifetime of Christian living.

22b While the Lord is talking about suffering and dying, the mother of James and John talk about reigning.

22c "**We are able**". That is the flesh talking but they would have a chance to prove their willingness as James would be martyred and John would suffer greatly. Sounds a lot like Peter claiming that he would never deny Christ even if the rest of the disciples would in Matthew 26:33.

AV	ESV	LSV
22 But Jesus answered and said, <b>Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?</b> They say unto him, We are able.	22 Jesus answered, " <b>You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am to drink?</b> " They said to him, "We are able."	22 But Jesus answered and said, " <b>You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?</b> " They *said to Him, "We are able."

The ESV, LSV and Darby omit "**and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?**" These versions also do this in Matthew 20:23. The "baptism" is obviously not water baptism but a baptism of suffering.

**20:23 And he saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my**

**left, is not mine to give,<sup>a</sup> but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father.**

23a Verse 23 shows that who gets to sit in the “left and right hand” seats is probably already determined by the Father and James and John (not anyone else) can put in a claim to them.

**20:24 And when the ten heard it, they were moved with indignation<sup>a</sup> against the two brethren.**

24a Can you blame them? The others wanted those chief seats for themselves! They were acting like Gentiles in Matthew 20:25. They were also acting like Roman Catholic popes, Independent Fundamental Baptist preachers (who sit on the platform while the preacher is preacher to show off just how important they are to their congregations) and other ecclesiastical leaders! But the truth was that they were all probably plotting the same thing. James and John simply tried to beat them to the punch.

**20:25 But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them.<sup>a</sup>**

25a This attitude among Christians must be avoided at all costs. How sickening it is to see preachers jockeying for position in the ecclesiastic hierarchy, trying to make a name for themselves, trying to get themselves invited to preach in the Big Time Conferences and to try to get someone to give them an honorary doctorate. This ecclesiastical social climbing sickens God and brings reproach on the cause of Christ and serves as a major motivation to compromise and apostatize. Unsaved Gentiles naturally acted like this, but Christians were not to do so.

**20:26 But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister;<sup>a</sup>**

26a Verses 26-28 is the opposite philosophy from the world. Men expect to be served but the way to greatness is to be a servant. Stop trying to amass power, influence and authority and simply concentrate on your service to God and allow Him to promote you.

**20:27 And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant:<sup>a</sup>**

27a The secret to greatness is a willingness to start at the bottom and to be a servant. Be faithful in that and greater responsibilities will follow.

**20:28 Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister,<sup>a</sup> and to give his life a ransom<sup>bc</sup> for many.<sup>d</sup>**

28a The Lord did not come the first time to have people kiss His ring or big toe, to have someone give Him an honorary doctorate or to be otherwise ministered unto. His first coming was to serve, minister and to die to provide salvation.

28b “**ransom**”. A “ransom” is a price paid to free someone from bondage. The Lord pays this price on the cross with His own blood to ransom us from the power and penalty of our sins.

28c Verses on the “ransom”

1. No man can give a ransom for his brother

A. Psalm 49:7 **“None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him:”**

i. How can he since he also needs a ransom for himself?

B. Proverbs 21:18 **“The wicked shall be a ransom for the righteous, and the transgressor for the upright.”**

C. The “ransomed of the Lord” prophetically (referring to redeemed Israel by context)

i. Isaiah 35:10 **“And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.”**

ii. Isaiah 51:10 **“Art thou not it which hath dried the sea, the waters of the great deep; that hath made the depths of the sea a way for the ransomed to pass over?”**

iii. Jeremiah 31:11 **“For the LORD hath redeemed Jacob, and ransomed him from the hand of him that was stronger than he.”**

D. Ransomed from the grave

i. Hosea 13:14 **“I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from mine eyes.”**

E. Christ gave His life as a ransom

i. Matthew 20:28 **“Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.”** (Also Mark 10:45).

a. This ransom is given for “many”- Matthew 20:28 and Mark 10:45.

b. Christ was a ransom for “all” in 1 Timothy 2:6.

i. There are no contradictions, as the Matthew/Mark reference shows the result of the ransom (for those who believe) but 1 Timothy shows the extent of the ransom potentially (for “all” although not all will believe and accept the payment for their sins).

2. Ransom for what? Our sins, to pay for our sins and to deliver us from the penalty and the domination of sin, and to restore us to full fellowship with the Father through the work of Christ on the cross.

28d **“ransom for many”**. “Many” not all, as not all will receive the salvation that is in Christ.

1. Christ died for all but that does not mean that all will be saved. Simply because something is made available to all does not mean all will accept it. Many will reject it. Not all men will accept this ransom paid for them.

2. All men may be saved potentially but only those who respond in faith will be saved practically and literally.

**125. The Healing of the Two Blind Men 20:29-34, see also Mark 10:45-52; Luke 18:35-43**

**20:29 And as they departed from Jericho, a great multitude followed him.**

**20:30 ¶ And, behold, two blind men sitting by the way side, when they heard that Jesus passed by, cried out, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou Son of David.<sup>a</sup>**

30a These two blind men recognized His messiahship and lordship. These blind men saw what many sighted people were blind to.

**20:31 And the multitude rebuked them, because they should hold their peace:<sup>a</sup> but they cried the more, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou Son of David.**

31a When a sinner comes under genuine conviction and makes a genuine attempt to find Christ, he immediately runs into the opposition of “the crowd” and is taken to be a fanatic who has lost his mind. “Religion” has made him crazy!

**20:32 And Jesus stood still, and called them, and said, What will ye that I shall do unto you?<sup>a</sup>**

32a This is the blank check question! What do you want or need from Christ? Ask in prayer according to the will of God and in faith!

**20:33 They say unto him, Lord, that our eyes may be opened.<sup>a</sup>**

33a They were asked what they wanted/need and they said so specifically. No beating around the bush with them!

**20:34 So Jesus had compassion on them, and touched their eyes: and immediately<sup>a</sup> their eyes received sight, and they followed him.<sup>b</sup>**

34a Answered prayer and healing because of divine compassion. This was an immediate healing, unlike some other healings that were done in stages or that were accomplished gradually.

34b “**and they followed him**” as any new convert should do.

### **Spiritual Applications- Matthew Chapter 20**

It doesn't matter when you worked in church history when it comes to rewards. If you served during the early church, during the Dark Ages, the Reformation, during a period of apostasy or revival, or at the end of the age, the basis of the rewards are the same. When I entered the ministry in 1986, I hoped that God would give me enough time to put in some ministry for Him before the rapture. So far, it has been 39 years!

Beware of ambition. James and John had an unhealthy dose of it as they wanted to be first in the Kingdom. But such a position is reserved for those who suffered to earn it. Many preachers aim for a bigger church and a more public and expansive ministry. Some preachers do their best to be noticed and recognized by the big-name ministries and hopefully, to have their sermons to be published in the Sword

of the Lord. Some hope to be asked to preach in the big-name conferences. But this is all carnal ambition which must be shunned. It is enough to grow where you are planted and to be content with whatever kind and size of ministry the Lord gives you.



**Matthew Chapter 21**

**126. The Entry of Jesus into Jerusalem 21:1-11, see also Mark 11:1-10; Luke 19:29-38; John 12:12-16**

This section records the entry into Jerusalem and the offer of the Kingdom to Israel by Christ. Starting in this chapter, the private discussions turn into public disputes.

Near the time of the Passover, the highest of the Jewish feasts. The law was that every adult male Jew who lived within twenty miles of Jerusalem must come to the Passover; but not only the Jews of Palestine, Jews from every corner of the world made their way to the greatest of their national festivals. Jesus came at a time when the city was surging with people keyed up with religious expectations.

**21:1 And when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage,<sup>a</sup> unto the mount of Olives, then sent Jesus two disciples,**

1a **Bethphage**- House of (unripe) Figs

**21:2 Saying unto them, Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her:<sup>a</sup> loose them, and bring them unto me.**

2a Matthew mentions both an ass and a colt. It was remarkable that Jesus was able to control a presumably unbroken animal moving through an excited crowd with an unfamiliar burden on its back.

**21:3 And if any man say ought unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them; and straightway he will send them.**

**21:4 All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying,**

**21:5 Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.<sup>a</sup>**

5a See Zechariah 9:9 ("Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass."). Matthew omits "and having salvation".

**21:6 And the disciples went, and did as Jesus commanded them,**

**21:7 And brought the ass,<sup>a</sup> and the colt, and put on them their clothes, and they set him thereon.**

7a "**ass**" In western lands the ass is a despised beast; but in the east the ass could be a noble animal. Often a king came riding upon an ass, but when he did, it was the sign that he came in

peace. The horse was the mount of war; the ass was the mount of peace. So when Jesus claimed to be king, he claimed to be the king of peace. He showed that he came, not to destroy, but to love; not to condemn, but to help; not in the might of arms, but in the strength of love.”<sup>185</sup>

**21:8 And a very great multitude<sup>a</sup> spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and strawed them in the way.**

8a “**multitude**” At this time of the year enormous crowds came to Jerusalem for the Passover. News spread swiftly among the crowds that Jesus was coming, that He had commandeered the use of an ass's colt, and that He was about to march in triumph into Jerusalem. Expectation was fanned to a fever pitch and a great multitude went forth to meet Him.

**21:9 And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna<sup>a</sup> to the Son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest.**

9a **Hosanna**- “save now”.

1. Everyone understood the Kingdom symbolism involved here and the Messianic claim that Jesus was making. And He never rebukes the multitude, nor does He deny that He is the Messiah and King of Israel. He accepts the praise (Matthew 21:16).
2. This would be the Hebrew version of the British “God save the king!” Others would say “May the King live forever”.
3. Naturally, the Pharisees and Sadducees opposed this and were quite upset by it. They did not approve of Jesus’ ministry and were upset that they people were not following their lead.

**21:10 And when he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this?<sup>a</sup>**

10a “**Who is this?**” You had better get the right answer to that question!

1. Possible answers:
  - A. “He is the son of Joseph.”
  - B. “He is ‘A’ son of God”, one among many claim the New Agers.
  - C. “He’s a god” say the Jehovah Witnesses and other Arians.
  - D. “He is a Great Teacher” says every liberal and modernist.
  - E. “He is some sort of Social Justice Warrior” say the race-hustlers and communists.
  - F. “He’s a prophet but inferior to Mohammad” claim the Moslems.
  - G. “He never existed!” claim radical atheists. There are actually people who believe this.
  - H. “This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee” is a good answer from the crowd in Matthew 21:11, but He is much more than that. He is God, the Second Person of the Godhead, King and Messiah of Israel!

**21:11 And the multitude said, This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee.<sup>a</sup>**

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<sup>185</sup> William Barclay, *Matthew* in The Daily Study Bible, volume 2, pages 242-243.



11a This is correct as far as it went. He was also the very Son of God, the second person of the Trinity.

**127. The Second Cleansing of the Temple 21:12-16, see also Mark 11:15-19; Luke 19:45-48**

**21:12 ¶ And Jesus went into the temple of God,<sup>a</sup> and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers,<sup>b</sup> and the seats of them that sold doves,<sup>c</sup>**

12a Not just the temple but it is called the “Temple of God”. Also called “my house” in Matthew 21:13.

12b **“moneychangers”** “The half-shekel had to be paid on the 15th of the month Adar, by every Israelite (even the poorest). In every city, collectors sat to receive it. On the 25th day (18 or 19 days before the Passover) they began to sit in the temple; and then they distrained if not paid. Change was given at a profit for the moneychangers.”<sup>186</sup>

12c As in John 2, one Man was able to do this all by Himself. Jesus could easily have been overpowered but was not for two reasons:

1. Omnipotence was at work here.
2. What Jesus was doing was popular with the people, who were also sick and tired of this commercialism.

**21:13<sup>a</sup> And said unto them, It is written, My house<sup>b</sup> shall be called the house of prayer;<sup>cd</sup> but ye have made it a den of thieves.**

13a The first cleansing was in John 2:13-17. It needed cleansing then, but it did not stay that way as the old commercial sins crept back in.

1. The “buying and selling” of animals for sacrifice is allowed under the Levitical law. Instead of dragging an ox for a hundred miles for a sacrifice, you could just buy one when you got to Jerusalem. The “moneychangers” indicate that these merchants in the temple are making a little “profit” on the side by transferring Gentile money into Jewish money, for many Jewish proselytes are present to make an offering also.

A. “The equivalent of this is the “cigarette exchange” for Yen in the back alleys of Tokyo, and it amounts to thievery in the final analysis, for Jesus calls the business “a den of thieves.” A transfer or conversion of a Dollar into a Mark or a Ruble or a Yen or a Peso, can involve a lot of things (as any GI knows).”<sup>187</sup>

2. On the twenty-fifth day of the month Adar (eighteen or nineteen days before Passover), tax officers set up business in that court to collect the annual half-shekel temple tax. Coins bearing a heathen inscription or a heathen monarch's image could not be paid into the temple treasury, so money-changers also set up business to convert foreign money or other coins into half-shekels—at a price. Every Israelite who had not already paid the tax in his hometown had to pay the collector in the temple, so business was brisk. The money-changers profited from converting secular money into sacred money and perhaps from arranging loans for the poor.

<sup>186</sup> Ethelbert Bullinger, *Companion Bible*.

<sup>187</sup> Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer's Commentary on Matthew*, page 522.

A. Most places that exchange one kind of currency for another (like the Duty Free Shops at airports and at national borders) will usually charge a fee for their service, but it was out of control here.

B. "The selling of doves was worse. For most visits to the Temple some kind of offering was essential. Doves, for instance, were necessary when a woman came for purification after childbirth, or when a leper came to have his cure attested and certified (Lev.12:8; Lev.14:22; Lev.15:14; Lev.15:29). It was easy enough to buy animals for sacrifice outside the Temple; but any animal offered in sacrifice must be without blemish. There were official inspectors of the animals, and it was to all intents and purposes certain that they would reject an animal bought outside and would direct the worshipper to the Temple stalls and booths."<sup>188</sup>

13b This is quoted from Isaiah 56:7, "**Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt offerings and their sacrifices *shall be* accepted upon mine altar; for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people.**"

13c Christ calls it "**my Father's house**" in John 2:16. With His entry into Jerusalem and the offer of the Kingdom, Christ is now claiming the Temple for Himself.

13d Verses 13 and 14 show the true, intended use of the temple. It is a house of prayer, not evangelism or commercialism.

**21:14 And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple; and he healed them.**

**21:15 And when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying, Hosanna to the Son of David; they were sore displeased,<sup>a</sup>**

15a They were upset since Christ was again interfering the money-changing in the Temple, which the religious leaders were profiting from.

**21:16 And said unto him, Hearest thou what these say? And Jesus saith unto them, Yea; have ye never read,<sup>a</sup> Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings<sup>b</sup> thou hast perfected praise?**

16a "**have ye never read?**"

1. "Don't you read the Scriptures?" Christ is accusing the religious leaders of ignorance of the Scriptures they were supposed to be familiar with. Psalm 8:2 is the verse referenced and Christ applies it to Himself ("**Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.**").

2. God won't show anything to an arrogant, over-stuffed religious blowhard but He will show wonders to anyone with a meek, humble, teachable spirit.

"**sucklings**" an unweaned baby, from Middle English suklyng, from suken to suck, a child that has not yet been weaned.

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<sup>188</sup> William Barclay, *Matthew* in The Daily Study Bible, volume 2, page 245.

## **128. The Cursing of the Fig Tree 21:17-22**

**21:17 ¶ And he left them, and went out of the city into Bethany; and he lodged there.<sup>a</sup>**

17a There were really two entrances by the Lord into Jerusalem during these days. The first was what we refer to as the “Triumphal Entry”. At the end of the day, the Lord retired back to Bethany, where He was staying. He then returned to Jerusalem on the next day, to much less fanfare.

**21:18 Now in the morning as he returned into the city, he hungered.<sup>a</sup>**

18a See also Mark 11:12-14; 20-24.

**21:19 And when he saw a fig tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever.<sup>ab</sup> And presently the fig tree withered away.**

19a There was no fruit on the fig tree although the Lord expected there to be some fruit, even if the tree was out of season. But there was nothing.

1. The Lord expected some spiritual fruit from Israel, even at this stage but there was none. If there were leaves, there should have been some fruit. There was a **profession** of fruit and a **promise** of fruit but there was no **production** of fruit.

A. The Lord may have expected/hoped some leftover figs from last year might be on that tree.

2. Were the roots also withered away?

3. Fig leaves (with no fruit) are a type of self-righteousness, as seen in Genesis 3. Self-righteousness cannot produce any good spiritual fruit.

4. “Fig trees were considered so valuable that a person who cut one down, even if it yielded meager crops, was thought to be deserving of death at the hand of God. Normally a fig tree was prolific. In a suitable location a tree bore three crops a year and ripe figs hung on it for ten months of the year. It was barren for two months (April and May) before the first crop ripened. The first crop ripened toward the end of June; the second crop ripened in August; the third crop, often small and of little commercial value, ripened in September and hung all winter on the tree. Although it was considered a crime among the Jews to destroy a fruit-bearing fig tree, there was no such protection for a barren tree. Not only did a barren tree yield no fruit; it also occupied valuable space that could have been given to a good tree. Moreover, its roots depleted the soil of nutrients.”<sup>189</sup>

5. The withering away happened immediately.

6. “The idea that Jesus cursed a helpless fig tree for no fault of its own has bothered some people. However, Jesus also cast demons (devils) out of people and into pigs that drowned in the sea (8:28-34). This really demonstrates Jesus' compassion for people as distinct from the animal and vegetable forms of life. Humankind was God's special creation, and Jesus' recognition of this superior form of life shows that He did not regard all life as equally valuable. In the destruction of the swine Jesus warned people of

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<sup>189</sup> John Phillips, *Exploring the Gospel of Matthew*, page 407.

Satan's destructive power. In the cursing of the fig tree, He warned them of God's judgment for unbelief.<sup>190</sup>

19b This unfruitfulness brings a divine curse and Israel is “cut down” in A.D. 70 for failure to produce fruit and for rejecting the Kingdom and then the Gospel. But even then, the root is left in the ground and the judgment is not total or final, as seen in God turning to Israel again in the Tribulation and His restoring the nation in the Millennium.

**21:20 And when the disciples saw it, they marvelled, saying, How soon is the fig tree withered away!<sup>a</sup>**

20a The curse worked quickly. God may threaten judgment for a long period, but when the hammer falls, it falls quickly. It would be “only” 40 years until the curse that was on Israel would be fulfilled with the events of A. D. 70. When that judgment came, it came rather quickly although it had been threatened for 40 years prior.

**21:21 Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea;<sup>a</sup> it shall be done.**

21a The issue with “moving mountains” relates to praying “big” prayers that require “big” answers. But one must always remember that God will not move a mountain if some poor widow lives on that mountain. Our prayers are considered by God in the light as how they will affect other people.

**21:22<sup>a</sup> And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.<sup>bc</sup>**

22a Matthew 21:21,22 is a good prayer promise.

22b “**Believing, ye shall receive.**” There are two kinds of “believing” in the Scripture (Romans 6:17 “**But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.**” and Acts 8:13 “**Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done.**”), and one of them is not effectual.

22c This promise is conditioned by His will (1 John 5:14-16 “**And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him. If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it.**”). The rule is liberal, gracious, and awesome in potential, but it is qualified by just and reasonable limitations expounded elsewhere in the Scriptures.

A. Luke 22:42 “**Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.**”

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<sup>190</sup> Thomas Constable, *Constable's Study Notes on Matthew*.

B. 2 Corinthians 12:7-9 **“And lest I should be exalted above measure through the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.”**

C. James 4:2,3 **“Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.”**

**129. The Question of Authority 21:23-27, see also Mark 11:27-33; Luke 20:1-8**

**21:23 ¶ And when he was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?<sup>a</sup>**

23a It always comes back to the question of authority.

1. What authority did they have to question His authority?
2. Christ had obviously established His authority over the past three years of His ministry with His signs and miracles, which the religious leaders either rejected or ignored.
3. From what teacher did you get these teachings? From what school? What is the source and the authority of your teachings?
4. The priests and elders are saying “We didn’t give you this authority and you don’t have our approval to do and say these things, so who do you think you are to operate without our approval?”
  - A. Jesus never sought their approval or endorsement, and He certainly didn’t need it.
5. They wanted to know what His teaching authority was and who gave it to Him. In modern terms, they wanted to know what level of degree qualifications He had and from which accredited institute of higher learning He obtained them from. They had the same questions as in Matthew 13:54 but now the Lord was teaching in the temple, not the synagogue and that provoked a confrontation

**21:24 And Jesus answered and said unto them, I also will ask you one thing, which if ye tell me, I in like wise will tell you by what authority I do these things.<sup>a</sup>**

24a This seemed fair enough, but the Lord turns the tables on them and exposes them for the hypocrites that they are.

1. If John’s baptism was from men (if he baptized on his own authority and volition) then it had no special power or authority. He could then be safely ignored.
  - A. But the people considered John to be a prophet and the leaders could not safely attack him without earning the wrath of the people.
2. If God authorized John’s baptism, then why didn’t the religious leaders accept it?

**21:25 The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men?<sup>a</sup> And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him?**

25a He is asking if the religious leaders thought if John's ministry was valid and divine or not, of God or of men.

**21:26 But if we shall say, Of men; we fear the people; for all hold John as a prophet.<sup>a</sup>**

26a They realized the ambush the Lord has set for them and realized there was no way out of the trap, but they must say something to save face.

**21:27 And they answered Jesus, and said, We cannot tell.<sup>a</sup> And he said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.<sup>b</sup>**

27a **"we cannot tell"** They could tell but dare not answer. They meant "We can't answer because he will make fools out of ourselves no matter how we answer for we fear the people and we can't jeopardize our cushy positions." These religious teachers were like politicians. They had no core principles and refused to go on record or say anything that would harm them or their positions.

27a The Lord did give the source of His authority as the leaders would have rejected it anyway.

### **130. The Parable of the Vineyard 21:28-32**

**21:28 ¶ But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to day in my vineyard.**

**21:29 He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went.<sup>a</sup>**

29a It is not who is faithful at the start, but who is faithful at the end that is important.

1. The publicans and harlots started off wrong but ended well.
  - A. They accepted John's preaching and, by extension, Christ's preaching.
2. The scribes and Pharisees started well but ended badly, as in Matthew 21:32.
  - A. They rejected the ministry of both John and Jesus.

**21:30 And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir: and went not.<sup>a</sup>**

30a Israel, especially the religious leaders, who said they would do the work of God but later fell away from it in their apostasy and disobedience.

**21:31 Whether of them twain did the will of his father? They say unto him, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans<sup>a</sup> and the harlots go into the kingdom of God<sup>b</sup> before you.**

31a **"publicans"** "What "publicans" did was according to "a public example" not "privily" Matthew 1:19 but "publicly" Acts 18:28, 20:20 "that they may be seen of men" Matthew 6:5 and "for to be seen of men" Matthew 23:5 like Diotrophes, like "the scribes and the Pharisees" Matthew 23:2 and typified by "a man named Zacchaeus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he

was rich” Luke 19:2, whom everyone knew, Luke 19:7, and hated for his graft and pomposity.”<sup>191</sup>

“The word is from the French “publicain”, from a Latin adjective which signified “pertaining to the public revenue”.<sup>192</sup>

AV	ESV	LSV
31 Whether of them twain did the will of <i>his</i> father? They say unto him, The first. Jesus saith unto them, <b>Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.</b>	31 Which of the two did the will of his father?” They said, “The first.” Jesus said to them, “Truly, I say to you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes go into the kingdom of God before you.	31 “Which of the two did the will of his father?” They *said, “The first.” Jesus *said to them, “Truly I say to you that the tax collectors and prostitutes will get into the kingdom of God before you.

“**publicans**” The ESV and LSV use the not-as-accurate “tax collectors”. Darby uses “tax gatherers”. If the “publican” had to do with the public revenue and operated publicly, “tax collector: is not accurate as collecting taxes is not always done in public.

31b This is the Spiritual kingdom. This is not a reference to the Millennial kingdom, or the Kingdom of Heaven.

**21:32<sup>a</sup> For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him.<sup>b</sup>**

32a Summarizing:

1. A kingdom is coming to Israel in Palestine.
2. This kingdom is to be ruled by the “Son of David.”
3. This Son of David shows up in Matthew 21 as rightful ruler.
4. He is rejected by the leaders on the grounds that His teaching and conduct conflicts with their Talmudic traditions, which they have invented themselves, to retain power themselves.
5. To show their disapproval, they refuse to acknowledge the authority of John and refuse to admit that his baptism is from “heaven.”
6. They further refuse Christ’s authority on the grounds that they want to run Palestine themselves (Matt. 21:38) and continue to be religious bigshots in the eyes of the common people.
7. Every verse in Matthew 21 points this out and brings it rapidly to a head.<sup>193</sup>

32b The leaders should have responded but didn’t. The harlots and publicans were not expected to repent yet they did.

<sup>191</sup> Alan O’Reilly

<sup>192</sup> Laurence Vance, *Archaic Words and the Authorized Version*, page 273.

<sup>193</sup> Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer’s Commentary on Matthew*, pages 539-540.

**131. Another Parable of the Vineyard 21:33-46, see also Mark 12:1-12; Luke 20:9-19**

**21:33 ¶ Hear another parable:<sup>a</sup> There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard,<sup>b</sup> and hedged it round about, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country:**

33a The characters in this parable:

1. Householder- God the Father
2. Vineyard- nation of Israel
3. Husbandmen- kings? Judges? Prophets?
4. Servants- prophets? They would be killed, persecuted or mocked and ignored by Israel.
5. Son- Christ, who was killed
  - A. Matthew 21:37 Israel would not “reverence” the Son and would instead crucify Him.
6. Miserable destruction- A.D. 70 and the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple

33b “**planted a vineyard**” The Lord did the same thing in Isaiah 5:1-7, with similar results, “**Now will I sing to my wellbeloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard. My wellbeloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill: And he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a winepress therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes. And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard. What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes? And now go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down: And I will lay it waste: it shall not be pruned, nor digged; but there shall come up briers and thorns: I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it. For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry.**”

1. This vineyard was the nation of Israel, which brought forth wild grapes.

**21:34 And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it.**

**21:35 And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another.<sup>a</sup>**

35a This is what Israel did to the prophets whom God sent to them in their apostasy, who tried to turn the nation back to God.

**21:36 Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise.**

**21:37 But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son.<sup>a</sup>**



37a If they killed the servants, who came in the name of the Master, these people would not respect his son, either. In fact, they will treat the son worse than the servants as seen in verse 38.

**21:38 But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir;<sup>a</sup> come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance.**

38a They knew him when they saw him! There is no ignorance on their part, just hatred and rejection of the heir.

Hebrews 1:2 says that the Father appointed Jesus to be Heir of All Things (**Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds.**) The Jewish leaders knew that as they recognized the Son of the Householder but killed Him that they might gain His inheritance. I am not sure what “inheritance” they were hoping to steal unless it has something to do with the Kingdom. If they knew that Jesus was the Heir and the Messiah, then He would be the One Who would bring in the Kingdom. But the religious leaders wanted that honor for themselves, but they knew that they would have no place in that Kingdom if Jesus was the Messiah. They also would they would get no credit or honor from bringing in the Kingdom as long as Jesus was alive. The only way to preserve their authority and influence was to kill Jesus and somehow steal His inheritance.

**21:39 And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard,<sup>a</sup> and slew him.**

39a Israel wanted nothing to do with Jesus, so they crucified Him “without the gate” as in Hebrews 13:12 **“Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.”** Israel’s attitude toward Jesus has not changed after all these years.

**21:40 When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh,<sup>a</sup> what will he do unto those husbandmen?**

40a This is a clear reference to the tribulation and the Second Coming and the judgments that will accompany it.

**21:41 They say unto him, He will miserably<sup>a</sup> destroy those wicked men,<sup>b</sup> and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen,<sup>c</sup> which shall render him the fruits in their seasons.**

41a **“miserably”** accurately describes what the Romans did to Jerusalem, as recounted in any history book. The Lord will miserably destroy those miserable men who treated His Son so miserably.

41b They condemned themselves and wrote out their own judgment.

41c **“other husbandmen”**

1. Gentiles and the Church.
2. Matthew 21:43 refers to the Kingdom of God, so this involves the spiritual aspects of the kingdom. The literal and political kingdom of Heaven is not taken away from Israel.

**21:42 Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures,<sup>a</sup> The stone which the builders rejected,<sup>b</sup> the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?**

42a **"Did ye never read in the scriptures..."** This is quoted from:

1. Psalm 118:22 **"The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner."**
2. Isaiah 28:16 **"Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste."**
3. 1 Peter 2:7,8 **"Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed."**

42b **"The stone which the builders rejected"**

1. The Stone is Christ, rejected by the nation.
2. Christ is the Headstone, the most important stone that keeps the entire building together. To reject that stone is foolish as it will ensure the structure will collapse, just as Israel did in A. D. 70.
3. The rejection of Christ by His own is also mentioned in John 1:11,12 **"He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:"**

**21:43 Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.<sup>a</sup>**

43a If this verse were isolated, it could teach that God was finished with Israel and that the Church has replaced Israel, but it cannot possibly teach that since Christ Himself said that He is not finished with Israel. He said they would not see Him TILL they repent (Matthew 23:39).

1. Christ always described a literal physical kingdom on earth. He said **"They shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God"** (Luke 13:29).
2. Christ gave the parable in Luke 19:11-27 specifically to teach that the kingdom of God would not come at that time but would come after the king would go into a far country and then return (Luke 19:12). After he returns, he will reward his servants and judge his enemies. This describes the church age followed by the establishment of an earthly kingdom, exactly as we see throughout Scripture.
3. Jesus says that the Kingdom of God shall be taken away from the nation of Israel, NOT the Kingdom of Heaven. Some of the spiritual aspects of the Kingdom would be taken away from Israel during the Church Age as they continue in their blindness, but the Lord never said anything about the Kingdom of Heaven (the literal and political Kingdom which is instituted after Revelation 19) would ever be taken away from Israel. The political elements of the Kingdom are never taken from Israel and given to the Gentiles as Replacement Theology falsely teaches. Most Catholics and Protestants

teach this, as does study Bibles like the *Thompson Chain Reference Bible*.<sup>194</sup> The political kingdom is ALWAYS Jewish.

**21:44 And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.<sup>a</sup>**

44a Either be broken now or be ground to powder by Christ at the Second Coming.

1. See Isaiah 28:13,16,17 **“But the word of the LORD was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little; that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken... Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste. Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place.”**

2. This speaks of the severity of the judgments at the Second Coming. The judgments of the tribulation as described in Revelation illustrate this.

**21:45 And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them.**

**21:46 But when they sought to lay hands on him, they feared the multitude, because they took him for a prophet.**

### **Spiritual Applications- Matthew Chapter 21**

You must always remember that the same crowd who was praising the Lord in verse 9 were calling for His blood a week later. You cannot put faith in the crowd, for the herd is always easily manipulated and is very fickle.

We have the second cleansing of the temple in verses 12 and 13. Jesus did it three years earlier back in John 2 but it did not stay cleansed. Reformations and revivals are not permanent. The only constant is apostasy, decay, backsliding and falling away. To maintain the fruits of a revival or a reformation requires constant diligence, and it is a never-ending task.

The widespread heresy of “Replacement Theology” comes up in Matthew 21:43, where the kingdom promises given to Israel and taken from them and given to the Church. A dispensational approach to Scripture prevents this. See Appendix 3.

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<sup>194</sup> This promotes the heresy of Replacement Theology in its page headings in Isaiah and the other Old Testament prophets, where it tries to apply Millennial promises to Israel to the Church.



**Matthew Chapter 22**

**132. The Parable of the Wedding Feast 22:1-14, see also Luke 14:16-24**

**22:1 And Jesus answered and spake unto them again by parables, and said,**

**22:2 The kingdom of heaven<sup>a</sup> is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage<sup>b</sup> for his son,**

**22:3 And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come.**

**22:4 Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage.**

**22:5 But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise:**

**22:6 And the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them.**

**22:7 But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.**

**22:8 Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy.**

**22:9 Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage.**

**22:10 So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good:<sup>a</sup> and the wedding was furnished with guests.**

**22:11 ¶ And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment:**

**22:12 And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless.**

**22:13 Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.**

**22:14 For many are called, but few are chosen.**

## Summary

1. 22:2 The kingdom of heaven is like a man who made a marriage for his son.

2. 22:2 The King is the Father

3. 22:2 The Son is Christ

### 4. "marriage"

A. Marriage supper of the Lamb? Probably not as many who were bidden did not come.

i. These who refused the invitation were the Jews who rejected the offer of the kingdom.

B. Those who turned down the invitation is probably unbelieving Israel.

i. Matthew 22:5, They made light of the invitation and mocked it.

ii. Matthew 22:6, They also murdered some of the servants as they were giving out the invitations.

5. 22:3 To be invited to a wedding by a king and then to refuse it or ignore it is a very serious insult. Today, think about turning down an invitation to the White House. Spiritually, consider all those who refuse the invitation for salvation. How will the King react to such an insult?

6. 22:4 The King gave them another chance and they reacted worse the second time. See the grace of God here. The offer of salvation comes to a sinner who initially rejects it. That ought to be justification enough to judge and condemn that sinner right there, but the Lord often gives multiple offers of salvation to that person in His love, mercy and grace. Many sinners go to hell after maybe dozens or even hundreds of spurned invitations to eternal life.

7. 22:5 Notice the excuses. Fallen man always has an excuse as to why he cannot accept or respond to the gospel or the call of God. They had more important things to do than to go to the wedding of the King's Son. They had to make a living, pay off the boat, get the kids through college. After all that, then MAYBE they will consider the invitation.

A. Other excuses might include:

i. There are too many hypocrites in the church.

ii. I don't like the preacher. He preaches too long, too loud...

iii. The church is hot/cold/drafty...

iv. I'm not ready yet/I still have plenty of time!

v. I read the Bible, but I don't understand it.

vi. Science has disproven the Bible.

vii. I'll be persecuted, mocked or I'll lose my family, friends or job if I get saved.

viii. I believe in another religion.

ix. I have to pay off my mortgage/student loan or have to get the kids through college before I can start worrying about religion.

x. Religion would be bad for my business.

8. 22:6 These sinners usually do not treat the messengers of the King very well while they are giving out the invitations. Can you image a royal messenger standing at your door with a gold-foil invitation to attend the royal wedding as an honored guest, and then killing that messenger because you hated that King and His Son so much? Israel did that to the prophets and the world does that today to faithful, witnessing Christians.

9. 22:7 The King's Response- He sent forth his armies and burned up their city. Can you blame him? His generous offers and invitations met with only spite and scorn, and the death and abuse of His servants.

A. Armies- Roman Empire historically. Prophetically it would be the armies of the Antichrist who will attack and destroy Jerusalem in the Tribulation.

B. The city is Jerusalem, burned and destroyed in A. D. 70 by the Romans but this is not the prophetic fulfillment, simply a historical type. But the greater interpretation lies in the destruction of Jerusalem in the Tribulation.

- i. This shows the fall of Israel morally and spiritually at the end of the Church Age and into the Tribulation.

10. 22:8 These other guests are the Gentiles who responded to the invitation that Israel rejected. Not everyone rejected the invitation. The ones who should have accepted it (Israel) rejected it and the ones who had to reason to accept it (the Gentiles) did. Israel turned down the offer of their Kingdom and their King in a very violent and disrespectful manner, showing nothing but contempt for their God, King and Messiah.

- A. The Jews were invited but rejected the invitation. They were deemed to be unworthy.
  - i. Acts 2-7.

- B. The invitation now goes universal, to the Gentiles.
  - i. Acts 10 onward

11. 22:9 The King will have His wedding furnished with guests, even if He has to go to the rescue missions and into the alley ways to find them. These are often fruitful ministries.

- A. Most of the conversions I saw in my ministry came from thirteen years of preaching in a county jail and my preaching in the Sunday Breakfast Mission in Wilmington, Delaware. I saw maybe one conversion while preaching on the street at the University of Delaware for two years.

12. 22:10 Many churches are like this today. They have a congregation but not all are good or saved. They have both wheat and tares.

13. 22:11 All invited, legitimate guests would receive this kind of a garment.

14. 22:12 This man stood out since he was never given such a garment and was not wearing one.

15. 22:13 This man was not properly clothed as he was missing the wedding garment that was passed out to all of the guests and that they were expected to wear.

- A. He could offer no reason or excuse as to why he did not have a robe.
  - i. How did he get into the wedding in the first place? He slipped in somehow but only the King noticed him. He was an uninvited guest.
    - a. He did not despise the invitation for he did come, unlike the Jews.
  - ii. He may have thought his robe was as good as the one the king was handing out.
  - iii. What was an unsaved man doing at this supper? This shows it cannot be a reference to the Marriage of the Lamb as there will be no unsaved men there.
    - a. You won't have to compel anyone to come in and no one will reject the invitation!

- B. His judgment, carried out by the servants (angels?)

- i. He was bound hand and foot.
  - ii. He was taken away.
  - iii. He was cast into outer darkness.
  - iv. There was weeping and gnashing of teeth.

C. "We may sum up the evidence by saying that the lost "guest" of Matthew 22:11–14 is either a Tribulation "invitee" who did NOT endure to the end (see comparison in 25:8, 25:30) or that it is Satan himself who will put in an appearance in Heaven after the Rapture and during the festivities of the marriage of the Lamb. Notice that the doom of the uninvited man without the wedding garment is: "bound hand and foot"! This will synchronize with Revelation 20:1–3, which occurs at the end of the Tribulation."<sup>195</sup>

D. This man is also a perfect type of a sinner clothed in the filthy rags of his self-righteousness (Isaiah 64:6, **But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities,**

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<sup>195</sup> Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer's Commentary on Matthew*, page 564.

**like the wind, have taken us away.)** who thought he could get into the “wedding feast” without an invitation or based on his own self-righteousness or morality. The command for him to be cast into outer darkness is the last thing the self-righteousness man expects to hear. He imagines that God will welcome with open arms such a man, religious, upstanding and moral man as him, but he is greatly surprised when he is found out. When confronted with the unpaid debt of his own sins and his lack of true righteousness and the filthiness of his own robe of human righteousness, he is left speechless.

E. “Outer darkness” see notes under Matthew 8:12.

16. 22:13 “A man goes down the street and says, “We’re having a wedding feast at the Statler (or Hilton) Hotel, and you are invited. The meal is free and will consist of baked beans, green beans, butter beans, sweet peas, English peas, black eyed peas, turnip greens, collards, rutabagas, ‘chittlens,’ candied yams, snap beans, crowder peas, field peas, steak, beef, chicken, turkey, rice, potatoes, pork, chicken pilau, chicken gumbo, chili, chicken and dumplings, chop suey, chow mein, tamales, enchiladas, tacos, fried potatoes, boiled potatoes, spinach, eggplant, okra, iced tea, milk, buttermilk, corn on the cob, coffee, lemonade, kool aid, apple cider, honey, pickles, German chocolate cake, ice cream, lemon meringue pie, pecan pie, cookies, and homemade biscuits and bread! Present will be Jayne Mansfield, Hedy Lamar, Artie Shaw, Elvis Presley, Fidel Castro, Walter Reuther, Jimmie Hoffa, Richard Widmark, Burt Lancaster, Elizabeth Taylor, Perry Como, Bing Crosby, Red Skelton, Matt Dillon, Walt Disney, Roy Acuff, President Kennedy, Roy Rogers, Winston Churchill, and Zsa Zsa Gabor. Do you want to come?” Well, 98 percent of Americans—Christian, Catholic, Jew, or Atheist—would break their fool necks trying to get in, especially if it were free. But what happens? A gospel messenger steps up and says, “There is going to be a marriage in the skies. God has arranged a wedding for His Son. The food will be twelve manner of fruits from the tree of life, bread, honey, and broiled snapper (Luke 24:42, 14:15). Present will be Billy Sunday, Fanny Crosby, General Booth, Moses, David, Paul, Whitefield, Torrey, Wesley, Bob Jones, Sam Jones, Joshua, Jeremiah, Frances Havergal, Livingstone, Bunyan, Fox, Isaiah, Peter, James, John, Talmage, Beecher, Huss, Wycliff, Phillip, Thomas, Matthew, Luther, and all the good and just men of every age, redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. It’s absolutely FREE. It will last forever. Who wants to come?” And 98 percent of Americans—Protestant, Catholic, or Jew—would break their fool necks trying to get out of the sound of the voice of the messenger so they could keep on living like they wanted to live! In 1959, George Gallup conducted one of the most unique polls ever taken in the United States. The question was, “Who in all history would you enjoy most having into your home for a meal?” Jesus Christ rated eleventh on the list. Do you know the ten that “beat Him out”? Well, No. 10 was Teddy Roosevelt. No. 9 was the old cigar smoking Episcopalian who wrote a history of England and then said to Billy Graham in astonishment, “Do you mean to tell me that God has an interest in the history of men?” (Winston Churchill) No. 8 was Mrs. Eisenhower. No. 7 was Douglas MacArthur. No. 6 was the old Pro-Communist integrationist, Mrs. Roosevelt. No. 5 was the old cussing, cocktail drinking Baptist, Harry S. Truman. No. 4 was the humanitarian deist, George Washington. No. 3 was “Ike” who captured the town of Little Rock in 1958 and overthrew a population of unarmed civilians without a casualty. No. 2 was FDR, the first advocate of Socialism in the White House, and the No. 1 spot (God bless you!), so help me, was the old bartending politician from Kentucky whose letters to his generals sound like Hitler’s correspondence—“Honest Abe Lincoln of Illinois!” (You see, he was not honest, for he was from Kentucky—not Illinois.) Thus, it is seen that the contemporary American is a gullible lackey, who polishes the boots of Time and Life magazines, and is literally “carried away” with the standard Associated Press estimate of “great people.” None of the people in the list (12, Hoover; 13, Nixon) ever professed to believe in the word of God as authoritative. None of them professed the new birth publicly. None of them ever led a soul to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, and none of them ever said anything or did anything to



spread the gospel. These are the “great people of the world.” But of course, when a man gets to know the Lord Jesus Christ as his own living Saviour, then the heroes of this world become mighty “common place.”<sup>196</sup>

17. 22:14 The call to salvation is universal (“many” are called) but only a few will respond to it.

**133. Giving Tribute to Caesar 22:15-22, see also Mark 12:13-17; Luke 20:20-26**

**22:15 ¶ Then went the Pharisees, and took counsel how they might entangle him in his talk.<sup>a</sup>**

They would try to trip Him up in His words in public in an effort to discredit Him before the people.

**22:16 And they sent out unto him their disciples with the Herodians,<sup>a</sup> saying, Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man: for thou regardest not the person of men.<sup>b</sup>**

**16a “Herodians”**

1. The Herodians, were a political party among the Jews who supported the dynasty of Herod. A Herod occupied the throne of Israel and the Herodians had come to terms with the fact that an Edomite sat on the throne of David as Rome's puppet king. They had also come to terms with Roman occupation of their country.
2. In matters of religion the Herodians leaned more toward the Sadducees than the Pharisees.
3. Normally there was little love lost between the Pharisees and the Herodians, but opposition to Christ gave them a common cause.

16b The “butter-up” is applied before the knife comes out. The questions of these religious leaders are never asked in a good heart with a good reason. It is not information they are after but trying to tangle-up the Lord in His talk. But it always backfired.

**22:17 Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar, or not?<sup>a</sup>**

17a The question is a perfect and cunning set-up:

1. If Christ answers “give” and the Jews can accuse Him of being unpatriotic and supportive of the Roman occupation. The Pharisees would accuse Him here.
2. If Christ answers “don't give” and they have Him preaching rebellion against Rome. The Herodians would have reported Jesus for promoting a tax rebellion.
3. It is the modern version of “Have you stopped beating your wife?” No matter how you answer, you lose.

**22:18 But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites<sup>ab</sup>**

18a The Lord saw right through the question and understood their motives and it exasperated Him.

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<sup>196</sup> Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer's Commentary on Matthew*, pages 565-566.

18b Luke 20:20 gives the motive for the question. They were looking for a justification to charge Him with a crime- any crime- so they could have Him arrested.

**22:19 Shew me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a penny.<sup>a</sup>**

19a The “**penny**” was a Roman coin with the image of Caesar on it, something that offended the Jew as it had an image and the image of a foreign conqueror.

1. Whose image was on it? Caesar’s. The coin belonged to him.
2. In that case, render back to Caesar what belonged to Caesar but render to God what belongs to God.
3. It was a day’s wages for a working man.

**22:20 And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription?**

**22:21 They say unto him, Cæsar’s. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar’s; and unto God the things that are God’s.<sup>a</sup>**

21a Jesus says to pay your taxes, even to a bloodthirsty and cruel Gentile empire! See Matthew 17:27. No one likes paying taxes as “taxation is theft”. Taxes are not fair, and they are used to finance many things we disagree with and that are sinful. But taxation belongs to Caesar and part of the curse is financing government. Tax resistance is not scriptural.

**22:22 When they had heard these words, they marvelled,<sup>a</sup> and left him, and went their way.**

22a Jesus impressed them and shut them up.

**134. “In the Resurrection...” 22:23-33, see also Mark 12:18-27; Luke 20:27-39**

**22:23 ¶ The same day came to him the Sadducees, which say that there is no resurrection, and asked him,<sup>a</sup>**

23a Seeing that the Herodians and the Pharisees “struck out”, the Sadducees decided to give it a try in trapping Jesus.

**22:24 Saying, Master, Moses said, If a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother.<sup>a</sup>**

24a This is a mess of a situation. It is likely that the Sadducees just made-up this situation as it is so improbable.

1. A man married a wife but died before he had any children. Levirate marriage required the dead man’s brothers to marry his widow and raise up children for him. But this dead man had seven brothers who all married the widow but who died without having any children. Then the woman died. Now in the resurrection, whose wife is she going to be as they all were married to her.

A. Deuteronomy 25:5-10 **“If brethren dwell together, and one of them die, and have no child, the wife of the dead shall not marry without unto a**

**stranger: her husband's brother shall go in unto her, and take her to him to wife, and perform the duty of an husband's brother unto her. And it shall be, that the firstborn which she beareth shall succeed in the name of his brother which is dead, that his name be not put out of Israel. And if the man like not to take his brother's wife, then let his brother's wife go up to the gate unto the elders, and say, My husband's brother refuseth to raise up unto his brother a name in Israel, he will not perform the duty of my husband's brother. Then the elders of his city shall call him, and speak unto him: and if he stand to it, and say, I like not to take her; Then shall his brother's wife come unto him in the presence of the elders, and loose his shoe from off his foot, and spit in his face, and shall answer and say, So shall it be done unto that man that will not build up his brother's house. And his name shall be called in Israel, The house of him that hath his shoe loosed."**

2. They were attempting to demonstrate how silly the doctrine of a physical resurrection was by hatching up such an outlandish scenario. Since they had no answer for this sort of situation, they reasoned there was no answer, so there must be no resurrection.

**22:25 Now there were with us seven brethren: and the first, when he had married a wife, deceased, and, having no issue, left his wife unto his brother:**

**22:26 Likewise the second also, and the third, unto the seventh.**

**22:27 And last of all the woman died also.**

**22:28 Therefore in the resurrection<sup>a</sup> whose wife shall she be of the seven? for they all had her.**

**28a "in the resurrection"**

1. What a pack of hypocrites! The Sadducees denied any bodily resurrection, yet here they are asking the Lord about it!

A. Liberals and cultists are guilt of the same error.

B. The Pharisees did confess the resurrection and Paul, an ex-Pharisee, used that division to "split the opposition" against him in Acts 23:6-8 **"But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question. And when he had so said, there arose a dissension between the Pharisees and the Sadducees: and the multitude was divided. For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both."**

2. They also denied angels and spirits. They were complete materialists.

**22:29 Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.<sup>a</sup>**

29a The Lord's response: **"Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures..."**

1. **"Ye do err"**. Mark has it **"Ye do greatly err"** in Mark 12:27.

2. Despite their position, their ignorance of Biblical doctrine was astonishing.

3. In the resurrection, there is no marriage. That is an earthly institution that is not practiced in heaven.

4. The Mormons teach that a married couple remains married after death and for eternity, but the Bible teaches no such thing. Death ends the marriage relationship.

5. Oh how religious leaders hate to be told when they are wrong! Many do not take it well but rather lash out at their opponents instead of humbly reconsidering their position. For all his errors, at least Augustine had enough common sense to write *Retractations* at the end of his life, where he reviewed his previous writings and corrected mistakes that he realized he made. But after you'd read John Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, you realize that Calvin was not of the same mind. A more recent example of such an unteachable spirit would be John R. Rice.

**22:30 For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven.<sup>a</sup>**

The saints in glory are like the angels, as angels do not marry.

1. All angels are male, so they could not marry other angels unless they were homosexuals. Then they would be guilty of sin and would then be cast out.

2. One reason for marriage is for the birth of children and for the creation of families, something angels do not do.

3. Simply because angels do not marry does not mean they are sexless. Since when do you need to be married to have sex? Whether they can have sexual relations with human women is an open question, depending on how you interpret Genesis 6 and the "Sons of God" taking the daughters of men.

**22:31 But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying,**

**22:32 I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?<sup>a</sup> God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.<sup>b</sup>**

32a Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, though dead for millennia, were still considered to be alive by the Lord. The Sadducees would have also denied any idea of life after death.

See Exodus 3:6 "**Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God.**"

32b Why wonder so much about dead husbands and wives? God is a God of the living, not of the dead.

**22:33 And when the multitude heard this, they were astonished at his doctrine.<sup>a</sup>**

33a Not just with the content of His doctrine but also with the authority by which He delivered it,

**135. The Great Commandment 22:34-40, see also Mark 12:28-34**

**22:34 ¶ But when the Pharisees had heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together.<sup>a</sup>**

34a These two groups did not like each other and were rivals, but they were united in their attempt to stop the Lord and to publicly embarrass Him.

**22:35 Then one of them, which was a lawyer,<sup>a</sup> asked him a question, tempting him, and saying,**

35a This “lawyer” was one who specialized in the study of the law of Moses.

**22:36 Master, which is the great commandment in the law?<sup>ab</sup>**

36a Again, this question is not asked in a good heart. The lawyer is trying to force Christ to pit one commandment against the others, so the charge could be laid that Christ thought some of the commandments were not as important as the others.

36b “There was plenty of room in the lawyer’s question for wrangling. The rabbis had divided the law into 248 affirmative and 365 negative commands. Some of these commands were spoken of as light and others as heavy. There were 613 altogether (the number of letters in the Decalogue). No matter which commandment the Lord picked, it would be possible to challenge Him. The rabbis were great at splitting hairs, and they made all kinds of subtle refinements to the law. They would argue for years over a simple statement like “Thou shalt not see the a kid in his mother’s milk.” How would this Teacher weigh in against all the ponderous opinions propounded in the rabbinic schools?”<sup>197</sup>

**22:37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.<sup>a</sup>**

37a The Lord responded with a commandment not mentioned in Exodus 20. He instead goes to Deuteronomy 6:5 “**And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.**”). Also see Psalm 119:2 (“**Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart.**”)

**22:38 This is the first and great<sup>a</sup> commandment.**

38a Not first numerically but first in importance.

**22:39 And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.<sup>a</sup>**

39a The second great commandment is based on Leviticus 19:18 (“**Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the LORD.**”). We love ourselves, so we are to love our neighbor with that same kind of love.

**22:40 On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.<sup>abc</sup>**

40a It can be summarized as:

1. Greatest commandment- Love God
- A. A Godward command- vertical

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<sup>197</sup> John Phillips, *Exploring The Gospel of Matthew*, pages 428-429.

2. Second Greatest Commandment- love your neighbor
  - A. A man-ward command- horizontal
  - B. You cannot love your neighbor properly unless you first love God properly.

40b Mark adds **“And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he: And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbor as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices. And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. And no man after that durst ask him any question”** (Mark 12:32–34).

40c Jesus never mentioned “keeping the Sabbath” (Fourth Commandment) as being either the first or second Great Commandment. This goes contrary to the teachings of the Seventh-Day Adventists and other Sabbath-keeping groups who place this as the most important commandment in God’s eyes.

### **136. Whose Son is Christ? 22:41-46, see also Mark 12:35-37; Luke 20:41-44**

**22:41 ¶ While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them,<sup>a</sup>**

41a The Lord turns the tables. He may have gotten exasperated with being asked so many questions that had a bad motive that He decides that it is time that He asks some questions to the religious leaders.

**22:42 Saying, What think ye of Christ? whose son is he?<sup>ab</sup> They say unto him, The Son of David.**

**42a What think ye of Christ? whose son is he?”**

1. The obvious answer is that He is the Son of David.
2. How then does David call his son “Lord?”
  - A. In the Jewish mind, it was difficult to conceive a son being greater than his father.
  - B. They had no answer for this.

42b The question in Matthew 22:42 ranks right up there with the question of Matthew 16:13-15. The idea is the same- “Who is Jesus”?

1. How you answer determines whether you are saved or lost. Is He the son of the carpenter? The son of Joseph? The son of a German soldier? “A” son of God? A great healer or teacher? A rebel? **“But whom say ye that I am?”** (Matthew 16:15).
  - A. If He is only any of these listed above, then He is not God, the Bible is a lie, there is no salvation, and when you die, you cease to exist forever.

**22:43 He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying,**

**22:44 The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand,<sup>a</sup> till I make thine enemies thy footstool?<sup>b</sup>**

44a The **“right hand”** is always the position of power and authority.

44b The Lord quotes Psalm 110:1ff. That passage is quoted six times in the New Testament

1. Matthew 22:44
2. Mark 12:36
3. Luke 20:42
4. Acts 2:33-35
5. Hebrews 1:13
6. Hebrews 10:12,13

**22:45 If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?<sup>a</sup>**

45a In the Jewish mind, the son can never be greater than the Father. If the Messiah was to be a son of David, how could David call his son “Lord”, which would make the Messiah greater than the Father? The Jews had a difficult time accepting that, but it was obviously true.

**22:46 And no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions.<sup>a</sup>**

46a Jesus had no trouble answering their questions, but He stumped them with one simple question.

**Spiritual Applications- Matthew Chapter 22**

Weddings and wedding receptions are popular, and most people are glad when they receive such an invitation. In countries that still have a monarchy, “royal weddings” are occasions of national rejoicing. But the world wants nothing to do with the wedding of Jesus Christ and His Church and they openly mock it and despise it. Such an attitude simply isn’t normal but can be easily explained how the world hates Jesus and all things relating to Him.





### **Matthew Chapter 23**

Matthew 23 is the strongest piece of “hate literature” in Scripture, where the Lord holds nothing back in His exposure and condemnation of religious hypocrisy. These false religious teachers make religion a burden instead of a delight.

#### **137. Condemnation of the Religious Leaders 23:1-39, see also Mark 12:38-40; Luke 20:45-47**

**23:1 Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples,**

**23:2 Saying, The scribes and the Pharisees<sup>ab</sup> sit in Moses' seat:<sup>c</sup>**

2a The Scribes and Pharisees are the primary targets in this chapter, but you know the Lord had the Sadducees in mind as well.

1. Notice the titles the Lord applied to these false teachers in Matthew 23:

- A. Hypocrites- 23:13,14,15,23,25,27,29
- B. Children of hell- 23:15
- C. Blind and blind guides- 23:16,17,19,24,26
- D. Fools- 23:17,19
- E. Whited sepulchers 23:27
- F. Serpents- 23:33
- G. Generation of vipers- 23:33

2b “Pharisees”

1. “The Pharisees then were two things. First, they were dedicated legalists; religion to them was the observance of every detail of the Law. But second--and this is never to be forgotten--they were men in desperate earnest about their religion, for no one would have accepted the impossibly demanding task of living a life like that unless he had been in the most deadly earnest. They could, therefore, develop at one and the same time all the faults of legalism and all the virtues of complete self-dedication. A Pharisee might either be a desiccated or arrogant legalist, or a man of burning devotion to God. To say this is not to pass a particularly Christian verdict on the Pharisees, for the Jews themselves passed that very verdict.

2. The Talmud distinguishes seven different kinds of Pharisee.

- A. There was the Shoulder Pharisee. He was meticulous in his observance of the Law; but he wore his good deeds upon his shoulder. He was out for a reputation for purity and goodness. True, he obeyed the Law, but he did so in order to be seen of men.
- B. There was the Wait-a-little Pharisee. He was the Pharisee who could always produce an entirely valid excuse for putting off a good deed. He professed the creed of the strictest Pharisees, but he could always find an excuse for allowing practice to lag behind. He spoke, but he did not do.
- C. There was the Bruised or Bleeding Pharisee. The Talmud speaks of the plague of self-afflicting Pharisees. These Pharisees received their name for this reason. Women had a very low status in Palestine. No really strict orthodox teacher would be seen talking to a woman in public, even if that woman was his own wife or sister. These Pharisees went even further; they would not even allow themselves to look at a woman on the street. In order to avoid doing so they would shut their eyes, and so bump into walls and buildings and obstructions.

They thus bruised and wounded themselves, and their wounds and bruises gained them a special reputation for exceeding piety.

D. There was the Pharisee who was variously described as the Pestle and Mortar Pharisee, or the Humpbacked Pharisee, or the Tumbling Pharisee. Such men walked in such ostentatious humility that they were bent like a pestle in a mortar or like a hunch-back. They were so humble that they would not even lift their feet from the ground and so tripped over every obstruction they met. Their humility was a self-advertising ostentation.

E. There was the Ever-reckoning or Compounding Pharisee. This kind of Pharisee was for ever reckoning up his good deeds; he was forever striking a balance sheet between himself and God, and he believed that every good deed he did put God a little further in his debt. To him religion was always to be reckoned in terms of a profit and loss account.

F. There was the Timid or Fearing Pharisee. He was always in dread of divine punishment. He was, therefore, always cleansing the outside of the cup and the platter, so that he might seem to be good. He saw religion in terms of judgment and life in terms of a terror-stricken evasion of this judgment.

G. Finally, there was the God-fearing Pharisee; he was the Pharisee who really and truly loved God and who found his delight in obedience to the Law of God, however difficult that it might be.”<sup>198</sup>

2c **“Moses’ seat”** They claimed to speak on Moses’ behalf, with the authority of Moses, as the successors of Moses. This is similar to popes and Roman Catholic “bishops” who claim to sit in Peter’s seat and to speak on behalf of Peter.

**23:3 All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not.<sup>ab</sup>**

3a “Do as I say, not as I do” should never be a motto for any religious “leader!” Our “walk” should always match our “talk”. If it does not, we are guilty of hypocrisy in saying one thing and instructing others to live one way while we live in a totally different manner.

3b They tell the people that “Moses instructs you to do this or live in this manner” which the Lord acknowledges was true. They were accurate enough in their exposition of the law. But if it was good enough for the people, why wasn’t it good enough for the priests, who were not following their own teachings and interpretations of Moses?

**23:4 For they bind heavy burdens<sup>a</sup> and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men’s shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.<sup>b</sup>**

4a **“Bind heavy burdens.”**

1. The reference will fit the self-righteous legalists of Matthew 11:28.

2. These “burdens” are the multitude of religious laws and traditions that the leaders heaped on their followers until it became impossible to keep track of them all.

A. The American government does this. There are so many federal laws on the books that it is impossible to count them or to keep track of them. This makes

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<sup>198</sup> William Barclay, *Matthew*, in the Daily Study Bible, volume 2, pages 282-284.

everyone a felon “by default” since you are bound to break a law, even in ignorance, if there are so many of them.

3. So here comes a pious Jew who hears of all 613 precepts of the Law of Moses and tries his best to keep them. After a few days of good intentions, he gives up in despair. He goes to his priest, expresses his desire to obey every jot and tittle of the Law but confesses he cannot. “What should I do?” he asks his priest. The priest can offer him no help or encouragement, leaving this poor man to flounder in his hopelessness. It’s “every man for himself.”

A. They were taskmasters, not burden-bearers and not sympathetic helpers.

4. They make religion a burden instead of a delight. There was no way the average Jew could have kept track of all these laws. The Roman Catholic Church is similar, with their innumerable “feast days”. Is this Year A, B or C in the missal? What color vestment is the priest wearing today? Keeping track of the mass and the other religious activities in the average Roman Catholic Church almost required a doctorate in Canon Law.

4b “According to the scribes an ordinary sabbath-day's journey was limited to two thousand cubits (about one thousand yards); however, on Friday a man could place enough food for two meals at the boundary of that distance, thus theoretically extending his house that far so that on Saturday he could continue walking for another two thousand cubits. On the sabbath a tailor was not permitted to go out with his needle; neither was a scribe permitted to go out with his pen. No ingredients could be added to a solution unless they would be completely dissolved before the sabbath. Wool was not to be dyed unless the whole process could be completed before the sabbath. Rabbis argued over how much guilt a person would incur if in blowing out a candle on the sabbath its flame happened to light another one. One rabbi forbade a man to throw hot water over himself on the sabbath in case the floor were to be cleaned as a result. A person could not drag a chair on the sabbath since he might create a rut in the ground. A woman was not permitted to look in a mirror on the sabbath because she might see a gray hair and pull it out, which would be work. Likewise a person could not put in false teeth on the sabbath. It was considered work to tie a knot, undo a knot, sew two stitches, sow two seeds, pluck a blade of grass, or pick a piece of fruit on the sabbath. To write two letters of the alphabet or to change one into another on the sabbath was sinful, but to write one big letter in the space of two smaller ones was not. To climb a tree or clap hands was to break the sabbath. The rabbis endlessly debated such issues. According to Edersheim, twenty-four chapters of the Babylonian Talmud (156 double pages of folio) are devoted to the sabbath laws. He wrote, “Matters are seriously discussed as of vital religious importance, which one would scarcely imagine a sane intellect would seriously entertain.” Far from accepting the Lord's rebuke, the scribes and rabbis went on adding intolerable burdens for centuries.”<sup>199</sup>

**23:5 But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries,<sup>ab</sup> and enlarge the borders of their garments,**

**5a “Make broad their phylacteries.”**

1. The phylactery was a leather box, cube-shaped, closed with an attached flap, and bound to the person's wrist by a leather band. Verses of Scripture were enclosed in the boxes.

2. To wear one was supposed to demonstrate how pious you were. The bigger and more visible the phylactery, the more spiritual you were supposed to be.

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<sup>199</sup> John Phillips, *Exploring The Gospel of Matthew*, pages 433-434.

5b "The rabbis wore tephillin or prayer-fillets, small leather cases with four strips of parchment on which were written the words of Ex 13:1-10, 11-16; Deut 6:4-9; Deut 11:13-21. They took literally the words about "a sign unto thy hand," "a memorial between thine eyes," and "frontlets." "That for the head was to consist of a box with four compartments, each containing a slip of parchment inscribed with one of the four passages. Each of these strips was to be tied up with a well-washed hair from a calf's tail; lest, if tied with wool or thread, any fungoid growth should ever pollute them. The phylactery of the arm was to contain a single slip, with the same four passages written in four columns of seven lines each. The black leather straps by which they were fastened were wound seven times round the arm and three times round the hand. They were revered by the rabbis as highly as the scriptures, and, like them, might be rescued from the flames on a sabbath. They profanely imagined that God wore the tephillin" (Vincent). It is small wonder that Jesus ridiculed such minute concern for pretentious externalism and literalism. These tephillin "are still worn at the present day on the forehead and left arm by Jews at the daily Morning Prayer" (Mcneile). "The size of the phylacteries indexed the measure of zeal, and the wearing of large ones was apt to take the place of obedience" (Bruce). Hence they made them "broad." The superstitious would wear them as mere charms to ward off evil."<sup>200</sup>

### **23:6 And love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues,<sup>a</sup>**

#### **6a "And love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues"**

1. Luke 14:8-11 ("**When thou art bidden of any man to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room; lest a more honourable man than thou be bidden of him; And he that bade thee and him come and say to thee, Give this man place; and thou begin with shame to take the lowest room. But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room; that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee. For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.**") makes it clear that when we are bidden, we are to take the lowest seats available, and we are to let our host exalt us instead of exalting ourselves. Also see Matthew 23:12

2. These leaders would scramble for the uppermost seats that were the most prominent seats so gain positions of prestige and authority in these sorts of events. They were always looking to exalt and promote themselves. In the synagogues, the back seats were occupied by the children and the most unimportant people; the further forward the seat, the greater the honor. The most honored seats of all were the seats of the elders, which faced the congregation. If a man was seated there, everyone would see that he was present and he could conduct himself throughout the service with a pose of piety which the congregation could not fail to notice.

A. I have seen videos of countless "Independent Fundamental Baptist" neo-fundamentalist churches where the pastor will sit on the platform and face the congregation, even if someone else is preaching. He doesn't sit with the rest of the congregation as he is too holy and important for that. He must sit "on high" before the people where he can demonstrate his piety. It also serves as a constant reminder to the congregation that he is the "man of God" and must be recognized as such.

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<sup>200</sup> A. T. Robertson, *Word Studies in the New Testament*.

**23:7 And greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi.<sup>a</sup>**

**7a “greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi”**

1. They sought public recognition of the fact that they were supposed “men of God”

2. **“Rabbi rabbi”**

A. They loved to be called “Reverend” and “Doctor”. They would insist on being called these titles.

i. Even today, men who have fake doctorates (called “honorary doctorates”) flaunt them the most. Men with earned doctorates “(who did the work and paid the tuition) might tend to be more likely not to put as much stock in being called “Doctor”.

a. A good rule is that men who have a genuine doctrine are less likely to “flaunt” it as a man who has a fake doctorate.

b. Why don’t schools award honorary bachelor or master degrees?

ii. Being a “doctor” (whether it is genuine or honorary) is a meaningless title since it says nothing about the spirituality of that person. You can be a total reprobate and still be a “doctor”.

iii. “Doctor” is an academic title, not a spiritual one. Having an earned doctorate simply means that you completed a course of study, wrote the dissertation and paid the tuition, nothing more.

B. “Rabbi” comes as “Rab” (Bachelor of Arts), “Rabbi” (Master of Arts) and “Rabbak” (Doctor of Philosophy).

C. This would include being called “Reverend” for that is associated with God (Psalm 111:9 **“He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant for ever: holy and reverend is his name.”**).

3. Verses 8 and 10 make it clear that we are not to be seeking after such titles.

4. The being called “father” in Matthew 23:9 refers to another spiritual title, to refer to some spiritual leader who was older.

A. We naturally apply this to the Church of Rome that calls its priests “father”.

B. This does not prohibit calling your earthly father “father”. This misunderstanding and misapplication is why many preachers, especially southern preachers, refer to their earthly fathers as “daddy” or to their parents as their “mother and daddy.” This is not what the Lord is referring to here.

i. The word “father” appears 970 times in the Bible, and in most of those uses it refers to a human father. The word “father” to refer to human fathers is also used after the gospels 25 times.

5. Three religious titles are forbidden to any Christian- Rabbi, Master, and Father.

**23:8 But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren.<sup>a</sup>**

8a Do not seek after earthly or spiritual titles just so you can embellish your resume or make yourself look to be more important than you really are. Many people do this in order to feed their ego.

**23:9 And call no man your father upon the earth:<sup>a</sup> for one is your Father, which is in heaven.**

9a This forbids calling a Roman Catholic priest “Father”. The average Catholic priest isn’t qualified to be a pastor.

**23:10 Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master,<sup>a</sup> even Christ.**

**10a “Master”**

1. We have no right to set ourselves up as masters, as the final authority on matters of faith and morals. We have no right to direct the conduct of another person's life, to intrude ourselves between him and Christ. We are not the Holy Spirit and we must not intrude upon His authority in the life of another believer. Paul expands on this in Romans 14.

2. The Lord was publicly “cutting down” men who reveled in such titles and the respect it commanded. Now He was removing their veil of religious hypocrisy in the temple court, exposing them for who and what they really were. No doubt the religious leaders were getting very uncomfortable in being publicly called out on their “home court” like this. They must have realized that the longer they allowed the Lord to continue preaching sermons like this, the more damage He would do to their standing and power. He may have even been looking a specific Pharisees and priests as He dealt with some of these sins, publicly accusing individual leaders of being guilty of them.

3. No man on earth is my spiritual master. There may be men we appreciate and follow, and men who lead us, like our pastor, but no man is to have spiritual dominion over us. Only Christ has that authority.

**23:11 But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant.<sup>a</sup>**

11a This verse makes it clear that those in positions of spiritual leadership are not to flaunt any authority they may have but are rather to adopt the attitude of a humble servant.

1. See Luke 22:27, where Christ said He was among them as one that serveth.

2. Peter referred to himself as merely an “elder” in 1 Peter 5:1. He said that the elders in the local congregations were not to “lord it over” God’s “heritage” in 1 Peter 5:4. Peter would have made a lousy “pope” as Peter was not haughty or arrogant enough to fill that position.

**23:12 And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.<sup>a</sup>**

12a Also see Proverbs 25:7 (“**For better it is that it be said unto thee, Come up hither; than that thou shouldest be put lower in the presence of the prince whom thine eyes have seen.**”) and Luke 14:11 (“**For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.**”)

**23:13 ¶ But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.<sup>a</sup>**

13a They shut up the kingdom of heaven against men and hindered others from entering in

1. “Kingdom of Heaven”, the millennial kingdom.

2. They were excluding themselves by their sin and since misery loves company, they tried to prevent anyone else from entering in as well.

3. A genuine minister seeks to open the door of salvation to all while the hypocrite makes salvation as difficult as possible.

**23:14 Woe<sup>a</sup> unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses,<sup>b</sup> and for a pretence<sup>c</sup> make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.**

14a Eight "woes" pronounced against the Pharisees:

1. They shut up the Kingdom of God- Matthew 23:13
2. They devour widow's houses- Matthew 23:14
3. They make converts into children of hell- Matthew 23:15
4. They make the gold of the temple to be more important than the temple- Matthew 23:16-22
  - A. False teachers always care more about the money than the people or the things of God.
5. They major on minors- Matthew 23:23,24
6. Legalism- Matthew 23:25
7. Hypocrisy- Matthew 23:27
8. Claiming to be better than their fathers were- Matthew 23:29

14b They devoured widow's houses.

1. Like the modern televangelist who bleed their viewers dry in promising them "blessing" if they would send them a generous "seed faith offering" to "keep this vital, last days ministry on the air so that we can continue to win souls".
2. Their motive is money, not the salvation of souls.
3. Roman Catholic priests were famous for this. If a woman had her husband or child die, the local priest would soon show up and offer to say "high masses" for the soul of her lost loved one to get them out of purgatory sooner, for the right price.

14c They "for a pretence" make long prayer.

1. "pretence" is "the act of pretending, a false display; affectation, a claim, especially a false one, to a right, title, or distinction, make-believe or feigning, a false claim or allegation; pretext". From Middle English, probably modification of Medieval Latin "pretension", irregular from Latin "praetendere".
2. Their prayers are phony, designed to impress you with their piety or to get after your money.
3. Prayers are not to be measured by their length but by their depth. The same can be said about sermons.
4. For the sins in Matthew 23:14, they would receive the "greater damnation", showing there are degrees of punishment and condemnation in hell.

AV	ESV	LSV
14 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.	(omitted)	14 ["Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you devour widows' houses, and for a pretense you make long prayers; therefore you will receive greater condemnation.]

This verse is missing in modern versions like the ESV and Darby. The LSV has it in brackets.

**23:15 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte,<sup>a</sup> and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.**

15a Their “evangelism”

1. They would literally travel to the ends of the earth to make one proselyte, but through their coldness and apostasy, would make that person twofold more a child of hell than they were before.

A. You have to admire their zeal but condemn their heart.

B. “The Jews had two classifications of proselytes: (1) those who were circumcised and were called “proselytes of righteousness”; and (2) those who were not yet circumcised and were called “proselytes of the gate.” (The root of the word proselyte means “to come over.”).”<sup>201</sup>

C. They Jews were supposed to be a missionary people and a witness to the whole world, but what is the point of evangelizing if you are only going to win them to a dead, decayed religion?

2. How is this done? You get a sinner to “pray a prayer” but they are not really saved. They think they are and were told that they were but they really are not. A true soulwinner tries to witness to them later as they can tell they are not really saved but the “convert” will insist up and down that he is “saved” because someone told him he was. It will be impossible to truly win that person to Christ because of the damage done by the false “soulwinner”.

A. You will see this with someone who was told they were “saved” when they were five years old in Sunday School, but they really were not. They live a carnal life, but you cannot deal with them because they were assured by someone that they were “saved” although they cannot remember it.

3. The sin of the Pharisees was that they were not really seeking to lead men to God, they were seeking to lead them to becoming Pharisees. One of the gravest dangers which any soulwinner is that he should try to convert people to a sect rather than to Christ, and that he should be more concerned in bringing people to a Church than to Jesus Christ

**23:16 Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor!<sup>abc</sup>**

16a They were hypocrites with the money. False teachers usually have issues with money as they tend to care more for the gold than the souls under their charge.

16b If you swore by the temple (something you shouldn’t do anyway) you were not obligated by that oath, but if you swore by the gold in the temple, you were debtor.

1. The religious leaders valued the things in the temple more than they valued the God of the temple.

A. Same with the altar (Matthew 23:18,19) and even swearing by heaven (Matthew 23:22).

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<sup>201</sup> John Phillips, *Exploring The Gospel of Matthew*, page 436.



2. The idea is that it was alright to say, "By the temple, I swear to thee that I will do such-and-such and so-and-so, if...etc." It was wrong to say, "I swear to you by the gold in the temple that I will carry out my promise to such-and-such...."

3. They were materialists, placing more emphasis on the material than on the spiritual.

A. They were also covetous, which goes right along with their materialism.

16c "The science of evasion had been brought to a high degree. It is most probable that in this passage Jesus is presenting a caricature of Jewish legalistic methods. He is saying, "You have brought evasion to such a fine art that it is possible to regard an oath by the Temple as not binding, while an oath by the gold of the Temple is binding; and an oath by the altar as not binding, while an oath by the gift on the altar is binding." This is rather to be regarded as a *reductio ad absurdum* of Jewish methods than as a literal description. The idea behind the passage is just this. The whole idea of treating oaths in this way, the whole conception of a kind of technique of evasion, is born of a fundamental deceitfulness. The truly religious man will never make a promise with the deliberate intention of evading it; he will never, as he makes it, provide himself with a series of escape routes, which he may use if he finds his promise hard to keep."<sup>202</sup>

**23:17 Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold?<sup>a</sup>**

17a Obviously the temple was greater, but the scribes and Pharisees would have to think it over!

**23:18 And, Whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing; but whosoever sweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty.**

**23:19 Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift?**

**23:20 Whoso therefore shall swear by the altar, sweareth by it, and by all things thereon.<sup>a</sup>**

20a You swear by the altar, you swear by the God of that altar.

**23:21 And whoso shall swear by the temple, sweareth by it, and by him that dwelleth therein.**

**23:22 And he that shall swear by heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, and by him that sitteth thereon.<sup>a</sup>**

22a You swear by the heaven, you swear by God, so just don't swear at all. Let your "yea" be "yea" and your "nay" be "nay".

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<sup>202</sup> William Barclay, *Matthew* in the Daily Study Bible, volume 2, page 292.

**23:23 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe<sup>a</sup> of mint and anise<sup>b</sup> and cummin,<sup>c</sup> and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith:<sup>d</sup> these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.**

23a They tithed, but for legalistic reasons and to be seen and praised of men.

23b “**anise**” a Eurasian annual herb (*Pimpinella anisum*) of the carrot family having carminative and aromatic seeds.

23c “**cummin**” a small annual herb (*Cuminum cyminum*) of the carrot family cultivated for its aromatic fruits, the seedlike fruit of cumin used as a spice.

23d They were guilty of “majoring on the minors”. They were famous for missing the forest for the trees. Everything was out of proportion with them. They would micro-manage your life by harping on relatively minor and obscure points of the law while missing the greater, overall teaching of the law. They would “develop” the minor points of the law while “devaluing” the major points of the law.

**23:24 Ye blind guides,<sup>a</sup> which strain at a gnat,<sup>b</sup> and swallow a camel.<sup>c</sup>**

24a They were “**blind guides**”

1. They missed the clear and plain interpretations and applications of Scripture.
2. They had no idea where they were going but felt competent to try to lead other spiritually.

24b “The minute rabbinic rules required that even the smallest products of the soil, like mint and anise and cumin, had to be tithed. In practice the Mosaic law of tithing extended to corn, wine, oil, and the firstborn of herds and flocks (Deuteronomy 14:23), but the Pharisees seized on Leviticus 27:30 and rigorously applied the law of tithing to everything.”<sup>203</sup>

24c They “strain at gnats and swallow camels”

1. “The statement is highly suggestive of the moral motives of Dean Weigle and the Yale and Harvard Divinity schools. No reader of the ASV or RSV ever failed to notice how carefully they corrected nonessential words so as to be able to brag that they had produced a “better translation.” Yet at the same time, they deliberately corrected, mutilated, added, and omitted words that would change Christian doctrine to Liberal theology. They swallow the camel, worrying about the gnat. They correct “suffer” and “wot” and “let” and then stamp on the Deity of Christ in Luke 2:33; 1 Timothy 3:16; and several other dozen passages. (Time forbids a list of the camels, by names, that the Liberal has swallowed in presenting his gnat-sized production, the RSV. A few are here: Acts 13:35; 17:26; Matthew 26:29; Daniel 3:25; Numbers 21:14; Matthew 1:25; Psalms 53:1; Song of Solomon 2:1; Genesis 4:8; Acts 2:29; Hebrews 7:21; 1 Corinthians 14:1; Matthew 22:42; John 7:53–8:10; Luke 23:42; Hebrews 1:5, etc.).”<sup>204</sup>
2. Both gnats and camels were ceremonially unclean. The Pharisees would tolerate one type of uncleanness but not another type. They were very inconsistent in their evaluation of what was clean and what was unclean.

<sup>203</sup> John Phillips, *Exploring The Gospel of Matthew*, page 437.

<sup>204</sup> Peter Ruckman, *The Bible Believer's Commentary on Matthew*, page 619.

**23:25 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess.<sup>a</sup>**

25a They would clean the outside of the cup while failing to clean the inside.

1. They placed all the emphasis on the externals of religion but nothing on the internals, such as a walk with God and heart purity. As long as you kept all their teachings, that was good enough. Your heart might be reprobate, but if you were fulfilling your religious duties, that is all they cared about.

A. The Catholic Church is like this. Come to mass, give some money, do the sacraments and you are okay, even if you were reprobate. How did Catholics like Ted Kennedy manage to avoid excommunication? Kennedy drowned a campaign worker in his car and supported abortion through his whole political career. Yet he was always considered to be a “good Catholic” as he did most of the religious works his priests told him to do. He was “clean” on the outside yet on the inside, he was filthy. But his church never cared about his heart, just that he did his duty and gave money.

B. Independent, neo-Fundamental and pseudo-Fundamental Baptists do this. Get saved, get baptized, “go soulwinning”, tithe, be busy around the church and support “the Man of God” 100% and you are okay. Never mind what is going on in the heart. These preachers preach sermons geared to the “outside” of their hearers but do not preach sermons aimed at the heart. This is usually because these preachers have no personal walk with God and no heart with God as they gauge their relationship with God on their external activity and their “results”. Spiritual preaching (such as spending much time in the Song of Solomon) is unknown in such churches, which explains why these churches have so many weak Christians despite their attendance.

**23:26 Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also.<sup>a</sup>**

26a No one cares so much about the outside of a cup is clean if the inside is filthy.

**23:27 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres,<sup>a</sup> which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men’s bones, and of all uncleanness.<sup>b</sup>**

27a “**Whited sepulchres**” or white-washed tombs.

1. They look very good on the outside but if you look within, you will see horrible foulness and corruption.

A. It is like digging up a grave. It may have a very impressive headstone and the grass may be well-maintained. Start digging and you will come across a \$10,000 casket. But you don’t want to look inside that casket! No matter how lovely you make the outside look and how much you perfume the tomb, it still covers a rotting corpse.

B. Many preachers, especially “public” preachers and television preachers look to be outwardly righteous, but it is all a show. Otherwise, how could they get people to send them money?

2. Also see Romans 3:13 **“Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips:”**.

27b “Here again is a picture which any Jew would understand. One of the commonest places for tombs was by the wayside. We have already seen that anyone who touched a dead body became unclean (Num.19:16). Therefore, anyone who came into contact with a tomb automatically became unclean. At one time in particular the roads of Palestine were crowded with pilgrims--at the time of the Passover Feast. For a man to become unclean on his way to the Passover Feast would be a disaster, for that meant he would be debarred from sharing in it. It was then Jewish practice in the month of Adar to whitewash all wayside tombs, so that no pilgrims might accidentally come into contact with one of them and be rendered unclean. So, as a man journeyed the roads of Palestine on a spring day, these tombs would glint white, and almost lovely, in the sunshine; but within they were full of bones and bodies whose touch would defile. That, said Jesus, was a precise picture of what the Pharisees were. Their outward actions were the actions of intensely religious men; their inward hearts were foul and putrid with sin. It can still happen. As Shakespeare had it, a man may smile and smile and be a villain.”<sup>205</sup>

**23:28 Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.<sup>a</sup>**

28a Their outward appearance betrayed what was really inside of them. Man can't see the heart, only the outward appearance and often times, the two don't match up. The Lord could see right through them, though.

**23:29 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous,**

Their persecutions

1. They praised the prophets although if they had been alive in their days, they would have participated in their deaths.
2. Today, many so-called “Independent Fundamental Baptists” praise men like Spurgeon or Sunday or Moody, yet if they had lived in their days, they would have opposed them.
  - A. John R. Rice is an example. Many hyper-evangelicals and self-styled fundamentalists praise him to the hilt. Yet, Rice supported modern Bible versions, was no friend to the Authorized Version, opposed “storehouse tithing” and left the possibility open that Pope John Paul I was saved. These positions are all anathema to the modern neo-fundamentalist, and they would have opposed these teachings if they had been alive in the 1970s and were reading the *Sword of the Lord*. Yet they praise him today.
  - B. John Wesley has been lauded by modern Methodists who have disgraced his name, defiled his ministry, blasphemed his legacy. If Wesley were to come into the average United Methodist Church today, he would die of a heart attack before he got past the third ashtray. Luther, too, as Lutheran churches are hellholes of sodomy and transgenderism today.
  - C. Charles Spurgeon is hailed by many Baptists as one of the greatest, if not the greatest, Baptist pastor that ever lived.<sup>206</sup> However, the Baptists of his day

<sup>205</sup> William Barclay, *Matthew* in The Daily Study Bible, volume 2, pages 296-297.

<sup>206</sup> We would not agree with this assessment. Spurgeon was a great preacher but he had some theological issues and problems. No man can lay claim to be the “greatest preacher” of any movement or denomination. That comes

excommunicated him during the Downgrade Controversy in one of the worst church splits England ever saw. Plus, he was savagely opposed during his early years in London by the High Calvinists as not being Calvinistic enough.

**23:30 And say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.<sup>a</sup>**

30a They thought themselves to be better than their fathers, which was a “no-no” in Jewish thinking. Their fathers killed the prophets, but **they** would never do that!

**23:31 Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets.<sup>a</sup>**

31a They were thinking they were better than their fathers when they were really much worse. Their fathers only persecuted and killed the prophets. This generation would kill their Messiah and the Son of God. They were descendants of these murderers. Their fathers were murderers of the prophets and the works of their fathers they would do.

**23:32 Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers.<sup>a</sup>**

32a “Notice the vehement, sarcastic, “Go on and do wrong then, who cares?” in verse 32. This is nothing new in Scripture. You will find God the Father (in Amos 4:4) sarcastically commanding the religious leaders to “Come to Bethel and transgress!” Liberal theologians from Marcion to Brunner have overlooked the fact that the God of the universe is sarcastic, especially when He is examining their anti-scriptural “doctrines of men.”<sup>207</sup>

**23:33 Ye serpents,<sup>a</sup> ye generation of vipers,<sup>b</sup> how can ye escape the damnation of hell?<sup>c</sup>**

33a “**serpents**” Eve was deceived by a serpent in Genesis 3, so Jesus is calling these Pharisees deceivers who were no better than Satan. A serpent is known for its deception.

33b “**vipers**” Even deadlier than serpents. The serpent deceives but the viper is venomous. The serpent deceives while the viper kills.

33c “**how can ye escape the damnation of hell?**”

1. Living the way they did only showed they were not saved, so they could not escape hell.
2. The Lord did not say there was no escape, but it would require repentance and an acceptance of His message and ministry.

**AV**

**ESV**

**LSV**

33 Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the

33 You serpents, you brood of vipers, how are you to escape being sentenced to hell?

33 “You serpents, you brood of vipers, how will you escape the sentence of hell?”

dangerously close to idolatry.

<sup>207</sup> Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer's Commentary on Matthew*, pages 622-623.

<b>damnation of hell?</b>		
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**“damnation of hell”** The ESV and LSV remove the “damnation” of hell and replace it with a mere “sentence” or “judgment”. But those who are “sentenced” to hell are damned.

**23:34 ¶ Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city:<sup>a</sup>**

**34a The Lord's Rejected Ministry to Israel**

1. The Lord never gave up on Israel as He continually sent prophet after prophet to them over the centuries, to expose the sins of the nation and to call the people to repentance. The success rate of these ministries was always very low.

A. Notice the **“I send”** in Matthew 23:34. It was obvious that God sent these prophets, but Jesus says that He sent them, asserting His claim to be God.

B. Not all scribes were heretics. Ezra was a very good scribe as was Baruch, Jeremiah's secretary.

2. The reception of these prophets by Israel is given in Matthew 23:34. Notice the future tense. These were crimes committed by Israel against the prophets, wise men and scribes historically, but these are listed as future tense, which means Israel will continue to reject these ministries. Will this continue into the tribulation? Will Israel reject the ministry of the 144,000 in Revelation 7? We know that a great number of Gentiles will be saved under their ministry but what will be the reaction of the tribulation Jews to their ministry?

A. They were killed (Matthew 23:37) and will be killed (Matthew 23:34).

B. They will be crucified.

i. Jews will crucify their own prophets? Besides their crucifixion of the Lord, there is no Biblical record of this ever happening. We have no record of Israel practicing crucifixion in her history, but will they take up that mode of execution in the tribulation?

ii. Jesus will be crucified but only because the Jews could not execute anyone on their own. If they could have killed Jesus, it would have been by stoning.

C. They will be scourged in the synagogues.

i. Like Paul.

D. They will be persecuted from city to city.

E. They were stoned (past tense) in Matthew 23:37.

**23:35 That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar.<sup>a</sup>**

**35a The list of martyrs runs from Abel to Zechariah, literally from A to Z in our English language.**

1. Two possibilities on who this “Zechariah” is:

A. The reference to Zechariah's death in 2 Chronicles 24. Second Chronicles, not Malachi, is the last book of the Hebrew Bible, so the Lord is working from the beginning of the Old Testament in Abel in Genesis to the end of it in 2 Chronicles through Zechariah.

B. “The most probable view is that the martyr of Matthew 23:35 was Zechariah, the son of the godly priest Jehoiada. Jehoiada was the man who hid baby Joash

from Athaliah's murderous hate and eventually put the young prince on the throne of David. It was not at all uncommon for a man to have two names, so it is likely that Zechariah's father Jehoiada had two names, one of them being Barachias. Joash repaid Jehoiada's kindness by murdering his son after Zechariah denounced the king for his lapse into idolatry. As Zechariah was dying he said, "The Lord look upon it [his martyrdom], and require it" (2 Chronicles 24:22). Thus his blood cried from the ground for vengeance just as Abel's did. According to a Jewish legend recorded by Edersheim, the blood of Zechariah did not dry up, but continued to bubble on the pavement for two and a half centuries until the Babylonians came and avenged it. Zechariah was killed in the open space in the court of the priests, between the holy place of the temple and the great brazen altar of sacrifice. The fact that one of God's servants was murdered on such a sacred spot aggravated the crime. Since the Jews placed the book of Chronicles at the end of their Canon, in the Jewish Bible Abel was the first martyr and Zechariah was the last; the order of the books thus added weight to the Lord's words."<sup>208</sup>

i. His father was Jehoiada (2 Chronicles 24:20) but it possible that he had a grandfather named Berachiah, although that is not mentioned in this account.

C. The Zechariah who wrote the Book of Zechariah, as his father was Berechiah (Zechariah 1:1).

i. This is still not a "slam dunk" as there is no record of this Zechariah being killed.

ii. Bullinger, in the *Companion Bible*, takes this view.

2. Thus, both of these men are possible although both have their issues, but I would tend to go with the first option, the Zechariah mentioned in 2 Chronicles. We know he was killed in the temple (2 Chronicles 24:21) and we do not know how the later Zechariah was killed. But the later Zechariah had the right father, as mentioned by the Lord.

**23:36 Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation.<sup>a</sup>**

36a "this generation". Which generation? Two possibilities:

1. The current one of the Lord's day. This would be fulfilled by the Romans in A. D. 70.
2. The future generation that would be guilty of the activities mentioned in Matthew 23:35, which would still be yet future and would probably be in the tribulation.

**23:37 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!<sup>a</sup>**

37a The Lord's lament over Jerusalem

1. The Lord called them and urged them to repent through the prophets, wise men and scribes that He sent them, but they would not.
2. Free will is seen here. They were not forced to repent or accept the Lord's message. They could have but they did not. This goes contrary to the Calvinistic teaching of irresistible grace. God called but they resisted that call, the ministry of the prophets and all the positive workings of God on their behalf.

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<sup>208</sup> John Phillips, *Exploring The Gospel of Matthew*, page 441.

- A. Also see John 5:40 **“And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.”**  
3. The “chicks” is a reference to Psalm 36:7 **“How excellent is thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings.”**

**23:38 Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.<sup>ab</sup>**

38a This desolation would take place in A.D. 70 at the destruction of Jerusalem, but there will be future tribulation desolation of Israel, such as at the Abomination of Desolation in the midpoint of the tribulation.

1. **“Your house”** not “my house”. The Lord had already abandoned the temple at this point.
2. “The siege of Jerusalem was one of the most terrible in history. The Romans first systematically subdued Galilee in a series of fierce battles, at times massacring all the inhabitants of a city, especially if it had put up a particularly stubborn defense. Meanwhile in Jerusalem, instead of preparing for the coming siege by uniting under a common leader, various factions savagely fought one another.

38b “One faction was led by the fierce John of Gischala, another by the more moderate Ananus, the eldest of the chief priests. John of Gischala was welcomed to the ranks of the Zealots, who were led by Eleazar and had been driven into the temple by the more law-abiding citizens. John suggested to the Zealots that they make common cause with the Idumeans, men of Arab stock who had been pillaging the countryside. John and his confederates infiltrated the Idumeans into Jerusalem, where they added to the internal strife. Terrible scenes of carnage and atrocity took place. The Idumeans then abandoned the Zealots and departed. First, however, they opened the prison doors and released thousands of inmates. The prisoners fled to join the ranks of Simon the son of Gioras, the head of another band of lawless ruffians who were settled at Masada.

“The state of anarchy was known to the Roman general Vespasian. He simply bided his time, allowing the Jews to weaken themselves with all this internal strife. At length, however, the vast Roman army moved through Samaria, advanced toward Jerusalem, and camped in the valley of Thorns, about three miles from Jerusalem. From the neighboring heights they could see the towers and walls of the city.

“Then the order came to march, and with its impressive might the army of Vespasian overcame all resistance and camped before the wall of the doomed city. The battle swayed back and forth, but relentlessly and inevitably the Romans took one section of Jerusalem after another amid scenes of both courage and carnage.

“Famine stalked the stricken streets and the ruffian soldiers defending the city were merciless in their hunt for food. They seized people they suspected of concealing food and tortured them, demanding they disclose secrets they often did not have regarding food stores. Natural affection and generous sentiment vanished before the plague of hunger. People ate offal and filth and some even became cannibals and devoured their own children. A measure of wheat was worth its weight in gold.

“When Titus took charge of the campaign, he added new horrors. He crucified Jewish prisoners, as many as five hundred at a time. The prisoners were brought in nightly and the soldiers fastened the victims to the crosses in all sorts of ludicrous positions. Soon the places chosen for the crucifixions were covered with crosses, and the Romans ran out of wood. The Zealots pointed to the terrible sight to check any desire on the part of the hapless population to desert.

“Meanwhile in the city treacheries went on. The high priest Matthias was slain on the charge of holding correspondence with the Romans, but not until his three sons were



massacred before his eyes. People started to desert. The Arabian and Syrian allies of the Romans seized a large party of deserters and cut them open alive, looking for gold and jewels they were suspected of swallowing.

"At length the Romans took the tower of Antonia. The temple cloisters became the scene of more carnage and fires. On the tenth of August (the date Solomon's temple was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar) Titus, who wanted to preserve Herod's magnificent temple, issued orders that the fires around it be extinguished. But in the heat of battle one enraged legionary climbed on the shoulders of a comrade and threw a lighted torch through the small gilded door into the porch. Soon the whole building was in flames.

"When the siege was all over, the Romans had 97,000 captives on their hands. The number of those who had been slain or who had died of famine has been estimated at 1,300,000. The tallest and strongest-looking of the captives were selected to grace Titus's triumphal return to Rome. A vast number, including the old and the sick, were put to death. Thousands were dispatched to the mines in various parts of the empire or distributed among the provinces for the amusement of the populace in the arenas.

"Thus Jerusalem fell. Foreseeing the event in all its horror, Jesus said, "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate" (23:38). How desolate only time would tell. After the Bar Kokhba rebellion (A.D. 132-135) the Romans were thoroughly fed up with Judea; they banished all Jews from the land, posted the country out of bounds to them, changed its name to Palestine in honor of their old foes the Philistines, and changed the name of Jerusalem to Aelia Capitolina."<sup>209</sup>

**23:39 For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.<sup>a</sup>**

39a At the Second Coming, all Israel will be saved (Zechariah 12:10-12 "**And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon. And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart**" and Romans 11:26 "**And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:**"). In that day, but not before, every Jew who survives the tribulation period shall be saved and shall believe. This is why it is so important for the Jew in the tribulation to "**endure to the end**" (Matthew 24:13) of the tribulation. If they die before the Second Coming, chances are not good that they will die saved. They may reject the Antichrist and his mark, but they may not have accepted the Lord at that point of the tribulation.

### **Spiritual Applications- Matthew Chapter 23**

God is love but He also hates. He hates error, apostasy and false teachers who seek to confuse and destroy His people. He has no toleration for religious leaders who are unfaithful to revealed truth. The Lord uses some very harsh language against these false teachers. Yet so many weak Christians believe that preachers should never raise their voice or use sarcasm when attacking false teachers and false doctrines.

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<sup>209</sup> John Phillips, *Exploring The Gospel of Matthew*, pages 443-444.

The biggest enemy to the truth is religion and religious people, not the atheists or the “liquor crowd”. The nastiest letters I’ve ever received in the ministry were from two “Independent Baptist” evangelists.

### **Matthew Chapter 24**

Matthew 24 is one of the most important prophetic chapters in the Bible, but it is also one of the most dangerous if it is not properly understood in a dispensational context. Many theological errors will be developed from an inability to distinguish between the Church in Israel. This chapter is devoted to Israel, not the Church.<sup>210</sup> Most of what happens in this chapter is going to happen after the rapture and during the tribulation, when the Church is gone. The Church is not in view in this chapter, but Israel is. This material is written for us but is about the Jew. Matthew is the gospel written to the Jew. Therefore, most of the doctrinal application of this book will be to Israel. The problem comes with those who did not distinguish between Israel and the Church, who attempt to apply the verses that deal with Israel to the Church. This leads to all types of problems. For example, in Matthew 24:13, the Lord says he that endures to the end, the same shall be saved. Many people will try to apply that to a Christian and teach that one must endure in the faith without apostatizing or falling away whatsoever, otherwise that person loses their salvation. That teaching attacks the doctrine of the security of the believer. However, if it is properly understood in a dispensational context that it deals with the nation of Israel, one will see that verse 13 is not dealing with a Christian at all. Rather, it is dealing with a Jew in the tribulation who must maintain his faith to the end and not compromise with the Antichrist during the tribulation in order to be saved. This is why we say that doctrinally, the book of Matthew is one of the most “dangerous” books in the Bible.

Notice the similarities between Revelation 6, Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21:

	<b>Revelation 6</b>	<b>Matthew 24</b>	<b>Mark 13</b>	<b>Luke 21</b>
False Messiah and false prophets	1,2	4,5,11,23,24,26	6,21,22	
War	1,2	6	7	9
International Strife	3,4	7a	8a	10
Famine	5,6	7b	8c	11b
Pestilence	7,8			
Religious Persecution	9-11	9-10	9,11-13	12-19
Increase in iniquity		12		
Earthquakes, signs in the heavens	12-17	7c	14-27	20-27
Spiritual indifference		38		34,35

Matthew, Mark and Luke are giving prophecies regarding these tribulation events of which events at the fall of Jerusalem were a type and foreshadowing.

<sup>210</sup> Postmillennialists and amillennialists would try to make the entirety of both Matthew 24 and 25 apply to the Church to the exclusion of Israel, whom they believe has little, if any, future prophetic role since both systems are infected with the heresy of Replacement Theology. Christians are never told to look for the Antichrist or the Tribulation judgments described in Matthew 24.

An outline of Matthew 24 and 25 from R. A. Huebner in his *Elements of Dispensational Truth*, volume 2, pages 168-169

The Jewish Part – Matt. 24:1-44

1. The beginning of throes (vv. 4-14).
2. The great tribulation (vv. 15-28).
3. The manifestation of Christ in glory (vv. 29-44)

The Christian Part – Matt. 24:45-25:30

1. The parable of responsible and irresponsible ministry (Matt. 24:45-51)
2. The parable of the proper waiting posture (Matt. 25:1-13).
3. The parable of service for an absent Lord (Matt. 25:14-30).

The Gentile Part – Matt. 25:31-46

1. The sheep, the blessed of His Father (vv. 31-40).
2. The goats, the cursed (vv. 41-46).

I will add that there is no reason to apply anything in this chapter to the destruction of Jerusalem in A. D. 70 with the possible exception of Matthew 24:2 (see notes under Matthew 24:1 about the timing of the event). Non-dispensationalists and non-premillennialists make a big deal over A. D. 70 as if it was some major prophetic watershed event. But if it was so important, then why do we have no inspired record of it? Why does Acts end a few years before the event? No doubt it was an extremely traumatic event for the Jew and in some ways, certain events of it could be types of future Tribulation judgments against Israel, but it is not a major subject of prophecy.

### **138. The Tribulation 24:1-14, see also Mark 13:1-31; Luke 21:5-36**

**24:1 And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple:<sup>a</sup> and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple.<sup>bc</sup>**

1a When they came out of the temple, which was probably right after the Lord finished up his scathing denunciation of the religious hypocrites in chapter 23, for some reason, the disciples wanted to show the Lord the temple and the buildings and brag about them. It was not as if the Lord had never seen the temple as He had been there many times during His earthly ministry. As God, He had witnessed its construction from the very beginning. But the disciples wanted to show him the temple, perhaps to boast about it for some reason. The Jews took great pride in their temple. But the Lord was very careful to tell them in verse 2 that the day was coming (and would come in 40 years) that there would not be one stone left upon another. Simply because it was the temple (and the “house of God”) did not mean that it was above or beyond the judgment of God. In 2 Samuel 7, David expressed his desire to build a house for the Lord as he may have been embarrassed that the true God lived in a tent while all the false gods around Israel had great temples. God made it clear that He was perfectly content with the tabernacle. He never ordered or commanded a temple to be built. Unlike all the other religions around Israel, God was perfectly content in living in tent. He did allow David to prepare and for Solomon to build the temple, but even after the temple was built, God was not above judging it. He did that with the Babylonians around 586 B.C. He would do that in 165 B.C. with the Syrians. He would allow it to be destroyed in A.D. 70 by the Romans. In the tribulation, it will be contaminated by the Antichrist in the Abomination of Desolation. He never judged the tabernacle in the same way that he judged the temple. We do not know the ultimate fate of the tabernacle.

It has to be remembered that the Lord never identified the timing of this destruction of the temple. He never said it would take place 40 years from this point. We know historically that the temple was destroyed in A.D. 70, but the Lord gave no timing for the fulfillment of this prophecy. It could have its ultimate fulfillment in the tribulation. After all, these events mentioned in this chapter were not all fulfilled in the years leading up to A.D. 70. The events of A.D. 70 might have been a type and a shadow of the greater events and fulfillment of the tribulation period (much like the events of 165 B.C.) but A.D. 70 is not the fulfillment of Matthew 24. The tribulation period is.

1b God never puts much stock or emphasis on buildings, whether it is a temple or even church buildings. Local congregations do need a place to meet (the early church met in houses), but do not put the emphasis on the external structure. Do not put a lot of time and money into the building, thinking that just because it's a church house that God would never judge the building. Church buildings burn down or get destroyed by tornados all the time. A church building should be functional and should look nice and be well-maintained as a public testimony, but how much more is needed beyond that? After the rapture, every church building you leave behind is going to be taken over by the antichrist.

1c In Mark 13:1 it is **"Master, see what manner..."**, and Mark says that this question is asked by "one of his disciples." There is only one man who habitually calls Christ "Master" but never "Lord" and this is Judas (Matthew 26:25,49; John 13:13). Judas is interested in the money gone into the building of the temple (Hosea 8:14 **"For Israel hath forgotten his Maker, and buildeth temples; and Judah hath multiplied fenced cities: but I will send a fire upon his cities, and it shall devour the palaces thereof."**). This is because money is involved in the work, and he (being treasurer) holds the money bag (John 12:6 **"This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein."**) and he was a covetous thief.

**24:2 And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.<sup>a</sup>**

2a It seemed unlikely that this would take place for several reasons:

1. The blocks were 65x8x10 feet in size.
2. The Romans helped build, or at least helped to finance the construction of Herod's temple. Why tear down what they helped to build?
3. The Roman General Titus was rather mild-mannered and would not be the sort of man to order such a thing to be done.

Yet this all did take place exactly as the Lord prophesied. The Roman soldiers even plowed up the ground around the temple, looking for gold that might have been buried.

**24:3 ¶ And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?<sup>a</sup>**

3a Matthew 24:3-28 is a listing of events leading up to the end of the world, up to the tribulation, the second coming and the Millennial kingdom. They believed Jesus when He said He would come again. They are asking Him to fill in the details. They asked nothing about the Church Age, something they knew nothing about as the Lord never taught on it nor revealed it during His earthly ministry.

**24:4 And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you.<sup>a</sup>**

4a See Matthew 24:4,5,11,23,24,26. Deception, including political, spiritual, in every compartment of society as well as in the teaching of prophecy. There will be a lot of deception by religious teachers, false religions in these last days. It was bad during the Lord's day and during the time of the Book of Acts. It is bad now. It will intensify in the tribulation. There will be more error than truth in the world in these days. We see this today with a lot of people who probably are born again but they are deceived into the Charismatic Movement, various Pentecostal movements other theological errors and it will only get worse.

**24:5 For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.<sup>ab</sup>**

5a These errors will be very bold, and they will get even bolder the closer we get to the end of the age. It is not just a doctrinal error that these false teachers are promoting, but they're actually claiming to be Christ. They are claiming to be God. They are claiming that what they are saying and doing is ordained or commanded by God then they shall deceive many. It seems that the bolder and more outrageous the deception, the more attractive it is to those who have "itching ears".

5b A list of Jewish "false Christs" from *Israel: A Deadly Piece of Dirt* by Peter Ruckman, pages 168-171 (and this is not a complete list. The 10<sup>th</sup> point is from me, not Ruckman):

1. Isphahan (710). He is called "Abu Isa", the father of Jesus. He raised an army of 10,000 Jews and marched against the Moslem Caliph Abd-Malik in order to "bring in the kingdom". His army got wiped out.
2. Serene from Baghdad (720). He was captured by the Moslems as a rebel and was brought before the formidable assassin Caliph Yazid II. Before this Caliph, Serene renounced his Messiahship; whereupon the caliph turned him over to a Jewish court who executed him,
3. One Messiah from Yemen (1172) was brought in chains before a Moslem ruler where he then claimed that if the Moslem cut off his head it wouldn't kill him. It did.
4. Abraham Abulafia (1240-1291) claimed that he was the Christ (the "Mashiach"; the "anointed One" as in Habakkuk 3:13). He came from a prominent Jewish family. He headed for Rome to convert Pope Nicolas to Judaism. Abulafia barely escaped from being burned alive at the stake. His own people excommunicated him and he disappeared from the face of the earth.
5. Asher Leemlin (sometimes "Lammlein") popped up in Venice in 1502, claiming to be "Elijah" of Malachi 4:5. His converts defected to Catholicism after Leemlin's 'chariot of fire' (2 Kings 2) failed to show up. Asher had promised that the chariots of Elijah would show up with the "horses of fire" and carry all the Jews back to Palestine- the Promised Land.
6. Prince David Reubeni (1490-1535), sometimes the name is spelled "Reuveni". The "Prince" stole David's title from the Old Testament (Ezekiel 45:17; 46:13). He implored Pope Clement VII for an alliance with the West to defeat the Turks. Clement sent him to John III of Portugal who promised him eight ships and 4,000 cannons. He was eventually turned over to the Inquisition, but he escaped.
7. Moses Botarel was a Spanish Jew, who believed the Old Testament from cover-to-cover, including the cover, and he took it literally. Following the godly example set before

him by Shadrach, Meschach and Abednego (Daniel 3), he requested that the King of Spain throw him in a fiery furnace to prove his Messiahship. The Spanish Catholic obliged him. Old Moses was burnt to a crisp, like a toasted marshmallow.

8. Sabbatai Zvi (1626). He came from Smyrna. He was a twice-married “Christ” who got divorced within three days of both marriages. He professed to be a mystic. He went to Egypt for a third wife (trying to imitate Hosea 1-3). He claimed that his calling was to liberate anyone from all religious institutions. His followers in India and England numbered about one-third of the Jewish populations in those countries. Sabbatai was finally imprisoned by Sultan Mohammad IV after going to Constantinople to depose the Sultan in 1656. The Moslem gave him some Roman Catholic options. He could either convert to Islam or die. He converted but still kept him locked up in the slammer until he died.

9. Jacob (Yanjiev) Frank from Poland (1726-1791). He claimed to be Elijah and said that he was waiting for Jesus Christ to show up so that he could baptize Him.

10. In more recent times was Menachem Mendel Schneerson (1902-1994), a Russian-born Jew who was one of the most influential “Chabad” Jewish leaders in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He ministered and died in Brooklyn. He even had a pirate AM radio station that could be heard along the East Coast. I heard it a number of times here in Delaware. Many of his followers believed him to be the Messiah and some believe that he is still alive despite many visiting his grave in Brooklyn daily. It does not appear that Schneerson directly made any such Messianic claims for himself.

AV	ESV	LSV
5 For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.	5 For many will come in my name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and they will lead many astray.	5 “For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many.

“**I am Christ**” The other versions, the ESV, LSV and Darby add the definite article, “I am the Christ”. Also in Matthew 24:23.

**24:6 And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.<sup>ab</sup>**

6a There will be an increase in international tensions despite the presence of the United Nations and every apostate religious leader praying for “peace.”

6b “**the end is not yet**”. Just when you think things are bad and can’t get any worse, things will get worse.

**24:7 For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences,<sup>a</sup> and earthquakes,<sup>b</sup> in divers places.**

7a Famines and disease are the usual aftermath of wars. But you don’t need a war to get pestilence. The Covid “pandemic” of 2020 was created in a lab in China with help from the United States.

7b There will also be an increasing number of earthquakes in areas that usually don't experience earthquakes. There was a moderate earthquake in central Virginia in 2011 that was felt here in Delaware.<sup>211</sup>

AV	ESV	LSV
7 For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and <b>pestilences</b> , and earthquakes, in divers places.	7 For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places.	7 “For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes.

“**pestilences**” Omitted in the ESV and LSV.

## 24:8 All these are the beginning of sorrows.<sup>a</sup>

8a If you think things are bad now, just wait- they will get worse!

AV	ESV	LSV
8 All these <i>are</i> the beginning of <b>sorrows</b> .	8 All these are but the beginning of the birth pains.	8 “But all these things are <i>merely</i> the beginning of birth pains.

“**sorrows**” The ESV and LSV use “birth pangs”. Why would the modern versions equate “birth pangs” with “sorrows”? The birth of a child is a joyous occasion, not one for sorrow, unless that child was born in the midst of events similar to what will be described in the Tribulation period. John Nelson Darby, in his Bible translation, has “throes” for sorrows and there is no good reason for the change.

## 24:9 Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.<sup>a</sup>

9a There will be an increase in religious persecution.

1. Includes martyrdom. It has been said that more Christians were killed for their faith in the 20<sup>th</sup> century than those who were killed in the 1st-19th centuries combined. This is largely due to the persecutions of both Catholicism and Communism.
2. The scope of this persecution will be international.
3. Friends and even family members will betray each other due to fear of persecution and death.

A. Luke 12:52,53, **For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three. The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother in law against her daughter in law, and the daughter in law against her mother in law.**”

<sup>211</sup> I was driving when it occurred so I didn't feel it but my wife and oldest son did. It almost caused a cabinet in our house to topple.



AV	ESV	LSV
9 Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.	9 "Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake.	9 "Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name.

**"afflicted"** The ESV, LSV and Darby have "tribulation". The Authorized Version is a better reading.

**24:10 And then shall many<sup>a</sup> be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.**

10a The word "many" is found applied to six kinds of people in the remaining verses:

1. MANY shall be offended.
2. MANY shall betray one another.
3. MANY shall hate one another.
4. MANY false prophets shall rise.
5. MANY shall be deceived by them.
6. MANY shall lose their love for each other.

AV	ESV	LSV
10 And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.	10 And then many will fall away and betray one another and hate one another.	10 "And at that time many will fall away and will betray one another and hate one another.

**"offended"** Both the ESV and LSV use "fall away".

**24:11 And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.<sup>abcd</sup>**

11a Many shall be deceived. The error will be so artistic and strong and attractive that it will be hard to resist. Only a few will have the spirituality and spiritual discernment to be able to see through and reject the errors.

11b "Hitler, Khrushchev, and Mussolini never fooled any Christian. The only way you can fool a Christian is to profess to be one, and then act "churchy" enough so that you can pass off as one... They not only say, "I am Christ," some of them say "I AM GOD." "Daddy Grace" of South Carolina used to have a peanut concession at his baptisms, where he baptized with a fire-hose and hollered, "By grace are you saved! Das me!" "Father Divine," a minstrel show version of "Father O'Toole," claimed to be a god to his followers. Unfortunately, they had to put him to bed with a shovel one day. Mary Baker Eddy did not profess to be Jesus Christ, but she claimed the title of "The Comforter" (which Mohammed also claimed!), and this is the Holy Spirit who anointed (Christos, Gk.) the Lord Jesus Christ in Matthew 3. Bishop Johnson didn't go quite so far, but merely professed apostolic succession to Acts 2 and established a "oneness-holiness" set-up where those who sold property sent the proceeds to headquarters, i.e., HIM. "And shall deceive MANY."<sup>212</sup>

<sup>212</sup> Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer's Commentary on Matthew*, pages 641-642.

11c I used to hear two false prophets on radio station WWVA from Wheeling, West Virginia in the 1990s. These two would come on between 1 and 2 AM, each taking a 30-minute slot. One was “Mother Truth” and the other bird was “Prophet Son”, both with the same mailing address in West Monroe, Louisiana (which I still member as they repeated their mailing address every two minutes). Both would sell religious junk like the “Money Bag”. The pitch would go “Are you tired of putting your money into bags with holes in them? You just can’t get ahead? Well honey, you need the Money Bag”. It only cost \$29.95, plus shipping and handling (a real bargain back in those days!). When that half hour was up, the other joker would come on the air and hawk something called the “Run Devil Run” kit, also a bargain at only \$29.95 plus shipping and handling. It seems Christian radio and television has done more to multiply such frauds more than any invention in history.

Radio and television have been greatly used to spread the gospel, but it has also spread error. With the advent of the internet, false teachers and teachings can spread with lightning speed. I wonder how many people they have deceived? How many people have Kenneth Copeland, Oral Roberts, Benny Hinn, Jessie DuPlantis and their ilk deceived?

The problem is not so much these false teachers but the people who follow them, in allowing themselves to be deceived. They have no spiritual discernment and cannot handle the Bible at all, They are willingly ignorant. They love to be deceived, and they get agitated if a genuine Christian tries to warn them of their error or if he calls out the false prophet. And the number of these deceivers and the deceived will only increase as we get closer to the end.

Another major channel of apostasy are modern Bible versions. Modern translations like the English Standard Version, New King James Version, New American Standard Version and the Legacy Standard Version (among many others) all service false teachers as the errors in these translations make it easier to teach heresy. Many of these false teachers use the Authorized Version, which makes them even more dangerous as they are able to frame their errors using Biblical language and in the context of the truths recorded in the Authorized Version.

11d **“Many false prophets...deceive many...many shall follow their pernicious ways”** (2 Peter 2:1,2).

## **24:12 And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.<sup>a</sup>**

12a Abortion is a perfect example of this. What normal woman could even think of murdering her unborn child? But it happens hundreds, if not thousands of times a day in “Christian” America.

AV	ESV	LSV
12 And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.	12 And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold.	12 “And because lawlessness is multiplied, most people’s love will grow cold.

“iniquity” The ESV, LSV and Darby use “lawlessness”.

## **24:13 But he that shall endure unto the end,<sup>a</sup> the same shall be saved.<sup>b</sup>**

13a **“the end”** here is the same “end” as in Hebrews 3:6,14.

13b **"But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved."**

1. This is one of the most mis-applied verses in the Bible, maybe only Acts 2:38 ("**Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.**") is the source of more false teaching.
2. This verse is not teaching that failing to "hold on and pray through" is the unpardonable sin in this age or that a truly saved person can lose his salvation today.
3. What is the context of this passage? Jews in the tribulation. This is not a Church Age verse aimed at Christians. In the tribulation, the Jew cannot at any time believe the lies of the Antichrist or The Lie that the Antichrist is their Messiah or that he is God. If he does, and takes the mark of the beast, he will be lost. He must maintain his resistance to the Antichrist and survive to the end of the tribulation. If he makes it to the end of the tribulation, holding to his faith in God and sees the Lord coming in the Second Coming, he will be saved.
  - A. A nation will be born in a day.
    - i. Isaiah 66:8 **"Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children."**
  - B. Israel shall mourn for Christ when they see Him.
    - i. Zechariah 12:10-14 **"And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon. And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart; The family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart; the family of Shimei apart, and their wives apart; All the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart."**
  - C. Israel shall call upon the Lord in that day.
    - i. Zechariah 13:9 **"And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God."**
4. There is no eternal security in the tribulation period. Salvation can be lost due to apostasy or by taking the Mark of the Beast.
  - A. Apostasy, such as taking the Mark of the Beast, would be an "unpardonable sin" in the Tribulation period, but it is an error to try to apply something like that to a Christian in the Church Age.
5. Matthew 24:13 cannot be used to deny the New Testament doctrine of the security of the believer. That teaching would contradict too many other verses, especially in the Church Epistles authored by Paul.
  - A. Dispensationally, Matthew 24:13 deals with the Jew in the tribulation, where there is no security of the believer.
  - B. This is heresy in the Church Age but is a truth in the tribulation, which is a different dispensation.

- C. Not all Scripture is written for Church-Age Gentiles. That would be arrogant to think that God has no word for those in the Tribulation period or for future Jews.
6. The “unpardonable sin” in the Tribulation Period is taking the mark of the beast (Revelation 13:16-18 **“And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six.”**). If a man rejects Christ in the Tribulation, he will then follow the Antichrist, take the mark, and damn his soul to the Lake of Fire with no hope of forgiveness or salvation. The Tribulation Jew/saint must resist the persecutions, death, propaganda and peer-pressure exerted on him throughout the Tribulation and resist taking the mark.
7. Verses supporting the truth that a truly saved person cannot be lost in this age:
- A. John 5:24 - **Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.**
  - B. John 6:37 - **All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.**
  - C. John 10:27-29 **My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any [man] pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave [them] me, is greater than all; and no [man] is able to pluck [them] out of my Father's hand.**
  - D. Roman 8:38,39 **For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.**
  - E. 2 Corinthians 1:22 - **Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.**
  - F. Philippians 1:6 - **Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform [it] until the day of Jesus Christ:**
  - G. 1 John 5:13 - **These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.**
  - H. Jude 24 - **Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present [you] faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.”**

### **139. The Gospel of the Kingdom 24:14**

**24:14 And this gospel of the kingdom<sup>a</sup> shall be preached in all the world<sup>b</sup> for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.**

14a **“This gospel”** is not the gospel of the grace of God that we preach today but is the Gospel of the Kingdom, preached by John the Baptist, Jesus and the early church in Acts 2-7. It will be preached again in the Tribulation by the 144,000. This is a dispensational kingdom that deals with the establishment of a literal, physical and visible Millennial kingdom. It is primarily directed at Israel.

14b **“preached in all the world”** When Matthew wrote this, that whole world may have only included the Roman Empire. In our day of fast travel and instantaneous communication, the Gospel can be spread over the entire literal world in a matter of minutes. The development of this technology will allow fast spread of the truth in the tribulation. If the truth can be spread quickly, so can error.

#### **140. The Abomination of Desolation 24:15-20**

**24:15 When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation,<sup>a</sup> spoken of by Daniel the prophet,<sup>b</sup> stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand):<sup>c</sup>**

15a **“desolation”** The word abomination is regularly applied to idols. See 1 Kings 11:5, 7; 2 Kings 23:13; Ezek. 20:1, 30-32. It is the same word found in Dan 9:27; 11:31 and 12:11. Another Hebrew word translated “abomination,” and which refers to idols or idolatry, is found in Deut. 7:25, 26; 12:31; 13:12-15; 18:9-14 etc.; 2 Kings 16:3-4; 21:2-3, 11; 23:13, etc.; Jer. 7:6-10 etc.; Ezek. 6:9, etc. We see therefore that regarding this abomination as an idol is certainly not “only a conjecture, a private opinion without Scriptural support.” It is only a conjecture to regard it as anything else than an idol!..If you find the Moslem here and the Irish potato famine there, etc., you falsify prophecy.”<sup>213</sup>

15b **“The abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet”** is found in Daniel 9:27 and Daniel 11:31.

1. Daniel 9:27 **“And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make *it* desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.”**
2. Daniel 11:31 **“And arms shall stand on his part, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily *sacrifice*, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate.”**
3. This takes place at the mid-point of the tribulation period.
4. This means that a literal temple must be rebuilt, probably around the time of the rapture or shortly after it. It will be rebuilt at Jerusalem.
  - A. Revelation 11:1-4 **“And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months. And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.”**
5. Paul says in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-6 that when the Man of Sin comes that he will sit down in the **“temple of God, shewing himself that he is God”**.
  - A. The Antichrist will profess to be God in the flesh (2 Thessalonians 2).
  - B. He will install himself as the object of worship as God and as Israel’s true Messiah.
  - C. He will demand sacrifice to replace the authorized sacrifices of the Jews.
6. After the Antichrist goes into the rebuilt Jerusalem temple and declares himself

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<sup>213</sup> R. A. Huebner, *Elements of Dispensational Truth*, volume 2, pages 195-196.

to be God, Israel will reject him where before, they thought him to be their Messiah. After this rejection, the Antichrist will turn on Israel to destroy them. Part of this involves defiling the temple to the point where the sacrifices will become impossible due to the pollution that he brings into it.

15b **“whoso readeth, let him understand”** This prophetic event is so important that it is VITAL that any Jew reading this who is in the tribulation **MUST** be able to identify this event and know what to do as a result of it.

## **24:16 Then let them which be in Judæa flee into the mountains:<sup>ab</sup>**

16a When the abomination of desolation takes place, what are the Jews who are living in Israel to do? **Flee into the mountains.** Many think a Jewish remnant may flee to the city of Petra, which is a fortress carved into the mountains that afford a great degree of defense.

16c The Bible has a surprising amount of information on “fleeing”:

1. Jacob had to flee from the face of Esau

A. Genesis 27:43 **“Now therefore, my son, obey my voice; and arise, flee thou to Laban my brother to Haran;”**

2. A man guilty of manslaughter was instructed to flee to a city of refuge.

A. Numbers 35:6-15 **“And among the cities which ye shall give unto the Levites there shall be six cities for refuge, which ye shall appoint for the manslayer, that he may flee thither: and to them ye shall add forty and two cities. So all the cities which ye shall give to the Levites shall be forty and eight cities: them shall ye give with their suburbs. And the cities which ye shall give shall be of the possession of the children of Israel: from them that have many ye shall give many; but from them that have few ye shall give few: every one shall give of his cities unto the Levites according to his inheritance which he inheriteth. And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come over Jordan into the land of Canaan; Then ye shall appoint you cities to be cities of refuge for you; that the slayer may flee thither, which killeth any person at unawares. And they shall be unto you cities for refuge from the avenger; that the manslayer die not, until he stand before the congregation in judgment. And of these cities which ye shall give six cities shall ye have for refuge. Ye shall give three cities on this side Jordan, and three cities shall ye give in the land of Canaan, which shall be cities of refuge. These six cities shall be a refuge, both for the children of Israel, and for the stranger, and for the sojourner among them: that every one that killeth any person unawares may flee thither.”**

B. Deuteronomy 19:3-5 **“Thou shalt prepare thee a way, and divide the coasts of thy land, which the LORD thy God giveth thee to inherit, into three parts, that every slayer may flee thither. And this is the case of the slayer, which shall flee thither, that he may live: Whoso killeth his neighbour ignorantly, whom he hated not in time past; As when a man goeth into the wood with his neighbour to hew wood, and his hand fetcheth a stroke with the axe to cut down the tree, and the head slippeth from the helve, and lighteth upon his neighbour, that he die; he shall flee unto one of those cities, and live:”**

3. David had to flee from Absalom’s rebellion

- A. 2 Samuel 15:14 **"And David said unto all his servants that were with him at Jerusalem, Arise, and let us flee; for we shall not else escape from Absalom: make speed to depart, lest he overtake us suddenly, and bring evil upon us, and smite the city with the edge of the sword."**
4. Elisha commanded an unnamed prophet to anoint Jehu as king and then flee.  
A. 2 Kings 9:3 **"Then take the box of oil, and pour it on his head, and say, Thus saith the LORD, I have anointed thee king over Israel. Then open the door, and flee, and tarry not."**
5. Nehemiah would not flee from threats against him.  
A. Nehemiah 6:11 **"And I said, Should such a man as I flee? and who is there, that, being as I am, would go into the temple to save his life? I will not go in."**
6. The Psalmist did not want to flee from his enemies.  
A. Psalm 11:1 **"In the LORD put I my trust: how say ye to my soul, Flee as a bird to your mountain?"**
7. We cannot flee from God's presence.  
A. Psalm 139:7 **"Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?"**
8. We should flee unto God for protection.  
A. Psalm 143:9 **"Deliver me, O LORD, from mine enemies: I flee unto thee to hide me."**
9. The wicked flee when no man pursues them, due to fear and a guilty conscience.  
A. Proverbs 28:1 **"The wicked flee when no man pursueth: but the righteous are bold as a lion."**
10. Some would rather flee than to trust in God.  
A. Isaiah 30:6 **"The burden of the beasts of the south: into the land of trouble and anguish, from whence come the young and old lion, the viper and fiery flying serpent, they will carry their riches upon the shoulders of young asses, and their treasures upon the bunches of camels, to a people that shall not profit them."**
11. Jonah fled from the call and presence of God.  
A. Jonah 1:3 **"But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish: so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD."**
12. Israel would flee in the tribulation.  
A. Zechariah 14:5 **"And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah: and the LORD my God shall come, and all the saints with thee."**  
B. Matthew 24:16 **"Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains:"**  
C. Mark 13:14 **"But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not, (let him that readeth understand,) then let them that be in Judaea flee to the mountains:"**  
D. Luke 21:21 **"Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto."**
13. Jesus, Mary and Joseph fled into Egypt.  
A. Matthew 2:13 **"And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young**

**child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him."**

14. Jesus commanded His disciples to flee into another city if they are persecuted.

A. Matthew 10:23 **"But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come."**

15. We are to flee fornication.

A. 1 Corinthians 6:18 **"Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body."**

16. Paul had to flee on several occasions.

A. Acts 9:25 **"Then the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket."**

B. Acts 17:10 **"And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews."**

17. Christ left areas where there was severe opposition and avoided other areas.

A. John 7:1 **"After these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him."**

**24:17 Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house:<sup>a</sup>**

17a There will be no time to get your "bug-out bag".

**24:18 Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes.<sup>a</sup>**

18a Get to a place of safety as soon as possible and don't return to your home to get supplies. It would be a good idea to have a "bug-out" bag always at the ready but you may not have time to grab it. The Mormons have a good idea here and probably the best preparation.

**24:19 And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!<sup>a</sup>**

19a The Tribulation is no time to get married, have a baby or start a family.

**24:20 But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day:<sup>a</sup>**

20a Traveling will be difficult in this day.

1. It will be even more difficult for pregnant women or families with young children.

2. **"But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day"**

A. The winter is the rainy season in Israel, which can make travel more difficult, not to mention cold and snow in some areas.

B. Traveling on the Sabbath is difficult. An observant Jew would not travel very far on the Sabbath. Even if he could, many transportation facilities are shut down on the Sabbath in Israel.



### **141. The Great Tribulation 24:21-28**

**24:21 For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.<sup>a</sup>**

21a Alluding to Daniel 12:1, the Lord said, "**Then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.**" The first part of the tribulation, from the rapture to the abomination of desolation, will be bad enough. The second part, from the abomination of desolation to the second coming will be unimaginably worse.

**24:22 And except those days should be shortened,<sup>a</sup> there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.**

22a "**Except those days should be shortened**" (much of this comes from my *Pilgrim Way Commentary on Revelation*):

1. Compare with Revelation 8:12. The "shortening" could refer to an increase in earth's rotation rate due to the impacts, shortening the length of a day by 1/3- days would be only 16 hours long. This would wreak havoc with our biological clocks and would do psychological damage due to disturbance of sleep patterns. If this is what is being described, it could be the result of a shift in the axial tilt of the earth due to such impacts. Currently, the earth is tilted at 23 degrees. Some scientists believe that before the Flood, the earth's axis may have been perpendicular to its orbit, resulting in worldwide warm weather. If we are being told of such an axial tilt, earth's axis may be tilted to as much as 40 or 50 degrees, resulting in severe changes in weather and length of daylight. This may have happened before. The planet Uranus is tilted 98 degrees. It is literally rolling on its side with its poles facing the sun. Something must have impacted Uranus to knock it onto its side. The same could happen to earth and many scientists are afraid that we are due for a major asteroid collision in the near future. Christ talked about "those days being shortened" in Matthew 24:22. See also Amos 8:9 where the Lord said He would cause the sun to go down at noon and that He would darken the earth on a clear day.
2. Earth may have undergone a similar orbital and rotational change as early as about 700 B.C. Patton, Hatch and Steinbauer remind us that in ancient times, the year was 360 days long. But now it is 365.25 days. We cannot dismiss this as an error on the part of the ancient astronomers for they were very precise in such measurements. So where did these extra 5.25 days come from? They propose that Mars engaged in a close fly-by of Earth in 701 BC, passing to within 70,000 miles of Earth. Mars at this time had a very eccentric orbit and would make such close encounters every 54 or 108 years. This pass (recorded by Isaiah and Hezekiah in prophetic language) was the closest yet and altered Earth's orbit, as well as Mars'. Mars was flung into a new orbit that prevented any more close passes. This would answer the question as to why our year is longer than the ancient year. And if it happened once, it could happen again.
3. Remember, the second and third trumpets describe a possible asteroid and comet strike on the earth. This one-two punch would be sufficient to do this sort of damage on the earth. Catastrophism is a Bible fact. Consider the Flood and a possible pre-Adamic battle in the heavens at the Fall of Lucifer. We see signs of this in our own solar system. Where did the asteroid belt come from? Why is Uranus tilted on its side with its poles facing the sun? Why does Venus rotate backward, with a day as long as its year? There seemed to be water on Mars once. What happened to it? Why is the orbit of Pluto so eccentric? Sometimes it is closer to the sun than Neptune. And look at some of the satellites of the planets. Consider Triton, the largest moon of Neptune. Why does it orbit

Neptune backwards? Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune all have ring systems, indicting collisions or break-ups of other planetary bodies that wandered too close to their gravity wells. Heathen geologists believe in uniformitarianism, that things happen gradually on the earth over billions of years (see 2 Peter 3:4). But the Bible clearly teaches a series of catastrophes that cause major changes on the earth in a very short period of time. One of the best books on this subject is *The Long Day of Joshua and Six Other Catastrophes* by Donald Patten, Loren Steinbauer and Ronald Hatch (1973) which is one of the best examinations on Biblical catastrophism.

4. The great tribulation is going to be so severe and so catastrophic that if it ran the whole 42 months, or more, all life on earth would be destroyed. The great tribulation will be just short of 42 months (considering 24-hour days) or it could be the whole 42 months of days that are shortened (say, 20-hour days rather than 24-hour days, as suggested above).

**24:23 Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not.<sup>a</sup>**

23a Another warning against being deceived. Yet many ignore the warning.

1. There will be a multiplication of false Christs and false messiahs. There was many in the New Testament days and there will be more as we approach the tribulation and in the tribulation period, since there will be no restraint of the Holy Spirit in those days.

A. They will be able to do signs and wonders that will add to the deception.

2. The elect will not be deceived.

A. In the Church Age, leading up to the rapture, this would include true Christians.

B. In the tribulation, it would include both the Gentile and Jewish remnant.

**24:24 For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders;<sup>a</sup> insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.<sup>b</sup>**

24a Simply because someone can do a miracle does not mean he is of God. Devils and false teachers can also do signs and wonders, which make it that much easier to deceive lost people and Christians with no discernment. Since there are no Christians in the tribulation and since the Holy Spirit has “withdrawn”, there is nothing keeping this error from spreading world-wide and through the population of the earth during the Tribulation period.

24b With Israel fighting for their very existence, they may be more susceptible to the promises of false messiahs during these days.

**24:25 Behold, I have told you before.<sup>a</sup>**

25a There are no excuses for anyone being ignorant of this! The Lord told us! These warnings were written down thousands of years ago! Preachers have been preaching on this for a very long time and there are books dealing with these truths all over the place. You may read it and disbelieve it and reject it, but you are still responsible for these truths even if you don’t receive them.

**24:26 Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not.<sup>a</sup>**

26a Being a skeptic is a good and useful trait as a believer. It may just keep you out of hell!

**24:27 For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west;<sup>a</sup> so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.<sup>b</sup>**

27a **“Cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west.”** This direction is the direction of seven things in the word of God.

1. It is the direction of the restoration of Israel under Nehemiah.
2. It is the direction of the calling out of Abraham from Mesopotamia.
3. It is the direction of Jacob's restoration from Laban (Genesis 28-34).
4. It is the direction of the High Priest's entrance to the Tabernacle.
5. It is the direction of Christ's triumphant entry into Jerusalem on the foal of the ass (Matthew 19-21).
6. It is the direction the gospel was commanded to be preached (Acts 16).
7. Being the direction of the Sun's movement, it is the direction from which the **“sun of righteousness”** returns (Malachi 4:1-4).
8. History moves east to west. The gospel goes east to west. Revivals move east to west. Discoveries move east to west. Wars progress from east to west.

27b The great tribulation will build to a climax of the Second Coming of Revelation 19. When it comes, it will come quickly.

**24:28 For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together.<sup>a</sup>**

28a **“For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together.”**

1. Repeated in Luke 17:37.
2. The “carcasses” are the carcasses of 200,000,000 horses and riders who came from the East in a United Nations army to help the Antichrist wipe out Jerusalem at the Battle of Armageddon.
  - A. Ezekiel 38,39
  - B. Revelation 19:15-20 **“And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS. And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great. And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.”**

C. Who are the eagles? Saints? Raptured saints? Surviving saints who made it all the way through the tribulation?

3. Those who insist that Matthew 24 is referring to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 make these “eagles” to be the banners of the occupying and invading Roman armies, which would supposed to have been an “abomination” to a Jew. But why limit this to A.D. 70? The Romans had occupied Israel since about 63 B.C. These idolatrous standards had been flying over Jerusalem and Israel for about 90 years as of these events and would be about 130 years at the destruction of Jerusalem. Why wouldn’t have this been a subject of prophecy before A.D. 70?

#### **142. The Second Coming 24:29-31**

**24:29<sup>a</sup> ¶ Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:**

29a The events of Matthew 24:29-31 clearly refer to the events in the “great” tribulation, leading up to the Second Coming in Revelation 19.

**24:30 And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man<sup>a</sup> in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.**

30a “**sign of the Son of man**” Uncertain what this is, but it must be some sort of sign, probably in the heavens, that will announce the Second Coming.

**24:31 And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet,<sup>a</sup> and they shall gather together his elect<sup>b</sup> from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.**

31a “**sound of a trumpet**” This must be a rapture of the surviving saints at the end of the tribulation, as a trumpet is mention at the rapture of the church in:

A. 1 Corinthians 15:52 “**In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.**”

B. 1 Thessalonians 4:16 “**For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:**”

C. Revelation 4:1 “**After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter.**”

31b “**his elect**” Not the Church and not to be understood in a Calvinistic context. It must refer to any believing Jews and Gentiles who survive to the time of the Second Coming.

#### **143. The Parable of the Fig Tree 24:32-35, see also Mark 13:28-37; Luke 21:29-33**

**24:32 Now learn a parable of the fig tree;<sup>a</sup> When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh:**

32a **“fig tree”** The fig tree is the tree of self-righteousness. It is the only tree that God ever cursed (Matthew 21:19,20). It stands for religious, dead-orthodox Israel without any spiritual fruit. The parable speaks of the revival of national Israel in the tribulation.

**24:33 So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors.<sup>a</sup>**

33a When national Israel is back in the land and is beginning to flourish, know that you are very close to the Second Coming.

1. The branch is **“yet tender”**. Israel, as a modern nation, only goes back to 1948, so at the time of this writing (2025), it is only 77 years old, which is very young for a nation.
2. When **“summer is nigh”**, we know the tree is in bloom with fruit, and the harvest is not very far away.

**24:34 Verily I say unto you, This generation<sup>ab</sup> shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.**

34a Which generation? Post-millennialists insist that it is that generation is the one which saw the events leading to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. But the Second Coming did not take place in A. D. 70, no matter how some theological systems try to spin it. There were many prophecies given in Matthew 24 that were not fulfilled in the years leading to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

1. The gospel may have been preached to many nations of the Roman Empire but not to “all” nations by A.D. 70 (Matthew 24:14).<sup>214</sup>
2. There was no rapture in the first century (Matthew 24:31).
3. The Antichrist was not revealed.<sup>215</sup>
4. There was tribulation but not the “great” tribulation that the world has never seen or will ever see (Matthew 24:21).
5. These days were not shortened (Matthew 24:22).
6. There was no physical and literal second coming of Christ (Matthew 24:27).
7. There were no signs in the heavens (Matthew 24:29,30).

It cannot refer to that contemporary generation. It must be the generation that leads up to the tribulation and the generation that goes into and through the tribulation, the generation that will see all these things fulfilled. It may be our generation, or it may be a future one. The rapture might happen tomorrow, but it also may be another 50 years before it takes place.

34b We have another problem in that we are not sure how long a generation is. Forty years? Seventy years (Psalm 90:1,2 **“A Prayer of Moses the man of God. Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.”**)? One hundred years (Genesis 15:13 **“And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that**

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<sup>214</sup> We still have not done that as of 2025 as there are still areas and peoples that have had no gospel witness. Even in the United States and Canada, there are many areas without a Bible-preaching church. I see this in driving through many small towns in the Canadian Maritimes.

<sup>215</sup> Preterists and post-millennialists desperately try to make Nero out to be the Antichrist but that will not work.

**thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years;”)?** We simply do not know, which makes date setting futile.

#### **24:35 Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.<sup>a</sup>**

35a All of these prophecies will be fulfilled to the letter. The Bible is eternal, even if the heavens and the earth are not (2 Peter 3:5-7 **“For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.”**)). Either through attacks or neglect by God’s people, the Scriptures will endure forever and must be fulfilled.

#### **144. The Days of Noah 24:36-41**

#### **24:36 ¶ But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.<sup>a</sup>**

36a There it is. Despite all of the date-setters over the centuries, no man knows the day or the hour of the Second Coming. By extension, no man knows the day or the hour of the rapture either. There have been multiple attempts to try to guess the date of the Second Coming and every last one has ended in failure. Yet that does not discourage the next person from trying their hand at it. There is always someone who thinks they have figured out what no one else has figured out and they state they know the date of the second coming. And they always end up looking like the fools they are when the promised date comes and goes.

Sometimes date-setting has other disastrous results like the establishment of a cult. The Great Disappointment in 1843 and 1844 directly led to the establishment of the Seventh Day Adventist cult. Date setting also led to the establishment of what would become known as the Watchtower Organization, of the Jehovah Witness cult.

We can know the “signs of the times” (Matthew 16:3 **“And in the morning, it will be foul weather to day: for the sky is red and lowring. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?”** and 1 Thessalonians 5:1 **“But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you.”**) and recognize the events leading up to both rapture and advent but we simply are not able to pinpoint either event to the actual day. We have no excuse for not knowing where we are on God’s prophetic timetable.

#### **24:37 But as the days of Noe<sup>a</sup> were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.**

##### **37a “days of Noe”**

1. These days are described in Genesis 4-6.
2. There will be a return to the types and degrees of sin that were so severe that it prompted God to wipe out the human race. Genesis 4-6 does not go into much detail as to the specific types of sins, leaving it (mercifully) to our imaginations. They were so bad and hideous that the Holy Spirit did not see much use in going into any great detail, but we can pretty much figure out what was going on by looking at the sins of our generation. And it is even worse today than it was in Noah’s day, as man has had 4,000 more years of practice!

**24:38 For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark,**

**24:39 And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.<sup>a</sup>**

39a Life went on as normal in verses 38 and 39 as no one was expecting that the axe would fall on the day that it did.

**24:40 Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.**

**24:41 Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left.<sup>a</sup>**

41a There will be a great separation at the rapture. People will be going about their daily tasks, unaware of the rapid events that will transpire with little or no warning.

#### **145. Watch and Be Ready 24:42-52**

**24:42 ¶ Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.<sup>a</sup>**

42a No one can pin down the exact date of either the rapture or the second coming. We know that the second coming would follow 7 years after the rapture, but we still would not still be able to know what the exact day or the hour is. So stop trying! You'll only make a fool of yourself in so doing.

1. They have been so many attempts to guess the date of either the rapture or second coming and every single one has failed and every future attempt by some false prophet to guess the date will also end in failure.
2. Almost every cult has tried this, including the Jehovah Witnesses and Mormons. The Seventh Day Adventist cult started with the Great Disappointment of 1843/1844 as a Baptist preacher named William Miller who guessed wrong after studying and misapplying Daniel's prophecies.

AV	ESV	LSV
42 Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.	42 Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming.	42 "Therefore stay awake, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming.

"hour" The ESV and LSV lengthen this out to "day". The versions also have "stay awake" for "watch", where the Authorized Version has a better reading.

**24:43 But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up.<sup>a</sup>**

43a If you knew a thief was active in your neighborhood, what would you do? Prepare and watch. We have been warned that the rapture is coming, followed by the second coming seven years (or so) later. What will you do and how will you respond?

**24:44 Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.<sup>a</sup>**

Instead of wasting time trying to guess the date of the rapture and/or second coming (which you can't do anyway), just live in such a way that you will be ready when the time comes. Be ready! Live with your bags packed, ready to go in an instant.

**24:45 Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season?<sup>abc</sup>**

45a See also Luke 12:41-48.

45b A faithful servant is one who is alert and aware, who knows the signs of the times and know how to respond.

45c One of those favorite "preacher illustrations" has either John Wesley or Martin Luther, having been asked what they would do if they knew that the Lord was coming on the next day, responding "I would go out and work in my garden". That means that they would still go about whatever their regular duties and obligations were. We are not to sell all of our good, put on white sheets and go sit on a hill, waiting for the Lord to come. We are to continue to work, labor and live. We plan and work as if the Lord is not coming in our lifetime but we live as if we knew He was coming tomorrow.

**24:46 Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.**

**24:47 Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods.<sup>a</sup>**

47a Faithfulness and watchfulness (not sleeping through these events) bring rewards.

**24:48 But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming;<sup>a</sup>**

48a There will be professing servants/believers who will not take these warnings seriously. They are of the same attitude that Peter describes in 2 Peter 3:3,4 ("**Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.**"). They have heard these doctrines of the rapture and second coming for years and since it still had not happened, they think it never will. So they live as if the Lord will never come and that they will never have to be judged. They will continue in their sin and their carnality with no restraint or fear of judgment.

**24:49 And shall begin to smite his fellowservants, and to eat and drink with the drunken;**



**24:50 The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of,**

**24:51 And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.<sup>a</sup>**

51a It would hard to apply this to the Christian. The man is obviously a believer of some type, but he was unfaithful and wasn't watching. He got caught by surprise when the master returned. He got "cast out" for his unfaithfulness with the hypocrites. Is this hell? The language seems to indicate more of a lack of rewards than punishment in hell.

### **Attempts at Date Setting, from**

**<https://www.raptureready.com/2016/07/19/rapture-date-setters-keep-failing/>**

Other people throughout history have read the same words of Jesus and have come up with different interpretations of what He intended. They've somehow managed to get around all restrictions against precise date setting. On a number of occasions, by doing so, they created pure havoc. The following is a list of some past failed attempts at date settings and some dates yet to come.<sup>216</sup>

### **53**

Even before all the books of the Bible were written, there was talk that Christ's return had already taken place. The Thessalonians panicked on Paul when they heard a rumor that the day of the Lord was at hand, and they had missed the rapture.

### **500**

A Roman priest living in the second century predicted Christ would return in A.D. 500, based on the dimensions of Noah's ark.

### **1000**

This year goes down as one of the most heightened periods of hysteria over the return of Christ. All members of society seemed affected by the prediction that Jesus was coming back at the start of the new Millennium. None of the events required by the Bible were transpiring at that time; the magic of the number 1000 was the sole reason for the expectation. During concluding months of A. D. 999, everyone was on his best behavior; worldly goods were sold and given to the poor; swarms of pilgrims headed east to meet the Lord at Jerusalem; buildings went unrepaired; crops were left unplanted; and criminals were set free from jails. When the year 999 turned into 1000, nothing happened.

### **1033**

This year was cited as the beginning of the Millennium because it marked 1,000 years since Christ's crucifixion.

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<sup>216</sup> And this is not an exhaustive list!

**1186**

The “Letter of Toledo” warned everyone to hide in the caves and mountains. The world was reportedly to be destroyed with only a few spared.

**1420**

The Taborites of Czechoslovakia predicted every city would be annihilated by fire. Only five mountain strongholds would be saved.

**1524-1526**

Muntzer, a leader of German peasants, announced that the return of Christ was near. After Muntzer and his men destroyed the high and mighty, the Lord would supposedly return. This belief led to an uneven battle against government troops. He was strategically outnumbered. Muntzer claimed to have had a vision from God in which the Lord promised that He would catch the cannonballs of the enemy in the sleeves of His cloak. The prediction within the vision turned out to be false when Muntzer and his followers were mowed down by cannon fire.

**1534**

A repeat of the Muntzer affair occurred a few years later. This time, Jan Matthys took over the city of Munster. The city was to be the only one spared from destruction. The inhabitants of Munster, chased out by Matthys and his men, regrouped and lay siege to the city. Within a year, everyone in the city was dead.<sup>217</sup>

**1650-1660**

The Fifth Monarchy Men looked for Jesus to establish a theocracy. They took up arms and tried to seize England by force. The movement died when the British monarchy was restored in 1660.

**1666**

For the citizens of London, 1666 was not a banner year. A bubonic plague outbreak killed 100,000 and the Great Fire of London struck the same year. The world seemed at an end to most Londoners. The fact that the year ended with the Beast’s number—666—didn’t help matters.

**1809**

Mary Bateman, who specialized in fortune telling, had a magic chicken that laid eggs with end-time messages on them. One message said that Christ was coming. The uproar she created ended when an unannounced visitor caught her forcing an egg into the hen’s oviduct. Mary later was hanged for poisoning a wealthy client. History does not record whether the offended chicken attended the hanging.

**1814**

Spiritualist Joanna Southcott made the startling claim that she, by virgin birth, would produce the second Jesus Christ. Her abdomen began to swell and so did the crowds of

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<sup>217</sup> These events still leave a bad taste in the mouth of many Germans when it comes to Baptist and Anabaptist people. Many Germans consider these groups to be a cult.

people around her. The time for the birth came and passed; she died soon after. An autopsy revealed she had experienced a false pregnancy.

### **1836**

John Wesley wrote that “the time, times and half a time” of Revelation 12:14 were 1058-1836, “when Christ should come.”<sup>218</sup>

### **1843-1844**

William Miller was the founder of an end-times movement that was so prominent it received its own name, Millerism. From his studies of the Bible, Miller determined that the second coming would happen sometime between 1843-1844. A spectacular meteor shower in 1833 gave the movement a good push forward. The buildup of anticipation continued until March 21, 1844, when Miller’s one-year timetable ran out. Some followers set another date—Oct 22, 1844. This too failed, collapsing the movement. One follower described the days after the failed predictions: “The world made merry over the old Prophet’s predicament. The taunts and jeers of the ‘scoffers’ were well-nigh unbearable.”<sup>219 220</sup>

### **1859**

Rev. Thomas Parker, a Massachusetts minister, looked for the Millennium to start about 1859.

### **1881**

Someone called Mother Shipton had, 400 years earlier, claimed that the world would end in 1881. A controversy hangs over the Shipton writings as to whether or not publishers doctored the text.

### **1910**

The return of Halley’s comet was, for many, an indication of the Lord’s second coming. The earth actually passed through the gaseous tail of the comet. One enterprising man sold comet pills to people for protection against the effects of the toxic gases.

### **1914**

Charles Russell, after being exposed to the teachings of William Miller, founded his own organization that evolved into the Jehovah’s Witnesses. In 1914, Russell predicted the return of Jesus Christ. Joseph Smith, founder of the Mormons, or Latter-Day Saints, also made a series of predictions in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.

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<sup>218</sup> A. M. Morris, *The Prophecies Unveiled*, p. 361.

<sup>219</sup> The ending years after the Second Great Awakening were full of millennial expectations. There were so many power revivals and “pseudo-revivals” that many preachers expected the Millennium to begin so. Charles Finney echoed this idea when he said that if the Church only “did her duty” in promoting his style of revivals, the Millennium would come in shortly. He was not the only one to believe that.

<sup>220</sup> There have been suggestions that this date setting of the 1840s may have been influenced by John Nelson Darby and other “Plymouth Brethren” writers as they started writing about premillennial and dispensational prophecy in the 1830s. As far as we can tell, no “mainline” Plymouth Brethren writers engaged in date-setting, although they did revive interest in prophetic studies.

**1918**

In 1918, new math didn't help the Witnesses from striking out again.

**1925**

The Jehovah Witnesses had no better luck in 1925. They already possessed the title of "Most Wrong Predictions." They would expand upon it in the years to come.

**1941**

Once again, Jehovah's Witnesses believed that Armageddon was due. Before the end of 1941, the end of all things was predicted.

**1967**

When the city of Jerusalem was reclaimed by the Jews in 1967, prophecy watchers declared that the "Time of the Gentiles" had come to an end.

**1970**

The True Light Church of Christ made its claim to fame by incorrectly forecasting the return of Jesus. A number of church members had quit their livelihoods ahead of the promised advent.

**1973**

A comet that turned out to be a visual disappointment nonetheless compelled one preacher to announce that it would be a sign of the Lord's return.

**1975**

The Jehovah's Witnesses were back at it in 1975. The failure of the forecast did not affect the growth of the movement. The Watchtower magazine, a major Witness periodical, has over 13 million subscribers.

**1977**

We all remember the killer bee scare of the late 1970's. One prophecy prognosticator linked the bees to Revelation 9:3-12.

**1981**

One author boldly declared that the rapture would occur before December 31, 1981, based on Christian prophecy, astronomy, and a dash of ecological fatalism. He pegged the date to Jesus' promised return to earth a generation after Israel's rebirth. He also made references to the "Jupiter Effect," a planetary alignment occurring every 179 years that supposedly could lead to earthquakes and nuclear plant meltdowns.

**1982**

It was all going to end in 1982, when the planets lined up and created magnetic forces that would bring Armageddon to the earth.

## 1982

A group called the Tara Centers placed full-page advertisements in many major newspapers for the weekend of April 24-25, 1982, announcing: "The Christ is Now Here!" They predicted that He was to make himself known "within the next two months." After the date passed, they said that the delay was only because the "consciousness of the human race was not quite right..."

## 1984

The Jehovah's Witnesses made sure, in 1984, that no one else would be able to top their record of most wrong doomsday predictions. The Witnesses' record currently holds at nine. The years are: 1874, 1878, 1881, 1910, 1914, 1918, 1925, 1975, and 1984. Lately, the JW's are claiming they're out of the prediction business, but it's hard to teach an old dog new tricks. They'll be back.

## 1987

The Harmonic Convergence was planned for August 16-17, 1987, and several New Age events were also to occur at that time. The second coming of the serpent god of peace and the Hopi dance awakening were two examples.

## 1988

The book, *88 Reasons Why the Rapture is in 1988*, came out only a few months before the event was to take place. What little time the book had, it used effectively. By the time the predicted dates, September 11-13, 1988, rolled around, whole churches were caught up in the excitement the book generated. I personally had friends who were measuring themselves for wings. In the dorm where we lived, my friends were also openly confronting all of the unsaved. It became my job to defuse situations. In one case, an accosted sinner was contemplating dispensary action against my now-distant friends. Finally, the days of destiny dawned and then set. No Jesus. The environment was not the same as Miller's 1844 failure. To my surprise, the taunting by the unsaved was very brief. I took it that people have very little understanding of the Bible, so they had nothing to taunt my friends with. I made one other interesting observation. Although the time for the rapture had been predicted to fall within a three-day window, September 11-13, 1988, my friends gave up hope on the morning of the 12th. I pointed out that they still had two days left, but they had been spooked.

## 1989

After the passing of the deadline in *88 Reasons*, the author, Edgar Whisenant, came out with a new book called *89 Reasons Why the Rapture is in 1989*. This book sold only a - fraction of the number of copies his prior release had sold.<sup>221</sup>

## 1991

A group in Australia predicted Jesus would return through the Sydney Harbor at 9 a.m., March 31, 1991.

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<sup>221</sup> The old joke was the 89th reason was because Christ did not return in 1988. Afterwards, you could find the book for a quarter in a used book store.

### 1991

Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan proclaimed the Gulf War would be “the War of Armageddon ... the final War.”

### 1991

Rabbe Menachem Schneerson, a Russian-born rabbi, called for the Messiah to come by September 9, 1991, the start of the Jewish New Year.<sup>222</sup>

### 1992

A Korean group called Mission for the Coming Days had the Korea Church an uproar in the fall of 1992. They foresaw October 28, 1992 as the date for the rapture. Numerology was the basis for the date. Several camera shots that left ghostly images on pictures were thought to be a supernatural confirmation of the date.

### 1993

If the year 2000 is the end of the 6,000-year cycle, then the rapture must take place in 1993, because you would need seven years of the tribulation. This was the thinking of a number of prophecy writers.

### 1994

In the book, *1994: The Year of Destiny*, F. M. Riley foretold of God’s plan to rapture His people. The name of his ministry is “The Last Call,” and he operates out of Missouri.

### 1994

Pastor John Hinkle of Christ Church in Los Angeles caused quite a stir when he announced he had received a vision from God that warned of apocalyptic event on June 9, 1994. Hinkle, quoting God, said, “On Thursday June the 9th, I will rip the evil out of this world.” At the time, I knew Hinkle’s vision didn’t match up with Scripture. From a proper reading of Bible prophecy, the only thing that God could possibly rip from the earth would be the Christian Church, and I don’t think God would refer to the Church as “evil.” Some people tried to interpret Hinkle’s unscriptural vision to mean that God would the rip evil out of our hearts when He raptured us. Well, the date came and went with no heart surgery or rapture.<sup>223</sup>

### 1994

Harold Camping, in his book *Are You Ready?* predicted the Lord would return in September 1994. The book was full of numerology that added up to 1994 as the date of Christ’s return.

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<sup>222</sup> Schneerson had quite the following among some orthodox Jews, especially in New York City. He still does today. A pirate radio station even came on the air from New York City, broadcasting his teachings and I was able to hear it here in Delaware. Some of his followers even believed that Schneerson was the Messiah and are still awaiting his return.

<sup>223</sup> I was listening to the Trinity Broadcasting Network on the night that Hinkle made this prophecy and it caused a sensation in the Charismatic media. Hinkle was on every Christian program and talk show. I made a note of the date (Hinkle made his prediction about 6 months before his date of June 9, 1994. When the date came, I remember there was a good-sized earthquake somewhere, but that was it.

### **1994**

After promising they would not make anymore end time predictions, the Jehovah's Witnesses fell off the wagon and proclaimed 1994 as the conclusion of an 80-year generation; the year 1914 was the starting point.

### **1996**

This year had a special month, according to one author who foresaw September as the time for our Lord's return. The Church Age will last 2,000 years from the time of Christ's birth in 4 BC.

### **1996**

California psychic Sheldon Nidle predicted the end would come with the convergence of 16 million space ships and a host of angels upon the earth on December 17, 1996. Nidle explained the passing of the date by claiming the angels placed us in a holographic projection to preserve us and give us a second chance.

### **1997**

There were many e-mail messages that pointed to this as the year when Jesus would return for His church. Two of the more widely known time frames were Monte Judah's prediction that the tribulation would begin in February/March and another prediction based on numerology and the Psalms that targeted May 14 as the date of the rapture.

### **1997**

When Yitzhak Rabin and Yasser Arafat signed their peace pact on the White House lawn on September 13, 1993, some saw the events as the beginning of tribulation. With the signing of the peace agreement, Daniel's 1,260-day countdown was underway. By adding 1,260 days to September 1993, you arrive at February 24, 1997.

### **1997**

Stan Johnson of the Prophecy Club saw a "90 percent" chance that the tribulation would start September 12, 1997. He based his conclusion on several end-time signs: that would be Jesus' 2,000th birthday and it would also be the Day of Atonement, although it wouldn't be what is currently the Jewish Day of Atonement. Further supporting evidence came from Romanian pastor Dumitru Duduman. In several heavenly visions, Dumitru claimed to have seen the Book of Life. In one of his earlier visions, there were several pages yet to be completed. In his last vision, he noticed the Book of Life only had one page left. Doing some rough calculating, Johnson and friends figured the latest time frame for the completion of the book would have to be September 1997.

### **1998**

Numerology: Because 666 times three equals 1998, some people point to this year as being prophetically significant. Someone called me long distance just so he could pass on to me this earth-shattering news.

### **1998**

A Taiwanese cult operating out of Garland, Texas predicted Christ would return on March 31 of 1998. The group's leader, Heng-ming Chen, announced God would return and then invite the cult members aboard a UFO. The group abandoned their prediction when a precursor event failed to take place. The cult's leader had said that God would appear on every channel 18 of every TV in the world. Maybe God realized at the last minute, the Playboy Network was channel 18 on several cable systems, and He didn't want to have Christians watching a porn channel.

### **1998**

On April 30, 1998, Israel was to turn 50 and many believed this birthday would mark the beginning of the tribulation. The reasoning behind this date has to do with God's age requirement for the priesthood, which is between 30-50.

### **1998**

Marilyn Agee, in her book, *The End of the Age*, had her sights set on May 31, 1998. This date was to conclude the 6,000-year cycle from the time of Adam. Agee looked for the rapture to take place on Pentecost, which is also known as "the Feast of Weeks." Another indicator of this date was the fact that the Holy Spirit did not descend upon the apostles until 50 days after Christ's resurrection. Israel was born in 1948; add the 50 days as years and you come up with. After her May 31 rapture date failed, Agee, unable to face up to her error, continued her date setting by using various Scripture references to point to June 7, 14, 21 and about 10 other dates.

### **1999**

Well, you can't call Marilyn Agee a quitter. After bombing out badly several times in 1998, Marilyn set a new date for the rapture: May 21 or 22 of this year.

### **1999**

TV newscaster-turned-psyhic Charles Criswell King had said in 1968 that the world as we know it would cease to exist on August 18, 1999.

### **1999**

Philip Berg, a rabbi at the Kabbalah Learning Center in New York, proclaimed that the end might arrive on September 11, 1999, when "a ball of fire will descend . . . destroying almost all of mankind, all vegetation, all forms of life."

### **2000**

Numerology: If you divide 2,000 by 3, you will get the devil's number: 666.6666666666667.

### **2000**

The names of the people and organizations that called for the return of Christ at the turn of the century is too long to be listed here. I would say that if there were a day on which Christ could not return, it must have been January 1, 2000. To come at an unknown



time means to come at an unknown time. I think January 2, 2000 would have been a more likely day for Him to call His Church home—right after the big letdown.<sup>224</sup>

### **2000**

On May 5, 2000, all of the planets were supposed to have been in alignment. This was said to cause the earth to suffer earthquakes, volcanic eruption, and various other nasty stuff. A similar alignment occurred in 1982 and nothing happened. People failed to realize that the other nine planets only exert a very tiny gravitational pull on the earth. If you were to add up the gravitational force from the rest of the planets, the total would only amount to a fraction of the gravitational tug that the moon has on the earth.

### **2000**

According to Michael Rood, the end times have a prophetically complicated connection to Israel's spring barley harvest. The Day of the Lord began on May 5, 2000. Rood's fall feast calendar called for the Russian Gog-Magog invasion of Israel to take place at sundown on October 28, 2000.

### **2000-2001**

Dale Sumbureru looked for March 22, 1997 to be "the date when all the dramatic events leading through the tribulation to the return of Christ should begin" The actual date of Christ's return could be somewhere between July 2000 and March 2001. Sumbureru is more general about the timing of Christ's second coming than most writers. He states, "The day the Lord returns is currently unknown because He said [Jesus] these days are cut short and it is not yet clear by how much and in what manner they are cut short. If the above assumptions are not correct, my margin of error would be in weeks, or perhaps months."

### **2002**

Priests from Cuba's Afro-Caribbean Yoruba religion predicted a dramatic year of tragedy and crisis for the world in 2002, ranging from coups and war to disease and flooding.

### **2004**

This date for Jesus' return is based upon psalmology, numerology, the biblical 360 days per year, Jewish holidays, and "biblical astronomy." To figure out this date, you'll need a calculator, a slide rule, and plenty of scratch paper.

### **2011-2018**

Jack Van Impe has hinted at nearly every year as being the time for the rapture. Normally, he has only gone out one or two years from the current calendar year. However, Jack's latest projection for the rapture goes out several years. His new math uses 51 years as the length of a generation. If you add 51 years to 1967, the year Israel recaptured Jerusalem, you get 2018. Once you subtract the seven-year tribulation period, you arrive at 2011.

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<sup>224</sup> Some tied the Y2K Bug of January 1, 2000 into the rapture and/or second coming.

### **2011**

Harold Camping predicted that May 21, 2011 would be the date of the rapture. After this prediction proved inaccurate, he claimed that a non-visible “spiritual judgement” had taken place, and that the physical rapture would occur on October 21, 2011. The new rapture prediction also proved inaccurate.<sup>225</sup>

### **2012**

New Age writers cite Mayan and Aztec calendars that predict the end of the age on December 21, 2012.

### **2024**

The total solar eclipse of April 8 brought out many prophecy hacks, predicting the eclipse was associated with the rapture that was supposed to take place on this date.

### **2060**

Isaac Newton, Britain’s greatest scientist, spent 50 years and wrote 4,500 pages trying to predict when the end of the world was coming. The most definitive date he set for the apocalypse, which he scribbled on a scrap of paper, was 2060.

An untold number of people have tried to predict the Lord’s return by using elaborate timetables. Most date setters do not realize that mankind has not kept an unwavering record of time. Anyone wanting to chart, for example, 100 BC to 2000 AD, would have to contend with the fact that 46 BC was 445 days long, there was no year 0 BC, and in 1582 we switched from Julian to Gregorian years. Because most prognosticators are not aware of all of these errors, their math is immediately off by several years. And as I type these lines I late 2024, there are more false teachers preparing their presentations.

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<sup>225</sup> I dealt with a few of these fanatics in Camden, Delaware a few days before the supposed event. They would not listen to any reason. Camping had gone off the theological “deep end” years before, even claiming that every single church on earth was apostate and that God hadn’t saved anyone in a church since 1998. Family Radio, Camping’s network, was the only true “church” so you were supposed to tithe to Camping and listen only to him. After this date came and went, Camping’s radio empire crumbled and he died a few years later. Camping was claiming there would be 24 raptures on May 11, one per time zone. I don’t know what he did with the fact that there are several “half” time zones (like in Newfoundland, which is 30 minutes off from surrounding time zones).

## **Matthew Chapter 25**

The burden of the final verses of chapter 24 about being ready for the Lord's coming is furthered by this parable of the virgins.

### **146. The Parable of the Ten Virgins 25:1-13**

**25:1 Then shall the kingdom of heaven<sup>a</sup> be likened unto ten virgins,<sup>b</sup> which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.**

1a The “**kingdom of heaven**” shows this is a millennial/kingdom parable.

1. There are going to be many theological problems in trying to apply this parable to Christians in the Church Age”

A. It deals with the “kingdom of heaven” which culminates in the Jewish Millennial kingdom. This “kingdom” not refer to the Church.

B. No other gospel writer has this parable, only Matthew, the Jewish dispensational gospel, so it will have no doctrinal application to the Church.<sup>226</sup>

C. In the rapture, the Bridegroom comes to meet us in the clouds. In Matthew 25:1, the virgins go out to meet the Bridegroom.

D. There can still be a Gentile element in the parable as we have ten virgins (two sets of five), and “ten” is the Gentile number.<sup>227</sup>

E. Oil is usually a type of the Holy Spirit. How then can He be “bought” in Matthew 25:9?

i. Is there an element of works in the tribulation? Works salvation is a church-age heresy but it may be a tribulation church, to some degree.

F. If this deals with the rapture, then we have a partial, or a split rapture, assuming the foolish virgins were saved. But Matthew 25:12 gives the indication that they may not have been saved.

i. Matthew 25:3 may indicate that the foolish virgins were not saved as they had no oil.

G. Christians are the bride, not part of the bridal party.

H. No rapture is in view here and there are no Christians on earth at the second coming in Revelation 20.

I. Virgins appear in the tribulation in Revelation 14:4.

1b The Parable of the Ten Virgins is doctrinally applied to the Tribulation, not to the Church Age. Of course, you can make a devotional application to this age of anything in Scripture but even then, you must be careful.

**25:2 And five of them were wise, and five were foolish.<sup>a</sup>**

2a Devotionally, the Church is made up of two kinds of people:

1. The wise and ready, who are actively watching for the coming of Christ.

2. The unwise and unready, who are sleeping when they should be awake and preparing.

A. They are asleep to the lateness of the hour, the signs of the times and the

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<sup>226</sup> Spiritual applications are always possible, with care and discernment.

<sup>227</sup> Although the Kingdom of Heaven in Jewish, this does not discount any role Gentiles might have in it.

imminency of the Second Coming. They may be aware of these truths but it makes no impression on them nor does it cause them to amend their lives or change their behavior.

3. 1 John 3:3 **And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.**

A. This is the “**blessed hope**” of Titus 2:13. Not “I sure HOPE I’m saved and that I’ll make it to heaven.” The hope both John and Paul are talking about is the hope of the second coming and our receiving our glorified bodies. We are still hoping for it because, while it is a settled thing in our hearts, it has not yet happened.

B. This is what the doctrine and hope of the Second Coming is designed to do for us. Since we shall soon see Him and stand before Him in the bema judgment, we want to make sure that we are always ready to do so. We want to make sure that all sin is confessed and that we are living pure and holy lives at all times since we do not know when we may be whisked out either in death or the rapture, to stand before Christ at the bema judgment to give an account of our lives and ministries since our salvation. A man with a proper understanding and acceptance of the Second Coming will be striving to live a pure life at all times.

**25:3 They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them:<sup>ab</sup>**

3a What is the point of taking a lamp if it has no oil? This lamp is useless. This was “foolish”. It makes the lamp ornamental only, or gives the illusion that the virgins are prepared because they have a lamp, only to be exposed upon further and closer inspection. It appears from Matthew 25:8 that they had oil in their lamps but no refill of that oil. They only had the oil in their lamps that was already there but none to refill their lamps when that oil was spent.

3b All the virgins were told that the Bridegroom was coming and that they were to wait, but only five took that seriously and prepared themselves for His coming. The Church, for long centuries, knew of the Second Coming but did not take it seriously due to their misunderstanding and rejection of the doctrine and they never properly prepared themselves to be ready for when that time would come.

**25:4 But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.<sup>a</sup>**

4a They all had lamps but only five of the lamps had oil. They all had the equipment needed to meet the Bridegroom but only five of them had made the spiritual preparation to do so. You can be orthodox, belong to a good Bible-preaching church, hold to the Authorized Version of the Bible, and still be spiritually unprepared to meet the Bridegroom.

**25:5 While the bridegroom tarried,<sup>a</sup> they all slumbered and slept.<sup>bc</sup>**

5a “**tarried**” Does the Lord have a set and unchangeable time appointed for His coming or can it be altered by circumstances? I believe that the time of His coming is set but we perceive it as long and tarrying. We cry out “what is taking Him so long? Doesn’t He see the distress and tribulation we are going through?” We wonder why He seems to delay but in reality, He is not delaying.

**5b "they slumbered and slept"**

1. "let us not sleep, as the rest do, but let us watch and be sober." (1 Thessalonians 5:6.)
2. Despite the continual preaching, teachings and warnings regarding the doctrines of the Second Coming, there are always going to be those who ignore it or who are lazy about it. They will be asleep when they should have been awake and they should have been watching instead of eating and drinking and beating the servants.
3. There is no condemnation of this slumber as the wise virgins also fell asleep. It simply speaks of our human weaknesses as we wait.

5c "Matthew 25:5 depicts a subsequent period of Church History: "While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept." This long period of spiritual lethargy included the Dark Ages and the Reformation, leading up to the Revivalists of the 1700s and 1800s. Although Bible doctrine dominated the time of the Reformation, it was only later that "spirituality" flowed from the doctrine of Scripture and became a burden among God's people. Matthew 25:6-7 may depict a return to a consciousness of Christ's imminent return: And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. Of all the periods of Church History, the greatest revival era was the Philadelphia Age from about 1750 to 1900. Although "doctrine" was the great burden of the Reformation and post-Reformation among the Puritans, the burden for the Christian life and spirituality did not come to importance until this time. From Reformation doctrine flowed Philadelphia revivalism and spirituality; then in the mid-nineteenth century, from revivalism and spirituality flowed a renewed burden and expectancy for Christ's second coming. This time was the beginning of the latter-rain outpouring of the Spirit. We are now at the end of this latter-rain outpouring. Probably more Christians would have been ready for Christ's coming at the beginning of the Philadelphia Church Age than in this Laodicean Church Age. The End Time will be the hardest period to find "true" Christians; it is the midnight of history. Because of the present increase of the apostasy within the Institutional Church, fewer individuals are truly in touch with God than even one hundred years ago. The public Christianity of our times is a false Christianity; it proclaims another Gospel of another kind. Christ is outside the Church knocking, endeavoring to find individuals within who will open the door for Him at this suppertime of history. Thus, for God's remnant this midnight hour is the period of the awakening. But what Neo-Christianity is calling an awakening the Bible calls an apostasy. The time of awakening comes when a voice is heard, "Behold the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him" (25:6). This is what has brought the burden of revival among the remnant in the past 200 years; it is the clear consciousness of the second coming of Christ. Now that the call has come, the crucial key for the remnant concerns how much oil is needed for the preparation. The parable of Matthew 25 indicates that they all were virgins, they all slept, they all awakened, they all had lamps, and they all had wicks which they trimmed. The only difference between being wise and being foolish was having or lacking the additional oil."<sup>228</sup>

**25:6 And at midnight<sup>a</sup> there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.<sup>bcde</sup>**

6a What kind of a bridegroom would arrive for his own wedding at midnight? That is very inconvenient. The Lord comes on His own schedule, when the world is sleeping and when only a remnant are prepared and looking for Him.

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<sup>228</sup> H.T. Spence, "Why Sleep Ye?" in Straightway, volume 34 number 2, March 2006.

6b "The day appointed for the marriage, about five o'clock in the evening, the bridegroom comes to the house of the bride, where the priest, pronounces for the first time the nuptial benediction. He then brings her to his own house, gives her some refreshment, and afterwards the assembly of her relatives and friends reconduct her to her father's house. When she arrives, the priest repeats the nuptial benediction, which is generally done about Midnight; immediately after, the bride, accompanied with a part of her attending troop, (the rest having returned to their own homes), is reconducted to the house of her husband, where she generally arrives about three o'clock in the morning. Nothing can be more brilliant than these nuptial solemnities in India. Sometimes the assembly consists of not less than two thousand persons, all richly dressed in gold and silver tissue; the friends and relatives of the bride, richly dressed in gold and silver tissue; the friends and relatives of the bride, encompassed with their domestics, are all mounted on horses richly harnessed. The goods, wardrobe, and even the bed of the bride, are carried in triumph. The husband, richly mounted and magnificently dressed, is accompanied by his friends and relatives, the friends of the bride following him in covered carriages. At intervals, during the procession, guns and rockets are fired, and the spectacle is rendered grand beyond description, by a prodigious number of Lighted Torches, and by the Sound of a multitude of musical instruments."<sup>229</sup>

6c They all knew the Bridegroom was coming, but they did not the exact time. They knew the "times and the seasons" of his arrival so they had to be always ready.

6d In terms of the Second Coming, the Church was asleep from about the 4<sup>th</sup> century when the truth was lost to the postmillennialism of Augustine and the Roman Catholic system until its recovery in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In that period, there was little preaching and teaching on the Second Coming since the mainline church believed that the City of God was already on earth in the form of the Roman Catholic system. Why preach on prophecy if the kingdom was already here? But the virgins began to awaken in the 19<sup>th</sup> century with the so-called Plymouth Brethren. They began preaching, teaching and writing on the Second Coming. Their burden caught fire and reached America after the Civil War. This led to the development of the Fundamentalist movement in the 1870s. They heard the call "The Bridegroom Cometh" that the church had missed for 1,800 years. Dispensational premillennialism came to dominate the prophetic thinking of God's people and the expectation of the Second Coming and a literal Millennium that had nothing to do with the Church of Rome or the teachings of Augustine. The early church in Constantine's day and in Augustine's day never heard the call. The Church of Rome never heard the call. The Reformers may have heard it but they really did not know what to do with it.<sup>230</sup> It was heard by the Plymouth Brethren and the early Fundamentalists.

6e While the virgins were awakening to forgotten prophetic truth, it must be remembered that Satan was always stirring to try to keep it suppressed. The cults which arose in the 19<sup>th</sup> century were part of this. The Seventh Day Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses,<sup>231</sup> Christian Scientists, Mormons, Christadelphians and others arose a little after the midnight cry. So was the development of textual criticism, which attempted to bring confusion regarding the Bible texts.

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<sup>229</sup> Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*.

<sup>230</sup> The burden of the Reformers was justification by faith, not prophecy. Some of the Reformers tried their hand at writing commentaries in Daniel and Revelation, but such attempts usually were not successful.

<sup>231</sup> The Seventh Day Adventists and Jehovah Witnesses focused on prophetic topics and brought about much perversion of the truth. Good luck trying to figure out the prophetic teachings of the Seventh Day Adventists!

The followers of Edward Irving, who were contemporary with John Nelson Darby also attempted to confuse the issue with their errors. The Church of Rome was also busy during this time with their pernicious errors and threats.

**25:7 Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps.<sup>ab</sup>**

7a Trimming the lamps would involve removing the charred portion of their wick. This helps the flame burn purer and brighter. The wick must be cleaned occasionally. While spiritual reform and change are needed, God's saints discerned that the life must have the oil to burn for Christ. The trimming of the wick without the oil is of no benefit. Repentance without godly sorrow had no power; only through the godly sorrow was repentance granted by God.

**7b "Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps"**

1. This was a season of an awakening and revival to come to God's true people, bringing a preparation and readiness of the life for His coming. We believe one of the burdens for revival is the preparation of the soul and life for the coming of the Lord. Though Neo-Christianity speaks of an "Awakening" at this time, it is evident that the world, as well as the institutional Church, is getting worse. But God has promised an End-time awakening to come to His true people.
2. This will bring to the forefront the need of oil to the end, the need of communion (Revelation 3:20 **"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."**), and the need of a fullness of God's Spirit in anointing for the life.
3. God first must send an awakening to the heart and then a revival. An awakening is when God opens the heart to the things of the Lord and the needs of the inward life with God.
  - A. Even the wise virgins at times sleep and need to come to an awakening. There is the need to arise from the sleep of apathy, indifference, neutrality with God, etc.
4. Once the awakening comes, God must bring revival to the soul and life.
  - A. Passions and desires have waned or grown cold as apathy has set in. These matters need to be revived or stirred up.
  - B. There may be things we used to do spiritually that we no longer do actively; such things were necessary and were most proper in our earlier walk with God.
  - C. The cares of life caused such precious things to wane, and eventually we became cold to them.
  - D. We tend to believe that certain responsible things in our lives can cover up for what is spiritually lacking. Revival brings a desire either to bring into the life that which is lacking or to restore that which has grown desolate."<sup>232</sup>

**25:8 And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil;<sup>a</sup> for our lamps are gone out.<sup>bcde</sup>**

8a **"Give us of your oil"** "How did you come to victory over sin?" "How did you come to know communion with God?" "Why is your love for Him so deep and earnest?" These questions should be asked by those who are seeking for a closer walk with God, heart purity and communion with God. It seemed that the righteous daily life and walk of individuals with Christ could almost supply another's spiritual lack; thus, some Christians believed they could ask for

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<sup>232</sup> H. T. Spence, "Revival In The Home Summer Study Series", 2016.

such oil from deeper-living Christians. Just being around mature Christians seemed to some to be a store of grace from which they could draw.

"The prepared virgins went to all the trouble to prepare themselves for the return of the Bridegroom. They brought the oil. They filled their lamps. They waited. The lazy and unprepared virgins did none of this but when the Bridegroom did arrive, they panicked and wanted the faithful virgins to "bail them out". It is like a schoolboy who waits until Sunday night to write his 5,000-word report that is due the next day. The problem is that the Bridegroom comes "**in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye**" (1 Corinthians 15:52) so there is no time to do what you neglected. You should have been ready. You should have been living right and you should be all "prayed up" instead of saying "**my lord delayed his return**" so you start living in sin (Matthew 24:48,49). You prepare NOW. The weather man tells you a category 5 hurricane is going to hit your area in three days, so you start your preparations NOW.

"God's saints discerned that the life must have the oil in order to burn for Christ. The trimming of the wick without the oil is of no benefit. Repentance without godly sorrow had no power; only through the godly sorrow was repentance granted by God. "Give us of your oil" was often the cry from one to another in those days. "How did you come to victory over sin?" "How did you come to know communion with God?" "Why is your love for Him so deep and earnest?" Yes, these were questions asked in church, on the telephone, and around the altar. It seemed that the righteous daily life and walk of individuals with Christ could almost supply another's spiritual lack; thus, some Christians believed they could ask for such oil from deeper-living Christians. Just being around deeper Christians seemed to some to be a store of grace from which they could draw without personal preparation... While the foolish went to buy, the Bridegroom came, and they that were ready went in with Him (Matt. 25:10). This is our burden as we live on the eve of such days. "But the wise shall understand." As a pastor and teacher, I must be ready to preach and teach the procuring of this biblical oil, as well as how to reserve this oil. The term in Daniel 12:10 for the wise is a term implying that of a "teacher," or one who causes others to understand. What are the truths that I must see in the Matthew 25 parable? I must have a concern about how I am living in what seems to be a time of delay in Christ's coming; I must be pure, spiritual, a virgin in this present age; I must have oil; I must be awake and watching; I must be trimming the wick of my life for the burning flame of Christ; yes, I personally must be ready. The five foolish virgins did not have a burning and living relationship with the Bridegroom. They failed at the end. Certainly, there was not a conscious need of care and forethought for preparation in the light of His coming."<sup>233</sup>

The Holy Spirit cannot be given, shared or sold. You must personally possess Him for yourself.

#### 8b "our lamps have gone out"

1. Fearful words! One duty of the priests was to make sure the fire on the altar of burnt offering was to "**never go out**" (Leviticus 6:12,13). Once the altar is lit, it is our responsibility to keep the fire lit- it must never go out. God kindles the fire- it is the duty of the priests to maintain it. What happens when the fire goes out? There is no indication in Scripture that God re-lights it.

A. How is the fire on the altar maintained?

i. Not by false methods and human means as seen in Leviticus 10:1,2  
"**And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD.**"

<sup>233</sup> H. T. Spence, "But The Wise Shall Understand", Straightway, July-August, 2016.



- a. God will not accept it
    - b. God will judge it
  - ii. By God's appointed means
    - a. Sacrifice- continually to feed the flame!
    - b. Confession of sin
    - c. Putting on the wood, hay and stubble.
      - (i). 1 Corinthians 3:12 **"Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;"**
    - d. Adding of oil (the Holy Spirit)
    - e. Meditation, prayer, Bible reading.
      - (i). Psalm 39:3 **"My heart was hot within me, while I was musing the fire burned: then spake I with my tongue,"**
2. They lamps were lit once, now they had no oil. It had been exhausted and not refilled. They neglected to refill the lamps or to take enough oil to make it through the night season of waiting for the Bridegroom.
- A. You have to make provisions to ensure your walk with God and communion with God are strong enough to get you through for the rest of your life.
  - B. These virgins did not keep a watch on their spirits and their relation to the Holy Spirit. Through neglect and carnality, they "lost" the filling when they needed it most. They had no oil, no light and no way to get back to a state of preparation in so short a time.
  - C. When the rapture comes, there will be no time to run to an altar or a church and "get right" as it happens in the **"twinkling of an eye"** (1 Corinthians 15:52) and **"immediately"** (Revelation 4:2)."

8c The foolish virgins wanted the oil, they wanted what the wise virgins had but were unable to obtain. The wise virgins turned down their request for oil.

- 1. The wise needed the oil for themselves and they had none to spare. You will need as much of the Holy Spirit as you can get to make it through this age and you have none to spare.
- 2. We cannot give spirituality to others. We cannot impart it to others. Others can help and assist but you must obtain it for yourself. It comes from long hours of prayer, reading, meditation, study and hearing of sermons. It is not something that can be given or taken from another. The wise couldn't give any of their oil, even if they wanted to.
- 3. Spirituality cannot be bought. You cannot obtain it after paying tuition for four years at a Bible college. You cannot obtain it by attending some conference and by paying \$200 for an armload of notebooks. You can buy books that will help you but the book must be read and applied. You cannot place a book on spirituality under your pillow and obtain spirituality by osmosis. Besides, it was midnight.
- 4. It was midnight. The oil-merchants were all closed.
  - A. We are in the midnight hour of human history. There are few places you can go at this time of Church History to hear about spirituality. In most pulpits, you will hear about evangelism, church growth, psychology, politics, running busses, prosperity, anything but spirituality. Where will you go today to hear about developing spirituality and a walk with God? Very few books are being written about it. Romance novels about the Amish and books on politics dominate what few Christian bookstores are left. In better days, during the "day", you heard about it often. Books were plentiful. Revivals brought such a burden to the forefront. It was during the spiritual day in that era. Oil merchants were plentiful.

But it is midnight now and what genuine oil merchants are closed. It will be much more difficult to obtain the spiritual oil for your lamps in the hours before the coming of the Bridegroom.

5. You need to get what you need regarding spirituality now, not at midnight. Why wait? Why delay? What are you waiting for? Why didn't you plan ahead? Why did you not ensure you had ample supplies to make it through the night season of waiting and watching? Did you think you can wait until the 11<sup>th</sup> hour to "get right with God?" Do you imagine yourself to have such a luxury? You make your preparation for the crises before it hits.

6. There are many foolish virgins today. They mistake work for spirituality. They comfort themselves that they are not like other men, for they fast twice in the week and give tithes of all that they possess. They worship with energy, with modern worship songs and their churches are full and the money is coming in, They delude themselves that they are in a great last-days revival. Yet they realize not that their lamps went out long ago and that they have no oil for when they will need it most. They rely on a false spirituality. The doctrinal statement of their churches are strong yet they themselves are weak. How many Calvinistic and Reformed churches are like this! I knew of a nearby church that advertised that they were Calvinistic and Reformed yet their music was horrible and they had no Christian standards of dress and their "worship" was contemporary to the core. Foolish virgins!

<b>Wise Virgins</b>	<b>Foolish Virgins</b>
Were watching	Were watching
Fell asleep	Fell asleep
Had lamps	Had lamps
Had oil	Had oil
Had reserves of oil	They ran out of oil
Had enough oil to prepare them for the coming	Had no oil for the coming
Would not give of their oil	Asked the wise virgins to give of their oil
Went into the wedding	Missed the wedding
Were acknowledged by the Bridegroom	Were not acknowledged by the Bridegroom
Had a genuine expectation and spirituality	They had a defective hope in the coming of the Bridegroom and a defective spirituality

8d "Awe-stricken come the foolish virgins to the wise, saying, "Give us of your oil"; but this is beyond the Christian, and the wise bid them "Go, buy oil for yourselves." There is One who sells, but freely, without money and without price: to buy even from an apostle is fatal. The cry was given to revive the hope, as it had the effect also of recalling to the original and only right attitude of the saints toward Christ. It was enough to sever the wise as alone ready to act accordingly. It was too late for the foolish: who could give what they wanted?

"What is the meaning of all the recent agitation? People zealous for religious forms, who know not really of Christianity. It is the foolish virgins in quest of the oil, leaving no stone unturned to get what they have not, the one thing needful -- taking every way except the right way. There is only one means of procuring the oil: solely can it be through Christ Himself, without money and without price. I remember the time when men bearing the name of the Lord's ministers spent their time in fishing, hunting, shooting, and dancing. Clergymen joined in worldly pleasures without shame. You rarely hear of such things now: the Oxford delusion has altered the form. The same sort of men now-a-days look very demure: they are in general busy everywhere about religion. Do you believe they are any better than the men who used to hunt

and dance? They have a zeal; but is it according to knowledge? Is it Christ, or is it not what they call the church without Him? Form deceives most. All the fashionable ecclesiastical millinery or machinery, does it change people's state or suppose real renewal? The decking of ecclesiastical buildings, the fantastical costumes of clergymen, the modern taste for church music, processions, and stations, simply show that the foolish virgins are at work. They are not in a fit state to meet the Lord, and fear it themselves. They are troubled with the rumor of they know not what. The consequence, then, of this midnight cry is that a double activity is going on. For the Lord is awakening those who know Himself, and are wise by His grace, to go forth to meet the Bridegroom. The others, if indirectly, are none the less powerfully but in their own way affected by the cry and its effects, which rise not above nature and the earth.

"Utterly ignorant of the grace of God, they are trying to make up by what is called 'earnestness.' They know not that they are far from God, yea, dead in trespasses and sins: their superstitious trust in baptismal regeneration blinds them. So they think, or hope, that being 'earnest' they may somehow or other get right at last. What delusion can be more hopeless? If you ask them whether their sins are blotted out, and they are saved by grace, they count it presumption. They are as ignorant of the true power and privilege of redemption as the heathen or the Jew. They have no Spirit-taught certainty that the Son of man came down to save the lost. If there be such a thing as a present salvation, their occupation is evidently gone. Neither grace nor truth admits of all this religious self-importance, bustle, and vain show. As sinners, we need a Savior, and a divine salvation; as saints, let us seek a calm but complete devotedness to the name, word, and work of the Lord Jesus. But man prefers his own works; and to win the world he finds that scenic representations of Christian facts or forms act most on the masses, and attract the light, sentimental, despairing, and even profane. Individuals in the midst of such histrionic religion may seek with a certain measure of the gospel to win souls; yet they subject Christ Himself to the church. But the movement as a whole is just the activity of the foolish virgins, who have not the oil and in vain try to get it as best they can."<sup>234</sup>

8e This is not a Church Age Parable regarding the oil/Holy Spirit as:

1. The Holy Spirit must be bought.
2. The Holy Spirit is not indwelling the virgins as the oil is in the lamps.

**25:9 But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.**<sup>abc</sup>

9a If the oil stands for the Holy Spirit, is there a limited supply of the Holy Spirit available in the Tribulation period? We know His role changes from the Church Age to the Tribulation and that His role in the Tribulation may be more limited than it is today.

1. Who sells the Holy Spirit?
2. How can the Holy Spirit be purchased?
3. Who would sell them oil at midnight? There comes a time where you wait too long to spiritually prepare yourselves for the Lord's coming and when that day finally arrives, you will be caught unaware and you will be unable to do anything about it. If have to work when it is yet day as the night is coming when no man can work...or buy (John 9:4).

9b There are many spiritual Christians who seem to always be full of the Holy Spirit in their lives, but they do not have extra and cannot impart the Holy Spirit to others. They can show where and how to obtain the Holy Spirit through the pursuit of communion with God, but they

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<sup>234</sup> Cited in R. A. Huebner, *Elements of Dispensational Truth*, volume 2, pages 228-229.

cannot give it to another. And the moments leading up to the coming of the Bridegroom is no time to start pursuing this. Developing a walk with God takes time and usually a whole lifetime is spent developing it. It cannot be obtained in a few minutes. Yet too many saints will wait too long in their life until they finally start getting serious for God. They were saved at a young age but slept the years away when they should have been busy obtaining the oil they needed for their life. They then find themselves late in life with little or no oil, with the return of the Lord imminent. They will be reduced to a state of panic in trying to obtain the oil for a Christian life on short notice, only to be frustrated in their attempts. This is why God always speaks of NOW and TODAY.

1. Ecclesiastes 12:1 **"Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them;"**

2. Hebrews 3:7,13,15 **"Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice...But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin...While it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation."**

9c A similar instance of buying oil took place in 2 Kings 4:7 where the oil is sold, not bought.

**25:10<sup>a</sup> And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut.<sup>b</sup>**

10a Verse 10 should always be our burden, that we would be spiritually wise and prepared to meet the Bridegroom, even if He comes at an unexpected time.

1. Matthew 24:44, **"Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh."** Also see Luke 12:40.

10b "We are not told that consequent upon the midnight cry all of the virgins returned to the original calling. Neither are we told that the wise all returned to the original calling. Indeed, the next parable which is very closely linked with this one (is an adjunct to this one), tells us about service for Christ in His absence by servants cognizant of His coming but without necessary reference to a present expectation of Christ's coming. We must not look in the parable of the virgins for all the variations we find in professed Christians. But we are told that there was a general effect. They arose and trimmed their lamps. There arose a felt need with respect to testimony.

"On the part of the wise virgins, there was a marked increase of missionary activity in the 19th century, along with the rise of the Sunday Schools, Y.M.C.A., and other movements. There was also a remarkable interest aroused in the truth of the Lord's coming and many began to await the Son from heaven. In this regard W. Kelly wrote:

"Is there nothing like this going on now? I appeal to those who love the Lord and the Church; and the more they know what is going on in the Church, and the more honest they are in answering, the better. Is not the midnight cry being made? Is there no going forth to meet Christ? It seems to me there can be but one answer, wherever spiritual intelligence and honesty are found. Since the apostles passed away, never till now has there been the appearance of any such awakening in the hearts of the saints all over the world; never before this joyful welcome, taking the place of sleep that used to be only disturbed by dreams of distress.

"And another thing is in its way to be marked. It is not a set of persons satisfied with themselves, or wishing to use this cry in order to make a party. God forbid

such a misuse! The cry goes out from the saints of God, wherever they may be, and penetrates where it is least expected. It has been heard in Catholicism. It has rung through Protestantism. Neither nationalism nor dissent have been able to stifle the call. Despite of all past sloth or present barriers and stumbling-blocks, the wise virgins go out to meet the Bridegroom. It is for none to say how far the Lord may carry the call, or to what extent He may give it effect. I do say it is a dangerous thing for souls to wait to see this or that result produced, before they go forth with oil in their vessels. Let the eye be only on Christ. Let the heart ever rest on the precious truth that we are one with Him, joyful in the taste of His love by the Holy Ghost now, and we shall soon reciprocate the longing of His heart who says, "Behold, I come quickly." If we know what He is to us here, we shall earnestly desire unbroken fellowship with Himself in heaven. And if saints only in a larger measure enter into this most precious portion for the heart, they will not be able to rest where there is not a practical testimony to it in their hearts and their homes, in their walk and their worship. The hope is just as practical as the faith of God's elect, and must be carried out into the details of each day."<sup>235</sup>

**25:11 Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us.<sup>a</sup>**

11a The Lord says He stood at the door and knocked (Revelation 3:20 "**Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.**") But what if we refuse to open the door to Him? There will come a time when He will refuse to open the door to us (Luke 13:25 "**When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are:**" also the next verse.).

**25:12 But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.<sup>a</sup>**

12a These are always fearful words. They were also virgins and were also waiting for the Bridegroom, but their spiritual laziness cost them, and they heard these fearful words "**I know you not**".

**25:13 Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.<sup>abcd</sup>**

13a See comments under Matthew 24:42-51.

13b Summary of the Parable

1. They "**took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.**"
2. In the first generation of the Church, God's people were anticipating the Second Coming almost immediately. They were watching for Him.
  - A. Paul said, "**Then we which are alive and remain**" (1 Thessalonians 4:17). Paul was looking for the return of the Lord for his own in the rapture.
  - B. This watching for and belief in the "any-moment" return of Christ had an impact on the lives of the early Christians. Knowing the Lord could return at any moment made them live clean lives as they did not want to be caught living in sin at His return.

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<sup>235</sup> R. A. Huebner, *Elements of Dispensational Truth*, volume 2, pages 227-228.

- i. Many were not living like this but thought the Lord's coming was delayed for a long time and that they could live however they wanted.
    - a. Matthew 24:48-51 **"But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; And shall begin to smite his fellowservants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites."**
- 3. The Bridegroom (Christ) did not come immediately, or at least at the time expected: **"While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept"** (Matthew 25:5).
  - A. This is a commentary on Church history in the light of the return of Christ. Church history indicates that men are given to slumbering and sleeping.
  - B. **"Where is the promise of His coming?"** (2 Peter 3:4). People can get discouraged in waiting for His return. The Church has been saying for Millennia that the Lord would return, yet as of 2024, He has not come. We thought He might return in 1984 or 2000 but He did not? When will He come? Will He come at all? This seeming delay will cause many to get careless in their watch and slumber in weariness or in discouragement.
- 4. In Matthew 25:6, we read **"And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him."**
  - A. This initial cry came in history in the early-to-mid 19<sup>th</sup> century when the truths of the Second Coming came to the forefront in the preaching of God's men.
  - B. The books of Daniel and Revelation were opened by the Holy Spirit with insight for the End Time. This burden has continued to the present hour.
- 5. The Five Wise Virgins watched.
  - A. They were alert.
  - B. They knew the "signs of the times".
    - i. Matthew 16:3 **"And in the morning, It will be foul weather to day: for the sky is red and lowring. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?"**
  - C. The believed the word of the Bridegroom when He said:
    - i. He would come again.
      - a. John 14:3 **"And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."**
    - ii. That He would come quickly.
      - a. Revelation 3:11 **"Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."**
      - b. Rev\_22:7,12,20 **"Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book...And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be...He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."**
  - D. They actively watched and listened (for the trumpet) for His return.
  - E. Thus, they were ready when He did return.
- 6. The Five Foolish Virgins did not watch. Why not?
  - A. They really didn't believe the Bridegroom's promise to come again.

B. If they did believe the Bridegroom, they did not think His return would be soon, so they thought they had plenty of time. ‘

i. They thought they would have plenty of time to get ready. But there will be no warning as His return will happen in the “twinking of an eye” which is less than a second.

a. 1 Corinthians 15:52 **“In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.”**

ii. I wonder if there will be any signs of when the rapture will take place in the short term, as maybe there would be a warming of a day or so to Christians before it happens. I base that on the fact that everyone involved seemed to know that Elijah would be “raptured” on the day that he was in 2 Kings 2.

C. Were they lazy? Watching implies work.

D. They were asleep. It can be difficult to stay up all night during a night watch but we cannot afford the luxury of sleep.

i. I have had to work many “graveyard shifts” and there have been times when I had to drive all night, fighting drowsiness all the time. But I could not afford to go to sleep in such seasons as the results could have been disastrous.

ii. Romans 13:11 **“And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.”**

iii. 1Thessalonians 5:6,7 **“Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night.”**

iv. The wise virgins sleep too but theirs may have been a different sleep. One can still watch and sleep. One can sleep light yet be ready in an instant to act when awakened. Think of a firefighter. He may sleep but he is ready in case the alarm sounds at 2 A.M. His clothes are laid out, his keys and wallet are nearby, and his car is fueled, ready to drive to the fire station. He is ready when awakened. The foolish virgins did not have such a “prepared” sleep.

E. Thus, they were not prepared upon His return. They were caught off guard and suffered loss. This is why we must watch, so we will not suffer the same fate.

F. There is a judgment if you don’t watch.

i. Revelation 3:3 **“Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.”**

7. We are told many times to watch.

A. Matthew 24:42, **Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.**

B. Matthew 25:13, **Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.**

C. Mark 13:35,37, **Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning...And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.**

D. 1 Corinthians 16:13, **Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.**

E. Colossians 4:2, **Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with**

**thanksgiving;**

F. 1 Thessalonians 5:6, **Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.**

G. 2 Timothy 4:5, **But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.**

What is involved in “the watch”?

1. Setting the watch

A. Judges 7:19 **So Gideon, and the hundred men that were with him, came unto the outside of the camp in the beginning of the middle watch; and they had but newly set the watch: and they blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers that were in their hands.**

2. A watch of protection.

A. 2 Kings 11:5-7 **And he commanded them, saying, This is the thing that ye shall do; A third part of you that enter in on the sabbath shall even be keepers of the watch of the king's house; And a third part shall be at the gate of Sur; and a third part at the gate behind the guard: so shall ye keep the watch of the house, that it be not broken down. And two parts of all you that go forth on the sabbath, even they shall keep the watch of the house of the LORD about the king.**

3. Keep the watch

A. 2 Chronicles 23:6 **But let none come into the house of the LORD, save the priests, and they that minister of the Levites; they shall go in, for they are holy: but all the people shall keep the watch of the LORD.**

4. Watch against enemies

A. Nehemiah 4:9 **Nevertheless we made our prayer unto our God, and set a watch against them day and night, because of them.**

5. Watching can be lonely work

A. Psalm 102:7 **I watch, and am as a sparrow alone upon the house top.**

6. I will watch

A. Habakkuk 2:1 **I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what he will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved.**

7. Watch for the Lord in the Second Coming

A. Matthew 24:42 **Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.**

B. Matthew 25:13 **Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.**

C. Mark 13:35,37 **Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning...And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.**

8. Watch with the Lord

A. Matthew 26:38 **Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me.**

B. Mark 14:34 **And saith unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death: tarry ye here, and watch.**

9. Watch and pray, as watching can be hard work

A. Matthew 26:41 **Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.**

B. Mark 14:38 **Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak.**

C. Luke 21:36 **Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted**



**worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.**

D. 1 Peter 4:7 **But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.**

10. General command to watch

A. Acts 20:31 **Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.**

B. 1 Corinthians 16:13 **Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.**

C. Colossians 4:2 **Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving;**

D. 1 Thessalonians 5:6 **Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.**

E. 2 Timothy 4:5 **But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.**

11. Watching for souls

A. Hebrews 13:17 **Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.**

12. Warning if you don't watch

A. Revelation 3:3 **Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.**

13. Watching in vain

A. Psalm 127:1 **A Song of degrees for Solomon. Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.**

14. What of the night?

A. Isaiah 21:11 **The burden of Dumah. He calleth to me out of Seir, Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night?**

15. Ezekiel set as a watchman

A. Ezekiel 3:17 **Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me.**

B. Ezekiel 33:7 **So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me.**

16. Unfaithful watchmen

A. Ezekiel 33:6 **But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand.**

17. A rebuke for failure to watch

A. Matthew 26:40 **And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour?**

"Keeping busy for Jesus and keeping your ministry in business is very important now. Every practicing separatist fundamentalist church must stay in business, with the lights on, with the grass around that ministry cut, with punctuality and joy and worship. No matter what happens, "occupy." If the attendance increases or falls, occupy. If some leave that church, occupy. If things are said against the pulpit, occupy. Do not allow discouragement to follow; choose never to live and minister without hope. Keep the spirit right; keep the family together; keep the marriage; occupy in the area God has assigned you. Occupy! If they do not like your choice of

the historic hymns and classical and traditional music, you must still occupy and watch faithfully through the tried music of the church.

"But watch, too! If you think you suffer loss—watch! You must watch when it appears nothing is happening to your dream or vision. You must watch if what you do is rejected. You must watch whether there is a battle going on, or peace, or indifference. You must watch! When I patrolled on Kwajalein each night, nothing happened. We must always watch if nothing or something happens. Remember: watching is only watching—being faithful to what you see. Watchmen never sleep. Watchmen must always be awake, alert, and careful.

"There is a place in our beloved Authorized King James Version of the Holy Scriptures where we have the word "watch" with an unusual placement, **Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh** (Matthew 25:13)...In the verse before us, "Watch," is not the more familiar New Testament word. We can see that this word must be different because instead of the regular night watch, guarding things, etc., this is watching for the unknown time of the coming of the bridegroom to take the bride and the virgins from the chamber of the bride to the chamber of the bridegroom for the marriage. There was even a period of slumbering and sleeping which was not condemned. This word "watch" must be understood in a different way, and indeed, it is. This word "watch" (*agrupnia*) deals with "sleeplessness"; a meaning taken from "to chase sleep," like driving sleep from the watcher. In other words, "watch," in this context, is "be prepared, awake, ready." This, too, is very much needed in our time.

"As you occupy and stand your watch, be prepared, too.

"In these dark times, get ready, be prepared for the sudden "shout," "voice," and "trump" announcing the Lord's call for the transport to the clouds of His glory.

"Be prepared for a different kind of people or individual who is observing your endeavor to occupy and watch. There remains a people for the Lord out there, unevangelized, who have become weary with the contemporary church music, the charismatic clowns and fevers, the ecumenical universalism of Billy Graham, the message of the World Council of Churches, the Promise Keepers, the Social Gospel, and who are positive candidates for a church where there is the Word and a Welcome. They do not want to go back to Rome and Roman Catholicism. There are not millions awaiting this message, but there is a considerable remnant.

"Be prepared to welcome some disillusioned religionists, atheists, agnostics, who have tried many things from sociology to science, so-called; from healing lines to decision lines; from crusades to their own crucibles of life.

"Be prepared to welcome an honest soul floundering in the shoals of despair and hopelessness.

"Be prepared: keep your lamp burning; keep a source of oil; speak in the streets; go to the prisons; take time for the children; and, prepare your own heart, mind and soul with the resources of God's great grace. Not everyone believes in worldliness, ecumenism, and gospel rock and the contemporary arrangement of song.

"To the end of our days, in the actions of all of our ways—we must occupy; we must watch; and we must be prepared!"<sup>236</sup>

Do you have a place where you watch? In his semi auto-biographical novel *The Divine Interlude*, O. Talmadge Spence describes the central figure as having a *ben most bore*, or a "secret hole", built in his attic, that housed most of his theological books. It was not his study but rather his private "watch", where he would go to read and pray. It was like his spiritual watch tower where he would pray for the remnant around the world. Do we have a place where we can go and watch? A prayer closet, a study, a reading room with a recliner, an attic space, where we go to watch and pray?

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<sup>236</sup> O. Talmadge Spence, "Keep The Watch", Straightway, February, 1999.

13c “Now, beginning at the beginning, and carefully and reverently sorting the facts, assessing them in the belief that the Bible is far superior to any commentary written on it, let us notice:

1. Those involved are virgins (plural), not “a virgin.”
2. They go to marry no one; they go to MEET Someone.
3. They go to meet Someone who is already married (Luke 12:36).
4. All had oil to start with, and some lost it (vss. 4, 7–8).
5. If oil is a type of the HOLY SPIRIT, works are involved in obtaining a fresh supply of the Holy Spirit (vss. 8–9).<sup>237</sup>
6. In 2 Kings 4:7 (where a transaction similar to this one takes place), the entire setting is JEWISH.
7. There is no “twinkling of an eye” or “in a moment” or anything else involved in the passage.
8. It is the “Son of man” coming as a married bridegroom (vs. 13), NOT “the Son of God” coming for His bride! Things different are not equal.”<sup>238</sup>

13d “Let us lay out the Scriptural definitions of the words found in the Scripture, using the Scripture’s interpretation of itself.

1. “Virgins” (plural) are found in the Tribulation, not the Church Age (Rev. 14:1–6).
2. “The VIRGIN bride” of Christ (2 Cor. 11:1–3) is never called “virgins” anywhere, and is always denominated one chaste virgin, in distinction from “virgins” (Song of Sol. 6:8–9, Psa. 45:13–14).
3. The “virgins” of the Tribulation follow the bride (Psa. 45:13–14), and they follow here at the end of the Tribulation (Matt. 24:29–31, Psa. 50:3–5).
4. There IS an element of WORKS connected with their salvation.<sup>239</sup>
5. Some of the “virgins” can lose it and DO. Consequently, Hebrews 9:28 is fair warning that there will be a split-rapture at the end of the Tribulation.
6. Since Old Testament times return (law and all!) when the Body of Christ leaves (see comments under Matt. 24:45–51), there is an element of WORKS connected with salvation (Rom. 10:5), and David fully realized that these works were connected with losing the Holy Spirit! (Psa. 51:11).<sup>240</sup>

AV

ESV

LSV

13 Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour <b>wherein the Son of man cometh.</b>	13 Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.	13 “Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know the day nor the hour.
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Modern translations omit “**wherein the Son of man cometh**”. The Authorized Version is correct and the words must be retained. After all, what are we to watch for? The Authorized Version tells us while the other versions leave us wondering.

<sup>237</sup> This can’t be a Church Age application as how can you buy the Holy Spirit.

<sup>238</sup> Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer’s Commentary on Matthew*, pages 703-704.

<sup>239</sup> This is dispensational, not applicable to the Church Age. The idea of works for salvation is a heresy in the Church Age but is a truth for the Tribulation period. The Tribulation is a different dispensation and it is not equivalent to the Church Age so why do so many assume that everything in the Tribulation is exactly as it is in the Church Age?

<sup>240</sup> Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer’s Commentary on Matthew*, pages 705-706.

### **147. The Parable of the Talents 25:14-30**

**25:14<sup>ab</sup> ¶ For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country,<sup>c</sup> who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods.**

14a This is another kingdom parable, although like the parable of the Ten Virgins, it is not referred to as a parable. Also like the Ten Virgins, this has a doctrinal application to the Jews in the Tribulation. Doctrinally, this parable deals with a Tribulation worker who does not **"endure unto the end"** (Matthew 24:13, 25:30).

14b This is to be set in contrast with the Parable of the Pounds in Luke 19:11-27. Both parables are similar, but they are not the same.

1. The Parable of the Talents deals with the Kingdom of Heaven; the Parable of the Pounds deals with the Kingdom of God.
2. In the Parable of the Talents, there are three servants; in the Parable of the Pounds, there are ten servants, showing you that the Parable of the Pounds deals with Gentiles.
3. Talents are a Jewish weight; pounds are a Gentile weight.
4. In the Parable of the Talents, each servant gets different amounts to invest; in the Parable of the Pounds, each servant gets the same amount.
5. In the Parable of the Talents, the unprofitable servant goes to outer darkness; in the Parable of the Pounds, he does not

14c The nobleman in the parable goes away **"into a far country"** (Matthew 25:12) and receives a kingdom and returns as King (Matthew 25:15).

1. The "nobleman" is Christ.
2. The "far country" is a reference to Heaven. When Christ ascended to heaven in Acts 1, He went into a "far country" with a promise to return at an unspecified time.
3. The "ten servants" and the "ten pounds" mark the parable in Luke 19 as a Church Age parable that takes place during the times of the Gentiles.
4. The servants are not given each "according to his several ability" as in the Parable of the Talents here. Each servant is given an equal amount: one pound each.
  - A. Why the difference? In Luke, we all receive an equal "pound" or opportunity. They all received ten pounds. In Matthew, the servants do not receive equal "talents". They are distributed as five, two or one talent.

**25:15 And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability;<sup>ab</sup> and straightway took his journey.**

15a Everyone got something, some ministry, some opportunity. Not everyone gets the same gifts or opportunities, but everyone gets something, and the Lord expects everyone to do something with what they are given. It is part of the sovereignty of God about who gets what and how much, why he gives more to some and less to others.

15b It would appear the Lord gave His gifts and ministries before His ascension in Acts 1.

**25:16 Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents.**

**25:17<sup>a</sup> And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two.**

17a Both men in verses 16 and 17 put their talents and gifts to work and expanded them. Their rates of return were different, but each had more at the end than what they started with. That is what the Lord was looking for.

**25:18 But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money.<sup>a</sup>**

18a This is what the Lord couldn't tolerate- inactivity. The other two servants were busy. This servant did nothing out of fear, but it resulted in laziness.

**25:19 After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them.<sup>a</sup>**

19a The Lord has been gone about 1994 years (and counting) but He will return! There is always a reckoning and a settling of accounts. For the Christian, this reckoning is at the Bema Judgment, immediately after the rapture (Revelation 4).

**25:20 And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more.**

**25:21 His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.**

**25:22 He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them.**

**25:23 His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant;<sup>a</sup> thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.<sup>b</sup>**

23a This is what every Christian should desire to hear at the Bema Seat judgment.

23b We can make a spiritual application here. The Lord wants SOME return on what He has invested in us. Even a small return will be rewarded. He commended both servants although the second servant did not produce as much of a return as did the first servant but the second servant received a commendation as well. The Lord wants effort and work. He wants us to do something with what He gives us. The issue is not whether he fails but that he tried.

Let's not just limit this to "soulwinning". The neo-Fundamentalist/hyper-evangelicals would limit this to the number of souls you've won but it goes so far beyond that. God has given us talents, gifts and abilities. What did we do with them? How did we use them to glorify God and further the Kingdom? Are you a scholar? How many books did you write? Are you good with music? How many hymns did you write? At what rate of return will you give the Lord back the talents and pounds He gave you when you stand before Him at the bema judgment?

**25:24 Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed:<sup>a</sup>**

24a This is typical of the believer who attempts nothing and accomplishes nothing for God. There was a reason why he received only one talent to start.

**25:25 And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine.<sup>a</sup>**

25a Fear of what? Losing the talent? The Lord was willing to accept that risk but He was totally unwilling to accept no attempt and return at all. If all He got back was what He gave the servant, He then could have just kept that talent to Himself for all the good it did Him. The Lord simply cannot tolerate this kind of unfaithfulness.

**25:26 His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed:<sup>a</sup>**

26a Complete condemnation! Nothing good or positive was said of this lazy servant at all. Lord, protect us from this when we stand at the Bema judgment!

**25:27 Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury.<sup>ab</sup>**

27a “usury” Interest on a loan. See Deuteronomy 23:19, 20 (“Thou shalt not lend upon usury to thy brother; usury of money, usury of victuals, usury of any thing that is lent upon usury: Unto a stranger thou mayest lend upon usury; but unto thy brother thou shalt not lend upon usury: that the LORD thy God may bless thee in all that thou settest thine hand to in the land whither thou goest to possess it.”) and Psalm 15:5 (“He that putteth not out his money to usury, nor taketh reward against the innocent. He that doeth these things shall never be moved.”). Jews were forbidden to take it from Hebrews but were allowed to charge it to foreigners.

27b This servant could have done SOMETHING to get some return on his master’s money. Even a lazy man could have walked down to the bank and deposited it into an interest-bearing account, but he was too lazy (or fearful) to do even the least thing he could do.

**25:28 Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents.<sup>a</sup>**

28a “Use it or lose it”. The Lord will take away gifts and ministries if they are unused and unappreciated.

**25:29 For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.<sup>a</sup>**

29a This will probably take place at some judgment but which one? Probably not the bema judgment as that is a judgment for the Church and this is a Kingdom parable.

**25:30 And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.<sup>a</sup>**

30a What is this? Hell? Or some sort of judgment and exclusion that does not involve hell? For notes on “**outer darkness**”, see Matthew 8:12.

#### **148. The Judgment of the Nations 25:31-46**

**25:31 ¶ When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy<sup>a</sup> angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:<sup>bcde</sup>**

##### **31a AV**

##### **ESV**

##### **LSV**

31 When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the **holy** angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:

31 “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne.

31 “But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne.

“**holy**” is omitted from the ESV, LSV and Darby translation describing these angels. “**Holy**” is missing from the 1385/1395 Wycliffe Bible. However, it is found in the Bibles of the 16th century English Protestant Reformation, the Tyndale, Coverdale, Great, Matthew, Bishops’ and Geneva Bibles.

“J. A. Moorman in *Early Manuscripts and the Authorized Version* p 73 shows that the majority of ex-tant Greek sources contain the word “holy” in Matthew 25:31 along with the Peshitta Syriac version and one Old Latin copy, although most of the extant Old Latin copies omit “holy” along with Jerome’s Latin Vulgate that omits “holy,” noticeable by the omission of the word “sancto,” which is Latin for “holy.” J. A. Moorman *ibid.* p 28 points out that the Old Latin sources have been subjected to varying amounts of corruption, which accounts for the departures in these witnesses from the AV1611 Text. Dr Moorman’s work shows that the extant Old Latin witnesses support the AV1611 in ratio 2:1 with respect to 356 important doctrinal passages of the New Testament.

“Dr Moorman shows that the ancient witnesses that omit “holy” are the corrupt uncials Aleph, B, D, L. The character of uncials Aleph, B, D, L is summarised in this writer’s work “O Biblios” – The Book pp 13, 67, 116-123, [www.timefortruth.co.uk/why-av-only/](http://www.timefortruth.co.uk/why-av-only/) uploaded version pp 8-9, 49, 95-99.

“In sum, the word “holy” in Matthew 25:31 has substantial support from God-given sources and ancient witnesses against the mainly God-denying ones that are in the minority. The modern versions cannot reasonably omit the word “holy.” “Holy” should be in the verse with respect to “holy angels” because it is a Second Advent reference and some angels are unholy, indeed “evil angels” (Psalm 78:49) and evil angels have already come down to earth with the Devil before the Second Advent.”<sup>241</sup>

31b This judgment is not the Bema Seat nor the Great White Throne Judgment. Those judgments involve the judgment of individuals. This judgment deals with the nations.

1. Also see Joel 3:2,12 for a judgment of the nations after the tribulation.

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<sup>241</sup> Alan O’Reilly.

2. Books are present at both the Bema and at the Great White Throne. No books are mentioned here.
3. The timing of this judgment is not specifically given but it must take place after the tribulation and before the Millennium. It deals with the status of the nations that go into the Millennium.

A. It is after the second coming, as in Matthew 25:31.

31c The basis is how these nations treated Israel, probably during the tribulation period.

1. The “goat nations” refused to aid Israel in her times of deepest trial, Matthew 25:41-45
  - A. They are on the “left hand”.
  - B. Their sins are sins of omission. They are condemned for things they did not do.
2. The “sheep nations” did give aid and comfort to Israel, Matthew 25:34-40
  - A. They are on the “right hand”.

31d Psalm 9 is a commentary on the Judgment of the Nations in Matthew 25:31-46.

### 31d AV

### ESV

### LSV

31 When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the <b>holy</b> angels with him, then shall he sit upon the <b>throne of his glory</b> :	31 “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne.	31 “But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne.
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“**throne of his glory.**” The ESV and LSV have “His glorious throne”.

“The AV1611 is unequivocal with respect to “the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ” 2 Thessalonians 2:14 with the statement “When the Son of man shall come in his glory” at the very beginning of Matthew 25:31. The NIV’s alteration, which matches the readings of Rome and Watchtower, shifts the focus of the glory away from the Lord Jesus Christ and onto the throne instead. It is not difficult to see who is behind the modern alteration, none other than he who has sought to exalt his own throne, noting that the Lord Jesus Christ is principal of “the stars of God.”<sup>242</sup>

**25:32 And before him shall be gathered all nations:<sup>a</sup> and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep<sup>b</sup> from the goats:<sup>cd</sup>**

32a “The Lord first gathers “before him...all nations.” Observe that, in contrast to the Devil, the scripture repeatedly recognises “nations” in that the word “nations” occurs 19 times in the Book of Revelation; Revelation 2:26, 7:9, 10:11, 11:9, 18, 12:5, 13:7, 14:8, 15:4, 16:19, 17:15, 18:3, 23, 19:15, 20:3, 8, 21:24, 26, 22:2. The Devil aims to dispose of nations and create his one-world, new world order concentration camp by destroying all bounds between nations (Alan O’Reilly).”

32b “The sheep are those from “all nations” Matthew 25:32 who minister to “my brethren” in Matthew 25:40 according to Matthew 25:34-40.

Note that:

1. “the sheep” Matthew 25:33 are not “my brethren” because “the sheep” are obviously designated differently from “my brethren” Matthew 25:40.

<sup>242</sup> Alan O’Reilly.



2. “the sheep” Matthew 25:33 are not “my brethren” because “the sheep” are part of the judgement Matthew 25:34-40 whereas “my brethren” are not.

3. “the sheep” Matthew 25:33 are not “Christians” Acts 11:26 as such because a Christian gets saved according to believing on the Lord Jesus Christ i.e. “And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house” Acts 16:31. As indicated, “the sheep” are saved by ministering to “my brethren” Matthew 25:40 i.e. by works whereas Paul writing to Christians states “But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness” Romans 4:5.

4. Paul refers to Christians as “brethren” with respect to being “faithful brethren in Christ” Colossians 1:2. See also Romans 7:4, 15:30, 1 Corinthians 1:10, 3:1, 8:12, 2 Corinthians 8:23, Galatians 6:18, Ephesians 6:23, Philippians 4:21, 1 Thessalonians 2:14, 2 Thessalonians 2:1, 3:6, 1 Timothy 4:6, Hebrews 3:1. However “my brethren” Matthew 25:40 are not Christians in the Church Age because neither “the sheep” nor anybody else gets saved or inherits a kingdom Matthew 25:34 by ministering to Christians in the Church Age, when the ministers are themselves distinct from “brethren” in the Pauline sense of the word, as Paul makes clear in Romans 8:9 “Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.”

5. “my brethren” therefore can only be literal Jews who are the seed of the woman, Israel, “which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ” in Revelation 12:17 and “they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus” Revelation 14:12 i.e. Jewish post-Church Age End Times faith and works believers.

6. Note finally that when the Lord Jesus Christ uses the term “my brethren” elsewhere in the Gospels, He is always referring to faithful Jewish followers, never Gentile followers from other nations. See Matthew 12:48-49, 28:10, Mark 3:33-34, Luke 8:21-22, John 20:17-18, noting, Judas notwithstanding Mark 3:19, how “his disciples” Matthew 12:49, Luke 8:22 or “the disciples” John 20:18, 19, 20 are mentioned in the context with “my brethren.”

This is why the sheep must be identified as those from “all nations” Matthew 25:32 who minister to “my brethren” Matthew 25:40 according to Matthew 25:34-40.”<sup>243</sup>

32c No resurrection is mentioned here so it is neither the Bema Judgment nor is it the Great White Throne.

32d Are whole nations judged or individuals from those nations? It is hard to believe that every single Syrian or Egyptian would wind up in hell because of the nation he lived in. It is usually the government of that nation that sets the tone of how that nation deals with Israel. You might be a Moslem or live in an anti-Semitic nation, but you can still get in on the blessing if you treat the Jew well as an individual.

### **25:33 And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.<sup>a</sup>**

33a This is where we get our political identifications of “The Left” and “The Right”. “The Right” generally includes conservatives and “The Left” usually identifies progressives, socialists, communists and liberals (but not classical liberals). This shows that conservatism (especially if it is Biblically based) is better than modern liberalism.

### **25:34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom<sup>a</sup> prepared for you from the foundation of the world:**

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<sup>243</sup> Alan O'Reilly.

34a They inherit a kingdom, not salvation. Salvation is a gift, not an inheritance (Ephesians 2:8 **"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:"**).

**25:35 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in:<sup>a</sup>**

35a There is an element of works in the basis for this judgment. How did these nations treat Israel?

**25:36 Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.<sup>ab</sup>**

36a Their judgment, as the goats, was based on their works. This is not the Bema judgment of Christians.

36b Prison ministries are always good if you can do it and they are fruitful. I preached in a county jail for 13 years and saw about a hundred men saved.

**25:37 Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink?<sup>a</sup>**

37a As with the goats, they were unaware of the works that the Lord is referencing. Many of them did it without realizing it and the goats neglected these works without realizing it. They were pleasantly surprised at their judgment.

**25:38 When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee?**

**25:39 Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?**

**25:40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.<sup>ab</sup>**

40a If you do it in the Lord's name, you might as well be doing it to the Lord personally.

40b They are identified by their righteous works in ministering to the Lord's literal Jewish brethren, and the Lord therefore calls them "the righteous".

**25:41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:<sup>ab</sup>**

41a This is a clear reference to hell fire. The Lord clearly taught an eternal hell of fire, even if theological liberals don't believe it.

41b These “goats” cannot be unsaved individuals from the Church Age because nobody today is condemned to “everlasting fire” and “everlasting punishment” for not ministering to anyone. In the Church Age, a man is condemned for rejecting the gospel and the payment for his sins.

**25:42 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink:**

**25:43 I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not.**

**25:44 Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?**

**25:45 Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.**

**25:46 And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.<sup>a</sup>**

46a This is clearly hell and the lake of fire as this punishment is referred to as “everlasting”. Can an entire nation be sent off into “everlasting punishment”? The “righteous” go into “life eternal” but the text does not the “righteous nations”. Individuals seem to be referenced here.



**Matthew Chapter 26**

**149. The Plot Against Christ 26:1-5, see also Mark 14:1,2; Luke 22:1,2**

**26:1 And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said unto his disciples,**

**26:2 Ye know that after two days is the feast of the passover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified.<sup>a</sup>**

2a The Lord again speaks of His impending crucifixion, two days hence.

**26:3 Then assembled together the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders of the people, unto the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas,**

**26:4 And consulted that they might take Jesus by subtilty, and kill him.<sup>a</sup>**

4a This is amazing. Supposed religious leaders and “men of God” want to murder a prophet. Politicians and “religious leaders” are the wickedest people in earth and are responsible for more martyrdoms of Christians than any Communistic atheist could hope to be.

**26:5 But they said, Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar among the people.<sup>a</sup>**

5a There was a clear conspiracy of the religious leaders to arrest Christ, but only under certain circumstances, when it would be “safe” to do so.

1. The Lord was popular enough that to arrest Him in broad daylight in public would have incited a riot.

A. The one thing the Romans would not stand was civil disorder. Let there be any rioting and certainly Caiaphas would lose his position. At the Passover, the atmosphere in Jerusalem was always explosive with political and religious dissent.

2. While Jesus was prophesying, his enemies were plotting.

**AV**

**ESV**

**LSV**

**5** But they said, Not on the **feast day**, lest there be an uproar among the people.

**5** But they said, “Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar among the people.”

**5** But they were saying, “Not during the festival, lest a riot occur among the people.”

“**feast**” The LSV reduces the Passover to a “festival” from a feast, ignoring the solemnity of it. Nowhere else have I ever seen the Passover referred to as a “festival”.

**150. The Anointing of Christ 26:6-13, see also Mark 14:3-9; John 12:1-8**

**26:6 ¶ Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper,<sup>a</sup>**

6a Simon was probably a leper the Lord had healed.

**26:7 There came unto him a woman<sup>a</sup> having an alabaster box of very precious ointment,<sup>bc</sup> and poured it on his head, as he sat at meat.**

7a The woman, probably Mary, enters with a pound of spikenard in an alabaster box. She breaks the box, pouring the perfume on the head and feet of Jesus as He sat at meat. The odor fills the dining room.

1. This was an act of great respect.
2. Jesus criticized Simon in Luke 7:46 because he did anoint the Lord's head with oil when He was a guest in his house (**"My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment."**)
3. "When had Mary purchased the spikenard? How long had she saved up for it? Had she originally bought it with her own wedding day in mind? Had she deliberately withheld it from Lazarus at the time his body was anointed for burial? All we know is that Mary had invested a large sum in this ointment and that she poured it out as an act of worship for the Lord she loved."<sup>244</sup>

**7b "A woman having an alabaster box of very precious ointment."**

1. In John 12:3, the "ointment" it is named as **"a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly."**
2. Where Matthew and Mark say: **"poured it on his head"** and **"she brake the box, and poured it on his head"** (Mark 14:3), John records, **"Mary...anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment"** (John 12:3). The incident is almost identical to the one found in Luke 7:39-50. However, here the man addressed as **"Simon"** is a Pharisee, not a leper (Luke 7:39).
  - A. The passage in Luke 7 occurs at least two years before the crucifixion, but it shows that the anointing of the head and feet of a guest was not an uncommon thing.

7c "The flask was of alabaster, a carbonate of lime or sulphate of lime, white or yellow stone, named alabaster from the town in Egypt where it was chiefly found. It was used for a phial employed for precious ointments in ancient writers, inscriptions and papyri just as we speak of a glass for the vessel made of glass. It had a cylindrical form at the top, as a rule, like a closed rosebud (Pliny). Matthew does not say what the ointment (murou) was, only saying that it was "exceeding precious" (barutimou), of weighty value, selling at a great price. Here only in the N.T. "An alabaster of nard (murou) was a present for a king" (Bruce). It was one of five presents sent by Cambyses to the King of Ethiopia (Herodotus, iii. 20)."<sup>245</sup>

**26:8 But when his disciples saw it, they had indignation, saying, To what purpose is this waste?<sup>a</sup>**

8a No doubt it was Judas who started this complaining. It is the thief who always claims to be so concerned about the money and "the poor". Judas speaks up and the other disciples chime in, showing that even at this stage, Judas still had a considerable amount of influence among the disciples.

1. Judas is not worried about the poor. He is worried about any money going anywhere except into his pocket. Judas' piety is only "bag deep."

<sup>244</sup> John Phillips, *Exploring The Gospel of Matthew*.

<sup>245</sup> A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*.

2. Judas was all about the outward works, to be seen of men. To men like him, spiritual works and devotions were worthless. Many are like this today, especially in the Independent Baptist movement. They place much emphasis on “soulwinning”, “door-knocking”, “bus routes” and “church building” but not as much on prayer, communion, meditation and devotion. Listen to the sermons preached in their conferences and “pastor’s schools” and you will see nothing but works. To them, works sanctify since they have no spirituality to fall back on.

3. They made their criticism sound spiritual by making mention of “**the poor**” (Matthew 26:9) but that is often just an excuse for these kinds of men to spend that money on themselves or on their pet projects. See any politician for an example. Those who talk about “the poor” the most are the ones who help them the least. But they will be the first ones to steal the money from these “anti-poverty” programs.

4. We wonder how the woman responded when she heard this criticism for this act of devotion. You hear it from the carnal ones in the church all the time. In the Song of Solomon, the Shulamite is always being criticized by the Daughters of Jerusalem (until chapter 6) for her love to Solomon. There will always be someone handy to criticize you if you decide to cast all to the wind and devote yourself totally to Jesus.

5. What finally motivated Judas to betray the Lord? The setting is the anointing of Jesus in Bethany. The trigger was the rebuke that Jesus gave Judas. Being stung by the Lord’s rebuke and becoming increasingly disenchanted because Jesus’ messianic and royal prospects seemed to be dimming, Judas decided to cut his losses and try to prophet as much as he could now, as it seemed he would not be able to profit in any future royal administration.

**26:9 For this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor.**

**26:10 When Jesus understood it, he said unto them, Why trouble ye the woman? for she hath wrought a good work upon me.<sup>a</sup>**

10a The Lord defends the woman and her action.

1. “**Why trouble ye the woman? for she hath wrought a good work upon me**”- John 12:7.
2. “**Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this**”- Mark 14:6.
3. “**She hath done what she could: she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying**”- Mark 14:8.

**26:11 For ye have the poor always with you;<sup>a</sup> but me ye have not always.<sup>bc</sup>**

11a “**ye have the poor always with you**”

1. The shows the failure of all Socialistic “anti-poverty” programs and “wars on poverty”. No economic system can truly solve the problem of poverty for in some instances, it is a product of human nature or events that cannot be controlled.
2. Serving Christ is more important than serving “the poor”. Only God can solve the problem of “the poor” and poverty and He will in the Millennium. Man is powerless to do anything about it.
3. “Our Lord always cared for the poor; he was himself poor, he was the poor people’s Preacher, he fed the hungry poor, and healed the sick poor. He would always have his people show their love to him by caring for the poor; but he had reached the one

occasion in his life when it was seemly that something should be done specially for himself, and this woman, by the intuition of love, did that very thing.”<sup>246</sup>

4. “The disciples were anxious to help the poor; but the Rabbis themselves said, “God allows the poor to be with us always, that the opportunities for doing good may never fail.”<sup>247</sup>

5. Genuine acts of devotion will immediately attract the criticism of spiritual hypocrites.

6. Part of the problem of “the poor” is human nature. Give some people a million dollars and they will be broke again in a week. They would spend it all on parties (like the Prodigal Son in Luke 15:13,30 **“And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living... But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf.”**), drugs, booze, cars, lottery tickets, etc. Or they will let someone swindle them out of that money. Some people simply cannot handle money.

11b **“but me ye have not always”** And the Lord would be leaving in a few days, so acts of devotion like this must be made now. We must always work when we can and as we have opportunity since these open doors eventually shut. You can help the poor anytime you want as they are always with us, but Christ would not be there in a physical form for much longer.

11c Some practical applications:

1. Jesus always accepts worship as proper always and never refuses it. He tolerates and approves of the belief that He is God.

A. Matthew 14:33 **“Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God.”**

B. John 20:28 **“And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.”**

2. Proper worship of Christ, by a believer, will cost something.

3. The death of Christ is the most important thing, not His birth. He is born to die for the sins of mankind.

4. Real devotion to Christ cannot be hid, and it will fill all the house if it is truly there

**26:12 For in that she hath poured this ointment on my body, she did it for my burial.<sup>a</sup>**

12a It wasn't much but she did all she could do with what she had.

**26:13 Verily I say unto you, Whosoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her.<sup>a</sup>**

13a And it is a memorial! It was recorded in the eternal word of God and we are still taking about it after 2,000 years! Mary's love and devotion are recorded forever in Scripture. She did a small thing in anointing Jesus, but her heart was large as was her love and devotion and the Lord commended and memorialized her for it. You don't have to do great things to be commended by God, just small things done faithfully.

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<sup>246</sup> Charles Spurgeon, *Commentary on Matthew*.

<sup>247</sup> William Barclay, *Matthew* in *The Daily Study Bible*, volume 2, page 330.



1. The world memorializes many of its own, for “great” deeds, whether for good or ill. Hollywood stars get a star on the “Walk of Fame”. Just about everything has a Hall of Fame. Singers get Grammys and actors get Oscars. Some people get bridges, highways and buildings named after them, even whole cities and states (for Washington and Lincoln).
2. The church commemorates many types of Christians:
  - A. Pastors
  - B. Teachers
  - C. Missionaries
  - D. Martyrs
  - E. Writers (both book and hymns)
  - F. I wish we would memorialize “ordinary” people more than we do, but what the church on earth omits, God will make up for it in heaven.
3. Look at the people God memorializes in Scripture as reminders and examples:
  - A. For good (not comprehensive)
    - i. Noah
    - ii. Enoch
    - iii. Abraham
    - iv. Joseph
    - v. Moses
    - vi. David
    - vii. Daniel
    - viii. The prophets
    - ix. Paul
    - x. Timothy
    - xi. Everyone mentioned in Hebrews 11.
  - B. For bad:
    - i. Cain
    - ii. Pharaoh
    - iii. Saul
    - iv. Belshazzar
    - v. Judas
    - vi. Demas

**151. The Conspiracy of Judas 26:14-16, see also Mark 14:10,11; Luke 22:3-6**

**26:14 ¶ Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests,**

**26:15 And said unto them, What will ye give me,<sup>a</sup> and I will deliver him unto you?<sup>b</sup>  
And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver.<sup>cd</sup>**

15a “**what will ye give ME...**?” It was always all about Judas and how he could profit from being a disciple.

15b What motivated Judas to do this? This is a question every commentator has asked, and we still don’t have a firm answer. We are not told directly but it had to be some form of disillusionment or disappointment when it became apparent that Jesus was not going to have Himself installed as king. That meant he wouldn’t get any glory or money for being a disciple and an early follower of Jesus. Everyone has a theory, but we may never know his true motivations.

We have to remember that Judas was flawed before this. Jesus identifies him as a “devil” in John 6:70,71 “Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? He spake of Judas Iscariot the son of Simon: for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve.” He was a devil, not simply possessed by devils. Judas would never be a supporter or Christ yet Christ deliberately and knowingly chose him. As a devil, Judas would have been waiting for the right time and situation to strike at Jesus.

15c The thirty pieces of silver was prophesied in Zechariah 11:12 **“And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver.”**

15d The members of the Sanhedrin must have been delighted. Here was an end to their difficulties in taking Jesus without causing a riot. But they did not regard Judas as an equal co-conspirator. They kept him at arm's length and treated him as a common informer. They had no respect for Judas. He was a useful idiot to them. They would give as little as they thought he would take.

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15 And said <i>unto them</i> , What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver.	15 and said, “What will you give me if I deliver him over to you?” And they paid him thirty pieces of silver.	15 and said, “What are you willing to give me to deliver Him to you?” And they weighed out thirty pieces of silver to him.

**“covenanted”** The Authorized Version correctly shows the agreement that Judas and the religious leaders had in his betrayal of Jesus, a fact the other versions ignore.

**26:16 And from that time he sought opportunity to betray him.<sup>a</sup>**

16a The Lord knew all this, of course, but He did not alter His plans at all.

**152. Preparation for the Last Supper 26:17-25, see also Mark 14:12-16; Luke 22:7-13**

**26:17 ¶ Now the first day of the feast of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the passover?<sup>a</sup>**

17a This passage established the church age ordinance of the Lord's Supper. It started with a regular observance of the Passover and the Lord then added to it and expanded it.

**26:18 And he said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master saith, My time is at hand; I will keep the passover at thy house with my disciples.<sup>a</sup>**

18a Jesus had it all arranged through His omniscience.

**26:19 And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them; and they made ready the passover.**

**26:20<sup>a</sup> Now when the even was come, he sat<sup>b</sup> down with the twelve.**

20a See also Mark 14:17-21; Luke 22:14 and John 13:21,22.

20b “**sat**” is defined in Amos 6:4 as reclining on a couch, “**That lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall;**”.

1. “There is no need to brag about what a great artist DaVinci was. DaVinci couldn’t read a Bible in eighth-grade Italian. He painted all the disciples sitting bolt upright, like Italian politicians.”<sup>248</sup> His painting of the Last Supper may be a great piece of art, but it is horrible theologically.
2. They were in a reclining position or lying on their side as they ate.

**26:21 And as they did eat, he said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.<sup>ab</sup>**

21a Jesus clearly identified that one of those disciples would betray Him. Jesus knew who the betrayer was, and it was no surprise to the Lord what Judas did. When Judas heard this, you can imagine him sweating bullets, thinking that Jesus was going to call him out right there.

21b Betrayal the Lord is a very real danger for us as well. We may not sell Him out for 30 pieces of silver but there are other ways to be disloyal and to betray Him.

1. Forsaking His word
  - A. This is when we go off into heresy and start accepting and believing doctrines that are not so.
  - B. Forsaking the truth to become a Mormon, Jehovah’s Witness, Roman Catholic...
  - C. 2 Timothy 1:13, **Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.**
  - D. 2 Timothy 2:2, **And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.**
2. Failure to witness
  - A. Violation of Acts 1:8, **But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.**
  - B. We have the opportunity and we do not take advantage of it.
  - C. Not even in an evangelistic context, if we fail to speak up when truth is under attack, the Lord is being blasphemed...
3. Fearing the world
  - A. This brings a snare
    - i. Proverbs 29:25, **The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe.**
  - B. It causes us to compromise
    - i. We shut up to save face, business, relationships...
  - C. It causes us to be cowards
    - i. Failure to witness as above
    - ii. We fear to lose:

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<sup>248</sup> Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer’s Commentary on Matthew*, page 735.

- a. Friends
- b. Finances
  - (i). Both money, power, position
- c. Friends
- D. It causes us to be critical
  - i. We might actually side against a brother in a controversy for fear of being on the wrong side or suffering unwanted consequences.
- 4. Faithfulness is the way
  - A. 1 Corinthians 4:2, **Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.**
  - B. Judas was unfaithful above all. What a crime unfaithfulness is! He was unfaithful to:
    - i. His friends
    - ii. His fellow disciples
    - iii. His call and that which was entrusted to him.
    - iv. His Lord!

Judas was unfaithful to the Lord which led to his ultimate betrayal of the Lord. A faithful man does everything that Judas did not do and nothing that Judas did. A faithful man:

- 1. Keeps His word
  - A. Luke 11:28, **But he said, Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.**
  - B. 1 John 2:5, **But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.**
- 2. Will be a witness as he is not ashamed of the Lord
  - A. This involves standing for the truth, even to martyrdom and death.
- 3. Will fear God rather than man.
  - A. Ecclesiastes 12:13, **Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.**
  - B. 1 Peter 2:17, **Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king.**
  - C. Revelation 14:7, **Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.**

Let's face it. A main reason for unfaithfulness to and betrayal of the Lord is that we are ashamed of Jesus.

### JESUS, AND SHALL IT EVER BE by Joseph Gregg

Jesus! and shall it ever be!  
A mortal man ashamed of Thee?  
Scorned be the thought by rich and poor;  
O may I scorn it more and more!

Ashamed of Jesus! sooner far  
Let evening blush to own a star.

Ashamed of Jesus! just as soon  
Let midnight blush to think of noon.

'Tis evening with my soul till He,  
That Morning Star, bids darkness flee;  
He sheds the beam of noon divine  
O'er all this midnight soul of mine.

Ashamed of Jesus! shall yon field  
Blush when it think who bids it yield?  
Yet blush I must, while I adore,  
I blush to think I yield no more.

Ashamed of Jesus! of that Friend  
On whom for heaven my hopes depend!  
It must not be! be this my shame,  
That I no more revere His name.

Ashamed of Jesus! yes, I may,  
When I've no crimes to wash away;  
No tear to wipe, no joy to crave,  
No fears to quell, no soul to save.

Till then (nor is the boasting vain),  
Till then I boast a Saviour slain:  
And, oh, may this my portion be,  
That Saviour not ashamed of me!

**26:22 And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I?<sup>a</sup>**

22a “Is it I?”

1. Every disciple considered the possibility that he might be the betrayer. Even bold and self-confident Peter asked the question. A good man knows what is in his heart and is painfully aware that he has within him the potential of the greatest of sins and spiritual failures. Beware the man who thinks himself too holy or too spiritually advanced to even consider him asking such a question.
2. No one even considered the possibility that Judas could have been the betrayer. Judas seems to have been respected enough among the disciples that no one suspected him. Judas had put on a very good show and had fooled everyone into thinking he was a righteous man. After all, no one is going to trust Judas with the money bag if they thought he was a thief!
3. The negative expects the answer “No” and was natural for all save Judas. But he had to bluff it out by the same form of question.
4. In Matthew 26:25 Judas also asks the question, to which Jesus indicates that Judas is the betrayer. And still no one suspected Judas!

**26:23 And he answered and said, He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me.<sup>a</sup>**

23a The Lord does not name the betrayer, but He does say that He will identify him by that man dipping his bread in the sop with Him.

1. John 13:26 says that the betrayer would be the one to whom Jesus would give the sop to and He gave it to Judas. And even after that, no one suspected Judas!
2. No eating utensils were used so everyone ate with their hands.
3. The “dish” was a platter with the broth of nuts and raisins and figs into which the bread was dipped before eating.

**26:24 The Son of man goeth as it is written of him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born.<sup>a</sup>**

24a This is Judas' legacy. His name is forever linked with betrayal, and he is usually placed in the same category as Hitler when it comes to evil. His punishment was also more severe and unique than the average devil or sinner in hell. Peter says he “**went to his own place**” in Acts 1:25 and to consider that is truly frightening. It was a place worse than hell and the lake of fire!

**26:25 Then Judas,<sup>a</sup> which betrayed him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, Thou hast said.**

25a Judas Iscariot- a background study

1. His surname was "Iscariot" (man of Kerioth).
2. All we know of his family is that his father's name was Simon (John 6:71).
3. Judas' Titles
  - A. Traitor- Luke 6:16
  - B. Son of Perdition- John 17:12
  - C. A devil- John 6:70
  - D. A thief- John 12:6
4. He was a friend of Jesus (Psalm 41:9) and the Lord referred to him as "friend" in Matthew 26:50.
5. He was possessed by Satan- Luke 22:3 **"Then entered Satan into Judas surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve."**
6. Motivations for betraying Jesus
  - A. Judas did it after becoming convinced that Jesus was going to die and not reign as King (Mark 14:3-11). This dashed Judas' hopes for political power and influence in a future kingdom ruled by Christ.
  - B. Judas did it for money (Matthew 26:14-16). His expectation of financial wealth no longer existed, so he bargained for what he could receive from the religious leaders (30 pieces of silver).
  - C. Judas may have thought, "What's the use of continuing to follow Jesus when the whole world is turning against Him, and the governmental authorities may swallow me up with Him?"
7. His death
  - A. Seeing that Christ was condemned to death, Judas was remorseful, admitted he betrayed innocent blood, threw the 30 pieces of silver the leaders paid him into the temple, then hanged himself (Matthew 27:3-5).
  - B. Judas hanged himself (Matthew 27:5). Acts 1:18 reveals that his bowels all gushed out as a result of how he hanged himself. This is very graphic. It is terrible enough to commit suicide, but to take a fall, have your body burst open, and your inner parts gush out, is horrendous.
  - C. He **"went to his own place"** in Acts 1:25.
    - i. This is terrifying. Hell and the bottomless pit are bad enough, but Judas went to a place even worse, that was especially prepared for him.
8. Judas a type of the Antichrist
  - A. He hangs, as Haman and Absalom
  - B. He is very close to Christ. No one suspected his true nature until it was too late.
  - C. Is called the Son of Perdition and a devil.
    - i. John 6:70,71 **"Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? He spake of Judas Iscariot the son of Simon: for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve."**
    - ii. John 17:12 **"While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled,"**

iii. 2 Thessalonians 2:3 **"Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;"**

D. He goes to his own place at death.

i. Acts 1:25 **"That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place."**

E. He is a Moabite. His name Iscariot means "A man of Kerioth", which is in Moab.

9. Ten Facts About Judas And Ahithophel<sup>249</sup>

A. They were friends of masters (Psalm 55:12).

B. Both betrayed and reproached their former friends.

C. Both were lovers of their masters.

D. Both magnified themselves against their best friends.

E. Both betrayed the trust placed in them.

F. Both were equals in trust (Psalm 55:13).

G. Both were guides or counselors.

H. Both were acquaintances known by their masters.

I. Both had sweet fellowship with their masters (Psalm 55:14).

J. Both worshiped with their masters.

**THE ANTICHRIST WILL BE JUDAS REINCARNATED** By Arthur W. Pink

This article first published in *Studies in the Scriptures*- a monthly magazine edited by A. W. Pink. In 1923, a book appeared composed of various similar essays from the above-mentioned magazine. This book was entitled, "The Antichrist". The book is currently published by Kregel Publications, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49501.

1. In Psalm 55 much is said of the Antichrist in his relation to Israel. Among other things we read there, "The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart: his words were softer than oil, yet were they drawn swords" (v. 21). The occasion for this sad plaint is given in the previous verse- "He hath put forth his hands against such as be at peace with him: he hath broken his covenant". The reference is to Antichrist breaking his seven-year Covenant with the Jews (see Dan. 9:27; 11:21-24). Now if the entire Psalm be read through with these things in mind, it will be seen that it sets forth the sorrows of Israel and the sighings of the godly remnant during the End-time. But the remarkable thing is that when we come to vv. 11-14 we find that which has a double application and fulfillment- "wickedness is in the midst thereof: deceit and guile depart not from her street. For it was not an enemy that reproached me; then I could have borne it: neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me; then I would have hid myself from him: But it was thou, a man mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together, and walked unto the house of God in company". These verses describe not only the base treachery of Judas toward Christ, but they also announce how he shall yet, when reincarnated in the Antichrist, betray and desert Israel. The relation of Antichrist to Israel will be precisely the same as that of Judas to Christ of old. He will pose as the friend of the Jews, but later he will come out

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<sup>249</sup> *Dake Study Bible.*

in his true character. In the Tribulation period, the Nation of Israel shall taste the bitterness of betrayal and desertion by one who masqueraded as a 'familiar friend'. Hence, we have here the first hint that the Antichrist will be Judas reincarnated.

2. "And your covenant with Death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with Hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it" (Isa. 28:18) The "Covenant" referred to is that seven-year one which is mentioned in Dan. 9:27. But here the one with whom this Covenant is made is termed "Death" and "Hell!". This is a title of the Antichrist, as "the Resurrection and the Life" is of the true Christ. Nor is this verse in Isa. 28 the only one where the Son of Perdition is so denominated. In Rev. 6 a fourfold picture of him is given; the antithesis of the fourfold portrayal of the Lord Jesus in the Gospels. Here he is seen as the rider on differently colored horses, which bring before us four stages in his awful career, and when we come to the last of them the Holy Spirit exposes his true identity by telling us, "and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him" (Rev. 6:8). Now "Hell" or "hades" is the place which receives the souls of the dead, and the fact that this awful name is here applied to Antichrist intimates that he has come from there.

3. Above, we referred to Matt. 12:41-43 to prove that Antichrist will be a super-human being, a fallen and unclean "spirit": we turn to it again in order to show that this coming Incarnation of Satan has previously been upon earth. The history of this 'Unclean Spirit' is divided into three stages. First, as having dwelt in "a man"; second, as having gone out of a man, and walking through dry places, seeking rest and finding none this has reference to his present condition during the interval between his two appearances on earth. Third, he says, "I will return to my house". This Unclean Spirit, then, who has already been here, who is now away in a place where rest is not to be found, is to come back again!

4. In John 17:12 we have a word which, more plainly still, shows that the Antichrist will be Judas reincarnated, for here he is termed by Christ "The Son of Perdition". But first let us consider the teaching of Scripture concerning Judas Iscariot. Who is he? He was a "man" (Matt. 26:24). But was he more than a man? Let Scripture make answer. In John 6:70 we read, "Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a Devil?" It is hardly necessary to say that in the Greek there are two different words for "Devil" and "demon". There are many demons, but only one Devil. Further, in no other passage is the word "devil" applied to anyone but to Satan himself. Judas then was the Devil incarnate, just as the Lord Jesus was God incarnate. Christ Himself said so, and we dare not doubt His word.

As we have seen, in John 17:12 Christ termed Judas "the Son of Perdition", and 2 Thess. 2 :3 we find that the Antichrist is similarly designated- "That Man of Sin be revealed, the Son of Perdition". These are the only two places in all the Bible where his name occurs, and the fact that Judas was termed by Christ not a "son of perdition", but "the Son of Perdition", and the fact that the Man of Sin is so named prove that they are one and the same person. What other conclusion can a simple and unprejudiced reader of the Bible come to?

5. In Rev. 11:7 we have the first reference to "the Beast" in the Apocalypse: "The Beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit". Here the Antichrist is seen issuing forth from the Abyss. What is the Abyss? It is the abode of lost spirits, the place of their incarceration and torment; see Rev. 20:1-3, and Luke 8:31, "deep" is "abyss" and cf.



Matt. 9:28. The question naturally arises, How did he get there? and when was he sent there? We answer. When Judas Iscariot died! The Antichrist will be Judas Iscariot reincarnated. In proof of this we appeal to Acts 1 :25 where we are told, "that he may take part of this ministry and apostleship from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place". Of no one else in all the Bible is it said that at death he went "to his own place". Put these two scriptures together: Judas went "to his own place", the Beast ascends out of the Abyss.

6. In Rev. 17:8 we read, "The Beast that thou sawest was, and is not: and shall ascend out of the Bottomless Pit, and go into perdition". This verse is generally understood to refer to the revived Roman Empire, and while allowing that such an application is warrantable, yet we are persuaded it is a mistake to limit it to this. In the Apocalypse, the Roman Empire and its final and satanic Head are very closely connected, so much so, that at times it is difficult to distinguish between them. But in Rev. 17 they are distinguishable. In v. 8 we are told that the Beast "shall ascend out of the Bottomless Pit, and that he shall go into perdition". In v. 11 we are told, "And the Beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seventh, and goeth into perdition". Now nearly all expositors are agreed that the Beast of v. 11 - the "eighth" (head, and form of government of the Roman Empire - is the Antichrist himself; then why not admit the same of v. 8? In both, the designation is the same - "the Beast"; and in both, we are told he "goeth into perdition."

We take it, then, that what is predicated of "the Beast" in 17:8 is true of both the Roman Empire and its last head, the Antichrist: of the former, in the sense that it is infernal in its character. Viewing it now as a declaration of the Antichrist, what does it tell us about him? Four things. First, he "was". Second, he "is not". Third, he shall "ascend out of the Bottomless Pit". Fourth, he shall "go into perdition". The various time-marks here concern the Beast in his relation to the earth. First, he "was", i.e. on the earth. Second, he "is not", i. e. now on the earth (cf. Gen. 5:24, "Enoch was not for God took him"; that is, "was not" any longer on the earth). Third, he shall "ascend out of the Bottomless Pit," where he now is, which agrees with 11:7. Fourth, he shall "go into perdition". We learn then from this scripture that at the time the Apocalypse was written the Beast "was not" then on the earth, but that he had been on it formerly. Further, we learn that in John's day the Beast was then in the Bottomless Pit but should yet ascend out of it. Here then is further evidence that the Antichrist who is yet to appear has been on earth before.

7. "And the Beast was taken, and with him the False Prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the Beast and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone" (Rev. 19:20). This gives the last, word concerning the Antichrist. It makes known the terrible fate which awaits him. He, together with his ally, will be cast alive into the Lake of Fire. This is very striking, and confirms what has been said above, namely, that the Antichrist will be one who has already appeared on earth, and has been in "the Abyss" during, the interval which precedes his return to the earth. And how remarkably Rev. 19:20 corroborates this. The Antichrist will not be cast, eventually into the Abyss, as Satan will be at the end of the Millennium (Rev 20 :1-3), but into the Lake of Fire which is the final abode of the damned. Why is it that he shall not be cast into the Abyss at the return of Christ? It must be because he has already

been there. Hence, the judgment meted out to him is final and irrevocable, as will be that of the Devil a thousand years later, see Rev. 20:10.

**153. The Last Supper 26:26-29, see also Mark 14:22-26; Luke 22:15-20,39**

**26:26 ¶ And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body.**

**26:27 And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it;**

**26:28 For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.**

**26:29<sup>a</sup> But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.**

1. The Christian ordinance of the Lord's Table is introduced here as an outgrowth of the Passover.

A. Its purposes are:

- i. To commemorate the death of Christ: "This do in remembrance of me."
- ii. To be a badge of the Christian profession.
- iii. To indicate and to promote the communion of believers with Christ.
- iv. To represent the mutual communion of believers with each other.

B. This is an ordinance, not a sacrament. There are no Sacraments in a New Testament church. A "sacrament" is defined as "a religious ceremony or ritual regarded as imparting divine grace, such as baptism, the Eucharist and (in the Roman Catholic and many Orthodox Churches) penance and the anointing of the sick." Neither the Lord's Table nor water baptism impart any "divine grace".

2. 26:26 First element- unleavened bread

A. Represents the human body of Christ in His sufferings.

- i. To make bread, the wheat must be grown, then cut down, ground, kneaded and baked. These steps all speak of the human sufferings of Christ.

B. Christ refers to Himself as the Bread of Life in John 6:35-48.

- i. He was born in Bethlehem, which means "The House of Bread".

C. The bread is unleavened. Since Christ was sinless on earth and since leaven is usually seen as a type of sin, there could be no leaven in that bread if it was to represent Christ.

- i. Leaven is fermented dough and the Jews identified fermentation with putrefaction and corruption; so leaven stood for all that was rotten and corrupt, and as a sign of purification, cleansed away.

D. The bread is simply bread. It is not turned into the flesh of Christ by some Roman Catholic priest in his hocus-pocus in the mass. The Christian is told that he is to be no longer occupied with the human Christ of the flesh (2 Corinthians 5:16). Furthermore, a man who takes the Romanist "eucharist" not knowing this truth (or supposing the bread to be Jesus Christ's earthly corpse) is eating and drinking "**damnation to himself**" (1 Corinthians 11:29) as he is not discerning the Lord's body.

3. 26:27-29 Second element- wine

A. It is wine/fruit of the grape. The only difference is that this was unfermented and non-alcoholic.

i. Alcoholic, or fermented wine would destroy the type if this was to represent the blood of Christ. There is no “breakdown” or process of decay in the blood of Christ, unlike in normal human blood, which is contaminated with sin.

ii. Fermentation is defined as “the chemical breakdown of a substance by bacteria, yeasts, or other microorganisms, typically involving effervescence and the giving off of heat.” It involves a process of corruption, when the fruit is left to itself for a period of time under certain circumstances. The chemicals in the fruit will begin to break down and produce alcohol.

iii. With all the verses warning against drinking alcoholic verses, it would be highly illogical for fermented wine to be used here. This also goes for Jesus changing the water into wine in John 2.

iv. New Evangelicals and neo-/pseudo-fundamentalists always mock Bible-believing Christians who insist on unfermented grape juice be used at the Lord’s Table. I guess they have to have their alcoholic wine as many of these people also mock at total abstaining from alcoholic beverages.

B. 26:27 They all drank of the cup. In the Roman Catholic mass, only the priest drinks of the cup and it is denied to the “laity”. There is no theological justification for this (or any element of the mass).

4. 26:28 **“blood”**

A. No covenant could be made without shedding of blood (Exodus 24:8 **“And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD hath made with you concerning all these words.”** and Hebrews 9:20 **“Saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you.”**) ; and no remission of sins without it (Leviticus 17:11 **“For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.”**).

5. 26:29 The Lord only observed one communion service with the disciples, but He looks forward to the day that He will observe it again with them in the kingdom.

6. It is obvious that the bread and the wine are types of the body and blood of Christ, not the real thing. We cannot literally eat the human flesh of Christ (that would be cannibalism) drink His literal blood (the Bible is always strong about drinking or “eating” blood).

A. The eating or drinking of blood is forbidden:

i. Before the law

a. Genesis 9:1–5 **“And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth. And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hand are they delivered. Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things. But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat. And surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man; at the hand of every man’s brother will I require the life of man.”**

ii. Under the law

a. Leviticus 17:10-12 **“And whatsoever man there be of the house of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you, that eateth any manner of blood; I will even set my face against that soul that eateth**

**blood, and will cut him off from among his people. For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul. Therefore I said unto the children of Israel, No soul of you shall eat blood, neither shall any stranger that sojourneth among you eat blood."**

iii. In the New Testament

a. Acts 15:20, 29 **"But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood. ...That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well."**

B. The drinking of fermented liquor (called "old wine") was forbidden to the Jew in the Old Testament, and he was cautioned against even looking at it.

i. Proverbs 20:1 **"Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise."**

ii. Proverbs 23:31 **"Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright."**

iii. The only time that strong drink was permitted was in Deuteronomy 14:26, where once every three years, the Old Testament Jew, in Palestine, was allowed a celebration at Jerusalem.

a. Deuteronomy 14:26 **"And thou shalt bestow that money for whatsoever thy soul lusteth after, for oxen, or for sheep, or for wine, or for strong drink, or for whatsoever thy soul desireth: and thou shalt eat there before the LORD thy God, and thou shalt rejoice, thou, and thine household,"**

b. This returns in the Millennium in Isaiah 62:1-9.

C. The basic rule of Biblical interpretation is "A passage is always literal unless it is absolutely impossible to take it in the literal sense." It is impossible theologically and in terms of reason to take the Roman Catholic mass seriously as it violates every law involved.

7. No covenant could be established without the shedding of blood. For the New Covenant/Testament to be established, Christ would shed His own blood.

## **154. Prophecies of Failure 26:30-35**

**26:30 And when they had sung an hymn,<sup>a</sup> they went out into the mount of Olives.**

30a They probably sang the Hallel, consisting of Psalm 113-118. In our church, we always since the Doxology on Old Hundredth after we observe the Lord's Supper.

**26:31<sup>a</sup> Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written,<sup>b</sup> I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad.<sup>c</sup>**

31a See also Mark 14:27-31; Luke 22:31-34 and John 13:36-38.

31b **"for it is written"** Quoted from Zechariah 13:7. This is the Greek perfect tense- it has been written and remains written, not to be changed or altered. It is a completed action with continuous results or the continuance of an act completed in the past. The components are

always a past action and continuous results. References to the Scriptures like this are often presented in the perfect tense. "The just shall live by faith" is one of those unalterable truths of Christianity. This perfect tense in reference to New Testament references to Old Testament texts is used 62 times in the New Testament, 16 times in Romans (1:17; 2:24; 3:4,10; 4:17; 8:36; 9:13,33; 10:15; 11:8,26; 12:19; 14:11; 15:3,9,21). This usage of the perfect is a strong argument for the verbal and plenary preservation of the Scripture, as the written Old Testament word stands forever and continues to.

31c The warnings that the disciples would flee after Christ was smitten fell on deaf ears. None of the disciples took the warning or the prophecy seriously. Or at least they did not apply it to themselves. They reacted as Peter reacted. They put more confidence in their flesh than they did in the Lord's own words.

**26:32 But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee.<sup>a</sup>**

32a This is a clear promise of His resurrection.

**26:33 Peter answered and said unto him, Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended.<sup>a</sup>**

33a Peter meant well and he was honest and sincere when he said this, but the Lord knew him better than he knew himself. The same applies to the rest of the disciples. But his confidence was a fleshly one.

Peter is the most vocal in his denial that he would ever forsake Jesus. But his fall would be the hardest and his repentance and restoration the toughest. His confidence was full of self. There is no doubt that he was sincere, as were the other disciples, but they were trusting in the flesh rather than praying and relying on the power of God to sustain them in the difficult hours ahead.

Peter seemed to have some contempt for the other disciples and their faithfulness when he said "though all men forsake thee..."

**26:34 Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.<sup>a</sup>**

34a Peter's fleshly self-confidence, no matter how sincere, would fail him when he would need it the most.

**26:35 Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples.**

**155. Christ in Gethsemane 26:36-47, see also Mark 14:32-42; Luke 22:40-46**

**26:36 ¶ Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane,<sup>a</sup> and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder.**

36a "Gethsemane"

1. The "olive press". Here, Jesus will be spiritually "squeezed" through agonizing prayer as no man ever has been.

2. Compare Luke 22:44 **“And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.”** That is called “prayer” and involved the agony of the Lord’s soul. He prayed so earnestly that the sweat was falling off Him as though He was bleeding.

A. This is no “saying or reading of prayers” or bowing your head over the dinner table. This is no “Hail Mary” or a rote recitation of the “Lord’s Prayer” muttered on a Sunday morning in some Romanist “church”. This is the “holy of holies” or prayer that we can only observe but not enter in to.

B. “This, dear reader, is where the psychiatrist enters, making notes and mumbling something about the poor fellow being “psychotic” or a “manic depressive” type. There he is, stretched out on the floor. He has not shaved today. He hasn’t eaten. His face is down. His eyes are closed; the fingernails grip the floor boards. The tongue-in groove is wet with tears. The man’s nose is stuffed with mucous from crying, so he cannot pray distinctly; and between moans and sobs, an occasional word comes through—“Lord, if there is any way it can be done...?” “Lord, is there no other way...?” “Lord, for Christ’s sake, have mercy on me and hear me!” “Lord, why can it not be answered...?” ...Here in Gethsemane, the blood, sweat, and tears roll; here, one verse in the book of Job is of greater comfort than a thousand masses, missals, meetings, and mother-confessors. Jesus is praying.”<sup>250</sup>

C. An outline of this kind of prayer would be:

1. It was a **solitary** prayer.

A. There are some circumstances where no one can help you and no one can pray with you- you are going to have to go into Gethsemane alone!

2. It was a **submissive** prayer.

A. **“not my will, but thine, be done.”**

B. The Lord gave Himself totally over to the will of the Father.

C. Prayer does not change the Father’s will as it changes our will concerning the will of God. It helps us to understand it and accept it.

3. The prayer is a **Scriptural** prayer.

A. It was addressed to the Father alone.

B. At no point in Scripture do we ever see Jesus or anyone else praying to anyone other than the Father. No one ever rattled off a single “hail Mary” in the New Testament.

**26:37 And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy.**

**26:38 Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful,<sup>a</sup> even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me.**

38a What was this “**cup**” that made Jesus so sorrowful? It wasn’t the physical suffering that He would suffer in His passion and on the cross. He was silent through all his sufferings. But when the Father turned His face from Christ in Matthew 27:45,46, THEN Christ cries out. It was at that point when Jesus became Sin Incarnate as He bore the sin of the world in His own body that the Father turned His face as He cannot view sin, even if it is in the person of His own Son.

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<sup>250</sup> Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer’s Commentary on Matthew*, pages 754-755.

It was the prospect of broken fellowship and communion (for the first and only time in all of eternity) that Jesus had trouble bearing. He needed divine help to endure that. He could endure the physical sufferings of the cross, but it was the prospect of the break of fellowship and communion with the Father that shook Jesus' soul. Broken fellowship doesn't bother us much as we live most of our lives out of fellowship and communion with God, but that was simply unbearable for Christ.

**26:39 And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.<sup>a</sup>**

39a The Lord surrenders Himself totally, absolutely and unconditionally to the will of the Father. Redemption can be achieved in no other way.

**26:40 And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour?<sup>a</sup>**

40a **"What, could ye not watch with me one hour?"**

1. How hard it is to pray for an hour or to spend an hour in the presence of God! We can go "knock on doors" for an hour or preach for an hour or do almost anything else for an hour, but our old nature rebels so much at the prospect of prayer and communion that we find it difficult to do it for any length of time.
2. Peter desperately needed to pray during this time in the light of the Lord's warning of his upcoming failure. Peter had much confidence in his flesh, and he may not have seen the need to spiritually prepare and fortify himself for the difficulties ahead.
3. Sleep is the great enemy of prayer. If you suffer from insomnia, just try praying and you will be asleep in no time.

**26:41 Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.<sup>a</sup>**

41a **"Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."**

1. This is the way it usually is with us. We have nothing but the best of intentions and our spirit is willing to do just about anything for God but our old nature fights and rebels as much as it can. Peter was sincere when he declared that he would never deny the Lord but his flesh had other ideas and would eventually gain the mastery in that hour.
  - A. It wasn't just Peter. All of the disciples suffered from this spiritual drowsiness.
2. This is where Romans 7 comes in. To summarize that chapter, Paul wanted to do right but was frustrated that he could not because of the old nature that resided in him. He wanted to do good but ended up sinning. He wanted to serve God but failed. We all should have a similar testimony of our desire to do right but suffering interference from our old, sinful nature.
3. They must "watch".
  - A. They must be alert, vigilant, knowing what the situation was, and be ready to act and react properly at the proper time.
    - i. We must know the "signs of the times" of our day.
      - a. 1 Chronicles 12:32 **"And of the children of Issachar, which were men that had understanding of the times, to know what**

**Israel ought to do; the heads of them were two hundred; and all their brethren were at their commandment.”**

B. They were going into a crises, probably the greatest crises in their life. Would they be ready? Would they be prepared?

i. We are entering into the deepest crises of the Church Age. Do we know the age? Do we know the times?

ii. The Lord’s arrest took place at night. We are in a night season of human history. Are we watching in the night? There is not as much urgency to watch in the day but we must watch in the night.

a. Isaiah 21:11 **“The burden of Dumah. He calleth to me out of Seir, Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night?”**

iii. Yes, we must watch in the day for the threat never ends, but the testings and the dangers are greatest in the night.

C. Yet they did not watch, due to sleep

i. Matthew 26:40 **“And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour?”**

4. They must pray

A. Prayer will give you the mind of God for the hour.

B. Prayer will give you the discernment you need for the hour.

C. Pray for:

i. Strength

a. You must never rely in your own strength when the crises comes. Peter did and failed.

ii. Courage

iii. That you will “play the man”

a. 1 Corinthians 16:13 **“Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.”**

b. We must either play the man or we will play the fool.

**26:42 He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.<sup>a</sup>**

42a The cup could not pass and Christ must drink of it if mankind is to be saved.

**26:43 And he came and found them asleep again: for their eyes were heavy.**

**26:44 And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words.**

**26:45 Then cometh he to his disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.**

AV

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45 Then cometh he to his disciples, and saith unto

45 Then he came to the disciples and said to them,

45 Then He \*came to the disciples and \*said to them,



them, Sleep on now, and take <i>your</i> rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.	“Sleep and take your rest later on. See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.	“Are you still sleeping and resting? Behold, the hour is at hand and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners.
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The LSV misses the point. It is not that the Lord was asking the disciples if they were still asleep for obviously, they were. He is saying the time has come and almost in sarcasm, He tells the disciples that they may as well keep sleeping as it is too late to pray anymore or to prepare for these events to follow. The ESV reading is only slightly better, ruined by the addition of the word “later”. If it had left that word out, it would have been an acceptable reading.

**26:46 Rise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray me.**

**156. The Arrest of Christ 26:47-56, see also Mark 14:43-52; Luke 22:47-53 and John 18:1-11**

**26:47 ¶ And while he yet spake, lo, Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves,<sup>a</sup> from the chief priests and elders of the people.**

47a Such a company to arrest one man! But Judas understood that this was no mere man and that the entire Roman army wouldn’t be able to arrest Jesus if He decided to fight back.

**26:48 Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he:<sup>a</sup> hold him fast.**

48a We do not know what Jesus looked like. We know that He was sufficiently non-descript that the Jews paid Judas to identify Him.

**26:49 And forthwith he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, master; and kissed him.<sup>a</sup>**

49a This is the infamous “Judas kiss”. This “kiss” is an intensive form in the Greek, showing that this was a very passionate kiss, not just a peck on the cheek, as if Judas did not want his signal to be missed or misunderstood who he was kissing and why.

**26:50 And Jesus said unto him, Friend,<sup>a</sup> wherefore art thou come? Then came they, and laid hands on Jesus, and took him.**

50a “**Friend...**” This may have just been polite talk from the Lord in addressing Judas, but still...! Calling the man who is going to betray you “Friend”?

AV	ESV	LSV
50 And Jesus said unto him, Friend, wherefore art thou come? Then came they, and laid hands on Jesus, and	50 Jesus said to him, “Friend, do what you came to do.” Then they came up and laid hands on Jesus and	50 And Jesus said to him, “Friend, do what you have come for.” Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and

took him.	seized him.	seized Him.
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**“wherefore art thou come?”** The Lord is asking Judas why he is there. The ESV and LSV err by having Jesus not ask a question but by telling Judas to do what he came to do.

**26:51 And, behold, one of them which were with Jesus stretched out his hand, and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high priest’s, and smote off his ear.<sup>a</sup>**

51a This is Peter, in his vain attempt to defend the Lord by force. At this point, he is not ever going to deny the Lord. He is ready to go down swinging to defend Him.

**26:52 Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.<sup>a</sup>**

52a The Lord told Peter to put the sword away. Now was not the time for that. And He certainly did not need Peter’s help. The Lord could have called twelve legions of angels (about 72,000) for His defense if He needed. But if He used His deity to escape this situation, how would any of the Scriptures concerning His death be fulfilled? How could our salvation be purchased?

**26:53 Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?<sup>a</sup>**

53a A legion consisted of between 4,000-6,000 men. Christ could have called for as many as 72,000 angels to protect Him if necessary, but then how would the Scriptures be fulfilled? One angel could kill 185,000 soldiers in a single night (2 Kings 19:35) and one angel could have destroyed Jerusalem (1 Chronicles 21:15). How much damage could 72,000 angels do, who were protecting the Son of God?

**26:54 But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?<sup>a</sup>**

54a This was always the Lord’s burden on earth- doing the will of the Father and fulfilling the Scripture.

**26:55 In that same hour said Jesus to the multitudes, Are ye come out as against a thief<sup>a</sup> with swords and staves for to take me? I sat daily with you teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hold on me.**

55a **“as against a thief”**

1. The Lord was treated as a common criminal from this point on, with an execution to match. After all, they would later crucify Him between two thieves.
2. He also exposes their cowardice in how they are arresting Him. The Jews could have arrested Him at any time but they feared the people. So Judas’ band has to operate in KGB/Gestapo fashion and arrest people in the middle of the night, with no witnesses.
  - A. The trials of Jesus operate in the same manner- at night in private, where none of Jesus’ supporters can come to defend Him and where the common people cannot see their wicked religious leaders in action.

**26:56<sup>a</sup> But all this was done, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled.<sup>b</sup>**

56a About this time, the Lord manifests His deity, as John relates in John 18:4-9: “**Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye? They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am he. And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them. As soon then as he had said unto them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground. Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way: That the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none.**” This is what Judas was concerned about, but the Lord only demonstrated His power by the use of the term for deity “I AM”. We were introduced to this back in Exodus 3:14 at the burning bush. But the Lord goes no further with this and submits to Judas and his band of men.

56b “**Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled.**” But Peter and John are both following, even if they are doing so from a safe distance.

**157. The Trial of Jesus 26:57-68, see also Mark 14:53-65; Luke 22:54,55; 63-71; John 18:12,24**

### **JESUS' RELIGIOUS TRIAL**

	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Before Annas				18:12-14, 19-24
Before Caiaphas	26:57-68	14:53-65	22:54, 63-65	
Before the Sanhedrin	27:1	15:1	22:66-71	

### **JESUS' CIVIL TRIAL**

	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Before Pilate	27:2, 11-14	15:1-5	23:1-5	18:28-38
Before Herod Antipas			23:6-12	
Before Pilate	27:15-26	15:6-15	23:13-25	18:39-19:16

**26:57<sup>a</sup> ¶ And they that had laid hold on Jesus led him away to Caiaphas<sup>b</sup> the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled.<sup>c</sup>**

57a The “trial” must be read in the light of the procedures laid out in Deuteronomy that are supposed to govern the trial of an offender.

1. In Deuteronomy 19:17, not only are priests to be present, but judges are to preside at official trials; that is, the religious leaders are not capable of giving a fair decision without consulting the civil leaders.

A. Deuteronomy 19:17 “**Then both the men, between whom the controversy is, shall stand before the LORD, before the priests and the judges, which shall be in those days;**”

2. It is the judge who is supposed to make the inquisition, not the priests.
3. This examination is first to hear of the charges against the accused, then to enquire diligently, then make certain before proceeding.
  - A. Deuteronomy 17:4 **“And it be told thee, and thou hast heard of it, and enquired diligently, and, behold, it be true, and the thing certain, that such abomination is wrought in Israel:”**
4. Two or three witnesses are necessary., and if their witness is found to be false, they are to receive the sentence that was passed out to the man on trial.
  - A. Deuteronomy 17:6 **“At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall he that is worthy of death be put to death; but at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death.”**
  - B. Deuteronomy 19:18-21 **“And the judges shall make diligent inquisition: and, behold, if the witness be a false witness, and hath testified falsely against his brother; Then shall ye do unto him, as he had thought to have done unto his brother: so shalt thou put the evil away from among you. And those which remain shall hear, and fear, and shall henceforth commit no more any such evil among you. And thine eye shall not pity; but life shall go for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.”**
5. None of these regulations were followed, thus rendering the trial invalid and illegal.

57b “Caiaphas”

1. He was the high priest in the reign of Tiberius Caesar and during the time of the Lord’s public ministry. He held the office during the procuratorship of Pontius Pilate, but soon after his removal from that office was deposed by the Proconsul Vitellius (A.D. 36), and succeeded by Jonathan, son of Ananas. His wife was the daughter of Annas, who had formerly been high priest, and who still possessed great influence and control in religious matters. Caiaphas belonged the Sadducees.
2. The office of the high priest had degenerated to a mere political office, full of the usual political intrigue. The spirituality of the man was not a qualification to hold the office.

57c “Such a meeting of the Sanhedrin during the night was illegal. Non-capital cases were decided by three and capital cases by twenty-three judges. In non-capital cases they hold the trial during the daytime and the verdict may be reached during the night; in capital cases they hold the trial during the daytime and the verdict also must be reached during the daytime. In non-capital cases the verdict, whether of acquittal or of conviction, may be reached the same day; in capital cases a verdict of acquittal may be reached on the same day, but a verdict of conviction not until the following day. Therefore, trials may not be held on the eve of a Sabbath or on the eve of a Festival-day.

The regular place for the meeting of the Sanhedrin was in the Temple, but they led Jesus away to the house of the High Priest Caiaphas, situated in a place just outside the wall of the city, where all the chief priests and elders and scribes had been summoned to meet. Nor was the legal hour of meeting for trials in the night. Other features in the illegality practiced in the trials of Jesus were: undue haste, seeking or bribing witnesses, neglecting to warn the witnesses solemnly before they should give evidence, forcing the accused to testify against Himself, judicial use of the prisoner’s confession, and failure to release the prisoner when there was failure of agreement between witnesses.”<sup>251</sup>

We can summarize the problems with this illegal trial as:

1. The judge was not impartial and did not try to protect the accused.

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<sup>251</sup> J. Dwight Pentecost, *The Words and Works of Jesus Christ*, pages 462-463.

2. There was probably no quorum. Those Jews were in attendance were hostile. Nicodemus should have been present if he was not. He would have defended Jesus, which was probably the reason why he was not informed of these events. He must have been very angry when he found out later what had happened without his being told about it.
3. There was no formal arrest warrant.
4. In criminal trials, all proceedings had to be carried out during daylight hours. Night sessions were illegal.
5. A guilty verdict could not be rendered on the same day. It could be rendered on the next day, but you would think an honest man would have wanted to go home and pray about it before sentencing an innocent man to death.
6. The accused could not condemn himself by his own words but that is exactly what they wanted Jesus to do.
7. The witnesses were obviously unreliable.
8. No valid evidence was presented against Jesus.
9. Pilate declared that he saw no cause of death in Jesus and that should have been enough to overturn the verdict of the Sanhedrin.

The Sanhedrin just wanted the pretense of a trial to try to make his execution look to be legal.

**26:58 But Peter followed him afar off<sup>a</sup> unto the high priest's palace, and went in, and sat with the servants, to see the end.**

Peter is still following and is still in the area of where Jesus is. Give him credit for that. Matthew does not mention that any other disciple was, not even John. Matthew must have had some rebuke for himself as he wrote this, as he wasn't following either!

**26:59 Now the chief priests, and elders, and all the council, sought false witness against Jesus, to put him to death;<sup>ab</sup>**

59a "Now the whole scene is out of hand. No charges are being brought, and none are being preferred, and no one is trying to prove them. What they have done is, they have arrested an innocent Man without a warrant, have hailed Him to a private Gestapo meeting (without due process of the law), and in order to kill the Man, they are going to make Him talk about His religious beliefs so they can hang Him on a prejudice."<sup>252</sup>

59b They had to seek for false witnesses as they had no legal charge they could use against Jesus, so they had to manufacture charges against Him in order to put Him to death. This was their result of over 3 years of constantly watching Him and recording everything He said and did in public- nothing! This religious Gestapo had a file on Jesus that would have resembled a thousand-page book and they STILL couldn't come up with a legitimate charge against Him!

**26:60 But found none: yea, though many false witnesses came, yet found they none. At the last came two false witnesses,<sup>a</sup>**

60a They need to find two false witnesses who were able to tell the same lie in order to condemn Jesus to death.

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<sup>252</sup> Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer's Commentary on Matthew*, page 771.

**26:61 And said, This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days.<sup>a</sup>**

61a This was false! Jesus told them to destroy the temple of His body and he would build it up in 3 days. He never said that He would destroy it, only that He would raise it up in 3 days. But they twisted His words to make it sound like He was referring to Herod's temple.

AV	ESV	LSV
61 And said, This <i>fellow</i> said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days.	61 and said, "This man said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to rebuild it in three days.'"	61 and said, "This man stated, 'I am able to destroy the sanctuary of God and to rebuild it in three days.'"

**"temple"** Why does the LSV read "sanctuary?" It was a temple. Why change the word?

**26:62 And the high priest arose, and said unto him, Answerest thou nothing?<sup>a</sup> what is it which these witness against thee?**

62a Why dignify such obvious lies with an answer?

**26:63 But Jesus held his peace. And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure<sup>a</sup> thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God.**

63a **"adjure"**- "hold on to your oath". Jesus was silent up to this point but when He was "adjured by God" by the High Priest, He felt compelled to say something.

**26:64 Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.<sup>a</sup>**

64a And with that truth, Jesus just signs His own death certificate. He could not be much plainer than that.

**26:65 Then the high priest rent his clothes,<sup>a</sup> saying, He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy.**

65a It was forbidden for the high priest to rend his clothes (Leviticus 21:10 **"And *he that is* the high priest among his brethren, upon whose head the anointing oil was poured, and that is consecrated to put on the garments, shall not uncover his head, nor rend his clothes;"**).

**26:66 What think ye? They answered and said, He is guilty of death.<sup>a</sup>**

66a He is guilty of a capital offense, namely blasphemy.

**26:67 Then did they spit in his face, and buffeted him; and others smote him with the palms of their hands,<sup>ab</sup>**

67a They were slugging the Lord with their fists as well as slapping Him with their palms.

67b “Now come the blows. Some spit on Him, some slap His face, some pluck out His beard. “Oh, so you’re the Son of God, eh? Then surely you must know everything! WHO HIT YOU? Blind man’s bluff!”

SMACK! SMACK! SMACK!

They have tied a towel around His face so He cannot see (Mark 14:65), and then they paste Him with their palms and fists until the effect is as described in Isaiah 52:14 and 50:6. Jesus, sitting patiently under the abuse, could have called out the name, rank, and serial number of every man in the outfit, but He “reviled not again” (1 Pet. 2:21–23), nor answered (Isa. 53:7).

This is the hour when the “Prince of this World” vents his hatred and wrath on the rightful heir to the throne (John 14:30). (Since the main subject of the Bible is a Kingdom, and that Kingdom has two claimants [Luke 4:6], it is remarkably fitting that at this juncture, the usurper should “pour it on” and try to the limit of his strength to get his Rival to quit.) There is more here than a room full of shouting, cursing, venomous Pharisees “taking it out” on a Prophet named Jesus. There in the early morning light, amidst the slappings, buffetings, blows, and spittle, a soul sits enthroned in the Sinless Son of God and faces another soul in the spirit realm and says to him: “He is near that justifieth me; who will contend with me? let us stand together: who is mine adversary? LET HIM COME NEAR TO ME!!” (Isa. 50:8—note the context!)

Here is an open challenge to “the prince of the power of the air,” the ruler of spiritual darkness, to come into close quarters and “try Jesus for size!” “Let him come near!” To those who have read Jude 9 and 1 Peter 5:8 (and believed them), the challenge is blood curdling. Jesus is stepping “into the ring” with the most powerful being in the universe, outside the Godhead. He is challenging the heavy weight champ for the title, and this heavy weight has never lost a battle until this time. Ten billion championship bouts—ten billion K.O.’s in the first round. Count them!

Adam, hiding.

Eve, lying.

Noah, drunk.

Joseph, lying.

Jacob, swindling.

David, adultery.

Moses, murder.

Daniel, idolatry.

Paul, resisting God’s will.

Peter, cursing.

Lot, backslidden.

Isaac, lying.

Abraham, lying.

Jeremiah, not trusting.

Job, complaining.

COUNT THEM!

That old veteran of ancient days, his majesty “the Devil,” never had any trouble KO’ing the greatest, best, wisest, and holiest men who ever lived. And now a Man sits before him, blindfolded with spit and blood running down His face, and says: “Who is mine adversary? let

him come near!" In he comes, both fists flailing, and brass knuckles on both hands (Job 40:18). Heaven, earth, and hell look on as the greatest conflict that ever took place in human history begins (Col. 2:15)."<sup>253</sup>

**26:68 Saying, Prophecy unto us, thou Christ,<sup>a</sup> Who is he that smote thee?**

68a "thou Christ:", spat out in mockery and contempt, "You Christ, you!"

AV	ESV	LSV
68 Saying, Prophecy unto us, thou Christ, Who is he that smote thee?	68 saying, "Prophecy to us, you Christ! Who is it that struck you?"	68 and said, "Prophecy to us, O Christ; who is the one who hit You?"

The LSV waters down the insult.

**158. The Failure of Peter 26:69-75, see also Mark 14:66-72; Luke 22:55-62; John 18:15-18; 25-27**

**26:69 ¶ Now Peter sat without in the palace:<sup>a</sup> and a damsel came unto him, saying,<sup>bc</sup> Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee.**

69a Peter is still in the area, although withdrawn. We can keep giving him credit for that.

69b In Matthew 26:69-73, three people come up to Peter and recognize him as being a disciple of Jesus. For fear of also being arrested, Peter denied all three accusations, and the denials got stronger as they went on. By Matthew 26:74, Peter is swearing all sorts of oaths in a public denial that he even knew Jesus.

69c The first of the "accusers" was a young lady and a maid. Peter was willing to go toe-to-toe with armed guards in the Garden but who questions by a "damsel" and a "maid" turned Peter into a coward.

**26:70 But he denied before them all, saying, I know not what thou sayest.**

**26:71 And when he was gone out into the porch, another maid saw him, and said unto them that were there, This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth.**

**26:72 And again he denied with an oath,<sup>a</sup> I do not know the man.**

**72a "oath", "curse", "swear"**

1. The "oath" was a legal declaration, like testifying to something under oath in the threat of perjury.

A. The Greek word (Strong's #3727 horkos) indicates a fence or an enclosure, something that restrains someone.

B. This is something you would do in a court of law.

2. The "curse" is the opposite of "to bless" and carries the idea of "invoke or call down a destruction upon someone or something".

<sup>253</sup> (Peter Ruckman, Bible Believer's Commentary on Matthew, pages 774-776)."



A. Something like “May God strike me dead if I’m lying!”

B. The Greek word (Strong’s #2653 katanathematizo) is a very strong word (it has the “kata-“ prefix, which is an intensifier), giving the full force of Peter’s curses.

3. To “**swear**” is to deny or affirm something by an oath.

**26:73 And after a while came unto him they that stood by, and said to Peter, Surely thou also art one of them; for thy speech bewrayeth<sup>ab</sup> thee.**

73a Peter had a Galilean accent and that gave him away as a follower of Jesus. His accent betrayed the fact that he was from Galilee.

73b “bewrayeth” It has the idea of to betray or reveal yourself, to uncover yourself. Peter’s accent gave away the fact that he was from Galilee. In its derivation is entirely different from betray (Latin, tradere), and meant originally “to disclose,” “reveal” (compare Shakespeare, Titus Andronicus, II, iv, 3: “Write down thy mind, bewray thy meaning so”).

The word is used three times in Scripture:

1. Proverbs 27:16 “**Whosoever hideth her hideth the wind, and the ointment of his right hand, which bewrayeth itself.**”

2. Proverbs 29:24 “**Whoso is partner with a thief hateth his own soul: he heareth cursing, and bewrayeth it not.**”

3. Matthew 26:73 “**And after a while came unto him they that stood by, and said to Peter, Surely thou also art one of them; for thy speech bewrayeth thee.**”

**26:74 Then began he to curse and to swear,<sup>a</sup> saying, I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew.**

74a Peter was not using profanity but was calling down curses upon himself if he was lying.

**26:75 And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.<sup>a</sup> And he went out, and wept bitterly.**

75a While Peter is cursing, swearing and lying, somewhere off in the distance, a rooster crows. That stops Peter dead in his tracks. All the color drains out of his face. He hastily excuses himself and goes out and weeps bitterly, in full realization that he fulfilled the prophecy that the Lord told of him- he DID deny the Lord three times.

1. Peter’s “wept bitterly” reminds us of David after Nathan draws back the curtain on his sin with Bathsheba. At this point, Peter very well could have written Psalm 51 if David hadn’t.

2. This is a sign of Peter’s true repentance. He must have thought “That’s it. I’m finished. It’s over. I failed just like the Lord said I would, and I’ll never preach again.” He was convinced his ministry was over and there was no future for him. What preacher out there hasn’t felt the same thing on the heels of a major failure of sin in his life?



## Matthew Chapter 27

### 159. Christ Delivered To Pilate 27:1,2, see also Mark 15:1; Luke 23:1; John 18:28

**27:1 When the morning was come, all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death:**

**27:2 And when they had bound him, they led him away, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor.**

2a At the crack of dawn, they took Jesus to Pilate for the legal condemnation and formal death sentence. The Jews could not wait until a “decent hour” to rid themselves of Jesus.

### 160. The End of Judas 27:3-10

**27:3 ¶ Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself,<sup>a</sup> and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders,**

Once Judas saw what was going on and the likely end, he “repented himself”.

1. He did say “**I have sinned**” in Matthew 27:4, much like Pharaoh did in Exodus during the plagues. But this is a repentance born out of desperation and a fear of consequences, not based on a true confession of sin and guilt. It is like the adulterer who “repents” of his sin after he is caught and is facing judgment.

A. Is there something significant in the phrase “repented himself?” Judas didn’t just “repent” but he repented “himself”. Was his “repentance directed inward instead of Godward? Was he upset that he condemned an innocent man to death and his plan (whatever it was) went wrong more that he was upset that he had betrayed the Son of God? He repented to the priests and to himself, but there is no indication that he repented to God. Judas was sorry for the consequences, not for his sin.

2. We are still not entirely sure of Judas’ motivations or the reason for his remorse here. Maybe he thought or hoped that Jesus would not allow Himself to be condemned. Once it was clear that He would be condemned and that He would not use His power to save Himself, Judas realized that He made the greatest mistake of all time (humanly speaking).

A. Judas made a mistake.

B. Judas made a HUGH mistake.

3. Judas and Peter give a great illustration of the two kinds of repentance. These are defined in 2 Corinthians 7:10. One is called “**godly sorrow**.” The other type is “**the sorrow of the world**.” Peter illustrates the first type. His sorrow is of a godly sort. Judas illustrates the second type. His repentance is an earthly, human thing. Peter’s is a grief-stricken heart for being wrong. Judas’ is a despair for messing up a plan. The source of Peter’s repentance is a look from Jesus Christ. The source of Judas’ repentance is himself (Matthew 27:3).

A. Both Peter and Judas were sorrowful, both wanted to do right; both made restitution. But the place of repentance was wrong; while Peter confessed to his Lord, Judas confessed to the priest. He said, “**Judas confessed to the priest**” and it got him **nowhere**.

B. The results of Peter's repentance and Judas' repentance show an obviously different result. Peter reaps a broken spirit, a contrite heart, and a humbleness of mind. Judas reaps a suicide by hanging and a bottomless pit for his home.

4. There is a repentance that comes too late and thus, is meaningless and powerless. When Judas said "I have sinned", he was doing nothing but telling the truth and confessing what everyone already knew. But his die was cast and no amount of any sort of repentance was going to do any good for Judas now.

AV	ESV	LSV
<p>3 Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, <b>repented himself</b>, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders,</p>	<p>3 Then when Judas, his betrayer, saw that Jesus was condemned, he changed his mind and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders,</p>	<p>3 Then when Judas, who had betrayed Him, saw that He had been condemned, he felt remorse and returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders,</p>

"**repented himself**" Neither the ESV, LSV nor Darby use "repent" and neither give the idea that Judas repented "himself".

**27:4 Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood.<sup>a</sup> And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that.<sup>b</sup>**

4a The Lord's innocence was declared by 6 people (none of them being His friends):

1. Judas

A. Matthew 27:4 "**Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that.**"

B Judas knew he had betrayed "innocent blood". Christ was sinless and Judas knew it. Judas knew he betrayed an innocent man.

2. Pilate

A. Matthew 27:24 "**When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it.**"

3. Pilate's wife

A. Matthew 27:19 "**When he was set down on the judgment seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him.**"

4. Herod

A. Luke 23:15 "**No, nor yet Herod: for I sent you to him; and, lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto him.**"

5. The malefactor

A. Luke 23:41 "**And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss.**"

6. The Roman centurion

A. Luke 23:47 "**Now when the centurion saw what was done, he glorified God, saying, Certainly this was a righteous man.**"

4b Judas got absolutely no sympathy from the priests. "**What is that to us? see thou to that.**" They got what they needed from him and now they had no further use for Judas. Never expect

any sympathy from religious hypocrites! He betrayed his friends and embraced his enemies. Now he is left with no one to support him, no one he can turn to. No one cared about him. Sin will always leave you “high and dry”.

**27:5 And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple,<sup>a</sup> and departed, and went and hanged himself.<sup>b</sup>**

5a The money is immediately picked up and transferred to a deed for the potter’s field in the valley of Gehenna. This is HOT money, blood money.

AV	ESV	LSV
5 And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself.	5 And throwing down the pieces of silver into the temple, he departed, and he went and hanged himself.	5 And he threw the pieces of silver into the sanctuary and departed; and he went away and hanged himself.

Why can’t the LSV use “**temple**” like everyone else? In Matthew 27:6, the LSV has “temple treasury”, adding “temple where neither the Authorized Version nor the ESV use it. If the LSV was consistent, it would read “sanctuary treasury” in Matthew 27:6.

5b “**went and hanged himself**” Acts 1:18 (“**Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out.**”) gives additional material and tells what happened after the earthquake of Matthew 27:50–54. While Jesus is also hanging, the earthquake strikes. Over goes the tree on which Judas’ body is hanging, and down it goes with its burden onto the rocks below. Judas lands on a jagged rock formation, and the body bursts asunder and the intestines and stomach slush out on the ground in “the field of blood.” It is a graphic and gory scene.

**27:6 And the chief priests took the silver pieces, and said, It is not lawful for to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood.<sup>a</sup>**

6a An innocent man has been condemned, a guilty man is contemplating suicide and these religious men are clucking their tongues, trying to figure out what to do with the money!

**27:7 And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter’s field, to bury strangers in.<sup>a</sup>**

7a Judas made himself a stranger to both God and man through his betrayal.

**27:8 Wherefore that field was called, The field of blood, unto this day.<sup>a</sup>**

8a One legacy of Judas, the “Field of Blood” to bury strangers in. He betrayed the “innocent blood” so he is buried in a “field of blood”.

**27:9 Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value;<sup>a</sup>**

9a Thirty pieces of silver for the Son of God. Life was very cheap in these days.

**27:10<sup>a</sup> And gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me.**

10a "These words are not *written in* Jeremiah, but are written in Zechariah 11:12,13. However, Zechariah 7:7 is a plain warning to remember not only what Jeremiah *wrote*, but what he said. Jeremiah 18:1–8 and 19:2–3 connect the potter and his field with the valley of Hinnom (Gehenna), running around the east side of Jerusalem to the south end, where the city dump was located. A similar confusion among Bible rejecting scholars is found in Jude 14. Here the citation is *spoken* from Zechariah 14:5 and Deuteronomy 33, and scholars have to go thrashing around in the Dead Sea Scrolls to find a "Book of Enoch" (so they can prove that "Tobit," "Judith," and "Bel and the Dragon" belong in the Bible also!). Nowhere in the Bible is there any reference to any of these or to any "Book of Enoch." All are the childish fancies of fickle brats. The citation is quoted from an oral speech, *not a written one*.<sup>254</sup>

**161. Christ Before Pilate 27:11-14, see also Mark 15:2-5; Luke 23:1-5; John 18:29-38**

**27:11<sup>a</sup> And Jesus stood before the governor: and the governor asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And Jesus said unto him, Thou sayest.**

**11a Pilate and the Cross** Matthew 27:11-25, 1 Corinthians 2:14 (a sermon outline)

1. The natural, worldly man confronting Christ and the Cross
  - A. A politician, whose main burden was:
    - i. Keeping the peace
    - ii. Keeping his job
  - B. He was confronted unexpectedly with Jesus
    - i. Most men are at one time in their life and how few are prepared!
  - C. He was skeptical at the Jews' claim about Jesus
    - i. He knew who he was dealing with
    - ii. He was impressed by Jesus
  - D. Sought to have Jesus released
    - i. Saw no cause of death in Him
2. Pilate knew the hypocrisy of the Jews, that they had delivered Him due to envy-Matthew 27:18
  - A. But Jesus witnessed a good confession
    - i. 1 Timothy 6:13 **"I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession;"**
3. Ultimately, gave in for political expediency-
  - A. John 19:12,13 **"And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend:"**
  - B. You cannot be a friend of Caesar and a friend of the cross.
4. How did Pilate see the cross?

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<sup>254</sup> Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer's Commentary on Matthew*, page 791.

- A. He did not understand its significance because he was a natural man- 1 Corinthians 2:14, **“the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God.”**
  - B. He probably saw it as nothing more than a tool of execution.
  - C. In this context, it was a way to keep political peace. In order to keep the Jews happy,
5. Pilate sent Jesus to the cross
- A. Political appeasement
  - B. Spiritual appeasement
  - C. No indication that he ever really came to understand the deeper significance of the cross
6. Like any other natural man, Pilate tried to avoid the cross- **“What then shall I do with Jesus which is called Christ?”**- Matthew 27:22
- A. He sent Him to Herod, but Herod sent Him back to Pilate
    - i. Luke 23:9-12 **“Then he questioned with him in many words; but he answered him nothing. And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused him. And Herod with his men of war set him at nought, and mocked him, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him again to Pilate. And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together: for before they were at enmity between themselves.”**
  - B. He tried to have the Jews deal with Him, but they wanted Christ killed and only Rome had that authority
  - C. He tried to put up Barabbas, thinking the Jews would certainly choose Jesus over a murderer. That didn’t work.
    - i. The whipping of Jesus associated with this didn’t satisfy the Jews.
  - D. In other words, Pilate could rid himself of this confrontation with Christ. He must decide one way or the other. He decides for the world and against Christ.
    - i. He is a man caught between two loyalties, two masters, two options, trying to satisfy both. But he finds what billions of others have found- you cannot serve God and mammon, you cannot please God and man, who can’t have the world and the cross. You must choose ONE. Pilate choose and he choose poorly.
    - ii. He counted the cost and decided it was too costly to take the cross

**“Art thou the King of the Jews? “**

- 1. That was the charge, probably brought about to show Pilate that Jesus was planning sedition. Pilate would have no concern about any charge of blasphemy so the priests have to create a charge that Rome would be interested in- treason and rebellion (per Luke 23:2 **“And they began to accuse him, saying, We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying that he himself is Christ a King.”**).
- A. If the Jews had brought a charge of blasphemy to Pilate, he would have reacted as Gallio did.
  - i. Acts 18:12-16 **“And when Gallio was the deputy of Achaia, the Jews made insurrection with one accord against Paul, and**

**brought him to the judgment seat, Saying, This fellow persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law. And when Paul was now about to open his mouth, Gallio said unto the Jews, If it were a matter of wrong or wicked lewdness, O ye Jews, reason would that I should bear with you: But if it be a question of words and names, and of your law, look ye to it; for I will be no judge of such matters. And he drave them from the judgment seat.”**

B. Pilate cared nothing for Jewish religious law as he didn't understand it and had no authority in that area. The Jews are going to have to bring charges that Pilate will pay attention to- sedition.

C. The charges laid out in Luke 23:2 were as follows:

i. **“Perverting the nation.”** Yet He healed the nation everywhere He went.

ii. **“Forbidding to give tribute.”** Another lie, for He paid His taxes (Matthew 17:24-27).

iii. **“He stirreth up the people.”**

a. He's disturbing the peace! He is **“troubling Israel”** (1 Kings 18:17).

2. In John 18:29,30, John records **“Pilate then went out unto them, and said, What accusation bring ye against this man? They answered and said unto him, If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee.”** The Jews were expecting, or hoping, that Pilate would rubber-stamp their demand to execute Jesus and may have been offended when Pilate refused to roll over and do their bidding. He was determined to search this matter out for himself.

3. Jesus certainly did not look like a king as he stood before Pilate. What kind of a king is this? If Jesus is “King of the Jews” then the Jews are in pretty rough shape! What kind of a “king” allows himself to be treated like this? Has he no followers or army to defend him?

**“And Jesus said unto him, Thou sayest.”**

1. “You said it”. The Lord does not deny it.

2. Jesus is actually going to talk with Pilate. He spoke only when forced to in His trial and He would have nothing to say to Herod in Luke 23:8-12 (**“And when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad: for he was desirous to see him of a long season, because he had heard many things of him; and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by him. Then he questioned with him in many words; but he answered him nothing. And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused him. And Herod with his men of war set him at nought, and mocked him, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him again to Pilate. And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together: for before they were at enmity between themselves.”**) But Christ would talk to Pilate. He also would not respond to the accusations of the Jews who were also in Pilate's judgment hall (Matthew 27:12). He would dignify their false accusations with any sort of a response.

3. Jesus denies that charge of sedition against Rome by telling Pilate while He is a king, His kingdom is not of this world in John 18:36: **“My kingdom is not of this world: if my**



**kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence”.**

**27:12 And when he was accused of the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing.<sup>a</sup>**

12a Christ would not dignify such outlandish slanders with a response. Sometimes, silence speaks louder than words.

**27:13 Then said Pilate unto him, Hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee?<sup>a</sup>**

13a He heard them all but He knew they were all false. A clear conscience allows one to be silent in the midst of such lies and character assassinations.

**27:14 And he answered him to never a word; insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly.<sup>a</sup>**

14a Pilate was impressed by the fact that Christ would not answer the very serious charges that were being leveled against Him. He must have known that they would lead to His crucifixion, yet He made no defense! Even a man's pride will compel him to defend himself, but not Jesus! Any other man would have been protesting his innocence and attacking his accusers, but not this Man.

**162. Christ or Barabbas? 27:15-26, see also Mark 15:6-15; Luke 23:17-25; John 18:39,40**

**27:15 Now at that feast the governor was wont to release unto the people a prisoner, whom they would.<sup>a</sup>**

15a This was a gesture of good will displayed to the Jews during their Passover season.

**27:16 And they had then a notable prisoner, called Barabbas.<sup>a</sup>**

16a “**Barabbas**” - “Son of the father”.

**27:17 Therefore when they were gathered together, Pilate said unto them, Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ?<sup>a</sup>**

17a Barabbas was a murderer and a political agitator with no redeeming qualities about him. Pilate brought Barabbas out and stood him next to Jesus, thinking the Jews would certainly choose Jesus, Who had harmed no one, over this murderer. But how wrong he was! Pilate was trying to find a way to release Jesus. Since it was a custom to release a prisoner during the Passover season, Pilate brings out the worst criminal he currently had in custody, Barabbas. He was total scum, a low-life, a very bad person. But standing Barabbas and Jesus together, the contrast couldn't have been stronger. Surely the Jews would want nothing to do with Barabbas and they would come to their senses and want Jesus released. This may have been what Pilate was thinking and hoping, but he totally misread the mob.

**27:18 For he knew that for envy they had delivered him.<sup>ab</sup>**

18a Pilate was no fool. He knew exactly why Jesus had been delivered up and it wasn't because He was a true criminal or any real threat to public safety or Roman rule. Envy has been the motivation for any such crimes and sins.

18b Envy! The great killer!. Envy is responsible for more sin, suffering and death than any other emotion. Envy is the feeling of discontent and resentment aroused by and in conjunction with desire for the possessions or qualities of another.

Envy in Biblical Theology:

1. Envy kills
  - A. Job 5:2 **For wrath killeth the foolish man, and envy slayeth the silly one.**
2. Do not envy sinners or his ways
  - A. Proverbs 3:31 **Envy thou not the oppressor, and choose none of his ways.**
  - B. Proverbs 23:17 **Let not thine heart envy sinners: but be thou in the fear of the LORD all the day long**
3. Envy causes physical issues.
  - A. Proverbs 14:30 **A sound heart is the life of the flesh: but envy the rottenness of the bones.**
4. No one can deal with envy..
  - A. Proverbs 27:4 **Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous; but who is able to stand before envy?**
5. General references
  - A. Ecclesiastes 9:6 **Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun.**
  - B. Isaiah 26:11 **LORD, when thy hand is lifted up, they will not see: but they shall see, and be ashamed for their envy at the people; yea, the fire of thine enemies shall devour them.**
  - C. Ezekiel 35:11 **Therefore, as I live, saith the Lord GOD, I will even do according to thine anger, and according to thine envy which thou hast used out of thy hatred against them; and I will make myself known among them, when I have judged thee.**
  - D. Ezekiel 31:9 **I have made him fair by the multitude of his branches: so that all the trees of Eden, that were in the garden of God, envied him.**
  - E. 2 Corinthians 12:20 **For I fear, lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I would, and that I shall be found unto you such as ye would not: lest there be debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults:**
  - F. James 4:5 **Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?**
6. Ephraim envied Judah
  - A. Isaiah 11:13 **The envy also of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off: Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim.**
7. The Jewish leaders delivered Jesus to Pilate to be crucified because of envy.
  - A. Matthew 27:18 **For he knew that for envy they had delivered him.**
  - B. Mark 15:10 **For he knew that the chief priests had delivered him for envy.**

8. Joseph's brothers envied him.
  - A. Genesis 37:11 **And his brethren envied him; but his father observed the saying.**
  - B. Acts 7:9 **And the patriarchs, moved with envy, sold Joseph into Egypt: but God was with him,**
9. The Jews envied the success of the early church
  - A. Acts 13:45 **But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming.**
  - B. Acts 17:5 **But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people.**
10. Sinners are filled with envy.
  - A. Romans 1:29 **Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers,**
  - B. 1 Timothy 6:4 **He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings,**
  - C. Titus 3:3 **For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.**
11. Some preach out of envy.
  - A. Philippians 1:15 **Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will:**
12. The Philistines envied Isaac.
  - A. Genesis 26:14 **For he had possession of flocks, and possession of herds, and great store of servants: and the Philistines envied him.**
13. Rachel envied Leah.
  - A. Genesis 30:1 **And when Rachel saw that she bare Jacob no children, Rachel envied her sister; and said unto Jacob, Give me children, or else I die.**
14. Moses was envied
  - A. Psalm 106:16 **They envied Moses also in the camp, and Aaron the saint of the LORD.**
15. Envy vexes the spirit.
  - A. Ecclesiastes 4:4 **Again, I considered all travail, and every right work, that for this a man is envied of his neighbour. This is also vanity and vexation of spirit.**
16. We are not to envy.
  - A. Romans 13:13 **Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying.**
  - B. Galatians 5:26 **Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.**
  - C. James 3:14 **But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth.**
17. Envy is associated with carnality.
  - A. 1 Corinthians 3:3 **For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?**
18. Envy brings confusion.
  - A. James 3:16 **For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.**
19. Envy brings evil works.

A. James 3:16 **For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.**

20. Those who envy will not inherit the kingdom of God.

A. Galatians 5:21 **Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told *you* in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.**

21. Charity does not envy.

A. 1 Corinthians 13:4 **Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity *envieth* not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,**

**27:19 ¶ When he was set down on the judgment seat,<sup>a</sup> his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him.<sup>bc</sup>**

19a “**judgment seat**”. This is the same idea as the yet-future Judgment Seat of Christ (Revelation 4). It is a place where legal judgments and rulings are made.

19b Pilate’s wife was an unexpected witness to the innocence of Christ, and she wanted to try to prevent her husband from making a terrible mistake. Romans put a lot of stock in omens, signs and dreams.

19c What exactly did she “**suffer**” in this dream? We are not told.

**27:20 But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus.<sup>a</sup>**

20a On their own, the crowd would have chosen Jesus to be released. But the religious leaders found a few loud and influential rabble-rousers that turned the tide of this “public opinion”.

**27:21 The governor answered and said unto them, Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you? They said, Barabbas.**

**27:22 Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ?<sup>a</sup> They all say unto him, Let him be crucified.<sup>b</sup>**

22a “**What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ?**”

1. The question of questions that all men must answer. In every man’s life, he will be confronted by Jesus Christ. How we answer this question determines our eternal destiny.

2. What are the options?

- A. Ignore Him and hope He goes away.
- B. Give Him lip service but not accept Him.
- C. Outright reject Him.
- D. Accept Him

22b See how easy it is to sway a mob and the religious rulers had no problem in manipulating the people here.

**27:23 And the governor said, Why, what evil hath he done?<sup>a</sup> But they cried out the more, saying, Let him be crucified.**

23a Pilate was surprised at the level of hatred and animosity being displayed toward Jesus. Jesus stood there, calm and dignified. He did not look like He was any sort of threat, and He was not the kind of man to be a troublemaker. So why were the Jews so upset with Him? What evil had He done? If the Jews could have pointed to one specific crime that Jesus had committed, he would have gladly signed the papers authorizing Jesus' crucifixion. But the Jews could provide nothing. All Pilate was getting was people screaming at the top of their lungs, frothing at the mouth, demanding His execution. Pilate may have feared that if he released Jesus, he would have a full-scale riot on his hands. The mob was calling for Jesus' blood and if Pilate did not comply, they might come after him next.

**27:24 ¶ When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it.<sup>a</sup>**

This was a common practice to demonstrate that Pilate believed Jesus was innocent and it went against his better judgment to condemn Christ, but he was going to do it anyway. Of course, this would not exonerate Pilate. There was a custom among the Greeks, Jews, and Romans of that time that when a man shed blood, he would wash his hands, thus symbolically cleansing away the stain. Pilate felt that he was a murderer.

AV	ESV	LSV
24 When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but <i>that</i> rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed <i>his</i> hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this <b>just</b> person: see ye <i>to it</i> .	24 So when Pilate saw that he was gaining nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, "I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves."	24 Now when Pilate saw that he was accomplishing nothing, but rather that a riot was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd, saying, "I am innocent of this man's blood; see <i>to that</i> yourselves."

The ESV and LSV are both in gross error as it attacks the innocence and sinlessness of Jesus here by leaving out the word "**just**". Other versions that also make this error include the New International Version, New Living Translation, Berean Standard Bible, New American Standard Bible, Amplified Bible (puts "righteous" in brackets), Holman Christian Standard Bible, Contemporary English Version, Good News Translation, New American Bible (Roman Catholic), NET Bible and the New Revised Standard Version. Darby has "righteous one".

**27:25 Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children.<sup>a</sup>**

25a "**His blood be on us, and on our children**"

1. And there it is. This was the reason why the Jews have suffered as they have for the past 2000 years. They brought their judgment upon themselves in their rejection of their King and His kingdom.
2. "In 135, Hadrian had 580,000 Jews killed. In 1020, Canute banished all Jews from England. In 1006, a holy war was started in Europe to kill all Jews not submitting to

Roman Catholic baptism. In 1272, Edward I confiscated all Jewish property and exiled 16,500 from England. “His blood be on us, and on our children!” They were banished from Prague and Constantinople in 1560–1600. Dominicans ran them out of Spain in the Inquisition (1492). In Alsace, Rhineland, Franconia, Bavaria, and Austria, in 1684, they were killed. In 1919 when England reneged on the Balfour Declaration (siding with the Pope’s Arabian Ally, the Grand Mufti), they were left without a country, packed, starving, and dying on ships that no port would receive but Singapore. In Ukraine, in 1942–43, 5,700,000 were butchered or disappeared. Dr. Bela Fabian, President of the Hungarian Independent Democratic Party, said 5,000,000 were gassed and cremated at the murder factory in Auschwitz (Silesia). This was done by dropping Cyklon B (crystallized prussic acid) into chambers where naked people were jammed in so tight, they couldn’t fall down. (Ilse Koch, wife of the Commander of Buchenwald, had prisoners with “interesting” tattoo marks killed so their skins could be used for lampshades.) Rudolph Hess said you could tell when the people in the chambers were dead because they stopped screaming.”<sup>255</sup>

3. Obviously, the blood of Christ is not ordinary blood if rejecting it like this causes 2,000 years of suffering and ministry to Israel!

4. “The tragic reply came back like an echo of a groan from future generations: “His blood be on us and on our children.” Thirty years later, on this very spot, judgment was pronounced against some of the best citizens of Jerusalem. Of the 3,600 victims of the governor’s fury, not a few were scourged and crucified! Judas died in a loathsome suicide, the house of Annas was destroyed some years later, Caiaphas was deposed a year after the crucifixion, and Pilate was soon after banished to Gaul and there died in suicide. When Jerusalem fell, her wretched citizens were crucified around her walls until, in the historian’s grim language, “space was wanting for the crosses, and crosses for the bodies.” The horrors of the siege of Jerusalem are unparalleled in history.”<sup>256</sup>

**27:26 ¶ Then released he Barabbas unto them: and when he had scourged<sup>a</sup> Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified.**

26a “**scourged**” “The Roman scourge was a terrible instrument made of thongs loaded at the tips with pieces of bone or metal. In a scourging the victim was stripped and tied to a low post in such a position that the skin of his back was stretched tight. At the first blow, blood began to flow. As the flogging proceeded, the skin on his back was torn to ribbons. Sometimes vital organs were exposed and lacerated. Often the victim died.”<sup>257</sup>

**163. The Mocking of Christ 27:27-33, see also Mark 15:16-22; Luke 23:26-33; John 19:16,17**

**27:27 Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall, and gathered unto him the whole band of soldiers.**

AV	ESV	LSV
27 Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into	27 Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the	27 Then when the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the

<sup>255</sup> Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer’s Commentary on Matthew*, page 821.

<sup>256</sup> J. W., Shepard, *The Christ of the Gospels*, page 592.

<sup>257</sup> John Phillips, *Exploring Matthew*, page 518.

the <b>common hall</b> , and gathered unto him the whole band <i>of soldiers</i> .	governor's headquarters, and they gathered the whole battalion before him.	Praetorium, they gathered the whole <i>Roman</i> cohort around Him.
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**“common hall”** The LSV’s and Darby’s “Praetorium” is correct but the Authorized Version and ESV readings are easier to understand.

# **27:28 And they stripped him,<sup>a</sup> and put on him a scarlet robe.<sup>b</sup>**

28a **“stripped”** in order to increase the shame and public humiliation. Soldiers are very good at being cruel and violently mocking prisoners.

28b Kings wore scarlet or purple robes. Compare Genesis 22:13, where that ram had a crown of thorns (**“And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son.”**)!

# **27:29 ¶ And when they had platted a crown of thorns,<sup>a</sup> they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand:<sup>b</sup> and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews!**

29a The **“crown of thorns”** was made up of very long and very sharp needle-like thorns that pierced into the skull. The crown of thorns is a “stephanos” crown, which is a victor’s crown, not a King’s crown which is a “diadem”. The soldiers unwittingly crown this King with the proper crown.

29b The “king” now has a robe and a crown. He needs a scepter. A **reed** is stuck in His hand. This is the flimsiest scepter possible.

# **27:30 And they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head.**

# **27:31 And after that they had mocked him, they took the robe off from him, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucify him.<sup>a</sup>**

31a **“crucifixion”** A Persian form of capital punishment that was never used by the Jews. The Romans used crucifixion as punishment for serious crimes such as insurrection and murder. The Romans used a short beam fastened to a long upright one, on which was placed a piece of wood for the feet to rest on. Nails were driven through the hands and feet (Psalm 22:16). The torture was dreadful, and the thirst, great; but in some cases, the victim could take up to three days to die.

“Truman Davis, M.D., provides the following description of a crucifixion from the viewpoint of a medical doctor: “The cross is placed on the ground and the exhausted man is quickly thrown backwards with his shoulders against the wood. The legionnaire feels for the depression at the front of the wrist. He drives a heavy, square, wrought-iron nail through the wrist and deep into the wood. Quickly he moves to the other side and repeats the action, being careful not to pull the arms too tightly, but to allow some flex and movement. The cross is then lifted into place. The left foot is pressed backward against the right foot, and with both feet extended, toes down, a nail is driven through the arch of each, leaving the knees flexed. The victim is now crucified. As he slowly sags down with more weight on the nails in the wrists,



excruciating, fiery pain shoots along the fingers and up the arms to explode in the brain—the nails in the wrists are putting pressure on the median nerves. As he pushes himself upward to avoid his stretching torment, he places the full weight on the nail through his feet. Again, he feels the searing agony of the nail tearing through the nerves between the bones of the feet. As the arms fatigue, cramps sweep through the muscles, knotting them in deep, relentless, throbbing pain. With these cramps comes the inability to push himself upward to breathe. Air can be drawn into the lungs but not exhaled. He fights to raise in order to get even one small breath. Finally, carbon dioxide builds up in the lungs and in the blood stream, and the cramps partially subside. Spasmodically he is able to push himself upward to exhale and bring in life-giving oxygen. Hours of this limitless pain, cycles of twisting, joint-rending cramps, intermittent partial asphyxiation, searing pain as tissue is torn from his lacerated back as he moves up and down against the rough timber. Then another agony begins: a deep, crushing pain deep in the chest as the pericardium slowly fills with serum and begins to compress the heart. It is now almost over—the loss of tissue fluids has reached a critical level—the compressed heart is struggling to pump heavy, thick, sluggish blood into the tissues—the tortured lungs are making a frantic effort to gasp in small gulps of air. He can feel the chill of death creeping through his tissues. ... Finally, he can allow his body to die.”<sup>258</sup>

**27:32 And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name: him they compelled to bear his cross.<sup>a</sup>**

32a After the beating, Jesus was physically tired and unable to drag His cross up to the place where He was to be crucified, so the soldiers drafted (in the navy, it would be called “impressment”) the first passer-by they could find to help Jesus carry His cross.

**27:33 And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha,<sup>a</sup> that is to say, a place of a skull,**

33a “**Golgotha**”, is “Calvary” in Latin. The rock probably had the shape of a human skull, hence the name. Christ is crucified “**without the gate**” of Jerusalem (Hebrews 13:11-13).

**164. The Crucifixion of Jesus 27:34-38, see also Mark 15:23-36; Luke 23:34-43; John 19:18-30**

**27:34 ¶ They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall:<sup>ab</sup> and when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink.**

34a Jesus cried for water (John 19:28 “**After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst.**”) and got vinegar instead. He tasted it but would not drink it (Mark 15:23 “**And they gave him to drink wine mingled with myrrh: but he received it not.**”). This vinegar was a stupefying agent designed to dull the senses and grant some relief to the victim, but Jesus needed to keep all of His faculties about Him during these hours.

1. Jesus also cried for water to fulfil Psalm 69:21 “**They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.**”

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<sup>258</sup> Cited in David Cloud, *Believer's Bible Dictionary*, pages 68-69.



34b “**gall**” is a bitter drink, “a bitter poisonous herb which deadens pain. From the Middle English galle, going back to Old English gealla, galla, going back to Germanic \*gallōn-, galla- (whence Old High German & Old Saxon galla, Old Norse gall), going back to Indo-European \*ǵholh3-n- (whence, without the suffix, Greek cholé “bile, bitter hatred,” chólos “bitter hatred, wrath,” Avestan zāra- “bile”), a derivative of \*ǵhelh3- “green, yellow”.

AV	ESV	LSV
34 They gave him <b>vinegar</b> to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted <i>thereof</i> , he would not drink.	34 they offered him wine to drink, mixed with gall, but when he tasted it, he would not drink it.	34 they gave Him wine to drink mixed with gall; and after tasting <i>it</i> , He did not want to drink.

The Authorized Version is more accurate with “**vinegar**”. The “wine” of the ESV and LSV could hardly be called “wine” for its badness. In Matthew 27:48, the ESV and LSV use “sour wine” for the “**vinegar**”, which is better.

**27:35 And they crucified him,<sup>a</sup> and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet,<sup>b</sup> They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots.<sup>c</sup>**

35a “The cross was the most disgraceful and one of the cruelest instruments of death ever invented. The Romans, who borrowed it from the Carthaginians, would not allow a Roman citizen to be crucified, but reserved crucifixion for slaves and foreigners or provincials. The Jews customarily used stoning and never crucifixion. It was not only the death of greatest ignominy but of the most extreme anguish and suffering. There were five forms of the cross used for this ghastly punishment: a plain stake to which the victim was nailed; the Tau cross with the transom below the top—the traditional type on which Jesus was crucified; the crux commissa, or Greek cross, with four arms of equal length; and St. Andrew’s cross, consisting of two beams obliquely crossed. The cross of Jesus was probably slightly higher than the traditional type, in the use of which the feet of the crucified were only a foot or two from the ground. The victim was usually first stripped naked, the garments falling to the lot of the executioners; but in the crucifixion of Jesus, tradition says that a loincloth was used. First the upright was planted firmly in the ground and then the victim was laid down with arms extended on the crossbar to which they were fastened by cords and afterwards by nails through the palms. Then the transom was raised to its position on the upright and nailed while the body was left to swing or its weight rested on an iron saddle peg driven into the upright. Following this the feet were nailed either through the instep separately, or both together with a single iron spike. There the body was left to hang in agony sometimes two or three days, until death from pain and starvation ensued.”<sup>259</sup>

35b AV	ESV	LSV
35 And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: <b>that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and</b>	35 And when they had crucified him, they divided his garments among them by casting lots.	35 And when they had crucified Him, they divided up His garments among themselves by casting lots.

<sup>259</sup> J. W., Shepard, *The Christ of the Gospels*, pages 595-596.

upon my vesture did they cast lots.

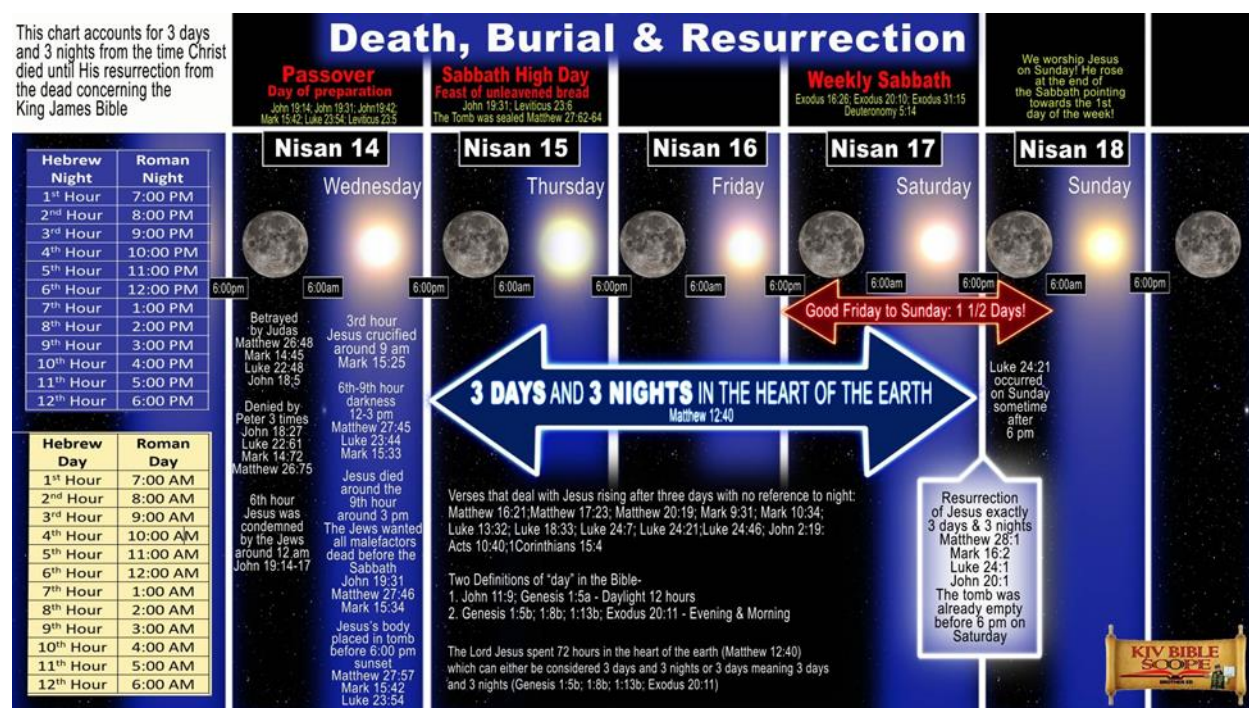
The ESV, LSV and Darby remove the prophecy and reference to Psalm 22:18.

35c The only instance of gambling in the Bible is not given in a good connotation.

1. What little Christ owned was also targeted for sport by the world.
2. This was fulfilled Psalm 22:18 **“They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.”**
3. The clothing of the condemned became the property of the soldiers in these situations.

The timing of the crucifixion. We believe Christ was crucified on Wednesday, not Friday. There is no such thing as “Good Friday” as it is nothing but a Roman Catholic tradition.

This chart accounts for 3 days and 3 nights from the time Christ died until His resurrection from the dead concerning the King James Bible



**27:36 And sitting down they watched him there;<sup>a</sup>**

36a Christ provided good entertainment for the crowd gathered there.

1. The world would give Christ no amount of dignity or respect in these hours. Even condemned men have some rights and have some dignity reserved to them in their death. But the world would give Christ none of it. They sought to humiliate Him at every turn and at every opportunity.
2. Even the centurion would watch Christ during these hours and he was so impressed that he gave his testimony of the deity of Christ.

**27:37 And set up over his head his accusation written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.<sup>a</sup>**

37a The crimes of the accused were usually nailed on the cross, to increase the sense of shame of the criminal.

1. It is written in three languages—Hebrew (Old Testament), Greek (New Testament), and then Pilate’s own language—“Latin”. This way, the Jew, the Roman and the Greek could see what was going on.

A. Matthew records the Hebrew text: THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

B. Mark gives the Latin text (15:26): THE KING OF THE JEWS.

C. Luke gives the Greek text (23:38): THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

D. John mashes all of the titles together (19:19): JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS.

2. The Jews did not appreciate the title (John 19:21 **“Then said the chief priests of the Jews to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews; but that he said, I am King of the Jews.”**) and demanded that Pilate change it to “He said I am the King of the Jews”. The Jews did not appreciate their mocking being crucified for that still made them look bad. But Pilate finally shows some backbone and refuses to back down. **“What I have written, I have written”** (John 19:22).”

**27:38 Then were there two thieves crucified with him, one on the right hand, and another on the left.**<sup>abc</sup>

38a Jesus was condemned as a criminal and was crucified between two thieves. What great company for a King! Look at how honorable His entourage is!

38b “Ethelbert Bullinger has proposed that there are FIVE crosses present, not three. The proposition is not as wild as it sounds. He first of all points out that two malefactors and two thieves are present. Although a thief is a malefactor, a malefactor is not necessarily a thief. Bullinger says that the criminals mentioned in Matthew and Mark are not brought to Golgotha until AFTER the garments are divided (Mark 15:27; Matt. 27:38). Further, in John 19:32–33, the soldiers go by two men before they get to Jesus, so there must be five, for Jesus is said to be crucified “in the midst” (see Luke 23:33; Mark 15:27; John 19:18)! If He is between them, then there is a malefactor and a thief on His right and a malefactor and a thief on His left. That isn’t all—it is abundantly clear in the Bible that “5” is the number of DEATH (not grace!): Genesis 5:5; Acts 5:5; Romans 5; three men killed below the fifth rib, Adam opened here for Eve, David’s five stones, Benjamin’s five-fold provision for his mother’s death, and five open wounds in Christ (one in each hand, one in each foot, and one in His side). If that were not enough, there are five pieces of clothing divided at His death (see John 19:23–24). One is made especially so that there CANNOT be six pieces.”<sup>260</sup>

38c Jesus was **“numbered with the transgressors”** (Isaiah 53:12).

### **165. Christ on the Cross 27:39-49**

**27:39 ¶ And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads,<sup>a</sup>**

39a What was worse- the physical pain of crucifixion or the mockery?

**27:40 And saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself.<sup>a</sup> If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.<sup>b</sup>**

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<sup>260</sup> Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer’s Commentary on Matthew*, pages 830-831.

40a This misunderstanding continued. Jesus was never referring to the physical temple but rather to the resurrection of His physical body in John 2:19 (“**Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.**”). The language He used could have been misinterpreted but then again, Jesus may have been point to His body when He said it. Naturally, He could have rebuilt the temple in 3 minutes if He had desired!

40b This was a temptation from Satan. He could have come down from the cross in His own power but if He did that, all this would have been for nothing.

**27:41 Likewise also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said,<sup>a</sup>**

41a Instead of praying for and comforting a dying man, they mocked and ridiculed Him, to add to His shame and suffering. Oh the tender mercies of religion!

**27:42 He saved others; himself he cannot save.<sup>a</sup> If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him.**

42a Yes, He did save others, but He did not see to save Himself!

1. “If you’re so good at getting people out of trouble, let’s see you get yourself out of this one!”
2. “They mocked him as a Savior: “He saved others; himself he cannot save.” They mocked him as a King: “If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and, we will believe him.” They mocked him as a believer: “He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him.” They mocked him as the Son of God: “For he said, I am the Son of God.”<sup>261</sup>
3. Jesus did not need to save Himself as He had no sin and did not need to be saved.

**27:43 He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him:<sup>a</sup> for he said, I am the Son of God.<sup>b</sup>**

43a “**if he will have him**” What a slap. The accusation is that God abandoned Jesus and wants nothing more to do with Him. The Father would abandon the Son when Christ became sin incarnate in Matthew 27:45ff, but for different reasons than they thought.

43b Of all the taunts, this one came straight from the mind of Satan, taking us back to Matthew 4 and “If thou be the Son of God...”

**27:44 The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth.<sup>ab</sup>**

44a Matthew records how the thieves also attacked Christ, but Matthew does not record the repentance and salvation of one of them.

44b “**cast the same in his teeth**” Insulted Christ.

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<sup>261</sup> Charles Spurgeon, *The Gospel of the Kingdom*.

**27:45 Now from the sixth hour<sup>a</sup> there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour.<sup>b</sup>**

45a Noon. This was last three hours, until the ninth hour in Matthew 27:46. This lasted from noon to three p.m. on our clock.

45b God turned the lights out here as He was about to smite His Son when He became Sin Incarnate and He was going to do that under the cover of a supernatural darkness, hidden from the views of sinful man. He was not going to give these people the satisfaction of seeing His Son suffering the way He did during these last three hours.

1. This was a supernatural darkness that cannot be explained by any natural means. Liberals suggest something like a solar eclipse, but this doesn't work because 1) no eclipse is recorded anywhere on earth during this time and 2) no total solar eclipse lasts for 3 hours. The maximum they can last is about 3 minutes. In vain do unbelievers try to explain a supernatural event. In so doing, they are usually forced to conjure up a greater miracle than the actual miracle they try to explain away.
2. Isaiah 53:1-12 is now being fulfilled behind a curtain of super-natural darkness.

**27:46 And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?<sup>a</sup>**

46a Up until this point, the Lord had suffered silently. He had not cried out like this, even during the height of His physical suffering. But why now? Why here? What prompted this outburst? At this point, Christ had now become Sin Incarnate and the Father could not fellowship with His Son in this state. The Father was too holy to gaze upon sin, even if it was in the person of His own beloved Son. The Father turned away from His Son and for the first time in all eternity, fellowship was broken between the Father and the Son. This is what Jesus couldn't handle. He could deal with the pain and the humiliation but not the break in fellowship. That made everything else unbearable. We do not understand this as we spend most of our lives out of communion and fellowship with God. But when fellowship was broken even for a moment, Jesus could bear it. The Father had abandoned Him at this point and that is caused the outburst.

1. Look at Song 3 and 5 and see how the Shulamite reacted when her fellowship and communion with Solomon was broken. In Song 3, Solomon withdrew. In Song 5, the Shulamite broke fellowship because of her laziness. Both times, she panicked once she realized she was out of communion with Solomon. This is a good sign of spirituality. The nominal Christian would not react in such a manner if they realized they were out of communion.
2. This is what Jesus was concerned about regarding the "cup" as He prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane.
3. Jesus is now abandoned by the Father. He is the loneliest man in creation now. He is abandoned by the Father, by man, even by Satan. Christ is now Sin Incarnate. This is a picture of a sinner in the lake of fire who will also be abandoned and forgotten, and he suffers for an eternity...alone. That man will cry but none will hear him or respond.

**27:47 Some of them that stood there, when they heard that, said, This man calleth for Elias.<sup>a</sup>**

47a **"this man calleth for Elias"**

1. "Eli, Eli" may have sounded like "Elias".

2. The crowd mocked this in Matthew 27:49.

**27:48 And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink.<sup>ab</sup>**

48a This was an intoxicating drink designed to put the victim in a bit of a stupor. The victim would be sort of drugged which would help lessen the pain of crucifixion. This would be sort of a mercy. But Jesus must keep all of His faculties during these hours and so He refused the vinegar.

48b This was the second time the vinegar was offered. Ethelbert Bullinger gives three drinks: Mark 15:23, refused without tasting; Matthew 27:34, tasted and refused; and John 19:29 received.

**27:49 The rest said, Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him.<sup>ab</sup>**

49a This was said in mockery.

49b "The elements are all there. It is a lamb slain and roasted (Exod. 12:1–12). It is roasted without water (Exod. 12:7–8). It is burned (Exod. 12:9). It is a Lamb as a substitute (Exod. 13:13). It is a Lamb suffering for someone else (Isa. 53:6, 12; John 1:29; Heb. 9:28; 1 Pet. 2:24). It is a propitiation (payment to satisfy), it is an expiation (to clean from sin), it is redemptive (to buy back something lost), and it is effective in that those who trust in it receive immediate, absolute assurance of eternal life, as a present and permanent possession."<sup>262</sup>

**166. The Death of Jesus 27:50-56, see also Mark 15:37-41; Luke 23:44-49; John 19:30-37**

**27:50 ¶ Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.<sup>abc</sup>**

50a Once all the prophecies had been fulfilled, there was no need for Jesus to suffer one minute longer. Many victims could spend two or three days on the cross, but there was no need for Jesus to suffer any longer than He had to. Somewhere between verses 49 and 50, salvation is accomplished and the atonement has been made. Thus the cry here is "It is finished!"

50b "**yielded up the ghost**" Another way of saying He dismissed His spirit. We cannot do that as we cannot choose the hour of our death or escape any physical suffering like this, but Jesus, as God, could.

50c "Many are teaching today that the LIFE and TEACHINGS of Jesus saves the soul! His Life and Teachings are necessary, and they become our example- but only AFTER we have been redeemed by the blood of His Death! Neither are we saved by the Love of God-and His Love was grandest of all God's Love was the motive, but God's Death, through Christ, was the remedy-the salvation of man! Many today, likewise, believe that LOVE is the element in salvation. Oh no! It was His DEATH! The entire purpose of God's Love, Christ's Life, Christ's Self-was to bring Him to the Cross, to die as God's Lamb! All the hatred of the centuries by the violent priests and bleeding birds were poured out by God-upon His Lamb! All the judgments and plagues of the future were poured out by God-upon His Lamb! I know that the Jews tried

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<sup>262</sup> Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer's Commentary on Matthew*, pages 861-862.

Him; Pilate permitted Him; and the Roman cross instrumented Him to death, but He was God's Lamb, too! God's Love made God's wrath rise and fall upon His Lamb!

"This Lamb lifted the human nature to its godly fulfillment. This Lamb proved the blessedness of being-just an obedient human creature. This Lamb revealed the glory of suffering; the riches of poverty; the sweetness of surrender; the liberty and freedom of law; the delight of discipline; and made every weakness and frailty of the human life an exhibition of triumphant faith and eternal glory!

"How the creature hates the boundaries of his limitation. But not the Lamb! How the human hates the "dust." But not the Lamb! How the human self hates surrender and obedience. But not the Lamb! How we kick against the pricks of poverty, sickness, limitation, and the fact of being human. But not the Lamb!".<sup>263</sup>

**27:51 And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent;<sup>a</sup>**

51a This exposed the Holy of Holies, showing that through the death of Christ, the barrier that separated the Holy of Holies from mankind is now removed. We now have free and equal access to the very presence of God, and we now have full communion with God

1. It was torn from top to bottom. God tore the veil. If man had torn it, it would have been torn from bottom to top,
2. It was no mean feat to tear this veil as it was very thick and heavy. The veils before the Most Holy Place were 40 cubits (60 feet) long, and 20 (30 feet) wide, of the thickness of the palm of the hand, and wrought in 72 squares, which were joined together; and these Veils were so heavy that it needed 300 priests to manipulate it.
3. "Hebrews 6:19 and 9:23–25 shed great light on the truth of the **"veil."** Hebrews 10:20 defines the **"veil"** as a type of **"his flesh,"** so there can be no doubt about the interpretation. The veil is rent, the door is open, the way is clear, and we have access to the **"throne of grace"** to find mercy and to obtain **"grace to help in time of need."** The rending of the veil symbolized an entirely new order of things, and although this new order is not thoroughly realized by Peter until Acts 10 (and by Paul until Acts 13, and by James until Acts 15), *it begins right here*. Rrrriipp!! goes the veil; no more priesthood of Levites, no more tithes to the storehouse, no more lambs burnt on the altar, no more incense burned in the temple, no more holy oil and burning lamps, no more long robed "fathers," no more "holy of holies," and *no more temple* (Acts 7:47–50; Mal. 3:10–12; 2 Cor. 3; 2 Tim. 1:9–10; Gal. 2–3; Heb. 10:8–12)! *The New Testament is in effect with Matthew 27:51* (Heb 9:16–17).<sup>264</sup>

**27:52 And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose,<sup>a</sup>**

52a The bodies slept, not their souls. Soul-sleep is unscriptural. The body dies and the spirit goes back to God but the soul is fully aware of his surroundings, either in heaven or hell.

**27:53 And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.<sup>ab</sup>**

<sup>263</sup> O. Talmadge Spence, *The Quest For Christian Purity*, pages 105-106.

<sup>264</sup> Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer's Commentary on Matthew*, page 866.

53a This was a pre-resurrection resurrection. Only Matthew mentions this and does not follow up on it. It must have been something to see these dead people suddenly appear in Jerusalem!

1. Nothing is said about what happened to these people after this. Did they live the rest of their lifespan and then die again? Or were they taken to heaven after the resurrection of Christ as a first fruits of His resurrection?

2. Not every dead body rose here, only some. Why were some raised and not others?

A. Applying the text of Matthew 27, the only possible place these resurrected people can be put is the **"feast of the first fruits"** (1 Corinthians 15:23), as not all the Old Testament saints come up—only **"many bodies"** (Matthew 27:52,53). This would be the equivalent of saying that the **"first fruits"** represent only the first part of a crop to be harvested later.

i. Leviticus 23:10,11 **"Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest: And he shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it."**

3. The first resurrection comes in three parts:

A. Old Testament saints, typified by the feast of the first fruits.

i. Deuteronomy 16:16 **"Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the LORD thy God in the place which he shall choose; in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles: and they shall not appear before the LORD empty:"**

ii. Matthew 27:53 **"And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many."**

iii. 1 Corinthians 15:21-23 **"For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming."**

B. New Testament saints, typified by the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost).

i. Deuteronomy 16:16 **"Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the LORD thy God in the place which he shall choose; in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles: and they shall not appear before the LORD empty:"**

ii. 1 Corinthians 15:21-23 **"For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming."**

iii. 1 Corinthians 15:50-54 **"Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory."**



C. Tribulation saints (Matthew 24; Revelation 11), typified by the Feast of Tabernacles.

i. Deuteronomy 16:16 **“Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the LORD thy God in the place which he shall choose; in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles: and they shall not appear before the LORD empty:”**

ii. 1 Corinthians 15:21-23 **“For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.”**

53b Many liberals believe that Matthew basically copied from Mark. If so, why didn't Mark include this? Matthew is the only gospel writer who mentions this.

**27:54 Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God.<sup>a</sup>**

54a All this got the attention of this battle-hardened veteran! It impressed him enough to declare “This was the Son of God!” A heathen confessed while the priests did not.

**27:55 And many women were there beholding afar off, which followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto him:**

**27:56 Among which was Mary Magdalene,<sup>a</sup> and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's children.**

56a There are four Marys at the cross:

1. Mary Magdalene.
2. Mary, the mother of James and Joses.
3. Mary, the mother of James and John.
4. Mary, the mother of Jesus.

**167. The Burial of Jesus 27:57-61, see also Mark 15:42-47; Luke 23:50-56; John 19:38-42**

**27:57 When the even was come, there came a rich man of Arimathæa, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus' disciple:<sup>a</sup>**

57a Joseph did believe and was a disciple. He may have been one of the “secret disciples” of John 12:42 (**“Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue:”**) and John 19:38 (**“And after this Joseph of Arimathæa, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave him leave. He came therefore, and took the body of Jesus.”**)

**27:58 He went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered.<sup>a</sup>**

58a Joseph was unable to do anything for the Lord in His dying hours, but he was able to do something in His death- provide an honorable resting place for the Lord's body.

1. Joseph gave his grave for Jesus to use. Grave/tombs like this were rather expensive and Joseph made quite a financial sacrifice to give Jesus his grave.
2. The fact that Pilate allowed Joseph to bury Jesus' body shows that the governor did not think Jesus was guilty of treason.

**27:59 And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth,<sup>a</sup>**

59a One Joseph would wrap Him in swaddling clothes while another Joseph would wrap Him in grave clothes.

**27:60 And laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed.<sup>ab</sup>**

60a The tomb was a cave with a large stone (shaped something like a millstone that rolled in a track) that sealed the tomb when closed. It was a "new tomb", unused. Jesus would go from a virgin womb to a virgin tomb.

60b There was some haste involved as the Sabbath was fast approaching. It was their intent to return after the Sabbath to complete the task of preparing the Lord's body for burial.

**27:61 And there was Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, sitting over against the sepulchre.**

### **168. The Concern of the Jews 27:62-66**

**27:62 ¶ Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation,<sup>a</sup> the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate,**

62a This was a high Sabbath, not a weekly Sabbath. Passover was a Sabbath day, regardless of what day of the week it fell, so there were two Sabbaths in this week. This is why Good Friday just won't fly. I hold to either a Wednesday or a Thursday crucifixion, in order to get three literal days and nights for Jesus to be in the tomb. Since there were two Sabbaths in this week, you don't need the crucifixion to take place on Friday afternoon. The Sanhedrin members could meet with Pilate if they did not have to travel more than a Sabbath day's journey and if they did not have to enter his residence.

1. John 18:28 "Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment: and it was early; and they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover."

**27:63 Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again.<sup>a</sup>**

63a The priests and Pharisees knew that the Lord had prophesied of His resurrection. They didn't believe Him, but just in case...! They go to Pilate and share their fears that the disciples might try to steal His body and pass that off as a resurrection.

1. What they didn't understand was that the disciples were in no condition to attempt anything like that. They were defeated and discouraged. They struggled with the resurrection as well and there is no indication that any of them had even considered this.

A. Peter, the unofficial "leader" of the disciples was too busy stewing in his own juices over his denials of the Lord to even suggest such a thing.

2. "They little thought what they were doing. They little thought that unwittingly they were providing the most complete evidence of the truth of Christ's coming resurrection. They were actually making it impossible to prove that there was any deception or imposition. Their seal, their guard, their precautions, were all to become witnesses, in a few hours, that Christ had risen. They might as well have tried to stop the tides of the sea, or to prevent the sun rising, as to prevent Jesus coming forth from the tomb. They were taken in their own craftiness. (1 Cor. 3:19.) Their own devices became instruments to show forth God's glory. The history of the Church of Christ is full of examples of a similar kind. The very things that have seemed most unfavorable to God's people, have often turned out to be for their good. What harm did the "persecution which arose about Stephen" do to the Church of Christ? Those who were scattered went every where, preaching the word. (Acts 8:4.) What harm did imprisonment do Paul? It gave him time to write many of those Epistles, which are now read all over the world. What real harm did the persecution of bloody Mary do to the cause of the English Reformation? The blood of the martyrs became the seed of the Church. What harm does persecution do the people of God at this very day? It only drives them nearer to Christ. It only makes them cling more closely to the throne of grace, the Bible, and prayer."<sup>265</sup>

AV

ESV

LSV

63 Saying, Sir, we remember that that **deceiver** said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again.

63 and said, "Sir, we remember how that impostor said, while he was still alive, 'After three days I will rise.'

63 and said, "Sir, we remember that when He was still alive that deceiver said, 'After three days I *am to* rise again.'

"**deceiver**" the ESV is weaker with "impostor".

**27:64 Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first.<sup>a</sup>**

64a Man and religion may "command" but God has no problem overruling the dictates of man.

**27:65 Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch:<sup>a</sup> go your way, make it as sure as ye can.<sup>bc</sup>**

65a "**watch**" consisting of four soldiers.

65b Pilate grants their request but does not release any of his soldiers to guard the tomb. He allows the Jewish leaders to post their own guards around the tomb. Pilate isn't going to waste any of his soldiers to guard a tomb.

<sup>265</sup> J. C. Ryle, *Expository Thoughts on the Gospels*.

65c **“Make it as sure as ye can”**. Is there is tone of doubt in Pilate’s voice? If Jesus had prophesied of His resurrection, Pilate may have thought that the Jews wouldn’t be able to do anything to stop it!

**27:66 So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone,<sup>a</sup> and setting a watch.**

66a Soldiers are assigned a seal is placed on the stone, and now, they wait...for something to happen. The whole world and the heavenlies now wait, to see if Jesus will escape the clutches of death and if the prophecies of the resurrection will be fulfilled.

## Matthew Chapter 28

### 169. The Resurrection 28:1-8, see Mark 16:1-8; Luke 24:1-11

**28:1<sup>a</sup> In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.<sup>b</sup>**

1a The greatest event in the history of the world is described in these verses, the physical, bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. On this historical fact, Christianity rises or falls. If it could be disproven or if the body of Jesus could be located somewhere on the earth, the whole structure of Christianity would immediately collapse.

1. The world has been trying to disprove this for 2,000 years and has yet to succeed. In fact, honest men who did not believe the resurrection and who undertook an honest study of the matter have been converted as a result of their realization through their study that the resurrection of Jesus Christ was a historical fact after all.

A. It is a fundamental of the faith. If a man denies the resurrection of Christ, he is to be marked and avoided and there can be no fellowship with him.

2. "I know the resurrection is a fact, and Watergate proved it to me. How? Because 12 men testified, they had seen Jesus raised from the dead, then they proclaimed that truth for 40 years, never once denying it. Every one was beaten, tortured, stoned and put in prison. They would not have endured that if it weren't true. Watergate embroiled 12 of the most powerful men in the world-and they couldn't keep a lie for three weeks. You're telling me 12 apostles could keep a lie for 40 years? Absolutely impossible. (Charles Colson, of Watergate fame)."

3. Frank Morison wrote a book titled *Who Moved the Stone?* which is a classic apologetic on the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Morison, whose real name was Albert Henry Ross, was a skeptical British journalist when he began his research, but it convinced him of the historicity of the resurrection, and he became a Christian. This book presents a careful study of the last seven days of Jesus' pre-crucifixion ministry

4. Notice the "**infallible proofs**" (Acts 1:2,3) of a literal, bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ:

A. The body was missing.

B. Those most anxious to recover the body never recovered it.  
i. Matthew 28:15.

C. The resurrected body was seen by more than 500 witnesses.

i. 1 Corinthians 15:6 "**After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep.**"

D. If the body was stolen, whoever stole it had the power to hypnotize Roman soldiers long enough to steal it (Matthew 28:4). How else do you explain sneaking past 4 Roman guards, rolling a huge stone away (which would have made a lot of noise) and then sneaking the body past them?

E. If the body was stolen, the stupid thieves wasted precious time unwinding the body and folding up the grave clothes in a neat little pile.

i. John 20:5-7 "**And he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in. Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie. L And the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself.**"

F. If the body was stolen, the Roman government and the Jewish Sanhedrin could not find it in forty years, even though the integrity of both was at stake!

G. If the body arose only spiritually (as the Jehovah Witnesses claim), it could still eat and drink (Luke 24:42 **"And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb."**). It had "flesh and bones" (Luke 24:39 **"Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have."**) and testified of its own resurrection for forty days after it arose.

5. Jesus was in the tomb for about 72 hours as we take the three days and three nights as literally as we can.

6. The resurrection could have taken place any time from sundown on Saturday (the end of the Sabbath) to when the tomb was discovered on Sunday morning. Christ could have rose from the tomb on Saturday night! The tomb was only discovered to be empty on Sunday morning.

A. "Easter sunrise services" is a tradition that should probably be stopped. The tomb was only discovered to be empty at sunrise. Christ could have risen several hours before sunrise.

1b The women came to finish the preparation of the Jesus' body for His final burial, as they did not have time in the hours after His death.

**28:2 And, behold, there was a great earthquake:<sup>a</sup> for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it.<sup>b</sup>**

2a A second earthquake.

1. "When he died, the earth that received him, shook for fear; now that he arose, the earth that resigned him, leaped for joy in his exaltation."<sup>266</sup>

2. There were earthquakes associated with the death of Christ, just as there will be earthquakes associated with His second coming.

A. Matthew 24:7 **"For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places."**

B. Revelation 6:12 **"And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood;"**

C. Revelation 8:5 **"And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake."**

D. Revelation 11:13 **"And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven."**

E. Revelation 11:19 **"And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail."**

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<sup>266</sup> Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*.

F. Revelation 16:18 **“And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great.”**

2b The angel sat on the stone, as if in contempt of it, to show the folly that it could have kept Christ in the tomb. The angel also cared nothing for the seal on the tomb that forbid anyone to tamper with it.

AV	ESV	LSV
2 And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for <b>the angel of the Lord</b> descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it.	2 And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it.	2 And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled away the stone and sat upon it.

**“the angel of the Lord”** The ESV, LSV and Darby have “an angel of the Lord”.

**28:3 His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow:<sup>a</sup>**

3a This is the natural appearance of a glorified body. Paul would describe it: **“There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power (1 Corinthians 15:40-43).”**

**28:4 And for fear of him the keepers<sup>a</sup> did shake, and became as dead men.**

4a Are **“the keepers”** the “watch” assigned to guard the tomb in Matthew 27:65,66? They fainted at the actual resurrection. They were the actual eyewitnesses and the sight overwhelmed them.

**28:5 And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not<sup>a</sup> ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified.**

5a **“fear not”** People usually feared when they saw an angel. Examples are:

1. Jacob- Genesis 28:17.
2. Gideon- Judges 6:22.
3. Manoah- Judges 13:21,22.
4. Sons of Ornan- 1 Chronicles 21:20.
5. David- 1 Chronicles 21:30.
6. Zacharias- Luke 1:11,12.

**28:6 He is not here: for he is risen, as he said.<sup>abc</sup> Come, see the place where the Lord lay.<sup>d</sup>**

6a **“He is not here: for he is risen.”** Go to the tombs of the world’s great religious leaders, and you will find that they all have one thing more in common than “belief in a supreme being,” “faith in their fellow man,” or “spiritual insight into the inner man”; yes, they have one great communal ground far more “vulgate” than these—they are all dead and maggot-eaten!...Name them: Buddha, dead. Lao-tze, stone cold dead in the market. Mohammed, deader than a mackerel. Confucius kicked the bucket. Zoroaster, colder than a dead Eskimo. Pope Pius XII, so corrupt now you wouldn’t want to look at him. And if all the dust that was left of them were blown into your face on a windy day, you wouldn’t bother to wipe your eyes. Go to the tomb outside Jerusalem, and you will find an empty tomb. The body is gone. It was never recovered. You never found it, and the blind and stupid writers, historians, poets, and anthropologists of this world never found it, and you never will until you’re dead and gone. Then you will discover, too late, that the “great example” and “great teacher” and “master” was your Creator. “He is not here: for he is risen.”<sup>267</sup>

1. Mohammad is in his tomb.
2. Every pope is in their tomb.
3. The Buddha is in his tomb.
4. Every false prophet is in his tomb, Charles Raze Russel, Joseph Smith
5. The theological systems are in their tomb
6. The philosophies and philosophers are in their tomb
7. Only Christ stepped out His tomb!

Don’t put your faith in anyone of any system or teaching that can’t come out of its tomb!

6b All Christ’s enemies were defeated by those words. All the competitors of Christ were defeated. The religions and false teachers were all defeated. The world system and the devil were also defeated and doomed as these words echoed out. The empty tomb meant Christ was Who He said He was, and that meant Satan and his followers were wrong, they killed God and He would be raised from the dead to judge those who had killed Him.

6c If Christ’s moldering, decaying body could have been found or produced, Christianity would have been stillborn. It would have been no better than any other religion and Jesus would have been nothing more than some religious teacher who lived in a Roman backwater province. You KNOW that Satan and all his followers did everything they could to either keep Christ’s dead body in that tomb or to produce it, but they all failed miserably, Do you want to destroy Christianity? Just produce the body of Jesus! Prove that He was not resurrected by the Father! Forget your books and debates and polemics. Just produce the body and every church will close up shop by this time next week and every preacher will start looking for another job.

6d Come see for yourself! Don’t take our word for it (John 1:39,46)! The Lord never is upset with a reasoned faith, with seekers approaching the claims of the Bible with a rational, reasoned faith.

**28:7 And go quickly, and tell his disciples<sup>a</sup> that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you.**

7a **“Tell his disciples”**

1. The angels would not or could not go and tell the disciples of the resurrect, so they commissioned the women with that task.

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<sup>267</sup> Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer’s Commentary on Matthew*, pages 887-888.



2. Not the Sanhedrin or the Pharisees or the scribes or Pilate, but the disciples first! The religious leaders wouldn't have believed it anyway and would have done their best to squash the news and to persecute anyone who spread it or believed it.

**28:8 And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run<sup>a</sup> to bring his disciples word.**

8a They ran. News like this must be delivered and proclaimed with all possible haste!

### **170. The Post-Resurrection Appearance of Jesus 28:9,10**

**28:9 ¶ And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them,<sup>a</sup> saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet,<sup>b</sup> and worshipped<sup>c</sup> him.**

9a There were numerous post-resurrection appearances by Christ, in multiple places to multiple people, so there was no way to say that anyone was imagining it.

The order of post-resurrection appearances:

1. Matthew 28:1-8
2. Luke 24:1-10
3. John 20:1-10
4. 1 Corinthians 15:5
5. Mark 16:7
6. Luke 24:43
7. John 20:11-18
8. Mark 16:9,12
9. Luke 24:13-29, 22-42
10. John 20:19-25
11. Mark 16:14
12. John 21
13. Acts 9:4-9 to Saul of Tarsus
14. Acts 9:10-12 to Ananias
13. 1 Corinthians 15:5-8 to over 500 witnesses

9b They "**held Him by the feet**". Since Jesus refused to let Mary touch these same feet not two hours earlier, we are left with the conclusion that He ascended and descended in that time and may have already made His application of His blood on the heavenly mercy seat during that period. The Book of Hebrews has much to say about this.

1. Hebrews 8:1-6 **"Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man. For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer. For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law: Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount. But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises."**

2. Hebrews 9:7-14 **“But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people: The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing: Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation. But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?”**

3. Hebrews 9:23-25 **“It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others;”**

9c They worshipped the risen Christ. He accepted worship before and after His resurrection. Jesus always accepted worship, never refused it and never rebuked anyone for worshipping Him.

**28:10 Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid:<sup>a</sup> go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee,<sup>b</sup> and there shall they see me.**

10a There was no need to fear about anything associated with the resurrection.

10b Galilee is mentioned here and in Matthew 28:7. That was Jesus' favorite area and was the base of His earthly ministry. Mark 16:7 adds **“Go...tell his disciples and Peter...”** Peter is singled out as he had an especially hard fall with his three denials. The Lord makes a special effort to restore Peter and to assure him that his failure was forgiven and that he still had a ministry ahead of him.

### **171. The Plot By The Jews 28:11-15**

**28:11 ¶ Now when they were going, behold, some of the watch came into the city, and shewed unto the chief priests all the things that were done.**

**28:12 And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers,<sup>a</sup>**

12a Now the cover-up begins. Word was spreading fast about the resurrection, and they had to move quickly if they were going to quench it.

**28:13 Saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept.<sup>a</sup>**

13a This was illogical for several reasons:

1. If the guards were asleep, how do they know why stole the body?
2. Were all the guards asleep at the same time?
3. Could the disciples go through all the work of rolling away a huge stone and stealing the body without waking even one of the guards?
4. Since the penalty for sleeping on duty was death, which soldier would openly admit to it?
5. They forget the disciples were too dispirited to try to pull a stunt like this.
6. The body was never found. All it would have taken to disprove Christianity was to produce a body! Yet no one ever could,

**28:14 And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you.<sup>a</sup>**

14a Would YOU trust this gang of liars, thieves and murderers to come to your rescue if you got in trouble with your superiors in covering for them? They just murdered an innocent man who was the Son of God and you are going to put your fate in their hands? How well did that work out for Judas?

**28:15 So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.<sup>a</sup>**

15a And it is also reported among liberals, modernists and unbelievers to this day. The media usually digs up (resurrects?) these articles about why the Resurrection couldn't be true around Easter every year.

**172. Another Post-Resurrection Appearance of Jesus 28:16-18, see also Mark 16:15,16; Luke 24:46-48**

**28:16 ¶ Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee,<sup>a</sup> into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them.**

16a Jesus grew up in Galilee and conducted most of His ministry there, so this was a favorite area of Jesus, and is where He wanted to spend His post-resurrection activities, rather than around Jerusalem, that had crucified Him.

**28:17 And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted.<sup>a</sup>**

17a **"some doubted"** Not only Thomas (John 20:25 **"The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe."**), but there will always be doubters, even when confronted by **"many infallible proofs"** (Acts 1:3).

These "doubters" like to call themselves "skeptics" or "agnostics" as they believe that there is never enough evidence to commit themselves to accept a certain thing as true. They like to brag about how "open-minded" they are about religious claims and how they try to see all

sides. Their agnosticism is just a cover for their unbelief but they try to appear “reasonable” and “scholarly” while in reality, they are just too cowardly to take a stand on an issue. Thomas was like that at first, but when he saw the resurrected Lord, all doubts and skepticism vanished. But many times, this is just an attempt to excuse unbelief.

**28:18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.<sup>ab</sup>**

18a “**All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.**” For two reasons:

1. Jesus is God. He never ceased being God.
2. By His successful work on the cross.
3. This “power” is not given to any church or denomination, but to Christ alone.

18b “On earth, this power is delegated. The first delegation, as usual, is to the one Jesus addressed in Simon Peter when He first mentioned the church (Matt. 16:16–18); the name of this one is the original, first and foremost, ecclesiastical authority of all time: SATAN (see Matt. 16:23). In their haste to get temporal power, the Roman cardinals and bishops have forgotten that Romans 13:1-4 includes the devil himself, first and foremost (see Matt. 4:9). The fifth and sixth century Roman bishops made the disastrous mistake of thinking that since Augustine was right in his millennial teaching, that the “kingdom had come,” and therefore, it was all right to use the Bible to claim temporal power and authority and rulership over the earth system itself, controlled by Satan (1 John 2:15, 5:19). What God intended to be a group of “faithful” Christians (Matt. 13:31) turned into a buzzard’s roost for “the faithful” (Matt. 13:32); meaning those enslaved, religious perverts subject to a Satanic dictatorial usurper, who was never FAITHFUL or Scriptural in the true sense a day in his life.”<sup>268</sup>

**173. The Last Commission of Christ 28:19,20**

**28:19<sup>abc</sup> ¶ Go ye therefore, and teach all nations,<sup>d</sup> baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:**

19a Outline for the so-called “Great Commission”:

1. Go.
  - A. Effort and activity is involved.
  - B. We go to the sinner for the sinner will seldom, if ever, come to us.
2. Teach.
  - A. This would be evangelism, teaching them the gospel.
  - B. Mark 16:15 adds “preach”. This is not necessarily a pulpit ministry on Sunday morning. It also involves a one-on-one dealing with a sinner, as Philip did with the Ethiopian in Acts 8:35 “**Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.**”
3. Baptize
  - A. Water baptism, by immersion, upon a profession of faith.
4. Make disciples.
  - A. This is teaching the converts in Bible doctrine and helping them along in their growth, maturity and sanctification.

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<sup>268</sup> Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer’s Commentary on Matthew*, page 896.

19b The question about the Commission is really “Is it for the Church in all ages or was it limited to the disciples in the Book of Acts or to an application in the Tribulation period?” In some quarters (such as the self-styled “Independent Fundamental Baptist” crowd, hyper-evangelicals and followers of Jack Hyles and the Sword of the Lord), to even hint at such a question is considered to be the highest blasphemy. The implication is that you “don’t care about soulwinning” and are lazy unless you have a slavish devotion to the “Great Commission”. You must therefore engage in “aggressive soulwinning”, door-to-door “soulwinning”, “confrontational soulwinning” and bus ministries, else you are backslidden and carnal. But this is a legitimate doctrinal question.

1. The early church in Acts did fulfill it. They did go into all of the world (the Roman Empire) of their day and maybe even further, into India and Wales.
  - A. They “turned the world upside down” in Acts 17:6.
2. After Acts 28, was this still in effect?
3. Since there is so much tribulation material in Matthew, would this be a commission to the 144,000 Jewish tribulation evangelists of Revelation 7?
4. It is not the same Commission as Mark 16:15-18 as Mark adds material.

Compare:

Matthew 28	Mark 16
Go ye into all the world	Go ye into all the world
Teach all nations	
	Preach the gospel to every creature
Baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit	He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved but he that believeth not shall be damned
Teach them to observe all things I have commanded you	And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues, They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

3. No one can find a clear statement of Trinitarian baptism anywhere in Acts.
4. **“The end”** (Matthew 28:20) is nearly always found referring, not to the end of the Church Age, but to the end of the Tribulation.
  - A. Matthew 24:13 **“But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.”**
  - B. Hebrews 3:6,14 **“But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.... For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end;”**.
5. “Doctrinally speaking, the commission has a direct application to Jewish evangelism of the nature of Jonah’s and Paul’s, which will take place in the Tribulation, at the end of the age. (Compare Matt. 10; John 1; Acts 9; and Rev. 7, 11.) The commission spoken is correct for this age and would remain unaltered until Acts 7. (Matthew, Acts, and Hebrews! That’s where they bust their necks!) After Acts 7, the commission is altered by a gospel of salvation by grace, through faith in a blood atonement (Acts 8, the eunuch), for the Gentiles (Acts 10), and is explained as a free gospel of grace—plus NOTHING—in order to be justified (Acts 11, 15). It winds up as a

gospel which Paul calls “my gospel” (Rom 2:16; 1 Cor. 15:1–6), and it includes also the mystery of the revelation of the Body of Christ—the True Church.”<sup>269</sup>

6. Regardless of if this is a commission for the modern Church or if it was just for the early Church or for Tribulation Jews, we should still be involved in evangelism, missions and discipleship in our ministry to be witnesses for Christ.

7. Another issue is, if the “Great Commission” is for today, was it given to individual Christians or to the Church as a body (if you believe the “Great Commission” is still valid after the Book of Acts)? I really don’t see the point of dwelling on this because it really isn’t that important. Individual Christians make up local churches, which makes up the Body of Christ, so the question is ultimately a moot one. This is a case of splitting hairs theologically and **“foolish and unlearned questions”** (2 Timothy 2:23)."

8. R. A. Huebner, follower of John Nelson Darby, believes this to apply to a future godly Jewish remnant.”<sup>270</sup>

19c “One of the greatest misconceptions in the past century has been the belief that the Lord gave the Great Commission to the Church. He did not! The Lord gave the Great Commission to the Apostles before His Ascension and thus, before the birth of the Church on the Day of Pentecost. They did fulfill the commission by going into all the known world at that time. The Church today has become obsessed with a false claim: all of their money and energies are being poured out, believing this commission is God's will for the Church.

If the Great Commission is not given to the Church, what then is her commission or purpose of existence? The apostle Paul to the Ephesians clarifies this calling:

*For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ. From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love (Eph. 4:12-16).*

This End-time church age has miserably failed in Paul's declaration; it has suppressed any truth that would feed a deeper walk with Goel, and in its place has created new teachings or doctrines to accommodate the growing epidemic of lukewarmness. Pastors have concocted and administered the perfect sedative to rock the heart into a deeper sleep, whispering "it's all right the way you are living.”<sup>271</sup>

A good number of classic dispensational writers hold to the position that the “Great Commission” was given to the early church only. It is the later dispensational men (say, from the time of John R. Rice onward, the men of the hyper-evangelical movement) who applied it to the entire Church Age. Most Independent, Fundamental Baptist preachers hold to this position and will proceed to shame anyone who doesn’t agree with them as having “no burden for the lost”. Check the booklist at the beginning of this commentary for a review of some of these men and their commentaries.

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<sup>269</sup> Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer's Commentary on Matthew*, pages 903-904.

<sup>270</sup> *Elements of Dispensational Truth*, volume 4, page 7.

<sup>271</sup> H. T. Spence, *The Rise and Fall of Historic Christian Fundamentalism*, page 154.

19d AV

ESV

LSV

19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

The Authorized Version has us to “teach all nations” while the ESV, LSV and Darby have us “making disciples”. No teaching? The only way the unsaved can become “disciples” is to be born again, something only the Holy Spirit can do!

**28:20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.<sup>a</sup> Amen.**

20a “**end of the world**” This is the end of the age or this dispensation, the end of this world system. Keep up the witness until the day comes when it is no longer needed.





### Archaic Words Defined

**“countenance”** from an Old French “contenance” which is from a Middle Latin word “continentia” and “continere” (“con”- with, together, having intensity, and “tenere” to hold), meaning “the way in which one restrains oneself”, a holding together of the face that expresses an attitude or a state of mind (Steven White, *White’s Dictionary of the King James Language*, page 282).

**“forswear”** From about the year 1000, Middle English “forsweren”, from the Old English forswerian, from “for” (away from, with intensity) and the Old English “swear” (to make a solemn promise or declaration, usually calling upon God in the process”. Forswearing tends to have an element of deceit or falsehood, as the one doing the it tends not to be completely honest. Psalm 24:4 speaks of not swearing deceitfully, such as making a vow and not following through on it (Steven J. White, *White’s Dictionary of the King James Language*, volume 2, page 155). This word only occurs once in the Authorized Version. “It is still in use as a legal term and has been defined as making an oath which the deponent knows to be untrue (Laurence Vance, *Archaic Words and the Authorized Version*, page 151).

**“gall”** is a bitter drink, “a bitter poisonous herb which deadens pain (De. 29:18; Ps. 69:21; Mt. 27:34) (David Cloud, *Believer’s Bible Dictionary*, page 119).” from the Middle English galle, going back to Old English gealla, galla, going back to Germanic \*gallōn-, galla- (whence Old High German & Old Saxon galla, Old Norse gall), going back to Indo-European \*ǵholh3-n- (whence, without the suffix, Greek cholē “bile, bitter hatred,” chōlos “bitter hatred, wrath,” Avestan zāra- “bile”), a derivative of \*ǵhelh3- “green, yellow”.

**“listed”** wanted or desired. It comes from the Middle English lysten, from Old English lystan; akin to Old English lust desire, lust. “It appears to be from the same root as ‘lust’, which is an evil inclination or propensity. Webster gives ‘list’ as a definition for ‘lust’...it means the wind blows in whatever direction it is inclined toward. The word is used secularly to mean the angle or degree to which a vessel leans. (Gail Riplinger, *The Dictionary Inside the King James Bible*, pages 133-134).”

**“lunatick”** It was thought that the moon caused these physical and mental issues. This could have been some form of epilepsy. This is here we see the word “luna” in this word. The word is used only in Matthew 4:24 and here. It is from the Middle English lunatik, from Anglo-French or Late Latin; Anglo-French lunatic, from Late Latin lunaticus, from Latin luna; from the belief that lunacy fluctuated with the phases of the moon.

**“mammon”** material wealth or possessions especially as having a debasing influence, material wealth or possessions especially as having a debasing influence. It comes from Middle English, from Late Latin *mammona*, from Greek *mamōna*, from Aramaic *māmōnā* riches.

**“mete”** Measure out, the definition comes by its context and nearness to the word “measure”. It comes from Middle English, from Old English metan; akin to Old High German mezzan to measure, Latin modus measure, Greek medesthai to be mindful of.

**“pretence”** the act of pretending, a false display; affectation, a claim, especially a false one, to a right, title, or distinction, make-believe or feigning, a false claim or allegation; pretext. We can see the word “pretend” here. From Middle English, probably modification of Medieval Latin pretensio, irregular from Latin praetendere.

**“prevent”** occurs seven times in the AV. The form “preventist” is found once and the form “prevented” appears nine times. “Prevent” is manifestly not an archaic word but it is used in the AV in an archaic sense. The word is from the Latin “praeventus”, from “praevenire”, “to come before”. Thus, the original meaning of “prevent” was to come or go before, anticipate, meet beforehand, obviate, or precede (Laurence Vance, *Archaic Words and the Authorized Version*, page 269)."

**“profane”** “Our Eng. word "profane" = far from the temple. The Greek word here = to trample down and thus treat as common. Cp. Act 24:6 (Ethelbert Bullinger, *Companion Bible*).” From Middle English prophanen, from Anglo-French prophaner, from Latin profanare, from profanes. We get our word “profanity” from this.

**“publicans”** “What “publicans” did was according to “a public example” not “privily” Matthew 1:19 but “publicly” Acts 18:28, 20:20 “that they may be seen of men” Matthew 6:5 and “for to be seen of men” Matthew 23:5 like Diotrophes, like “the scribes and the Pharisees” Matthew 23:2 and typified by “a man named Zacchaeus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich” Luke 19:2, whom everyone knew, Luke 19:7, and hated for his graft and pomposity (Alan O’Reilly)”

“The word is from the French “publicain”, from a Latin adjective which signified “pertaining to the public revenue”. (Laurence Vance, *Archaic Words and the Authorized Version*, page 273).”

**“raca”**. Vain, empty, as if saying “You empty headed fool!” Saying this to another person in the Millennium brings the threat of hellfire.

**“sucklings”** an unweaned baby, from Middle English suklyng, from suken to suck.

**“tetrarch”** The Greek word transliterated means a governor over the fourth part of any region; but the word subsequently lost its strict etymological meaning, and came to denote any petty prince not ruling over an entire country. It comes from “tetra”, meaning “four” and “arch”, meaning “a ruler”.

**“upbraid”**, to criticize severely, find fault with, to reproach severely : scold vehemently. From Middle English upbreyden, from Old English ūpbregdan, probably from ūp up + bregdan to snatch, move suddenly.

## **Appendix One** **Outline of the Doctrine of Repentance**

All verses relating to repentance, faith and salvation must be interpreted in context and in relation to other verses. We cannot isolate one verse and build a doctrine around it.

The doctrine that a mere prayer saves sinners, even if they evidence no repentance in their lives is a great error in our day.

One reason why so many converts in Independent Fundamental Baptist churches are so spiritually weak is because they “believed” a plan of salvation that left out repentance and a changed life. They simply “believed” but without any instruction that the life needed to reflect the reality of a heart change, if there was one. But with this manner of evangelist, the “soul-winner” got them to quickly recite a prayer or give some verbal assent that “they wanted to go to heaven when they died”. A quick prayer was made and then the ‘soul-winner’ left the new “convert” with no charge, challenge or instruction about repentance and a change of life as described in 2 Corinthians 5:17 and 1 Thessalonians 1:9.

Quotes from men who hold an incorrect view of repentance for salvation. (Many of these quotes taken from David Cloud’s works *Way of Life Encyclopedia, Repentance and Soulwinning*).

1. “What makes the wrath of God abide on a person? Believing not! So, from what must a person repent in order to be saved? He must repent of that which makes him lost. Since ‘believing not’ makes him lost, ‘believing’ makes him saved. The repentance there is a turning from the thing that keeps him from being saved to the thing that saves him. So, yes, there is a repentance from unbelief in order to believe. It is simply a change of direction. It means a turning around. You are going away from believing, and you decide to turn around and believe. You change your direction; you change your mind. With your will you believe and rely upon Christ to save you. In order to believe, you have to repent of unbelief. That which makes a man lost must be corrected” (Dr. Jack Hyles, *Enemies of Soulwinning*, 1993).

2. “10,446 professions of faith in 1995. ... Repentance is not a doctrine. The word ‘repent’ is not even found in the book of John. It is obviously assumed by God that ‘repentance’ is a part of ‘believing.’ ... Repentance is not turning from your sins. ... Repentance is to change one’s mind from unbelief to belief in Christ” (Bob Gray, “A Message from the Pastor,” *The Soulwinner*, January 1996, Longview Baptist Temple, Longview, Texas).

3. “Repentance is not a prerequisite to salvation; for if repentance is required, salvation is based, at least in part on works. ... We would suggest to you from the Word of God that repentance is included in believing. It is not a separate act which conditions salvation, but rather it is included in the act of believing” (Dwight Pentecost, *Things Which Become Sound Doctrine*, 1965, pp. 70, 71).

4. “The emphasis upon repentance has created confusion among preachers young and old. It has been a source of discouragement to soulwinners. ... I have two choices. I can follow those who wear their soulwinning pins and carry New Testaments,

or I can follow those who are critical of leading people to Christ. May the critics repent and may the soulwinners realize that we are on the same team” (Brent Neal, “Is Repentance an Attack on Soulwinning?” *The Baptist Contender*, June 1996).

5. “The many false conditions of salvation [include] water baptism and repentance” (Dr. Fred Afman, “The Way of Salvation,” Sunday School class, Highland Park Baptist Church, Chattanooga, Tennessee, May 1996; quoted from Chris McNeilly, *The Great Omission*, pp. 25,26; Dr. Afman was a teacher at Tennessee Temple).

Definitions of repentance and the references where the word is used in our English Bible

1. English

A. To turn from sin and dedicate oneself to the amendment of one's life, to feel regret or contrition, to change one's mind (Merriam-Webster Dictionary)

2. Hebrew

A. shub, turn back (Hebrew)

i. 1 Kings 8:47 **Yet if they shall bethink themselves in the land whither they were carried captives, and repent, and make supplication unto thee in the land of them that carried them captives, saying, We have sinned, and have done perversely, we have committed wickedness;**

ii. Ezekiel 14:6 **Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Repent, and turn yourselves from your idols; and turn away your faces from all your abominations.**

iii. Ezekiel 18:30 **Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord GOD. Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin.**

3. Greek

A. ametameletos (Strong's #278), “not repented of, unregretted”, signifies “without change of purpose”

i. Romans 11:29 **For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.**

ii. 2 Corinthians 7:10 **For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.**

B. metamelomai (Strong's #3338), meta, and melo, “to care for,” “to regret, to repent oneself,”

i. Matthew 21:29 **He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went.**

ii. Matthew 21:32 **For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him.**

iii. Matthew 27:3 **Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders,**

iv. 2 Corinthians 7:8 **For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not**

**repent, though I did repent: for I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though it were but for a season.**

v. Hebrews 7:1 **(For those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath by him that said unto him, The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec:)**

C. metanoeo (Strong's #3340), "to perceive afterwards" (meta, "after," implying "change," noeo, "to perceive"; nous, "the mind, the seat of moral reflection"), in contrast to pronoeo, "to perceive beforehand," hence signifies "to change one's mind or purpose," always, in the New Testament, involving a change for the better, an amendment, and always, except in Luke 17:3, 4, of "repentance" from sin.

i. Matthew 3:2 **And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.**

a. Mark 1:15 adds: **repent ye, and believe the gospel.**

ii. Matthew 4:17 **From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.**

iii. Matthew 11:20,21 **Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not: Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. (Luke 10:13; 11:32)**

iv. Matthew 12:41 **The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here.**

v. Mark 6:12 **And they went out, and preached that men should repent.**

vi. Luke 13:3 **I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. (also Luke 13:5)**

vii. Luke 15:7 **I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.**

viii. Luke 15:10 **Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.**

ix. Luke 16:30 **And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.**

x. Luke 17:3,4 **Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him.**

xi. Acts 2:38 **Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.**

xii. Acts 3:19 **Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;**

- xiii. Acts 8:22 **Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.**
- xiv. Acts 17:30 **And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:**
- xv. Acts 26:20 **But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.**
- xvi. 2 Corinthians 12:21 **And lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and that I shall bewail many which have sinned already, and have not repented of the uncleanness and fornication and lasciviousness which they have committed.**
- xvii. Revelation 2:5 **Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.**
- xviii. Revelation 2:16 **Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.**
- xix. Revelation 2:21 **And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not.**
- xx. Revelation 2:22 **Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds.**
- xxi. Revelation 3:3 **Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.**
- xxii. Revelation 3:19 **As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.**
- xxiii. Revelation 9:20,21 **And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.**
- xxiv. Revelation 16:9 **And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory.**
- xxv. Revelation 16:11 **And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds.**
5. metanoia (Strong's #3341), "afterthought, change of mind, repentance," repentance," is used of "repentance" from sin or evil.
- i. Matthew 3:8 **Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance:**
- ii. Matthew 3:11 **I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with**

**fire:**

iii. Matthew 9:13 **But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.**

iv. Mark 1:4 **John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.**

v. Mark 2:17 **When Jesus heard it, he saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.**

vi. Luke 3:3 **And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins;**

vii. Luke 3:8 **Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.**

viii. Luke 5:32 **I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.**

ix. Luke 15:7 **I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.**

x. Luke 24:47 **And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.**

xi. Acts 5:31 **Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.**

xii. Acts 11:18 **When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.**

xiii. Acts 13:24 **When John had first preached before his coming the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel.**

xiv. Acts 19:4 **Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.**

xv. Acts 20:21 **Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.**

xvi. Acts 26:20 **But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.**

xvii. Romans 2:4 **Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?**

xviii. 2 Corinthians 7:9,10 **Now I rejoyce, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of:**

**but the sorrow of the world worketh death.**

xix. 2 Timothy 2:25 **In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;**

xx. Hebrews 6:1 **Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God,**

xxi. Hebrews 6:6 **If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.**

xxii. Hebrews 12:17 **For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.**

xxiii. 2 Peter 3:9 **The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.**

Repentance:

A. Is a change of perception in the mind

B. A change of direction of the life

C. A change of allegiance that will lead to a change of heart (H. T. Spence, *A Catechetical Study for the Remnant*, page 75),

Categorization of verses on repentance (mainly New Testament verses)

1. Verses about Israel repenting of their national sins

A. 1 Kings 8:47 **Yet if they shall bethink themselves in the land whither they were carried captives, and **repent**, and make supplication unto thee in the land of them that carried them captives, saying, We have sinned, and have done perversely, we have committed wickedness;**

B. Ezekiel 14:6 **Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Repent, and turn yourselves from your idols; and turn away your faces from all your abominations.**

C. Ezekiel 18:30 **Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord GOD. Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin.**

D. Jonah 3:5-8.

1. The word repentance is not used in this passage, but in Matthew 12:41 Jesus said they repented. The repentance of the people of Nineveh was witnessed in their actions. True repentance is always observable by a change in one's manner of living.

E. Luke 3:8 **Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.**

F. Acts 2:38 **Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one**



**of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.**

G. Acts 3:19 **Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;**

H. Acts 5:31 **Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.**

I. Acts 13:24 **When John had first preached before his coming the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel.**

2. Example of Personal Repentance

A. Job 42:6 **Wherefore I abhor *myself*, and **repent** in dust and ashes.**

3. Examples of Preachers Preaching Repentance

A. John preaching repentance

i. Matthew 3:2 **And saying, **Repent** ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.**

ii. Mark 1:4 **John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of **repentance** for the remission of sins.**

iii. Luke 3:3 **And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins;**

iv. Acts 13:24 **When John had first preached before his coming the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel.**

v. Acts 19:4 **Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.**

B. Jesus preached repentance

i. Matthew 4:17 **From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, **Repent**: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.**

ii. Matthew 9:13 **But go ye and learn what *that* meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to **repentance**.**

iii. Mark 2:17 **When Jesus heard it, he saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.**

iv. Luke 5:32 **I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.**

C. The Disciples preaching repentance

i. Mark 6:12 **And they went out, and preached that men should repent.**

D. Peter preaching repentance

i. Acts 2:38 **Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.**

ii. Acts 3:19 **Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the**

**presence of the Lord;**

**E. Paul preaching repentance**

- i. Acts 17:30 **And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent”.**
- ii. Acts 20:20,21 **And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have showed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.**
- iii. Acts 26:20 **But showed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.**

**4. Repentance has evidences for it (2 Corinthians 5:17)**

- A. Matthew 3:8 **Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance:**
- B. Matthew 3:11 **I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:**
- C. Mark 1:4 **John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.**
- D. Luke 3:3 **And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins;**
- E. Luke 3:8 **Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.**
- F. Acts 13:24 **When John had first preached before his coming the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel.**
- G. Acts 19:4 **Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.**
- H. Acts 26:20 **But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.**

**5. Repent and believe, showing repentance and belief are separate things**

- A. Mark 1:15 **And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.**

**6. Repentance accompanies belief, can't have one without the other**

- A. Matthew 3:2 **And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.**
  - 1. Mark 1:15, adds : **repent ye, and believe the gospel.**
- B. James 2:19 **Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.**
  - 1. The devils “believe” but without repentance.

7. Associated with the Kingdom of Heaven

A. Matthew 3:2 **And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.**

B. Matthew 4:17 **From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.**

8. Associated with the Kingdom of God

A. Mark 1:15 **And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.**

9. Commands to repent

A. Ezekiel 18:30. **Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord GOD. Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin.**

B. Matthew 3:2 **And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.**

C. Matthew 4:17 **From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.**

D. Matthew 9:13 **But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.**

E. Mark 1:15 **And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.**

F. Mark 2:17 **When Jesus heard it, he saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.**

G. Mark 6:12 **And they went out, and preached that men should repent.**

H. Luke 5:32 **I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.**

I. Acts 2:38 **Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.**

J. Acts 3:19 **Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;**

K. Acts 8:22 **Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.**

L. Acts 17:30 **And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:**

M. Acts 26:20 **But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.**

N. Revelation 2:5 **Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.**

O. Revelation 2:16 **Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.**

**P. Revelation 3:3 Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.**

**Q. Revelation 3:19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.**

10. You will perish if you do not repent

A. Luke 13:3,5 **I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.**

11. Heaven rejoices when a sinner repents

A. Luke 15:7 **I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.**

12. Self-righteous men will not repent

A. Luke 15:7 **I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.**

13. Men will not necessarily repent if they saw a miracle

A. Luke 16:30 **And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.**

14. If someone sins against us and then repents, we are to forgive

A. Luke 17:3,4 **Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him.**

15. Repentance preached in the name of Christ

A. Luke 24:47 **And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.**

16. Repentance to be preached to all nations

A. Luke 24:47 **And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.**

17. Baptism follows repentance

A. Acts 2:38 **Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.**

18. Repent first, then sins are blotted out/forgiven

A. Acts 3:19 **Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of**

**the Lord;**

**B. Acts 5:31 Him hath God exalted with his right hand *to be* a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.**

**19. God grants repentance**

**A. Acts 11:18 When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.**

**B. 2 Timothy 2:25 In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;**

**C. Hebrews 6:6 If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.**

**20. Repentance toward God**

**A. Acts 20:21 Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.**

**21. Gentiles should repent**

**A. Acts 26:20 But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and *then* to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.**

**22. Repent and turn to God**

**A. Acts 26:20 But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and *then* to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.**

**23. The goodness of God leads to repentance**

**A. Romans 2:4 Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?**

**24. Sorrow works repentance**

**A. 2 Corinthians 7:9,10 Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.**

**25. Repentance is impossible for some**

**A. Hebrews 12:17 For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.**

26. God desires all to come to repentance

A. 2 Peter 3:9 **The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.**

27. Refusal to repent brings judgment

A. Matthew 11:20 **Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not:**

B. Revelation 2:5 **Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.**

C. Revelation 2:22 **Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds.**

28. Repentance toward God is a fundamental doctrine and is absolutely necessary

A. Hebrews 6:1 **Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God,**

29. Verses where repentance is associated with salvation

A. Luke 13:3,5 **I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.**

B. 1 Thessalonians 1:9 **For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God;**

Steps in salvation

A. Conviction -- where sin is admitted. Man must see himself as a lost, ruined, guilty, desperately wicked sinner without hope or help, in danger of hell. In repentance, a lost sinner not only sees himself as a sinner, but he recognizes the fact that he has sinned against a righteous and holy God.

i. The message that Paul preached was: "**repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ**" (Acts 20:21). In repentance, there will be confession of sin to God (Psalm 32:5; 51:1-4).

B. Contrition -- where sin is abhorred. When one sees himself as he appears before God, he is brought to a place where there is godly sorrow for his sin and hates it altogether.

i. "**For I will declare mine iniquity; I will be sorry for my sin.**" (Psalm 38:18).

ii. "**For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of ...**" (2 Corinthians 7:10).

3. To hate sin is to love God. In true repentance, there is not only the desire to escape the consequences of sin, but to be rid of sin itself as a thing displeasing to God.

C. Conversion -- where sin is abandoned. Repentance involves the forsaking of sin:

1. **"Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon"** (Isaiah 55:7).
2. **"He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy"** (Proverbs 28:13).

#### Biblical Examples of Repentance

- A. The Prodigal Son coming to himself, confessing his sin against God and his father, and returning home. Luke 15:17-20.
- B. The Thessalonians believers turning to God from idols to serve the living and true God. 1 Thessalonians 1:9.
- C. Zaccheus turning from corruption to uprightness. **"And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold. And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham"** Luke 19:8,9.
- D. Nebuchadnezzar humbling himself before God. **"Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase"** Daniel 4:37.
- E. The Philippian Jailer running from his sin to Jesus Christ and becoming a helper of Christians. Acts 16:33,34 **"And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway. And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house."**
- F. The Jews at Pentecost turning to Christ. **"Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. ... Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers"** Acts 2:38-42.
- G. It is Job, repenting and abhorring himself in dust and ashes- Job 42:6 **"Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes."**
- H. It is Manasseh repenting of his sins after God's judgment fell on him- 2 Chronicles 33:12-19.
- I. It is Paul, turning from a life as a persecutor of Christians to the life and ministry of an apostle- Galatians 1:23 **"But they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed."**
- J. David repenting of his sin with Bathsheba in Psalm 51.

Objections of the Biblical doctrine where both faith and repentance are necessary for salvation generally comes from the "hyper-evangelicals", the neo-Independent Fundamental Baptists (followers of the Sword of the Lord and Jack Hyles) and the self-



styled “New IFB” (followers of Steven Anderson):

**1. Objection 1 “Repentance is not found in the Gospel of John”**

A. Since “repentance” is not found in John’s Gospel, it is not necessary for salvation. “Believe” is used 99 times in John.

B. But other doctrines relating to salvation are also not mentioned in John—redemption, justification, propitiation, substitution, etc. Since they are not mentioned in John’s Gospel, do they also have no bearing in salvation? We are given four Gospels so that we will have a complete picture of Christ’s person, work, and message; and the fact remains that repentance is mentioned 27 times in the Gospels alone and 59 times in the New Testament. That is a heavy emphasis.

C. John’s Gospel emphasizes faith, but why make it mutually exclusive from repentance? Is it mentioned anywhere in John that repentance has no role in salvation?

D. Why ignore the other verses where repentance is associated with salvation?

**2. Objection 2- Repentance is wrapped up in faith and are the same thing- “The word ‘repent’ is not even found in the book of John. It is obviously assumed by God that ‘repentance’ is a part of ‘believing’” (Bob Gray).**

A. If repentance and faith are the same, why did Paul make such a plain distinction between them? **“Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ”** (Acts 20:21).

B. Repentance and faith are two separate things that come together for salvation, but they act together as one thing.

C. If repentance and faith are the same, why did the Jesus say that repentance is a part of the Great Commission? **“And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem”** (Luke 24:47). Both repentance and faith are to be preached. While these doctrines are intimately connected, they are not the same. Biblical salvation involves both: **“repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ”** (Acts 20:21).

**3. Objection 3- The Philippians Jailor in Acts 16:31- Paul never mentions repentance**

A. Paul made no mention of repentance, only “believe on the Lord Jesus Christ”.

B. It is obvious that the jailor was already under deep conviction and had heard Paul and Barnabas preach. He was probably already familiar with their calls to repent.

C. Just one chapter later, in Athens, Paul clearly mentioned repentance (Acts 17:30). His message at Athens was probably no different than what he preached at Philippi.

D. The word “repent” is not necessary in every Gospel appeal (Acts 16:31) in the same way that the word “believe” is not necessary in every Gospel appeal (Acts 3:19).

E. The reason why verses such as John 3:16 and Acts 16:31 don’t mention repentance is that proper saving faith includes repentance and proper repentance includes faith. Repentance and faith are sometimes spoken of in



Scripture as both being necessary for salvation (i.e., Acts 20:21; Heb. 6:1), while at other times only one or the other is said to be necessary.

- i. Salvation is referred to as coming to repentance with no mention of faith in Matthew 9:13; 11:20-21; 21:32; Mark 1:4; 2:17; 6:12; Luke 15:7; 24:47; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 5:31; 11:18; 26:20; 2 Corinthians 7:10; 1 Thessalonians 1:9; 2 Timothy 2:25; and 2 Peter 3:9.
- ii. In other passages, such as John 3:16 and Acts 16:31, salvation is referred to as believing and repentance is not mentioned.

#### **4. Objection 4: This is Lordship Salvation**

A. "Lordship Salvation" can be defined as "John MacArthur, whose book *The Gospel According to Jesus* lays out the case for lordship salvation, summarizes the teaching this way: "The gospel call to faith presupposes that sinners must repent of their sin and yield to Christ's authority." In other words, a sinner who refuses to repent is not saved, for he cannot cling to his sin and the Savior at the same time. And a sinner who rejects Christ's authority in his life does not have saving faith, for true faith encompasses a surrender to God. Thus, the gospel requires more than making an intellectual decision or mouthing a prayer; the gospel message is a call to discipleship. The sheep will follow their Shepherd in submissive obedience. (<https://www.gotquestions.org/lordship-salvation.html>)

B. Such teachings are abhorrent to the hyper-evangelicals as it tends to reduce the number of conversions and lengthen the time and process for a sinner to truly be saved.

- i. They try to associate a negative connotation of such words and phrases, like "lifestyle evangelism" to scare people away from acceptance of any methodology or theology that goes counter to their own definition and practice of so-called "confrontational soulwinning".

C. It is not necessary to adopt any form of "Lordship Salvation" to insist in repentance as a part of salvation, as the Scriptures plainly teach it.

#### **5. Objection 5: This is works for salvation**

- A. Not if the Lord commanded it
- B. Repentance is no more a work than believing is
- C. Repentance is never called a work
- D. Romans 4:5 separates works and belief. If any of these men believe that repentance and faith are the same thing, then why don't they also separate repentance from works?

**6. Objection 6- The only sin that needs to be repented of is unbelief. "There is only one sin that the lost man is to repent of and that is the sin of unbelief" (Bob Gray). "There are those who say we have to repent of our sins in order to be saved. No, we have to repent only of the thing that makes us unsaved, and that is unbelief" (Jack Hyles).**

A. What about other sins?

- i. If I "believe" but deliberately sin constantly, am I saved?
- ii. In Luke 3:10-14, the people asked John what they should do in light of his message. He never tells them to repent of their unbelief. He lists specific sins as sharing, helping people, not stealing, being content with your wages, do no violence.

B. What about sin in general?

C. What about our sin nature?

D. It is not only unbelief that sends a man to Hell; it is all of his sin. Romans 5:12 says that it is the sin of "one man" which has resulted in death. Adam's sin was not merely unbelief; it was disobedience.

E. Revelation 20:12-15 tells us that unsaved men will be condemned by their works and cast into the lake of fire. They will not be condemned only by the one sin of unbelief.

F. Revelation 21:8 tells us that unbelief is only one of the sins which cause men to be outside of the eternal city of God. "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."

G. **"Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they REPENT OF THEIR DEEDS"** (Revelation 2:22).

H. **"And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and REPENTED NOT OF THEIR DEEDS"** (Revelation 16:11).

I. If the only sin that sends men to hell is unbelief, then why do we have Ten Commandments? There would only be one commandment, "That Shalt Believe"

**7. Objection 7- How can a sinner repent of all of his sins if he can't remember them all? Must he repent of every single sin?**

A. We do not have to repent to every single sin but repent of that fact that we have sinned, he have transgressed and that we have rebelled against God.

B. There is a difference in repenting from "sin" and repenting from "sins".

**8. Objection 8- Repentance is merely a change of mind**

C. Curtis Hutson, former editor of the Sword of the Lord, wrote a booklet in 1986 entitled "Repentance: What Does the Bible Teach?" Hutson denied that repentance means to turn from sin (p. 4). He denied that repentance is sorrow for sin (p. 8). He even denied that repentance means "a change of mind that leads to a change of action" (p. 16). He claimed that repentance simply is "to change one's mind" and that it did not necessarily result in a change of life. But how can one change his mind regarding sin and God and have no change in the life?

This is because Hutson was trying to cover the failure in Sword-type evangelism that relied on a mere verbal assent to the gospel with no correspondent change of life. So many of their converts would make a profession but then not follow through with that profession. How to explain so many spiritual "misfires"? They can claim that mere belief is sufficient, but no corresponding change of life was required, so all of their "converts" who "prayed" or who "bowed their head" were really saved, even if they never set foot in a church afterwards or demonstrated any other fruits stemming from their "decision".

**9. Objection 9- This is a new doctrine. "Who in the world would have thought that Independent Baptist preachers would try to redefine Bible 'repentance'? ... Repentance is not turning from your sins" (Bob Gray, Longview, Texas).**

A. Quotes from the past. We do not base the authority of our understanding on repentance on the teachings of men but it is interesting to see how so many

Sword/Hyles "Independent Fundamental Baptists" refuted the teachings of their "mentors" whom they claim to respect so much. (most quotes cited in *Way of Life Encyclopedia*, by David Cloud)

i. John R. Rice

a. "To repent literally means to have a change of mind or spirit toward God and toward sin. IT MEANS TO TURN FROM YOUR SINS, earnestly, with all your heart, and trust in Jesus Christ to save you. You can see, then, how the man who believes in Christ repents and the man who repents believes in Christ. The jailer repented when he turned from sin to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ" (*What Must I Do to Be Saved?* 1940).

b. "What do I mean by repent? I mean to TURN YOUR HEART FROM YOUR SIN. Turn from sin in your heart and start out to live for God. ... A penitent heart that TURNS FROM YOUR SIN and turns to Jesus" (John R. Rice, "Repent or Perish," *Sword of the Lord*, March 3, 1971).

c. "There ought to be plain preaching against sin. People ought to be taught TO TURN FROM SIN in genuine repentance" (John R. Rice, *Dr. Rice, Here Are More Questions*, Vol. II, p. 425, 1973).

ii. Harold Sightler, "Recognizing his guilt, there is a TURNING FROM SIN. There is a turning to God. The actual word 'repentance' means a turning completely around: a change of course; a change of mind. ... TO THINK OF REPENTANCE THAT DOES NOT CAUSE THE SINNER TO TURN GLADLY FROM HIS SINS IS IMPOSSIBLE. ... I know that we have a shallow religious movement in our times that will allow men to profess faith in Christ and at the same time continue to live in the world. Such a shallow religious faith is not real. These are mere professors and have no part with God in salvation" (*Chastening and Repentance*, 1963).

iii. B.R. Lakin, "Repentance toward God -- that's TURNING AWAY FROM ALL YOUR SIN and everything you know to be wrong, and TURNING RIGHT ABOUT FACE, then trusting Jesus Christ as your complete Redeemer" (*Prepare to Meet Thy God*, 1964).

iv. Lester Roloff, "Repentance is a godly sorrow for sin. REPENTANCE IS A FORSAKING OF SIN. Real repentance is putting your trust in Jesus Christ so you will not live like that anymore. Repentance is permanent. It is a lifelong and an eternity-long experience. You will never love the devil again once you repent. You will never flirt with the devil as the habit of your life again once you get saved. You will never be happy living in sin; it will never satisfy; and the husks of the world will never fill your longing and hungering in your soul. Repentance is something a lot bigger than a lot of people think. It is absolutely essential if you go to heaven" (*Repent or Perish*, 1965).

v. Oliver B. Green, "True repentance is sorrow for sin committed against a holy God and not only sorrow for sin, but TURNING FROM SIN, FORSAKING SIN AND TURNING TO GOD. Sin nailed the Savior to the cross and certainly that fact alone is sufficient reason why ALL WHO

HAVE GENUINELY REPENTED HATE SIN AND FORSAKE SINFUL WAYS" (*Commentary of Acts of the Apostles*, Acts 2:37-38, 1969).

vi. J. Frank Norris "Baptists preach the gospel of repentance for sin. They preach and practice the very same gospel of repentance, of salvation, of baptism, as the first Baptist preacher we have any record of whose name was John and who came from God" (J. Frank Norris, *Lectures on Romans*, c. 1947).

vii. Leon Maurer "A rotely memorized prayer or some repeated statement without true repentance and faith never saves anyone. He must be very serious about it and really mean it. ... Consider a case where the person being dealt with is going to repeat a prayer after the soul winner as he calls on the Lord to save his soul. Here is a pattern which can be followed merely as an example: 'Lord, I realize I am a sinner. I am lost in my sin. I TURN FROM MY SIN. I repent of my sin. Right here and now I do trust the Lord Jesus Christ as my personal Saviour...' (Leon F. Maurer, *Soul Winning: The Challenge of the Hour*, 1970).

vii. "The preacher who leaves out repentance commits as grave a sin as the one who leaves out faith. I mean he must preach repentance just as often, and with as much emphasis, and to as many people as he preaches faith. To omit repentance, to ignore it, to depreciate it, is rebellion and treason. Mark its relative importance: You may make a mistake about baptism and be saved, for baptism is not essential to salvation. You may be a Christian and not comprehend fully the high-priesthood of Jesus Christ (He. 5 :11), but 'Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish.' So said the Master Himself. Repentance is a preparatory work. For thus saith the Lord: 'Break up your fallow ground and sow not among thorns.' I submit before God, who will judge the quick and the dead, that to preach faith without repentance is to sow among thorns. No harvest can be gathered from an unplowed field. The fallow ground needs to be broken up. The most striking instance on record of repentance as a preparatory work was the ministry of John the Baptist. He was sent 'to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.' He did it by preaching repentance, and Mark says his preaching was 'the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.' Here is the true starting point. Whoever starts this side of repentance makes a false beginning which vitiates his whole Christian profession. When true repentance was preached and emphasized, there were not so many nominal professors of religion. To leave out or minimize repentance, no matter what sort of a faith you preach, is to prepare a generation of professors who are such in name only. I give it as my deliberate conviction, founded on twenty-five years of ministerial observation, that the Christian profession of today owes its lack of vital godliness, its want of practical piety, its absence from the prayer meeting, its miserable semblance of missionary life, very largely to the fact that old-fashioned repentance is so little preached. You can't put a big house on a little foundation. And no small part of such preaching comes from a class of modern evangelists who desiring more for their own glory to count a

great number of converts than to lay deep foundations, reduce the conditions of salvation by one-half and make the other half but some intellectual trick of the mind rather than a radical spiritual change of the heart. Like Simon Magus, they believe indeed, but 'their heart not being right in the sight of God, they have no part nor lot in this matter. They are yet in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity.' Such converts know but little and care less about a system of doctrine. They are prayerless, lifeless, and to all steady church work reprobate" (B.H. Carroll, 1889).

So-called "Repentance Blacklist", men who hold to the Biblical definition of repentance, from an anti-repentance website affiliated with Stephen Anderson, <http://repentanceblacklist.com/blacklist/> These men are called "Certain Sons of Belial" for preaching that repentance is necessary for salvation. Anderson, like many of the Jack Hyles-type of hyper-evangelicals, holds to an "easy believism" in that a mere outward profession without any signs of repentance was sufficient for salvation. Anderson is a major leader in the self-styled "New IFB".

John Calvin	Rick Joyner	Bearing Precious Seed,
Martin Luther	Hal Lindsey	Lansing, MI
Charles Spurgeon	Charles Capps	God Save America
Billy Sunday	Robert Tilton.	Conferences
D.L Moody	David Platt	Local Church Bible
Mother Teresa	Jan Boshoff	Publishers, Lansing, MI
Billy Graham	Levi Price	Moody Bible Institute
John Piper	Joseph Prince	Way of Life Publications
Paul Washer	Joel Osteen (as weak as	Way of the Master
Ray Comfort	he is on any doctrine,	A Voice in the
John McArthur	this is doubtful)	Wilderness Ministries
J.I Packer	Rick Warren	Answers in Genesis
T.D Jakes	J.C Sproul	Creation Ministries
Kenneth Copeland	John Hagee	International
Jessie Duplantis	Brother Nathaniel	Search the Bible
Eric Hovind	Benny Hinn	Ministries
Oral Roberts	Joyce Meyers	Word for the World
Richard Roberts	James White	Masters Baptist College
Kenneth Hagin Sr.	A.Z Tozer (should be A.	- Fargo, ND
Kenneth Hagin Jr.	W. Tozer)	James Beller
Frederick Price	John Graf	Kirk Cameron
Creflo Dollar	Francis Chan	David Cloud
Rodney Howard Browne	Robert Lyte	Dennis Corle
Jack Van Impe	Southern Baptist	George Eager
Rinehard Bonnke	Convention	Doug Fisher
Morris Cerullo	The Fellowship Tract	Keith Gomez
John Kilpatrick	League	William Grady
Clarence McClendon	Chick Publications	John Graf

## Pilgrim Way Commentary on Matthew

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Oliver B. Greene  
Al Lacy  
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W.D. Nowlin  
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Tim Fellure  
Leroy Goodman  
Kent Gossmeier  
George Gray  
John Hallman  
Andrew Hammack  
Dino Hatem  
Joshua Joscelyn  
Craig Ledbetter  
James Lyman  
Keith McIntyre

Scott McIntyre  
Stan McIntyre  
Jerry H. Matson  
Bobby Mitchell  
Daniel Morgan  
Chuck Mosher  
Bob Nappier  
Abe Partridge  
Steven Pawley  
Al Pihringer  
Ron Robey  
Tony Scheving  
Gary Schwer  
Daniel Walton  
Gary Webb  
Jerry Wilhite  
Jon Zwingel

They could have added:

John R. Rice  
Harold Sightler  
Harry Ironside  
B. R. Lakin  
J. Frank Norris

References,

Cloud, David, various reports and articles by David Cloud at [www.wayoflife.org](http://www.wayoflife.org) as well as *The Way of Life Encyclopedia*, Repentance and Soulwinning and Spence, H. T., *A Catechetical Study For The Remnant*

## Appendix Two

### Study of the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Heaven in Biblical Theology

The Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Heaven are NOT the same thing, as seen that God is not heaven and heaven is not God. They are different, separate and distinct.

#### Kingdom of God- the spiritual aspects of the Kingdom

1. We are to search for the Kingdom of God
  - A. Matthew 6:33 **But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.**
2. Involves the casting out of devils
  - A. Matthew 12:28 **But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you.**
3. It is hard for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God
  - A. Matthew 19:24 **And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.**
  - B. Mark 10:23-25 **And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.**
  - C. Luke 18:24,25 **And when Jesus saw that he was very sorrowful, he said, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.**
4. The publicans and sinners would go into the Kingdom of God before the religious leaders
  - A. Matthew 21:31 **Whether of them twain did the will of his father? They say unto him, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.**
5. The Kingdom of God would be taken away from Israel and given to another nation
  - A. Matthew 21:43 **Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.**
6. John preached the Kingdom of God
  - A. Mark 1:14 **Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God,**
7. Repentance is part of the message of the Kingdom of God
  - A. Mark 1:15 **And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.**
8. There are mysteries involves with the Kingdom of God that are explained in parables

- A. Mark 4:11 **And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables:**
- B. Mark 4:26 **And he said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground;**
- C. Luke 8:10 **And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand.**
9. Some would not die until they saw the Kingdom of God
- A. Mark 9:1 **And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power.**
- B. Luke 9:27 **But I tell you of a truth, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God.**
10. It is better to suffer loss in this life so you may enter the Kingdom of God
- A. Mark 9:47 **And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire:**
11. The Kingdom of God belongs to those with the spirit of a little child
- A. Mark 10:14,15 **But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.**
- B. Luke 18:16,17 **But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein.**
12. The Lord will observe communion with the disciples in the Kingdom of God
- A. Mark 14:25 **Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God.**
- B. Luke 22:16 **For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God.**
- C. Luke 22:18 **For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come.**
13. The Kingdom of God belongs to the poor
- A. Luke 6:20 **And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said, Blessed be ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of God.**
14. The least in the Kingdom of God is greater than John the Baptist
- A. Luke 7:28 **For I say unto you, Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist: but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.**
15. There are glad tidings with the Kingdom of God
- A. Luke 8:1 **And it came to pass afterward, that he went throughout every city and village, preaching and shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the twelve were with him,**
16. Healing the sick is associated with the Kingdom of God



- A. Luke 9:2 **And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick.**
- B. Luke 9:11 **And the people, when they knew it, followed him: and he received them, and spake unto them of the kingdom of God, and healed them that had need of healing.**
- C. Luke 10:9 **And heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.**
17. People who are not totally dedicated are not fit for the Kingdom of God
- A. Luke 9:62 **And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.**
18. Casting out devils is associated with the Kingdom of God
- A. Luke 11:20 **But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you.**
19. If we seek first the Kingdom of God, the temporal needs of life will be met
- A. Luke 12:31 **But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you.**
20. The Old Testament patriarchs and prophets will be in the Kingdom of God
- A. Luke 13:28 **There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out.**
21. Some will be excluded from the Kingdom of God
- A. Luke 13:28 **There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out.**
- B. 1 Corinthians 6:9,10 **Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.**
22. The Kingdom of God was preached since John the Baptist
- A. Luke 16:16 **The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.**
23. The Kingdom of God does not come with observation
- A. Luke 17:20 **And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with<sup>1</sup> observation:**
24. The Kingdom of God is within you
- A. Luke 17:21 **Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.**
25. Those who follow the Kingdom of God and give all for it will be rewarded
- A. Luke 18:29 **And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake,**
26. When you see the events of the Abomination of Desolation, the Kingdom of God is at hand

- A. Luke 21:31 **So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand.**
27. The new birth is needed to see and enter the Kingdom of God  
A. John 3:3 **Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again,<sup>1</sup> he cannot see the kingdom of God.**  
B. John 3:5 **Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.**
28. Much tribulation is needed to enter into the Kingdom of God  
A. Acts 14:22 **Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.**  
B. 2 Thessalonians 1:5 **Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer:**
29. The Kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, joy and peace in the Holy Ghost  
A. Romaans 14:17 **For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.**
30. The Kingdom of God is not in word but in power  
A. 1 Corinthians 4:20 **For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power.**
31. Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God  
A. 1 Corinthians 15:50 **Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.**
32. An inheritance is associated with the Kingdom of God  
A. 1 Corinthians 15:50 **Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.**
33. Some will not inherit the Kingdom of God  
A. Galatians 5:21 **Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.**  
B. Ephesians 5:5 **For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.**

**Kingdom of Heaven- the political aspects of the Kingdom, fulfilled in the Millennium.**

1. Repentance is part of the Kingdom of Heaven  
A. Matthew 4:17 **From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.**
2. The Kingdom of Heaven belongs to the poor in spirit  
A. Matthew 5:3 **Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.**
3. Persecution is associated with the Kingdom of Heaven  
A. Matthew 5:10 **Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.**

4. Lawbreakers are the least in the Kingdom of Heaven  
A. Matthew 5:19 **Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.**
5. Those who promote the law are the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven  
A. Matthew 5:19 **Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.**
6. You must have a perfect righteousness to enter the Kingdom of Heaven  
A. Matthew 5:20 **For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.**
7. Those who do the will of the Father will enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. A mere profession is not enough.  
A. Matthew 7:21 **Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.**
8. The patriarchs will be in the Kingdom of Heaven  
A. Matthew 8:11 **And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.**
9. The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand  
A. Matthew 10:7 **And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.**
10. The least in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than John the Baptist  
A. Matthew 11:11 **Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.**
11. The Kingdom of Heaven suffered violence and the violent take it by force from the days of John the Baptist  
A. Matthew 11:12 **And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.**
12. There are mysteries associated with the Kingdom of Heaven and they revealed in parables  
A. Matthew 13:11 **He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.**  
B. Matthew 13:24 **Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field:**  
C. Matthew 13:31 **Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field:**

D. Matthew 13:33 **Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures<sup>2</sup> of meal, till the whole was leavened.**

E. Matthew 13:44,45 **Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls:**

F. Matthew 13:47 **Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind:**

13. There are keys to the Kingdom of Heaven and they are given to either Peter or the Church

A. Matthew 16:19 **And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.**

14. Those with the spirit of a child are the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven

A. Matthew 18:1,3,4 **At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?... And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.**

B. Matthew 19:14 **But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.**

15. The Kingdom of Heaven is like a certain king who would take account of his servants

A. Matthew 18:23 **Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants.**

16. Some have made themselves eunuchs (or have decided not to marry and have a family) for the Kingdom of Heaven.

A. Matthew 19:12 **For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.**

17. It is very difficult for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven

A. Matthew 19:23 **Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.**

18. The Kingdom of Heaven is like a householder who hired laborers for the day and paid them all equally

A. Matthew 20:1 **For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard.**

19. The Kingdom of Heaven is like a king who made a marriage supper for his son

A. Matthew 22:2 **The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son,**

20. The scribes and Pharisees shut up the Kingdom of Heaven and do what they can to prevent others from going in

A. Matthew 23:13 **But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.**

21. The parable of the Ten Virgins illustrates the Kingdom of Heaven

A. Matthew 25:1 **Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.**

22. The Kingdom of Heaven is like a man travelling into a far country

A. Matthew 25:14 **For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods.**

The best study on the subject from a Bible-believing viewpoint is *The Sure Word of Prophecy* by Peter Ruckman. Ruckman recommends *The Theocratic Kingdom*, the massive 3-volume work by George Peters.

**Kingdom of Heaven Parables in Matthew:**

1. The Sower- Matthew 13:24ff
2. Mustard seed- Matthew 13:31,32
3. Leaven- Matthew 13:33ff
4. Hidden treasure- Matthew 13:44
5. Merchant man seeking goodly pearls- Matthew 13:45,46
6. Net cast into the sea- Matthew 13:47ff
7. Householder- Matthew 13:52
8. A king taking account of his servants- Matthew 18:23ff
9. A householder taking account of his servants- Matthew 20:1ff
10. A king making a marriage for his son- Matthew 22:2ff
11. Ten virgins- Matthew 25:1ff
12. A man travelling into a far country- Matthew 25:14ff



### **Appendix Three** **The Errors of Replacement Theology**

Sources:

*A Refutation of Replacement Theology*, March 1, 2018, by David Cloud  
[https://www.wayoflife.org/reports/a\\_refutation\\_of\\_replacement\\_theology.php](https://www.wayoflife.org/reports/a_refutation_of_replacement_theology.php)

*Proof Texts of Replacement Theology*, December 11, 2017 by David Cloud,  
<https://www.wayoflife.org/reports/proof-texts-of-replacement-theology.php>

*The Coming Apocalypse* by Renald Showers

*The Error of Replacement Theology*, Clarence H. Wagner, Jr.

Plus original material by the author, Dr. John Cereghin

Replacement Theology (also called Supersessionism) is the doctrine that the church has replaced Israel in God's plan and that the Church is now Israel. This is held by many Protestant groups, Puritans, Amillennialists, Postmillennialists, non-dispensationalists, the Roman Catholic Church and the self-styled "New IFB", the cult led by Steven Anderson of Phoenix, Arizona.

Any commentator who sees the Church in the Old Testament prophets (especially Isaiah 40-66) holds to some form of Replacement Theology and is not dispensational. The *Thompson Chain Reference Bible* is guilty of this. On the chapter and page headings in the Prophets, Thompson often makes the prophecies refer to the Church and not to Israel.

Replacement Theology was introduced to the Church shortly after Gentile leadership took over from Jewish leadership. It's main teachings are:

1. Israel (the Jewish people and the land) has been replaced by the Christian Church in the purposes of God, or, more precisely, the Church is the historic continuation of Israel to the exclusion of the former.
2. The Jewish people are now no longer a "chosen people." In fact, they are no different from any other group, such as the English, Spanish, or Africans.
3. Apart from repentance, the new birth, and incorporation into the Church, the Jewish people have no future, no hope, and no calling in the plan of God. The same is true for every other nation and group.
4. Since Pentecost of Acts 2, the term "Israel," as found in the Bible, now refers to the Church.

The promises, covenants and blessings ascribed to Israel in the Bible have been taken away from the Jews and given to the Church, which has superseded them. However, the Jews are subject to the curses found in the Bible, as a result of their rejection of Christ.

**Verses showing that God will never cast away His people Israel**

1. Leviticus 26:44 **And yet for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly, and to break my covenant with them: for I am the LORD their God.**
2. Jeremiah 30:11 **For I am with thee, saith the LORD, to save thee: though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee: but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished.**
3. Romans 11:2 **I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew.**
4. 1 Corinthians 10:32 **Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God.**
  - A. If God was done with Israel, then why does Paul mention Israel as a separate entity?
5. A literal interpretation of all the Old Testament prophets and the Book of Revelation makes it clear that after the Rapture, God returns to Israel and starts dealing with them again (which He stopped doing in A.D. 70 after the destruction of the Temple). He calls out 144,000 literal Jews in Revelation 7 and we know they are literal Jews as their tribes are mentioned.
6. Where in Scripture does it say that the covenants to Israel have either been nullified or transferred to the Church? Has the Abrahamic Covenant ended? Or have the Kingdom Promises been transferred to the Church? No verse of Scripture gives any indication of this.
7. The resurrection of the modern nation of Israel in 1948 is also strong proof that God is not finished with Israel. Here is a nation that had its capital and temple destroyed by the Romans in A.D. 70 and the people driven from the land. Yet for 1,900 years, they maintained their culture, religion and language in their exile. In 1948, God did the unthinkable and re-established them in their own land. If God was finished with Israel, why would God go through all the trouble to re-establish the nation?

**History of the teaching:**

In the first century AD, the church was well-connected to its Jewish roots, and Jesus did not intend for it to be any other way. Jesus was Jewish and the basis of His teaching is consistent with the Hebrew Scriptures. In Matthew 5:17-18 He states: "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfil them. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished."

Separation between Judaism and Christianity began as a result of religious and social differences. There were several contributing factors: 1) the Roman intrusion into Judea, and the widespread acceptance of Christianity by the Gentiles, complicated the history of Jewish Christianity; 2) the Roman wars against the Jews not only destroyed the Temple and Jerusalem, but also resulted in Jerusalem's relinquishing her position as a center of Christian faith in the Roman world; and, 3) the rapid acceptance of



Christianity among the Gentiles led to an early conflict between the Church and Synagogue. Paul's missionary journeys brought the Christian faith to the Gentile world, and as their numbers grew, so did their influence, which ultimately disconnected Christianity from its Jewish roots.

Many Gentile Christians interpreted the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem as a sign that God had abandoned Judaism, and that He had provided the Gentiles freedom to develop their own Christian theology in a setting free from Jerusalem's influence. After the Second Jewish Revolt (AD 133-135) put down by the Roman Emperor Hadrian, theological and political power moved from Jewish Christian leaders to centers of Gentile Christian leadership such as Alexandria, Rome, and Antioch.

As the Church spread within the Roman Empire, and its membership grew increasingly non-Jewish, Greek and Roman thought began to creep in and completely change the orientation of Biblical interpretation through a Greek mindset, rather than a Jewish or Hebraic mindset. This would later result in many heresies, some of which the Church is still practicing today.

Once Christianity and Judaism began to take separate paths, the chasm became wider and wider. Judaism was considered a legal religion under Roman law, while Christianity, a new religion, was illegal. As Christianity grew, the Romans tried to suppress it. In an attempt to alleviate this persecution, Christian apologists tried in vain to convince Rome that Christianity was an extension of Judaism. However, Rome was not convinced. The resulting persecutions and frustration of the Christians bred an animosity towards the Jewish community, which was free to worship without persecution. Later, when the Church became the religion of the state, it would pass laws against the Jews in retribution.

As the apostasy grew during the early centuries after the apostles during the era of the "church fathers," the clear apostolic teaching about Israel was rejected. Following is a brief survey of this from *The Coming Apocalypse* by Renald Showers:

1. Quotes from the Church Fathers

A. Justin Martyr (AD 100-166), in *Dialogue of Justin Martyr with Tropho a Jew*, said that Christians 'are the true Israelitic race.' He also asserted that the biblical expression 'the seed of Jacob' now referred to Christians, not Jews.

B. Tertullian (160-220) wrote an anti-Semitic discourse titled *An Answer to the Jews*.

C. Origen's (185-254) allegorizing method of interpretation permitted him to read almost any meaning he desired into the language of the Bible. It allowed him to claim that the word Israel in the Bible can mean the church, not national Israel.

D. Cyprian (195-258) wrote *Three Books of Testimonies against the Jews*. He stated that in this work, he 'endeavoured to show that the Jews, according to what had before been foretold, had departed from God, and had lost God's favour, which had been given them in past time, and had been promised them for the future; while the Christians had succeeded to their place. Like Tertullian, he interpreted God's statements to Rebekah concerning the twins in her womb (Ge. 25:23) allegorically Esau representing the Jews and Jacob representing the Christians. The

implication is that the Christians have inherited the birthright that the Jewish people have forfeited. He declared, 'The Gentiles rather than the Jews attain to the kingdom of heaven.

E. Constantine (272-337), the first Roman emperor to declare himself a Christian, became sole ruler of the entire empire in AD 323. He began an increasingly hostile policy toward the Jews. In 329 'the death penalty was ordained for those who embraced the Jewish faith, as well as for Jews versed in the Law who aided them.'

i. In AD 306, Constantine became the first Christian Roman Emperor. At first, he had a rather pluralistic view and accorded Jews the same religious rights as Christians. However, in AD 321, he made Christianity the official religion of the Empire to the exclusion of all other religions. This signaled the end of the persecution of Christians, but the beginning of discrimination and persecution of the Jewish people. Already at the Church Council in Elvira (Spain) in AD 305, declarations were made to keep Jews and Christians apart, including ordering Christians not to share meals with Jews, not to marry Jews, not to use Jews to bless their fields, and not to observe the Jewish Sabbath.

ii. In AD 321, Constantine decreed all business should cease on "the honored day of the sun." By substituting Sunday for Saturday as the day for Christian worship/rest, he further advanced the split. This Jewish Shabbath/Christian Sunday controversy also came up at the first real ecumenical Council of Nicea (AD 325), which concluded Sunday to be the Christian day of rest.

F. Sylvester, bishop of Rome from 314-335, incited the inhabitants of the Roman Empire against the Jews.

G. John Chrysostom (347-407) delivered messages *Against the Jews*.

H. Ambrose (340-397) used the Jewish people as 'a type of the infidel.' He regarded the Jewish soul to be 'irrevocably perverse and incapable of any good thought' and asserted that 'burning a Jewish synagogue was not a crime.'

I. Hilary of Poitiers (AD 291-371) wrote: "Jews are a perverse people accursed by God forever."

J. Gregory of Nyssa (died AD 394), Bishop of Cappadocia: "the Jews are a brood of vipers, haters of goodness..."

K. Jerome (AD 347-407) describes the Jews as "... serpents, wearing the image of Judas, their psalms and prayers are the braying of donkeys."

L. Augustine (354-430) influenced the future direction of organized Christendom more than any person since the apostle Paul. Augustine's *Tract Against the Jews* was so influential that derogatory arguments against Jewish people throughout the Middle Ages were usually called 'Augustinian.' Augustine applied the allegorical method of interpretation to the prophets and Revelation. He interpreted the first resurrection and millennium of Revelation 20 as salvation of the soul at the new birth. Augustine developed the idea that the church is the kingdom of God

foretold in such Scriptures as Daniel 2 and 7 and Revelation 20. In *The City of God*, Augustine was the first person to teach that the organized catholic church is the Messianic kingdom and that the Millennium began with the first coming of Christ. 'Therefore the Church even now is the kingdom of Christ, and the kingdom of heaven. Accordingly, even now His saints reign with Him.'

M. Cyril, bishop of Alexander (378-444) drove the Jews from the city. 'He assembled the Christian mob, incited them against the Jews by his excessive fanaticism, forced his way into the synagogues, of which he took possession for the Christian,' and handed over the Jews' property 'to be pillaged by the mob, ever greedy of plunder.'

N. In the early 4th century, Eusebius wrote that the promises of the Hebrew Scriptures were for Christians and not the Jews, and the curses were for the Jews. He argued that the Church was the continuation of the Old Testament and thus superseded Judaism. The young Church declared itself to be the true Israel, or "Israel according to the Spirit," heir to the divine promises. They found it essential to discredit the "Israel according to the flesh" to prove that God had cast away His people and transferred His love to the Christians.

2. Imperial Rome, in AD 313, issued the Edict of Milan, which granted favor to Christianity, while outlawing synagogues. Then, in AD 315, another edict allowed the burning of Jews if they were convicted of breaking the laws. As Christianity was becoming the religion of the state, further laws were passed against the Jews:

- A. The ancient privileges granted to the Jews were withdrawn.
- B. Rabbinical jurisdiction was abolished or severely curtailed.
- C. Proselytism to Judaism was prohibited and made punishable by death.
- D. Jews were excluded from holding high office or a military career.
- E. These and other restrictions were confirmed over and over again by various Church Councils for the next 1,000 years.

3. This became the official doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church. The view that God is finished with Israel was behind the persecution of Jews by the Catholic churches, such as during the Crusades.

4. Replacement Theology was brought out of Rome by the Protestants in the 16th to 18th centuries. Martin Luther became extremely anti-Jewish toward the end of his life and called for the princes to persecute them and mobs to set upon them, 'even as Moses did, who slew three thousand of them in the wilderness.' He called for their synagogues to be destroyed, their houses pulled down, and their books burned.

5. Covenant Theology also adopted Replacement Theology within its theological system. It taught that since Israel rejected Christ as Messiah, God has forever rejected the nation of Israel as His people and replaced Israel with the Church. The Church is now the Israel of God and inheritor of the blessings God promised to national Israel. Thus, most Protestant churches hold the same doctrine that the Roman Catholic Church does regarding the Jews.

Most of this doctrine came from frustration over Jewish persecution of the Church and their later rejection to convert to the Gospel. Since they refused to convert to Scripture, the idea was that God must have rejected them and if He did, then the Church must have replaced Israel.

### **Proof Texts Considered**

Replacement Theology takes a few verses out of context to try to establish their doctrines.

#### **1. Matthew 21:43 - Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.**

A. If this verse were isolated, it could teach that God was finished with Israel and that the church has replaced Israel, but it cannot possibly teach that since Christ Himself said that He is not finished with Israel. He said they would not see Him TILL they repent (Matthew 23:39).

B. Jesus says that the Kingdom of God shall be taken away from the nation of Israel, NOT the Kingdom of Heaven. Some of the spiritual aspects of the Kingdom would be taken away from Israel during the Church Age as they continue in their blindness, but the Lord never said anything about the Kingdom of Heaven (the literal and political Kingdom which is instituted after Revelation 19) would ever be taken away from Israel. Since most who hold to Replacement Theology are reject a dispensational understanding of Scripture, they miss the distinction between the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Heaven and many do not even believe in a literal Millennial kingdom.

#### **2. Acts 1- Christ taught that the kingdom of Israel will be restored.**

A. Christ had taught the disciples about was the kingdom that was promised in Old Testament. He had not taught them that the Church has replaced Israel, because just before He ascended, the disciples asked, **“Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?”** (Acts 1:6). They believed that Israel’s kingdom would be restored, they just didn’t know when. Christ’s reply makes it clear that they were all on the same page about the future of Israel’s kingdom. He said, **“It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.”** (Acts 1:7,8).

B. If the disciples had still misunderstood Christ’s teaching about Israel’s kingdom, this would have been the perfect time to have corrected their thinking. But Christ didn’t say, “You are confused; there is no restoration of Israel’s kingdom.” Instead, He told them that the timing of the re-establishment of the kingdom is God’s business, and they need to focus on their own business in this present time, which is preaching the gospel to the ends of the earth.

#### **3. Romans 2:28-29 - For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.**

A. Paul was showing the Jews of his day that their outward conformity to the law was not true righteousness and could not save them. Romans 2:28,29 is a simple statement that the true Jew, meaning the Jew that pleases God, the Jew

that God intended when He made the Jews, is not one who merely observes the outward rituals of the Old Testament. Rather, he is one who is circumcised in the heart and loves God and His Word, as Abraham, Samuel, David, Deborah, Jeremiah, and Mary and Joseph.

B. This is not saying that an unsaved Jew is not a Jew or that unsaved Israel is not Israel. It is certainly not saying that a Christian is the true Jew and that the Church is Israel. All such things have to be read into the passage.

**4. Romans 9:6 - Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel.**

A. The context of this statement is found in Romans 9:1-8. Paul is expressing his love for Israel even in her unbelieving condition. He recounts her great benefits in having the covenants and the law and the fathers and chiefly as being “of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came.”

B. Since the question would arise how could God’s promises to Israel be reconciled with her present rebellion, Paul answers this. He says, “Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel.” He is simply saying that a Jew is not saved because he is born into Israel and is of the physical seed of Abraham. Just because someone is born into Israel or converts to Judaism doesn’t mean he automatically inherits the promises of God. The promises of God are not through the law of Moses.

C. Paul proves this by pointing out that not all of Abraham’s children inherited his promises (Romans 9:6-8). This is what Paul had already stated in Romans 2:28, 29.

D. In this passage, Paul uses the term “Israel” in two ways. First, he uses it to refer to all Jews and to all the nation Israel (Romans 9:4). Then he uses it to refer to the true Israel which is the saved Israel (Romans 9:6).

E. Romans 9:6 does not say that a Jew is not a Jew or that an Israelite is not an Israelite. It is not saying that the true Israel consists of New Testament

Christians. Paul says nothing here about the church replacing Israel. He is simply explaining what a true Israelite or Jew is before God. He is saying that salvation is not by being a physical descendant of Abraham.

**5. Romans 11:16-24 - For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches. And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear: For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graff them in again. For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?”**

A. This passage is used by those who hold to Replacement Theology to teach that the Church and Israel are one tree. But the context of Romans 11 itself teaches that the Church is not Israel and that Israel has a future in God's plan and that her Old Testament covenants will be fulfilled.

B. Romans 9:15 says that as there is a casting away of Israel, which is what we see in the current dispensation, so there will be a receiving of Israel which will be associated with the resurrection of the dead (Romans 11:15).

C. What we see in Romans 9:16-24 is that the Church, though different from Israel, is closely associated with Israel (Romans 11:16-24). The root is not Israel herself. The root is Abraham's covenant and Abraham's Seed Jesus Christ. Both the church and Israel are connected with this Root. There is one tree but different branches. An Old Testament saint like Samuel and a New Testament saint like Apollos are both children of Abraham, one literally and one spiritually. Some of the natural branches growing from the root were broken off because of unbelief, and when they repent, they will be grafted back in.

D. In Romans 9:25-27, Paul summarizes the issue of the Church and Israel. Israel is in spiritual blindness today, and that is what we see in modern Israel, but God isn't finished with blind Israel. She will be saved and converted, and God's covenants with her will be fulfilled. Words could not be plainer. When Paul says that "all Israel shall be saved," he is referring to Israel as a whole Israel and not to every Israelite. This is clear in comparing Scripture with Scripture. All Israel will be saved in the sense of the 12 tribes. Ezekiel tells us that God will restore Judah and Israel and they will be one (Ezekiel 37:15-20). But Zechariah tells us that only one-third of individual Israelites living in that day will be converted (Zechariah 13:8,9). Paul stated that a remnant of Israel will be saved (Romans 9:27).

**6. Galatians 3:16 - Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.**

A, Paul taught that Abraham's covenant is fulfilled in and by Christ. He is the promised Seed. He inherits the promises and distributes the blessings. But Paul nowhere says that Jacob's seed, the 12 tribes of Israel, have ceased to be the seed of Abraham. In the context, he is contrasting the covenant of Abraham with the covenant of Moses. He is proving that the law of Moses was temporary, and the blessing of Abraham and the salvation of God does not come through the law of Moses. It comes through Jesus Christ. See Galatians 5:17 - And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.

**7. Galatians 3:26-29 - For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.**

A. This passage is speaking about Christ and those who are in Christ. In Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek. All are saved the same way and all become part

of the same body today. But this passage does not say that there is no Jew or Greek today. There are still Jews and Greeks in the flesh, but they must be saved in the same way through faith in Jesus Christ. Paul made this clear elsewhere, when he said that the gospel was to be preached to “the Jew first, and also to the Greek” (Romans 1:16) and when he divided men into three major groups: Jew, Gentile, and the church of God (1 Corinthians 10:32).

B. New Testament believers are the seed of Abraham in Christ (Galatians 3:7). They are the children of God. But they are not the nation Israel and they have not replaced the nation Israel, and God is not finished with the nation Israel.

**8. Galatians 4:21-26 - Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law? For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise. Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.**

A. The allegory of Galatians 4 cannot support the allegorical interpretation of prophecy, because Paul never interpreted Bible prophecy allegorically, always literally. He described a literal tribulation (1 Thessalonians 5:1-3), a literal Antichrist (2 Thessalonians 2:8-12), a literal resurrection (1 Corinthians 15), a literal return of Christ with His saints (1 Thessalonians 3:13; 4:14), a literal kingdom to come (2 Timothy 4:1), a literal fulfillment of national Israel’s promises (Romans 11:25-27).

B. Paul’s allegory is different from the allegorical method of interpreting prophecy, because in Galatians 4 Paul assumes the literal existence of Hagar, Sarah, Mount Sinai, Jerusalem, etc. He cites them as allegories only for the purpose of illustration. Those who interpret prophecy allegorically, though, say that Zion is not Zion and that the 144,000 in Revelation 7 is not 144,000 and that the 1,000 years in Revelation chapter 20 is not 1,000 years. This is not what Paul was doing in Galatians 4.

**9. Galatians 6:15-16 - For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.**

A. Those who believe in salvation by grace through Christ Jesus are the ones who are accepted by God and are the true Israel. Paul is saying here the same thing as he said in Romans 2:28-29; 9:6. This is not to say that an unsaved Jew is not a Jew or that unsaved Israel today is not Israel or that the church is Israel. Only by isolating Scripture and proof texting and spiritualizing that which can only be literal can one come to such conclusions.

B. Paul is using the term “Israel” in a different and broader way than he usually does, but elsewhere he plainly says that Israel is Israel and Jews are Jews. He taught that a remnant of Israel will be saved (Romans 9:27) and that God’s covenants with her will be fulfilled (Romans 11:25-27).

**10. Philippians 3:3 - For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.**

A. New Testament saints are the true circumcision, meaning they fulfill the true spiritual meaning of circumcision, which points to the circumcision of the heart, to knowing and loving God from the heart, to a rejection of self-righteousness for the true righteousness in Christ, rather than mere external ritual and confidence in religion and ritual.

B. The verse does not say that New Testament believers have become the true Israel and replaced Israel. It doesn't say that God's covenants with Israel are fulfilled in the church.



**Appendix Four**  
**Chronological Movements of Jesus in Matthew**

2:1	Bethlehem	16:13	The coasts of Caesarea Philippi
2:14	Egypt	17:1	A high mountain
2:23	Nazareth	17:24	Capernaum
3:13	Wilderness of Judea/Jordan River area	19:1	He departed from Galilee, and came into the coasts of Judaea beyond Jordan.
4:1	Wilderness	20:17	Going up to Jerusalem
4:13	Capernaum	20:29	Departing from Jericho
4:18	Sea of Galilee	21:1	They drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto the mount of Olives.
4:23	Galilee	21:10	Jerusalem
5:1	An unnamed mountain	21:12	The temple
8:5	Capernaum	21:17	Bethany
8:14	Peter's house	21:18	Jerusalem
8:18	Crossing the Sea of Galilee	21:23	The temple
8:28	Country of the Gergesenes	24:3	Mount of Olives
8:34	An unnamed city	26:6	Bethany
9:1	Crossing the Sea of Galilee	26:19	Jerusalem
9:35	All the cities and villages	26:30	Mount of Olives
12:9	An unnamed synagogue	26:36	Gethsemane
13:54	"His own country"	27:2	Pilate's hall
14:13	Into a desert place	27:33	Golgotha
14:22	Crossing the Sea of Galilee	27:59	Joseph's tomb
14:34	Land of Gennesaret.	28:16	Galilee
15:21	Into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon		
15:29	Nigh unto the sea of Galilee; and went up into a mountain.		
15:39	Coasts of Magdala		



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### **About the Author**

Dr. John Cereghin was saved on February 9, 1978 at the age of 13 after being raised in the Roman Catholic church. He was saved after listening to a program on missionary shortwave radio station HCJB from Quito, Ecuador. He left the Catholic church in 1983 and joined Maranatha Baptist Church in Elkton, Maryland in 1985. In 1986, he transferred from the University of Maryland to Maryland Baptist Bible College, earning the first doctor's degree awarded by the school in 1995. Dr. Cereghin also earned his Master of Theology degree from Foundations Theological Seminary in 1994.

Dr. Cereghin's ministry background includes working at Radio Station WOEL in Elkton, Maryland (1986-1998), teaching in various capacities at Maryland Baptist Bible College in Elkton, Maryland from 1988-1998, also serving as Dean of Men, Registrar and Academic Dean, and pastoring Queen Anne's Baptist Church, Centreville, Maryland (1989-1990), Charity Baptist Church, Mebane, North Carolina (1994-1995) and Grace Baptist Church in Smyrna, Delaware (1998-present). He and his wife Teresa have four children and four grandchildren.

**Booklist on Matthew**

\$ A *Treasure House of Good Books From My Library* by James Alexander Stewart  
! *An Annotated Bibliography of Reference Works and Commentaries on the Greek New Testament*, by Jon Weatherly, Cincinnati Bible College & Seminary, for Fall Semester, 2003.

\* *Commenting and Commentaries* by Charles Spurgeon

% *The Minister's Library* by Cyril Barber

@ *New Testament Commentaries for Bible Expositors, 1987-92* and *Commentaries for Biblical Expositors*, both by James E. Rosscup,

# From notes by Dr. H. T. Spence, Foundations Bible College, Dunn, North Carolina

& Top 5 Commentaries on Matthew, Ligonier Ministries by Keith Mathison,

<http://www.ligonier.org/blog/top-5-commentaries-on-the-gospel-of-matthew/>

!! Library of Bob Jones University

@@ *Tools For Preaching and Teaching the Bible*, Stewart Custer

## *New Testament Commentary Survey*, D. A. Carson

\$\$ Themelios Magazine, The Gospel Coalition

\*\* Biblical Viewpoint, Bob Jones University

@ *A Guide to Biblical Commentaries and Reference Works* by John F. Evans

^^ from the author, Dr. John Cereghin.

I do not recommend most of the commentaries on this list but are listed for the sake of completeness and to familiarize you with them should you encounter them. All remarks are the responsibility of the author cited and do not necessarily reflect the position or opinion of this author, except where otherwise noted.

I have reproduced some rather lengthy reviews of commentaries, especially from the Themelios Journal. You can glean a lot of information about the book you are studying by reading long reviews of those commentaries.

\* Abbot, Lyman, *New Testament. Vol. I. Matthew and Mark*, 1875. Intended for workers, and likely to be useful to them.

\* Adamson, H.T., *Matthew expounded*, 1871. This book reads to us like utter nonsense. We question if anyone except the author will ever be able to make head or tail of it, and he had better be quick about it, or he will forget what he meant.

\*\* Albright, William F., and C. S. Mann, *Matthew in the Anchor Bible*, 1971, 564 pages. A critical commentary urging a reverent attitude toward Scripture without the faith of the fundamentalist. The authors have form-critical presuppositions (p. XXVI) and discuss the "Synoptic Problem," oral tradition, and "Q" (pp. XXXVIIff.); attack the idea that miracles cannot happen (p. CXXVI); recommend a variety of Matthean authorship (CLXXXIIIff.); argue for authentic traditions with inconsistencies in the genealogies (pp. 5-6); discuss the Hebrew words behind the Greek (p. 46); hold that the Sermon on the Mount is not a new law, but should be linked to the Pauline letters (pp. 51-53); suggest that an editor added verses (p. 62); hold that the Greek of 6:18 is impossible (p. 78); attack the old liberal idea of the fatherhood of God (p. 121); treat the exceptive clause as

an interpolation (p. 226); claim that blocks of oral tradition are pieced together in Mat. (p. 238); refer to second Isaiah (p. 244); think that the figure of sheep and goat count against the scene being the final judgment in Mat. 25 (p. 310); hold that much of the debate about the N.T. comes from "an a priori assumption that all our sources are late and un-reliable" (p. 336).

\*Alexander, Joseph Addison, *Matthew Explained*, 1870. Alexander's last work. He died before it was quite finished. It is complete to Chapter 16. Its value is great.

\*\* Alford, Henry. *Matthew*, in vol. I of The Greek Testament. 4 volumes, 1874, reprinted in 2 volumes by Moody Press, 308 pages. Concise comments on the Greek text. He defends the Virgin Birth (p. 5), miracles (p. 76), the reality of demons (pp. 86- 87). He applies the "Salt" and "Light" to all believers (p. 42), gives the parable of the Leaven a good sense (p. 145), and applies Mat. 24-25 partly to the present age, including A.D. 70 and partly to the eschatological end (pp. 235ff).

\*\* Allen, Charles L., *The Lord's Prayer*, 1963, 64 pages. Devotional meditations on the Lord's Prayer. This book provokes both thought and prayer. There are unusual drawings to illustrate the text.

\*\* Allen, Willoughby C., *The Gospel According to St. Matthew, International Critical Commentary*, 1907, 448 pages. Liberal commentary on Greek text of Matthew. He has a thorough critical introduction (96 pp.) with a helpful section on the Theology of Matthew (pp. lxxi-lxxix); he denies Matthean authorship (p. lxxx), dates the book soon after A.D. 70, holds to the Virgin Birth (p. 10), but he has a poor doctrine of inspiration (pp. 45, 70, etc.). He often says that Matthew changed Mark (pp. 83, 253, etc.) or inserted into Mark's account (p. 162).

\*\* Argyle, Aubrey William, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, 1963, 228 pages. A commentary on the NEB by a British liberal. He confesses Christ as human and divine (pp. 6-7); commends form critical ideas (pp. 14-15); rejects Matthean authorship (p. 16); claims that there "is no adequate reason to doubt that the virgin birth is historical" (p. 27); thinks that Matthew gathered different teachings to manufacture the Sermon on the Mount (p. 44); suggests that Matthew reversed the meaning of the parables (p. 102) and has abridged Mark's account of the same events (p. 112); sees contradictions between Matthew and Mark (p. 145); thinks Matthew misunderstood Zech. (p. 156); can see nothing prophetic about the abomination of desolation (p. 182); holds that there are some genuine utterances of Jesus in Mat. 24-25 (p. 186); doubts that the whole Sanhedrin was assembled at night (p. 206); claims that the early church invented details of the burial (p. 219).

\*\* Armerding, Carl, *The Olivet Discourse*, 1955, 95 pages. A strictly dispensational interpretation of Mat. 24-25. He holds that the Discourse deals with the Tribulation Period only (p. 5), identifies the "desolation" of Mat. 24:15 with the "beast" of Rev. 13 (p. 23), and believes that the "one taken" (Mat. 24:40- 41) is taken away in judgment, not in the Rapture (pp. 48-49).

\*\* Augustine, *Sermon on the Mount*, Volume 6 of The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, 1956, pages 1-63. Practical explanations of the Sermon on the Mount, sometimes helpful, sometimes archaic. He holds that the Sermon on the Mount is "a perfect standard of the Christian life" (p. 3). There are tinges of approval for celibacy (p. 18). He treats fornication (on Mat. 5:32) in an allegorical as well as a literal manner.

\*\* Baker, Eric, *The Neglected Factor*, 1963, 109 pages. Liberal Methodist exposition of the Beatitudes. He intends to show that religion and morality are inseparable. Although he clearly commits himself to the deity of Christ (p. 10), there are a number of liberal statements, such as: "It is recognized that there is probably no single extant saying which can be attributed to our Lord with absolute certainty" (p. 90). He loves the New English Bible (pp. 25, 30, 66, etc.).

@ Barbieri, Louis, *Matthew*, in Bible Knowledge Commentary, 1985. A fairly good dispensational survey, helpful to pastors as well as lay readers.

^^ Barclay, William, "Matthew" in the *Daily Study Bible*. Liberal comments and many times, Barclay will not commit himself as to whether he believes a recorded miracle was a true miracle or not. But he still has many useful and helpful observations, so he must be used with discernment.

\$\$ Beare, Francis, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, 1982 For quite a time now there has been a need for a major English commentary on Matthew incorporating the research of recent years. This work is the first major contribution in this respect, although shortly afterwards a commentary by R. H. Gundry was published and another one (by D. Carson) is to be published shortly.

It is evident throughout this commentary that Beare sees the author of the first gospel as a pastor and a teacher writing a manual of instruction in the Christian way of life. The narrative framework of the gospel is not essentially biographical and historical but displays a double perspective. Although formally related to the life of Jesus, the anecdotes related here are meant to address the church of Matthew's day. This gospel is not intended as a record for the archives, but as practical guidance for the Christian of the evangelist's own time. Beare points out that this does not imply that the whole story is fictional, as there is a—not inconsiderable—nucleus of recollections in the gospel.

One can agree with Beare's emphasis on the practical concerns of the evangelist and with his emphasis on Matthew's narrative framework. But when he calls this 'a meagre enough story' (p. 17), he does an injustice to the narrative form by which the evangelist communicated the gospel of Jesus Christ to his readers/audience. Although Beare acknowledges the correspondences between Matthew and the Markan framework, he rightly emphasizes the important role of the five discourses as conspicuous indications by the author of the way in which the gospel was organized. His analysis of the main divisions and subdivisions of the gospel as a whole can be taken to be largely satisfactory, though the reviewer would want to underline the structural importance of 4:17 and 16:21 more, without on the other hand taking these verses as the only compositional criteria.



Quite often Beare underlines the evangelist's creative freedom in handling his tradition and in his editorial rearrangement of material. It is to be positively appraised that the commentator does not merely debate historicity or authenticity, but would rather concentrate on the function and meaning of such material in Matthew. Yet there are times when Beare is quite sure that a phrase, or pericope, is a later addition (e.g. 'Holy' in 3:11), or obviously fictional (27:3–10). Ironically in the last example, detailed comment on the meaning of these verses (not only on their origin) is absent in the relevant section of the commentary. Incidentally, the (most) important link between the fulfilment quotation here and in Jeremiah 19 is not pointed out or discussed.

The problems concerning the so-called historical Jesus and his *ipsissima verba* are well known. It seems to me that evangelicals still have much work to do in connection with the narratives in Old and New Testament, and especially with respect to the role of reporting and reported speech (especially dialogue) in narratives. At any rate, a certain degree of freedom by the biblical authors in composing their narratives (from their sources) has to be conceded. However, when the various sources and traditions available are kept in mind, even with full cognizance of the author's specific aims in writing his gospel narrative, the easy recourse to 'fiction' is not acceptable when dealing with a biblical narrative which obviously purports to be a historical narrative.

In his introduction, Beare also gives a survey of the main teaching of the evangelist. Here the main concepts of Matthean theology are discussed. One has to agree that the theme of judgment is pervasive in Matthew. But to call Matthew a 'grim book' (p. viii), with little trace of the gospel of grace (p. 43), is a one-sided view of this gospel, opening and closing as it does with the wonderful message of Jesus as Emmanuel, God with us, and emphasizing in the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount the grace accorded to those who do not deserve it.

The reader will find this commentary worth while to use for many reasons, but especially as the commentator consistently endeavours to focus on the gospel as a whole. His often lengthy introductory treatment of pericopes and chapters, before the detailed verse-by-verse commentary, is in line with this basic approach and to be welcomed.

Although reference is made to secondary literature, the student and non-specialist will find that the commentary reads easily and smoothly. Luckily the commentator refrained from duplicating all the encyclopedic bibliographical data available in other sources, though the omission from his bibliography of certain books of recent years can be mentioned.

All in all, this is a welcome addition to Matthean commentaries and one which will certainly stimulate discussion of many of the basic questions in Matthean studies.

## Is rather skeptical in many of its historical judgments. Worse, its bibliography and discussion were at least fifteen years out of date the day the work was published.

\*\* 550 pages. A critically unbelieving exposition. He rejects Matthean authorship (p. 7); holds that the author was primarily concerned with the life and faith of the church of his own time (p. 13); thinks that Matthew added "further fictional details" to Mark's record (pp. 15-17); calls the genealogy "artificial" (p. 62); classes the visit of the Magi in a "cycle of infancy legends" (p. 72); terms the temptation story "myth" (p. 104); holds that the Sennon on the Mount was not really a sermon, but a compilation of "sayings" (p. 124), followed by a compilation of miracle "stories" from different sources (p. 201);

calls 11:27 a theological composition "from the hand of an unknown mystic" (p. 266); thinks that Matthew composed allegorical interpretations to the parables (p. 287); terms the feeding of the 5,000 "preposterous" (p. 326), the Messianic utterances of Jesus not genuine (p. 353), the trans-figuration "a creation of mythopoetic imagination" (p. 361), the cursing of the fig tree "not an actual incident" (p. 419), the death of Judas "legendary embroidery" (p. 499), and the great commission "a relatively late formulation" (p. 545).

@ A liberal work arguing for Markan priority (p. vii). Matthew is almost totally taken over from Mark. Conservatives will sift much that is good, but disagree with many of the statements, such as "Matthew has given us a grim book, singularly lacking in those notes of joy that sound through ... Luke," etc. (viii). He dates Matthew in the late first or early second century (7-8). He denies that the sermon on the mount was given at one time and place and says the "mountain" was not a particular geographical location (13). Questions the disciples ask Jesus may or may not grow out of a tradition of questions really put to Jesus; they are used to call forth answers for Christians of the later writer's day (14). Some of the scenes are "artificially constructed settings for sayings of Jesus" (14-15). We see things that happened mixed with fiction that is added, and imagination is given a large place (15). Matthew has done violence to his sources in his artificial genealogy (63). Beare seems to take Mary's conception as supernatural (66-67, 70), but denies that Isaiah 7:14 in its own right predicted a miraculous birth from a virgin centuries later (71). In gospel stories the point to Beare is not whether they have any "possible kernel of historical fact" (72), but the purpose the writer intends them to serve. Sometimes Beare has much learning on a verse and is helpful, at other times he provides little real help, as on the use of Old Testament "prophets" in 2:23. The bibliography is years out of date.

\* Beausobre, Isaac, and L'Enfant, Jacques, *A New Version, with a Commentary*, 1790, 1823. The brief notes are purely literal or illustrative, and are remarkably pertinent. The mass of the volume is taken up with an introduction to the New Testament.

\* Benham, W., *Matthew, with Notes*. 1861, With this in his hand a teacher would be much aided in conducting his class. It is written by a teacher for teachers. The remarks are not very profound, nor always such as we should endorse, but they are well fitted for their purpose.

\* Blackwood, Christopher, *An Exposition upon the First Chapters of Matthew*, 1649. This learned divine became a Baptist through studying the arguments against believers' baptism. This proves his candour. His comment is somewhat out of date, but it is still good.

\$\$ Blomberg, Craig. *Matthew*. New American Commentary, volume 22, 1992. It is a considerable challenge to write a single-volume commentary of moderate size on the Gospel of Matthew. The commentator must know what to leave out, as well as what to put in, and must have the knack of coming right to the heart of the issues that are to be discussed. Craig Blomberg succeeds admirably in using his limited space well in this new commentary.

Blomberg's commentary is solidly evangelical, well-informed, and judicious in its conclusions. While it is not a technical commentary, it reflects a high level of scholarship, and its footnotes will lead the reader to further resources for the study of a passage or problem. Blomberg approaches the text from the standpoint of 'a cautious evangelical redaction criticism', i.e. with a concern to focus on the distinctive theology of Matthew. Not every opportunity along these lines is taken up, however. To be sure, this may often be due to space limitations. In one case, rather surprisingly, Blomberg denies that in 15:10ff. Matthew's omission of Mark's editorial insertion, 'Thus he declared all foods clean', is a toning down of Mark's radicalism for the sake of his Jewish-Christian readers. In another case, Blomberg denies that in 9:17 Matthew has redacted Mark in a conservative direction by alluding to the preservation of the old and new in the allusion to both the wine and the wineskins being preserved.

In addition to redactional analysis, however, Blomberg gives considerable attention to the matter of 'narrative flow' (the particular sequence of discrete sections) and its implications for the outline of the book. He opts for a combination of the structural analyses of Bacon and Kingsbury, adding to them his own inductive observations about the outline of the Gospel.

Blomberg leaves the date of the Gospel open, although he inclines slightly to a date between 58 and 69; similarly, as to authorship, Blomberg tentatively suggests the apostle Matthew as the author of an original draft of the Gospel or perhaps of one of its sources. He assumes the two-source hypothesis (Mark and Q), and somewhat less confidently the possibility of an M source. As to the life setting of the Gospel, Blomberg accepts the view that the evangelist writes to a Jewish-Christian church in Palestine that has recently separated from the synagogue, but which remains in dialogue with the Jewish community. Indeed, he finds that the most fundamental theological theme of the book is the problem of particularism and universalism. On these issues, Blomberg is full of insight.

Blomberg's earlier work on the historical reliability of the Gospels stands him in good stead in his handling of this question in the commentary. He rightly insists that we measure the Gospel's reliability by the standards of the day and the intention of the evangelist. He disallows forced harmonizations and he puts the burden of proof upon those who contest the authenticity of the tradition. As enlightened as Blomberg's approach generally is, one is surprised to find him arguing that Matthew's five major discourses are actually single sermons, or distillations of sermons, that were spoken by Jesus on specific occasions, rather than compositions of the evangelist from the sayings tradition. When it comes to the miraculous deeds of chapters 8 and 9, on the other hand, Blomberg does not hesitate to conclude that the evangelist has collected these narratives together for thematic reasons and that they are not to be understood as reflecting actual chronology.

As one might expect, again from Blomberg's earlier work, his treatment of the parables is especially strong. He opts for a mediating approach that treats the parables as 'limited allegories', giving attention to their meaning in the ministry of Jesus and in the life of the early church.

On the difficult question of Jesus and the law, Blomberg has it just right, in my opinion. Matthew's view is dialectical: Jesus comes in faithfulness to the law to bring it to its intended goal; yet Jesus contravenes the letter of the law at a number of points. Thus

Christ 'makes it clear that he is not contradicting the law, but neither is he preserving it unchanged' (p. 103).

On other assorted Matthean cruxes Blomberg is equally convincing. He takes *porneia* (5:32; 19:9) as meaning sexual unfaithfulness. He corrects the niv, upon which the commentary series is based, in 11:12 to read: 'from the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and violent people attack it'. The rock upon which Christ will build his church (16:18) is Peter, and not his confession. Blomberg handles Matthew's OT quotations with insight, allowing for multiple levels of fulfillment and the nature of typological correspondence.

On the difficult imminence *logia* Blomberg takes long-established conclusions. The promise of 10:23b refers to the *parousia* of the Son of Man, since the Jewish mission remains perpetually incomplete. Blomberg understands 16:28, 'the Son of Man coming in his kingdom', as referring to the transfiguration narrative that immediately follows in all three synoptics. The 'immediately after' of 24:29 refers to the period of tribulation described in verses 21–28, which is to be distinguished from the fall of Jerusalem, and 24:34 refers to everything in 24:1–26, but not the *parousia* itself.

In our day it is refreshing to see Blomberg's openness to the supernatural in history—and it is a great disadvantage for a Matthew commentator not to accept the possibility of the supernatural! From the supernatural birth of Jesus and the moving star of 2:9 to the miracles performed by Jesus, and thence to the transfiguration and finally the resurrection of Jesus, Blomberg affirms that God has broken directly into the historical process. Even the strange story of the resurrection of the dead saints in 27:52f. does not cause Blomberg to flinch, although he does attempt to put this resurrection after Christ's resurrection. At one point, with little justification, Blomberg makes the storm at sea (8:23–27) into an attack of Satan.

Two main things stand out about this commentary. First, it is clear that the author is an exegete, and a good one. His obvious priority is to make clear what the author meant his first readers to understand, using the good old-fashioned grammatical-historical method. Second, he is concerned to bridge the hermeneutical gap by helping the reader to understand what the text says today. Here Blomberg again and again provides sane, pastoral wisdom. He can affirm the charismatic tradition as worthy, and while not making it a norm, he can affirm the possibility of supernatural healing 'from time to time' in the modern world. As a further example, Blomberg notes that the exception clause of 5:32 'does not reflect a consideration of every conceivable legitimate or illegitimate ground for divorce'.

Blomberg has, in short, produced a fine commentary filled with solid, informative exegesis. The fact that he has managed at the same time to squeeze as much sensible application into his commentary as he does, will make the commentary especially appealing to pastors and lay teachers.

@ This work using the NIV is a major contribution in the 40 volume re-doing of an old evangelical series in which John Broadus was notable on Matthew, The NAC claims inerrancy. Blomberg, Associate Professor of New Testament, Denver Seminary, has such standout works as *Interpreting the Parables* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1990). Here he has a brief, well-packed, knowledgeable introduction (21-49), favoring a date between ca. A. D. 58-69 and authorship by Matthew. He sees this gospel as historically reliable (47) as he argues in his *The Historical Reliability of the Gospels* (IVP, 1987). He sums up

sections awarely, handles problems usually in a concise but informed and pertinent way, and often offers relevant footnote material to add help from much reading. Examples are his handling of the Isaiah 7:14 problem in 1:22, 23, the Hosea 11:1 citation in 2:14, 15 and the Sermon on the Mount (eight views). He deems adultery a valid ground for divorce and remarriage in 19:9, but is sensitive to different sides of the issue. He views "great distress" in 24:21 as the period from A. D. 70 to the Second Advent (359-60), a whole era of tribulation for the saved. He sees 24:40, 41 as meaning that the unsaved are the ones "taken" from earth in judgment and the saved as "left" on earth with the coming of Christ, who will reign during the millennium (366). He appears to hold a post-tribulation rapture of the church (370), but with some lack of clarity as to how that would be consistent with other aspects of his views.

@ Boice, James M. *The Gospel of Matthew*, 2 volumes, 2001. This prolific Philadelphia pastor/writer, now with the Lord, elucidates matters quite often in his exposition, and passes over important ones, or does not really explain them, or is unconvincing (cf. on mustard seed and leaven). Still, he can be quite helpful, as frequently in the Sermon on the Mount (he also has an entire book on that Sermon). It is unfortunate when he misrepresents many dispensationalists of today<sup>272</sup> on whether the sermon applies now (most say it does), and how they can integrate details (72-73). He is sensible on many texts, for example seeing the second and third soils (Matt. 13) as depicting people not really born again. Like MacArthur's vols. on Matthew, these show how a pastor feeds his flock, and principles he draws.

\*\* Boice, James Montgomery, *The Sermon on the Mount*, 1972, 328 pages. A New Evangelical exposition of Matthew 5-7. He quotes Billy Graham with approval (pp. 17, 66, 131-32); often quotes Donald Barnhouse (pp. 20, 61, 64, 120, 142, 229, etc.); emphasizes that the law cannot make man righteous (p. 25); argues for the absolute authority of Scripture (pp. 84ff.); gives various grounds for divorce (pp. 139-40); stresses that God is our "Daddy" (p. 196); refers to the liberal William Barclay as "the great British devotional commentator" (p. 270); quotes Dietrich Bonhoeffer with approval (pp. 299-300); recounts William Borden's famous dying note, "No reserve, no retreat, and no regrets" (p. 311).

\*\* Bowman, John Wick. (Assisted by R. W. Tapp), *The Gospel From the Mount*, 1957, 189 pages. Liberal interpretation and very free paraphrase of Sermon on the Mount. He doubts Matthean authorship (p. 10); holds that Sermon on the Mount is poetry (pp. 11ff); holds that introduction starts in Mat. 4:23, that this is a sample of the Gospel of the Kingdom (pp. 19ff); denies that this is "interim Ethik" (p. 36); is always quoting T. W. Manson, V. Taylor, Dodd, Barth, etc.

% Broadus, John Albert, *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, 1886. A singularly helpful exposition based upon careful exegesis and containing practical applications of the text which will be of help to preachers. Amillennial.

## His handling of Old Testament texts within Matthew is generally appalling.

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<sup>272</sup> This seems to be a cottage-industry among non-dispensational writers. Few handle the system accurately or judge it fairly.

\*\* 661 pages. The most helpful single exposition of Matthew. Although one will not agree with every interpretation, one can turn to almost any random verse and find more practical help in understanding it than in any other work. He defends the Virgin Birth (p. 8), miracles (pp. 80-81). His explanations of some hard passages are impressive: "Resist not evil" (pp. 118ff), "The Kingdom of heaven suffereth violence" (pp. 241ff). He gives an Amillennial interpretation of Mat. 24-25.

@ Brown, Jeannine K., *Matthew*, Teach the Text Commentary, 2015. The author is a capable scholar who writes well, and there is a wise selectivity about aspects of Matthew's Gospel which she engages in this succinct commentary for pastors (approx. 330pp.). She seeks to uncover the narrative theology in the text, understand the socio-cultural backdrop of the stories and teaching, and trace how the theology (with its ethics) in Matthew's account of Jesus should shape the Christian community.

\*\* Bruce, Alexander Balmain, *Matthew*, in volume 1 of *The Expositor's Greek Testament*, 1907, reprinted, 280 pages. A critical commentary on the Greek text. He leaves authorship unsettled with a date after A.D. 70 (p. 43), holds that the Sermon on the Mount is "a skillful combination of originally distinct lessons" (p. 95), gives a rationalistic denial of the "oft-told tale" of the Gadarene demoniac (p. 147), holds that the transfiguration was a vision (Moses and Elijah were not necessarily there, p. 229); on Mat. 24:15 holds that the "Abomination of desolation" was the Roman army (p. 292) and that the post-resurrection meeting in Galilee is "so brief and vague" that it may not be a particular occurrence (p. 339); Great commission perhaps "is not to be taken as an exact report of what Jesus said to His disciples at a certain time and place" (p. 340).

\*\* Bruce, William. *Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Matthew*, 1866, 682 pages. A devout, practical exposition. Although some of his comments sound archaic, this is still a rich Puritan exhortation. He avoids mentioning many difficulties; some of his interpretations are allegorical.

@ Bruner, D. Frederick, *The Christbook: Matthew*. 2 volumes in 1, 1987-1990. This effort to teach Matthew doctrinally is too wordy. Bruner sees a doctrinal emphasis in each chapter: chap. 1, God with us; chap. 2, man (magi, human nature under the power of sin); chap. 3, repentance; etc. He assumes Markan priority (xvii), and says that Mark is Luther, Matthew is Calvin or Thomas, Luke is Wesley or Xavier or Chrysostom, and John is Augustine or Barth (p. xvii), parallels that many find dubious. His apparent liberal orientation appears in his understanding that Matthew erred in having only thirteen names in the third part of his genealogy (p. 15) and that Jesus as a child made mistakes (p. 15). His excessive detail at times is not relevant to Matthew, but he does sometimes help, for example, in his sections "The Roman Catholic position on Peter" and "The Reformation Position on Peter" in connection with 16:18. He sees a posttribulational rapture of the church in 24:40-41 (p. 882). He allows sexual infidelity as a ground for divorce in 19:9.

@ This is a too wordy effort to teach Matthew doctrinally. Bruner arbitrarily feels that Matthew emphasizes particular doctrines chapter by chapter: chapter 1, God with us; chapter 2, man (magi, human nature under the power of sin); chapter 3, repentance;

etc. He assumes Markan priority (xvii), and has artificial distinctions such as Mark being the gospel for evangelists, Matthew for teachers, Luke for deacons or social workers, John for elders or spiritual leaders (xvii). He concocts that theologically Mark is Luther, Matthew is Calvin or Thomas, Luke is Wesley or Xavier or Chrysostom, and John is Augustine or Barth (xvii). Many have difficulty seeing validity here. Often he is very instructive in detail and is steeped in the literature. Apparently liberal, he believes that Matthew erred in having only 13 names in his third series in Matthew | (p. 15). He feels that Jesus as a child made mistakes (15). Sometimes the detail goes rather afield from the point, and one gets more of Bruner than Matthew. But he can offer help at times. An example is 16:18 where he has sections on "the Roman Catholic position on Peter" and "The Reformation Position on Peter." He sees the church's rapture in 24:40, 41, taken away to salvation, post-tribulationally (882). He sees sexual infidelity as a ground for divorce in 19:9 and a second ground, willful desertion, in I Corinthians 7:15. He says that in 25:1 Jesus originally taught the coming bridegroom as God, but the church substituted the coming Christ for the coming God (895), yet the church is Spirit-led and we must follow this. Do we know more than Jesus?

\*\* Buttrick, George A., and Sherman E. Johnson. *The Gospel According to St. Matthew* in volume. 7 of *The Interpreter's Bible*, 1951, pages 229-625. A liberal interpretation. They date Matthew "not far from the year 100,, (p. 241), deny Matthean authorship (p. 242), state that the Virgin Birth "arises out of pious speculation" (p. 254), manifest consistent unbelief by distinguishing between their view and what Scripture says: the early Christians took the stilling of the storm "as an actual occurrence" (p. 346); the appearance of the angel at the resurrection "may be the evangelist's free composition" (p. 615).

% Carr, Arthur, *The Gospel According to St. Matthew*. Cambridge Greek Testament for Schools and Colleges, 1906. Still of value for its theological and grammatical annotations

! Carson, D. A. *Matthew*. Expositor's Bible Commentary, 1984. Thorough and conservative.

& It is difficult to decide whether to place Carson or France in the number 1 position because both are such outstanding commentaries. Ultimately, I place France slightly ahead of Carson because of France's interpretation of Matthew 24. Carson's commentary, however, should not be neglected by anyone doing serious study of this Gospel. Carson's work is characterized by careful and sane exegesis and consideration of all interpretive options. His individual commentary in the series is also available separately as a two-volume paperback.

^^ Carson endlessly cites and quotes other commentators and spends more time telling us what they say instead of what he says. If I wanted to read what these other commentators thought about a verse, I would buy their books. We want to know what Carson thinks, which is why we would have bought this book. This is a common flaw among the "scholars" as they endlessly cite their sources instead of telling us what they think. Having a lengthy bibliography is usually seen as "scholarly". Thus, Carson's work is not that useful.

\$\$ We will compare Luz's commentary first with that of Don A. Carson, which was published in 1984 together with Walter W. Wessel's commentary on Mark and Walter L. Liefeld's commentary on Luke as volume 8 of the Expositor's Bible Commentary. It is a commentary on the whole of Matthew's gospel, running to almost 600 pages. Apart from F. W. Beare's, this is to my knowledge the most detailed of all English commentaries on Matthew in the last few decades (with the exception of Gundry's work).

In many ways Carson's work is at the opposite pole to Luz's. This applies, first, to its hermeneutical position. The Expositor's Bible Commentary is an international and interdenominational series. Its contributors are, according to the back cover, 'the best in evangelical scholarship committed to the divine inspiration, complete trustworthiness, and full authority of the Bible'. In terms of scholarship Carson is comparable to Luz. Both obviously draw their information primarily from the literature of their own theological background. So we have here two top-class exegetical works from differing perspectives, which is what makes a comparison of the two particularly exciting and instructive. How does an evangelical exposition of Matthew on the same academic level differ from a middle-of-the-road, critical exposition?

Carson devotes about 60 pages (10% of his commentary) to introduction. After a short overview of historical research he emphasizes that the evangelist did intend to convey historical information as well as theology (p. 10). An interest in faith and historical authenticity do not exclude each other. As Carson writes, 'the burden of proof rests with the skeptic' (p. 11). This valuation of historicity is one of the major differences from Luz.

Concerning the synoptic problem: 'This commentary adopts a cautious stance' (p. 16). He agrees that Mark is older than Matthew and that Matthew worked with Mark's information. It would be a mistake, however, to tie oneself slavishly to the two-source hypothesis, although it is still the best theory in the field. Above all one may not draw any conclusions from this hypothesis for questions of historicity and the age of the tradition (p. 16). Carson wants to approach his commentary in such a way that his conclusions would not be affected substantially by the downfall of the two-source hypothesis: 'The aim throughout has been to let Matthew speak as a theologian and historian independent of Mark, even if Mark has been one of his most important sources' (p. 17). Compared with Luz, this approach allows Carson a greater freedom vis-à-vis the two-source hypothesis; as the hypothesis is one that is increasingly being called into question these days, Carson seems that much more 'modern' than Luz in this respect (cf. pp. 14ff.).

Carson adopts a similarly cautious point of view on the authorship of the gospel. However, he tends to believe that the apostle Matthew is the author and that this is the most likely theory. The following sentences are quite typical: 'Though Matthew's authorship remains the most defensible position, very little in this commentary depends on it. Where it may have a bearing on the discussion, a cautionary notice is inserted' (p. 19).

Carson also considers the date of the gospel very carefully. As Jesus was quite able to prophesy the destruction of Jerusalem, ad 70 need not be the terminus a quo (p. 20). The circumstances in which Matthew's gospel is set permit a dating between ad 40 and ad 100. Also, Matthew's gospel is not anti-Jewish to the extent that we can



presume the final break between synagogue and church. Although no fixed date can be given, 'perhaps the sixties are the most likely decade for its composition' (p. 21). So Carson dates Matthew approximately twenty years earlier than Luz. The place of composition was probably somewhere in Syria.

A considerable part of the introduction is devoted to discussion of the gospel's distinctive themes. Luz's commentary does not have much comparable discussion. Carson discusses Christology, prophecy and fulfilment, law, church, eschatology, the Jewish leaders, mission, miracles, and the understanding and faith of the disciples (pp. 26ff.). It is striking that Carson gives much less importance to anti-Jewish polemic in Matthew than does Luz (see pp. 32ff.).

Let us turn to some examples of exegesis which enable us to compare Carson and Luz. Over against Luz, Carson believes in the virgin birth as an historical fact: 'There is a good case for treating chapters 1–2 as both history and theology' (p. 73). The visit of the magi is also historical: 'Matthew records history so as to bring out its theological significance and its relation to Scripture' (p. 83). Similarly on Matthew 2:13ff.: 'there is nothing historically improbable about this account' (p. 90). Although Carson is willing to treat any objection to historicity seriously, we can note a fundamental difference from Luz in this respect. Carson's interest in history is far greater than that of his historical-critical counterpart.

The classification of the Sermon on the Mount leads us to another difference. In Luz's volume it is qualitatively and quantitatively an unparalleled high point. This is evident from the way he divides the prologue (1:1–4:22) and the words of Jesus (4:23–11:30), with the latter consisting in this first volume of nothing but 'A. The Sermon on the Mount'. Carson, however, groups 3:1–7:29 together under the heading 'The gospel of the kingdom', seeing it as one of seven main sections in Matthew's gospel. And this (second) main section chapter is again divided into two main sections: 'A. Narrative' (3:1–4:25) and 'B. First discourse: The Sermon on the Mount' (5:1–7:29). In this way the Sermon on the Mount is seen more strongly than in Luz as part of the general development of the story.

And the differences continue. Carson places importance on the authenticity of the words of Jesus in Matthew 5–7, and that includes 5:17–20 (pp. 123ff., 141), whereas Luz believes that Matthew 5:17–20 is without doubt the work of Matthew himself (Luz, pp. 228ff.). Even the context of Matthew 5–7 is seen by Carson to be authentic and historical: 'The authenticity of that context must be assumed' (p. 125). Carson discusses different ways of interpreting the Sermon on the Mount: the Lutheran, the classical liberal, that which takes its starting-point from a Matthew community, the Baptist ('Anabaptist-Mennonite'), the existentialist, the 'Interim Ethic' approach, that starting from a radicalizing of the OT, and the classic-dispensational approach (pp. 126ff.). Luz sees himself as closest to the 'minority community of Matthew' or the Anabaptist interpretation. Carson refuses both those interpretations. The first is 'reductionist' in his eyes, because the gospel is more than a community catechism, and we have to interpret it in terms of salvation history (pp. 126ff.). The second leads to pacifism and retreat from the world and does not fit in with the Scriptures as a whole (p. 127). The other possibilities mentioned above do not satisfy him either. So Carson decides in favour of an interpretation in terms of salvation history, with the kingdom of God as the starting-point (pp. 127ff.). This means for him that the

Sermon on the Mount has to be seen Christologically, pointing to Jesus as the fulfiller of law and prophecy (pp. 128, 143f). This interpretation allows for the unity of Old and New Testaments, of Matthew and Paul, of Palestinian Jewish Christians and of Pauline Gentile Christians (p. 144). The NT and the two Testaments together can be interpreted as a unity if we follow Carson.

After the Sermon on the Mount the comparison between Carson and Luz has to come to an end. Carson follows his path consistently in the following chapters, i.e. he interprets them in the light of salvation history and Christology, and combines this with his interest in historicity.

Let us start by examining the outline. 'The kingdom' is also part of the heading of the third and fourth main sections and of the second half of the fifth main section. It is a theme followed through to Matthew 28:16–20, 'The Risen Messiah and His Disciples'. Let us have a look at the conclusion of the commentary. Carson talks about 'historical reminiscence' used by Matthew in 28:16–17 (p. 594). Carson's interpretation of Matthew 28:18–20 seeks to show continuity between the authority of the Risen One and the earthly Jesus in his ministry (p. 594). Disagreeing with Hill, Carson asserts the authenticity of the Great Commission to make disciples in all the world (pp. 596f.). In the same way he defends the authenticity of the reference to the Trinity in Matthew 28:19, which he, with D. Wenham, traces back to Jesus (p. 598). On the last page Carson writes: 'The revelation of Jesus as Messiah at this late stage in salvation history brings the fulfilment of everything to which the OT Scriptures pointed and constitutes their valid continuity; but this means that the focus is necessarily on Jesus' (p. 599). This masterly commentary is notable for its discussion of historical issues, of salvation history and of Christology.

## Carson, D. A., Walter W. Wessel, and Mark L. Strauss. *Matthew–Mark*. Revised ed. Expositor's Bible Commentary, 2010. Carson's work is well-known to readers of Themelios, and pastors and students of Scripture have been well-served by his Expositor's Bible Commentary on Matthew since its original publication in 1984. Revised in 2010, Carson's commentary includes a sixty-page introduction and nearly six-hundred pages of judicious, verse-by-verse exposition that assumes the Gospel's inerrancy, historicity, and unity. He explains that Matthew's Gospel fulfills multiple purposes, instructing and encouraging believers in the faith, supplying apologetic and evangelistic material, and fostering a deeper understanding of the Messiah's "person, work, and unique place in the unfolding history of redemption" (p. 49).

\*\* Carson, D., *The Sermon on the Mount*, 1978 157 pages. A brief evangelical exposition. He gives a careful outline (pp. 7-8); corrects the KJV (p. 26); disparages divorce (pp. 45- 46); compares the Sermon on the Mount with Paul's teaching (pp. 115f.); teaches the reality of hell (p. 134); includes an appendix dealing with critical questions (pp. 139ff.); in another appendix attacks dispensationalism (pp. 155-57).

\*\* Chappell, Clovis G, *The Sermon on the Mount*, 1930, 227 pages. Messages by a well-known preacher; they are somewhat dated, but still interesting. He had a knack for titles and phrases: "A Good Appetite" (hungering and thirsting for righteousness), "Drastic Operations" (If thine ... offend), etc.

\*\* Chrysostom, John, *Homilies on the Gospel of Saint Matthew*, Volume 10 of *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, edited by Philip Schaff, 1956. 573 pages. Remarkably sensible and helpful messages. Some statements sound archaic (as one would expect from the fourth century), but much of his reasoning is close to the meaning of the Greek text. His expositions of the Beatitudes (pp. 91-102) and fulfilling the law (pp. 103-115) are especially instructive.

\* Clarke, George, W., *Notes*, 1870. Good notes for teachers. Well compiled.

\*\* Cox, George Ernest Pritchard, *The Gospel According to St. Matthew*, 1952, 168 pages, Neo-orthodox commentary. Doubts the Matthean authorship, advocates "Q"; holds to five books of Matthew plus the birth and the passion as prologue and epilogue; holds to the Virgin Birth, some miracles; on demons he questions the supernatural causes of insanity (p. 69); holds to the resurrection but says that Matthew embellished the account (p. 166).

% Criswell, Wallie Amos. *Expository Notes on the Gospel of Matthew*, 1970. Helpful devotional messages on Christ's earthly life and ministry.

@ Davies, Margaret, *Matthew*, 1993. The writer synthesizes sections, not treating things verse by verse, and stimulates patient readers by comments on issues of life, inviting thought. She apparently (cf. p. 33) sees in the Matthew 1 use of Isaiah 7:14 a reinterpretation of 7:14 and 8:10 and not directly what those verses meant, fabricating a non-miraculous conception of Isa. into the miraculous. She thinks the story in Matthew 2:1-12 most probably was invented as a dramatic device to claim fulfillment of OT expectations (37). She calls into question the trustworthiness of Gospel accounts (37), and often takes claims in Matthew as extremely unlikely to be historically reliable, feeling wise enough to suggest what should be said to make claims true (37-38). The work for evangelicals has its benefit mostly as an example of how unbelief can force its own creations on the pages of Scripture that one actually should be explaining.

@ Davies, W. D., and Dale C. Allison, Jr. *The Gospel According to Matthew*. 3 volumes, International Critical Commentary, 1988. The first two volumes are complete and cover through Matthew 18, with a third volume yet to appear. This replaces the single-volume work by W. C. Allen (1912) in the ICC series. The volumes are very expensive but contain an immense amount of information. It is very liberal, but informs evangelicals of differing views (e.g., eight views on the structure of 1:2-17, eight views on the Son of Man's coming in 16:28), arguments (e.g., nine reasons Mary's pregnancy is traced to the Holy Spirit [pp. 201-2]), and sources (e.g., the use of Hos 11:1 in Matt. 2:15 [p. 263]). The 26-page general bibliography has mostly liberal works, ignoring the work of William Hendriksen, but including that of evangelical R. H. Mounce. It has a 148-page introduction. The authors argue that the Jewish flavor and use of the Old Testament point to a Jewish author (pp. 33, 58). They see a "massive unity" in the overall structure, but a "structurally mixed" situation that does not yield a clear outline (p. 72). They advocate the priority of Mark (p. 73) and sum up the most important of Allen's

conclusions (e.g., p. 73). Helpful features include discussions of semitisms, triads, repetition, headings, and conclusions and different kinds of tables. They see a redactional source for many of the statements in the gospel. They date Matthew between 80 and 95 (p. 138) and give Antioch as the place of origin (pp. 146-47). This ranks at the top of technical works because of its exegetical detail.

& For those doing an exhaustive study of the Gospel of Matthew, the work of Davies and Allison is indispensable. Readers should be aware that it is written from a moderately critical perspective, but in terms of comprehensiveness, there is nothing quite like this commentary. It is a highly technical commentary on the Greek text and thus not suitable for lay readers, but discerning pastors who are looking for information on every conceivable issue related to the text need look no further. The three paperback volumes are somewhat expensive, but they are a bargain compared to the hardcovers, which run approximately \$150 each!

## This work is moderately critical and leaves few stones unturned. Its attention to detail sometimes means the flow of Matthew's argument is less than clear, and its exorbitant price will put it out of the range of many buyers.

\$\$ At last we have in English a commentary on the Greek text of Matthew that is up-to-date and thorough (or, to be more accurate, a third of a commentary, since this first volume of three only takes us to the end of chapter 7). Matthew has until now been poorly provided for, but now we have on Matthew a commentary, comparable to those on Luke by Marshall and Fitzmyer, which interacts with a vast range of recent research and writing on Matthew (including U. Luz's major German commentary, but not Don Carson's useful *Expositor's Bible Commentary*) and which will be an invaluable resource to serious students and exegetes.

The commentary begins with 148 pages of judicious introduction. The authors explain their rather traditional historical-critical approach, acknowledging the value of modern literary approaches but arguing (rightly) that a historical text deserves a historical approach. They are traditional in other ways, for example in their acceptance of the two-source hypothesis and in dating Matthew between ad 85 and 95. They restate the case for the two-source hypothesis quite well, though their explanation of the 'minor agreements' of Matthew and Luke against Mark is not wholly convincing (e.g. on Mt. 13:11), and they underestimate the probable extent and importance of pre-synoptic oral tradition.

They are unpersuaded by most analyses of the structure of Matthew's gospel, but they are sympathetic to the 'pentateuchal' analysis of B.W. Bacon and they make a lot—probably too much—of the so-called 'triadic structures' that in their view permeate the gospel (e.g. the threefold structure of the genealogy in Mt. 1). On the authorship issue, they are unpersuaded by many of the objections to the traditional view that the gospel was written in Hebrew by the apostle Matthew, but they end up—with disappointing caution!—concluding that the author was a 'member of the Jewish people'.

In the body of the commentary they discuss each passage under the headings: (i) structure, (ii) sources, (iii) exegesis, (iv) concluding observations, (v) bibliography. Their discussion is detailed and helpful, providing the reader with a wealth of comparative material, with sensible analysis of different viewpoints (e.g. on Jesus' kingdom teaching, or on 5:17, where Jesus fulfils the law in the sense that 'his new

teaching brings to realization that which the Torah anticipated or prophesied'—transcending the Torah but not dispensing with it), and with interesting observations and ideas (e.g. on John the Baptist's rejection of 'covenantal nomism' in 3:8, and on the structuring of Mt. 6:19–7:12 around issues of social ethics).

On historicity the authors are often conservative, adducing good arguments (e.g. on the call story of 4:18–22). But at other points they are unnecessarily sceptical: thus, calling the words ascribed to John in Matthew 3:2 'certainly redactional' is certainly an exaggeration, since it may well be that Jesus took over John's message. (Incautious use of 'certainlys' and 'undoubtedlys' is a common scholar's disease, from which Davies and Allison are not immune, despite their normal balanced approach.) Their rejection of the historicity of the virgin birth and of the wilderness temptations is disappointing. They agree that (a) Matthew himself believed in Jesus' virginal conception, (b) there are no obvious pagan or Jewish parallels to the virgin birth story, (c) the infancy narratives do contain historical tradition and historically plausible description (e.g. of Herod), and (d) the 'birth of Jesus was an important christological moment' from very early—pre-Pauline—times. And yet, instead of admitting for themselves that the historical explanation of the story is a real and plausible option (though not without its difficulties), they refer to this as the view of Dr Cranfield, the series editor, rather than as their own. This is out of keeping with their usual even-handedness, and the explanation may lie in their hint that they find the miraculous nature of the event problematic. We may suspect that, like many other commentators, they are not free of the anti-supernatural outlook of our age and of the scholarly world—which is a pity in those commenting on the highly supernatural story of the gospels.

There are other controversial points of interpretation. For example, they play down the radicalism of Matthew's (and Jesus') attitude towards worldly wealth. Thus they take 6:21 to mean 'where your heart is, there will your treasure be' (i.e. to be about inner attitudes) rather than to mean what it says, that 'where your treasure is, there will your heart be' (i.e. to be about use of wealth).

To conclude: there are weaknesses in this commentary, but it is an outstandingly useful work filling an important gap in recent scholarly literature. We look forward to the next volume.

% Davis, William Hersey. *Notes on Matthew*, 1962. A "thematic" approach to Matthew's Gospel which stresses the Messianic character of Christ. However, Davis fails to organize his treatment around Matthew's thematic outline.

\*\* Davis, W. D., *The Selling of the Sermon on the Mount*, 1964, 547 pages. Although he speaks of the "plague of source criticism" and the "nightmare of form-criticism," he uses both (p. 3). He gives the "Pentateuchal form" of Matthew (p. 15), but he rejects it (p. 25). He gives ideas of "New Moses on New Sinai giving New Torah to New Israel" (pp. 25ff), but they are implied, not stated (p. 108). He surveys Jewish Messianic expectation in Old Testament, Apocrypha, pseudepigraphic, Dead Sea, and rabbinic sources; surveys Gnosticism, Qumran, Jamnia, anti-Paulinism, "Q," etc. "Sermon on the Mount in its setting spans the arch of Grace and Law," links together James and Paul (p. 440), man's need and grandeur.

\* Dickson, David, *A Brief Exposition of Matthew*, 1651. A perfect gem. The work is, to men of our school, more suggestive of sermons than almost any other we have met with.

\*\* Dods, Marcus, *The Prayer That Teaches to Pray*, 1893, 176 pages. An exposition of the Lord's Prayer. Although the reader may not agree with everything here, he will be struck with more devotional and inspirational thoughts per page than he would think possible.

% English, Eugene Schuyler. *Studies in the Gospel According to Matthew*, 1960. A helpful premillennial treatment in which the writer appears to draw heavily upon the earlier work of Pettingill.

\*\* 1935, 226 pages Extremely dispensational comments on this gospel. Matthew is a Jewish book (p. 17); Church is heavenly; Sermon on the Mount "is to a great extent earthly in its application" (p. 46); "Christians can never pray, 'Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors'" (p. 53); between A.D. 30 and 70 the apostles did not preach the Gospel of the Kingdom at all, but the Gospel of Grace (p. 171); Mat. 24 deals with the Tribulation Period. These comments were originally Sunday school lessons and still are.

% Erdman, Charles Rosenbury. *The Gospel of Matthew*, 1920. A brief, conservative exposition which adequately explains the thematic development of the Gospel.

\*\* 224 pages. Brief conservative exposition. He defends the Virgin Birth and miracles; he gives a moving explanation of the Sermon on the Mount and a premillennial view of the Olivet Discourse. Always kind and temperate in his comments.

@ Evans, Craig A., *Matthew*, New Cambridge Bible Commentary, 2012. Beautifully produced, evangelical, and insightful, which is what was expected, given Evans's reputation as a top Gospels specialist. (He has written commentaries on the other Synoptics, including an especially thorough one on Mark. Since Matthew uses almost 90 percent of Mark's content, we can say Evans was well-prepared for this assignment.) His focus is on the text and, though citing much of the most important scholarship, "kept the engagement with scholarly literature to a minimum" (p. xv). Evans's handling of socio-cultural and religious background is outstanding. Quite useful to students as a recent issue and for its learning in extra-biblical literature.

% Fenton, J. C.. *Saint Matthew*, Westminster Pelican Commentaries, 1977. Based on form criticism and heavily dependent on the biblical writer's "sources" for an understanding of what he wrote, this work nevertheless demonstrates insight into the thematic structure of Matthew's Gospel.

% Filson, Floyd Vivian. *Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Matthew*, Black's New Testament Commentaries, 1960. Harper's New Testament Commentaries, 1960. While denying the Matthean authorship, the writer provides a good treatment of Matthew's theology in his section on "Prominent Themes." The exposition is weak.

\*\* 306 pages. Denies Matthew's authorship (pp. 16-20); has a good

treatment of Matthean theology in "Prominent Themes" (pp. 25- 44); discusses titles of Jesus, Moses and Law, the Kingdom (pp. 32-35), miracles, Cross and Resurrection, and the Church (pp. 41-44).

@ A professor at McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago did this knowledgeable yet brief and to the point work. He was abreast of much scholarship on Matthew. He believes in Marcan priority and an author who was not Matthew. On 1:23 with Isaiah 7:14 he says Isaiah 7:14 meant a supernatural but not a virgin birth. He is disconcertingly brief on some key problems where many desire much more, as in writing little more than an inch of copy on who the "rock" is in 16:18. In 27:51-53, the account of saints coming out of their tombs could at first have been a figurative teaching, but the writer of this gospel takes it as a real event. There are these and many other comments where many will not agree with Filson. But he is briefly helpful at times on passages.

\*\* Fitch, William, *The Beatitudes of Jesus*, 1961, 132 pages. A devotional exposition of the Beatitudes. Probably the best book on the Beatitudes. The author has a fine sense of the right hymn or poem to illustrate his points. He takes strong exception to the extreme dispensational interpretation that would remove the Sermon on the Mount from present concern (p. 6).

! France, R. T. *The Gospel According to Matthew*. TNTC, 1985. Highly readable.

& A short commentary on the Gospel of Matthew has been available in the Tyndale New Testament Commentary series since 1985, but in 2007, France published a much more comprehensive commentary on this Gospel in the NICNT series — *The New International Commentary on the New Testament*. France's work is thorough and solidly evangelical and will be beneficial to pastors and all serious students of Scripture. His commentary is distinctive in that he takes a largely preterist approach to much of the Olivet Discourse.

## Not many will follow him in his interpretation of theological discourse.

\$\$ It is in the series of Tyndale New Testament Commentaries and was published in 1985. France has only 410 pages for his commentary on the whole gospel. This does not allow him to go into highly detailed academic discussion. Furthermore, we have to remember that the purpose of the whole Tyndale series of commentaries is to bring out the contemporary relevance of the biblical text for a general readership (see the preface by Leon Morris). So the academic discussion of the text is of secondary importance, and France's commentary has to be viewed on a different level from the works of Luz and Carson. Comparison of the three is only possible to a limited extent.

The relatively large introduction to France's commentary, extending as it does to over 50 pages, shows, however, that he, like the others, has done his work thoroughly. He stresses the close connection of Matthew with the OT (p. 16). It is a Jewish Christian gospel (p. 17) and at the same time universal (pp. 18ff.). Despite its 'ecclesiastical' features it should not be too narrowly viewed as a church catechism or the like (pp. 20ff.). France, like Carson, speaks out against the opinion, represented most recently and notably by Gundry, that Matthew is a midrash (pp. 22ff.). Instead, he defends the historical authenticity of the gospel (p. 26).

The place of composition could either be Palestine or Syria (pp. 27f.). Like Carson, France prefers 'a date in the sixties' for the final 'publication' of Matthew (p. 30), but he remains as cautious as Carson in his arguments about this. From the point of view of someone on the Continent two things stand out: the cautious evangelical argumentation, and the tendency to date Matthew relatively early. The apostle Matthew is possibly the author, though here too we cannot be completely certain: 'we simply do not know the extent of the role of the apostle Matthew in the composition of the First Gospel, but the tradition of the early church encourages us to believe that it was a major one' (p. 34).

The synoptic problem is also treated with great caution by France (pp. 34ff.). He refers to 'areas of growing uncertainty' (p. 35) with regard to the classical two-source hypothesis and notes the questions both about the priority of Mark and about the direct literary dependence of Matthew. Nevertheless, like Carson, he works from the assumption of Markan priority, taking Mark and Q to be Matthew's sources (p. 38).

A long section deals with the central theological themes of Matthew's gospel (pp. 38–56). Like Carson, France deals with themes such as promise and fulfilment, Christology, law, community, and then turns to the structure of the gospel. As we have already referred to parallels with Carson several times, it ought to be stressed that France did not know Carson's commentary when he was writing his (see p. 14).

It is characteristic of France that he structures his commentary on geographical lines. Following the first major section, 'Birth and Preparation of Jesus' (1:1–4:16), there follow two major sections on the 'Ministry in Galilee', 'public' (4:17–16:20) and 'private' (16:21–18:35), then the 'Ministry in Judaea' (19:1–25:46), and finally 'Death and Resurrection' (26:1–28:20).

In his exposition France emphasizes firmly the historical credibility of the fiercely debated chapters 1 and 2. We are dealing here with 'facts': 'It would be a strange apologetic, which invented "facts" in order to defend them' (p. 71). Concerning the Sermon on the Mount, the discussion of the different possible interpretations is much shorter than that in Carson or Luz. It is 'throughout the teaching of Jesus, but much of the structure derives from Matthew' (p. 106). France points out that we are dealing with teaching for the disciples and not for all: 'indeed much of it would make no sense as a universal code' (p. 106). Of the three commentators, France stands closest to the two-kingdom theory of the Lutheran-Reformation tradition. His Christological interpretation allies him with Carson. The Sermon on the Mount compels us first to think about who is speaking here, i.e. about the identity of the preacher of the Sermon (p. 107). He differs from Luz in his view that man cannot fulfil the Sermon (pp. 106f.). Evangelical exposition is—at least in this area—closer to the 'majority Reformation' point of view than the critical view. Matthew 5–7 and 8–9 highlight 'the unparalleled authority of Jesus the Messiah' (p. 151).

France is also convinced of the historicity of the miracles. One reflection of this conviction is his ability to accommodate the fiercely debated 'Messianic Secret' in his historical understanding of Jesus' way; he does not have to reinterpret it as an artificial construction of the later community.

The reader will be very grateful for the careful and down-to-earth approach France takes on many questions that cause problems in the Christian community. He says, for instance, that Matthew 10:23 and 16:28 refer to Jesus' taking of heavenly



authority, not to his parousia (pp. 184f., 261). Partly due to the shortness of the commentary, there are of course many points where the keen reader would have liked a more detailed exposition (e.g. on 1:17 or 23:39).

Towards the end of the commentary France's convictions about historical authenticity are evident again. It is indeed Jesus who speaks to the disciples after his resurrection, and gives them the Great Commission referring to God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (pp. 413f.). Neither Carson nor France reflects on the significance of the order 'baptizing' and 'teaching' in 28:19. The commentary ends pointing to the glory of Jesus Christ: 'That the risen Lord can now make such a promise (sc. in 28:20) as God made to his people in the past brings the Gospel's portrait of Jesus ... to a stupendous climax' (p. 416).

Although he writes independently of Carson and at a different level, France agrees with Carson in emphasizing the same three important things: salvation history, historicity, and Christology. In the reviewer's opinion this is no accident, but may be seen as a typical characteristic of current evangelical exegesis, at least in NT studies. Despite its brevity, France has provided the reader with an excellent commentary.

@ This work, only a fair one, was done to replace R. V. G. Tasker's work. It handles many matters well, concisely, and usually hits the crux of interpretation, showing awareness of considerable scholarly literature and main views. France uses the NIV text. He draws up summaries of sections and shows the meaning and connection in context.

\$ Gaebelein, Arnold, *An Exposition of Matthew*, 1910. I have consulted quite a number of books in my library, but believe this is one of the best on the First Gospel.

% A very thorough premillennial exposition. Weak in handling chapters 13 and 24-25.

\*\* 624 pages. A thoroughly dispensational exposition of Matthew. He holds that Matthew is "the Jewish Gospel" (p. 5), Kingdom of David was offered to the Jews, rejected, postponed (pp. 60-61), Lord's Prayer is for Jewish believers (p. 140), great Commission is for the Jewish remnant (p. 622). He puts dispensational meaning into many purely historical even (Mat. 8); leper signifies Israel (p. 170), centurion's servant signifies Gentiles, etc. He is at his best on genuinely prophetic subjects such as Mat. 24-25, which he relates to the Jews, the professing church, and the nations. Sometimes he chooses a poor text (p. 126). He distinguishes between the Gospel of grace and the Gospel of the Kingdom (p. 488).

@ Gaebelein, A. C. *The Olivet Discourse*, n.d. An influential Bible teacher, as in his work on Matthew 13, argues for a premillennial and dispensational exposition. He rejects the view that most of the verses were fulfilled in the first century, also the view that the church will go through the tribulation period leading up to the Second Advent. He contends that Israel, not the church, is in view. He argues that the gospel of grace is relevant for the church to preach today but that the gospel of the kingdom is special before the cross and again just before the Second Coming. The unsaved are the ones "taken" in 24:40, 41, the saved are "left" on earth to enter into the kingdom, the opposite of "taken" and "left" when the church's rapture occurs. Yet Gaebelein suddenly switches and says that 24:45ff. and 25:1-13 refer to the separation between the true church and

the unsaved at the church's rapture. Many even among present dispensationalists consider his view arbitrary and inconsistent here. The parable of the talents is related to the Israel/church issue in Gaebelin's treatment; he definitely does associate it with the church (p. 113).

@ Gaebelin, A. C. *The Seven Parables, Matthew XIII*. 20th edition, n.d. A 56-pp. dispensational work of a simple, popular nature contending that the kingdom, rejected by Israel, will be set up by Christ at His Second Advent and that in this age "mysteries" of the Kingdom outlined here are developing in Christendom, not the church. But the church is in the larger sphere, the kingdom of the heavens, he says. He contends for a pretribulation rapture of the church but believes at some verses that the developments here go to the end of the future tribulation. The mustard tree with its birds, as well as the leaven, are interpreted to refer to evil vs. the almost universal explanation of these outside dispensationalism. The treasure and pearl, likewise, are explained differently than in the common view, viz. both to Gaebelin refer to Christ having a value in men He saves, not men seeing Christ, or the kingdom, or salvation as the value above all else. Many modern dispensational thinkers disagree with Gaebelin and do not see inconsistencies between the common views and other Scripture where Gaebelin insists on irreconcilables.

@ Garland, David E., *Reading Matthew. A Literary and Theological Commentary*. Macon, GA, 2001. Brief at 273 pp., this evangelical effort surveys sections and usually has knowledgeable remarks to resolve problems. Garland brings to the conciseness the use of pertinent helps from wide study, and also maintains a readable quality. All told, the work does little that several other books have not already done as well or better. At times one needs to fish in sections to locate remarks on matters of specific verses. Straight-forward verse by verse commentaries can be so much more helpful than any such broad attempt as this.

@ Gibbs, Jeffrey A. *Matthew 1:1 - 11:1*, 2006; *Matthew 11:2 - 20:34*, 2010. In keeping with the series' pattern, a massive and conservative Lutheran exposition. The vols. run to 1025pp. thus far. I have had less opportunity to use it, but find Gibbs to be an able exegete who writes with mind and heart. He studied under Kingsbury and follows him in his narrative approach, finding a tripart structure: 1:1 — 4:16; 4:17 — 16:20; 16:21 — 28:20. He consults much of the important literature in his exegesis, but scholarly interaction isn't the main aim in this pastor's commentary.

\*\* Gibson, John Monroe. *Matthew, The Expositor's Bible*, 1896, reprinted, Eerdmans, 458 pages. Brief conservative expositions. He holds to the Virgin Birth (p. 8), the reality of the miracles (pp. 107-108), and of demons (p. 118). There is not much help on individual verses: he dispatches all seven parables of Mat. 13 in four pages (pp. 182-185).

@ Glasscock, Ed. *Matthew, Moody Gospel Commentary*, 1997. The commentator is Academic Vice-President and Director of Biblical Studies, Southeastern Bible College. His is a premillennial, dispensational work of considerable detail (635 pp.), often

grappling seriously to focus light on details. Still, some problems are dealt with only in part, leaving many questions, for example how Isaiah 7:14 in its own connection is suitably seen as fulfilled only in Mary and Jesus, or in a double fulfillment, or what. The commentary handles many verses rather well (cf. an instance in "ask... seek... knock," Matt. 7:7-11). Glasscock does not see the second and third soils of Matt. 13 as picturing saved people. He believes the "rock" in 16:18 is Christ, not Peter or the confession. Prophetic verses, for example 24:40-41 ("taken ... left") are explained in a usual dispensational way.

\*\* Glover, Richard, *A Teacher's Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, 1956, 238 pages. Holds Matthean authorship (p. 5); defends Virgin Birth (p. 11); says chapters 5-7 are "the greatest utterance in human language" (p. 39); defends the miracles (p. 79); says mustard and leaven refer to the church (pp. 149-150); Mat. 24:15 is parallel to Lk. 21:20 "armies" (p. 272); but vs. 29ff. seems to refer to eschatological judgment (p. 272); 24:40,41 means taken away to blessedness; 25:31ff. refers to final judgment (p. 285). He has a number of epigrammatic comments: "Beware of negative lives" (pp. 288-289). Devotional and practical but often inadequate.

% Green, H. Benedict., *The Gospel According to Matthew*, New Clarendon Bible, 1975. Relying heavily on source criticism, Green provides little more than a summary of modern critical opinion regarding matters of authorship, date, etc. His comments on the text are of help to the discerning reader, but his handling of Christ's virgin conception, ministry, death, and resurrection leave much to be desired.

## Very concise and reveals an excellent knowledge of Old Testament and rabbinic background. Although provocative and often stimulating, it tends toward viewpoints characterized by eccentric independence.

@ Green, Michael, *Matthew*, Bible Speaks Today, 2001. Almost 350pp., this entry is an excellent companion to the more exegetical works I recommended above. Should this be added to your own list? Students may hold off, but many pastors will want to buy Green as a homiletical aid. The author builds upon his earlier exposition, *Matthew for Today* (1988). He also taught a course on Matthew at Regent College. Preachers on the lookout for additional expository helps might consider the sermonic vols. by Doriani, Boice, and O'Donnell, the commentary by Bruner, and the old vintage Ryle.

^^ Greene, Oliver B., *The Gospel According to Matthew*, 4 volumes, 1971. A basic commentary that doesn't break any new ground. Greene is too dependent upon the Scofield Reference Bible and Albert Barnes. Greene also frequently cites "Greek scholars" or what "the Greek" says despite his having little or no training in Greek. How then would he be able to critique "the Greek" and these Greek scholars? He would have done better by simply sticking with the English,

\$ Glover, Richard. *A Teacher's Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, 1956. A reprint of an old (1889) conservative treatment. Devotional and practical. Contains some good expository ideas for preachers, but is inferior to other works.

\* Godwin, John, *New Translation, with Brief Notes*, 1863. Godwin is a painstaking elucidator of the word, and his plan is an excellent one. Students in college will value him.

\* Goodwin, Harvey, *Commentary*, 1857. An important work, which may be consulted with advantage.

@ Griffith-Thomas, W. H., *Outline Studies in the Gospel of Matthew*, 1961. This 476-pp. volume of 60 studies was put together from his writings as an evangelical devotional commentary by his daughter Winifred Gillespie after his death. It is a very well-outlined, concise work by the author who was a key figure in English Keswick circles and in the founding of Dallas Theological Seminary in 1924. The crisp, quick-moving lay-out of points makes this a good survey and a catalyst for a teacher of a Bible class of laymen. The work is dispensational in its perspective, e.g. Matthew 5-7, 13:31-33 and even pretribulational as to the rapture (p. 347), The author was unusually well-organized and knowledgeable as to pertinent biblical details and their correlation which in many places makes this a profitable synopsis of strategic points pulled into a unit.

@ Guelich, Robert A., *The Sermon on the Mount: A Foundation for Understanding*. Though this has elements of a critical literary nature that will please some and displease others, it is highly regarded in acquainting readers with issues and fairly recent studies.

## Gundry, Robert, *Matthew, a Commentary on His Literary and Theological Art*, 670 pages, 1982. The most rigorously redaction-critical commentary yet to appear. It detects a "midrashic" approach to the Jesus tradition at many points, although without ever telling us whence the definition and formal characteristics of midrash are derived. Gundry has chosen to interact with few secondary sources. Few preachers will find it serviceable in sermon preparation.

\$\$ Gundry's commentary on Matthew has been eagerly awaited, not only because of the promise of a full-scale commentary on the most neglected gospel by a leading Matthean scholar, and a conservative one at that, but also because it had been widely 'leaked' that this book would take the bold new line of defending unhistorical midrash as an acceptable category within the context of an evangelical doctrine of Scripture.

It is, I suppose, inevitable that evangelical comment on this volume will focus particularly on Gundry's denial of a historical intention in much of Matthew's presentation of Jesus; indeed the author is aware of this danger, and suggests that readers withhold judgment on this issue as they read the commentary on chapters 1-2, where it arises in its most acute form, until they have sampled the rest of the commentary. This review will, accordingly, try not to overbalance in that direction, for the volume is presented first and foremost as a commentary rather than simply a discussion of Matthew's attitude to historicity.

This is not a book for those who baulk at untranslated Aramaic and Hebrew. Its sheer bulk is likely to deter non-specialists. Yet it has few references to other scholars, and Gundry makes a point of his intention to 'develop his own line of interpretation' rather than to interact with other interpreters. (Even where, unusually, opposing views

are mentioned, they are not documented, as on p. 360 where ‘the hypothesis’ dismissed in small print is taken almost verbatim from Jeremias’ *New Testament Theology*, I, pp. 155f., but Jeremias is not mentioned.) This approach is both refreshing, in that it leads to a less cluttered text and a more direct flow of argument, and frustrating, in that a dogmatic presentation of one exegetical option is likely to send most of us to other commentaries to assess the strength of the alternative. As one presently writing a commentary on Matthew, I found it interesting to compare Gundry’s exegetical decisions with what I had written. Sometimes I was enthusiastically in agreement; sometimes (quite as often, I guess!) I disagreed. In the latter cases, while I am sure that the view I adopted had been given a fair hearing in Gundry’s study, the case was seldom presented in the book. No doubt all commentators must to some extent appear arbitrary to those they disagree with; but few, at least in a volume of this size, do so as a matter of policy!

In many ways this is an original volume; both in its conception and in its contents it is not a conventional commentary. So what may the theological student expect to find here that he would not find in most other commentaries? Three things stand out.

Date and authorship. Here is the best argument I have seen, on the basis of the contents of the gospel itself, for a date before ad 63 (the date Gundry assigns to Luke), which is argued in full awareness of the wider implications if Matthew used Mark. There is also an energetic defence of Matthew the apostle as author, based largely on a long discussion of the Papias testimony. This (pp. 609–620) is in itself an argument to be reckoned with, as Gundry dates Papias’ work no later than 110, identifies his ‘Elder John’ with John the apostle, and regards the statement about Matthew as a direct quotation of John’s testimony. The price of this shoring up of Papias evidence is that Papias’ *Hebraidi dialectō* must be translated ‘in a Jewish style’, a result which suits Gundry’s emphasis on Matthew’s midrashic procedure, but which still seems to me to stretch the elastic of Papias’ reported words to the limit.

Inspired fiction? It has hitherto generally been assumed, and sometimes argued, that a high view of Scripture (‘scriptural inspiration, authority, infallibility or inerrancy—call it what we will’, p. 639) entails that the gospels are throughout reports of historical events and sayings. Without wishing in the least to lower this view of Scripture, Gundry questions whether it may not accommodate deliberately unhistorical narrative and the attribution to Jesus of words he never actually spoke. If this was standard Jewish literary practice, why should it not have been adopted by Matthew and accepted as such by his Jewish readers who would automatically understand that he was writing ‘midrash and haggadah’, and so would not expect his theological expansion of the tradition to reflect actual events? Thus, after nearly two millennia of Gentile misunderstanding, we are now enabled, by our increasing knowledge of ancient Jewish literary method, to understand Matthew’s inspired work as he intended it to be taken, as a deliberate mixture of historical tradition and unhistorical embellishment.

This is a bold argument, attractively presented, and worthy of respectful attention from evangelicals whose particular concern it should be to interpret Scripture according to its own intention rather than in terms of modern literary convention. Those who disagree must do so not on the basis that this is not what evangelicals have traditionally believed, but by showing why it is not a proper conclusion from the evidence of the gospel. The debate has already begun, and no doubt it will continue for a long time.

This review cannot enter into it, but Themelios readers may like to refer to longer review articles by Don Carson in *Trinity Journal* 3 (1982), pp. 71–91, and by Philip Payne, forthcoming in volume 3 of *Gospel Perspectives*.

The only point I want to take up here is Gundry's repeated appeal to 'midrash and haggadah' as if these terms, whether singly or together, represented a recognized and unified literary category, as if a prime characteristic of all 'midrash and haggadah' was the fictional embellishment of history, and as if it were agreed that this procedure was so commonplace in pre-Jamnian Judaism that Matthew could take it for granted that his life of Jesus would be understood in that light, despite the fact that it does not obviously conform to any existing Jewish literary genre. Here is room for much debate, and particularly for much careful study of non-Christian Jewish literature in all its diversity. Perhaps a commentary on Matthew is not the place to expect such a study, but without it, and without even a definition of how these notoriously slippery terms are being used, the simple use of the slogan 'midrash and haggadah' is in danger of becoming a confidence trick at the expense of those who are not aware of the complexity of the subject. It is what Matthew can be shown to be doing in his own right, rather than his assumed conformity to a supposed literary convention, that should be the basis of the judgment as to how much store he set by historicity, and it is here that Gundry's arguments must be weighed, not waved aside, by those who find the notion of inspired fiction disturbing.

This is not a book to help preachers to grasp and expound the meaning of a passage, still less a book to sit down and read for exegetical and devotional help. It is a meticulous study of Matthew's literary technique and theological predilections by means of a redaction-critical analysis of almost every word of his Greek text. At times it seemed to me to treat a pericope rather like a crossword puzzle, where every word of every clue has to be accounted for, sometimes by quite esoteric means, and the object of the exercise is the individual words rather than any over-all meaning.

The essential basis of the commentary is Gundry's view of synoptic relationships. Matthew used Mark and Q, and little else beyond his own scripturally inspired imagination (neither oral tradition, nor the 'many' of Luke 1:1, nor even, apparently, his own apostolic memory). 'Q,' however, is larger than the commonly accepted corpus, for Matthew based some of his apparently independent ('M') material on other traditions which Luke recorded more directly ('L'). Thus, the M parable of the two sons (Mt. 21:28–32) is Matthew's reworking of the prodigal son, and, most importantly, most of Matthew 1–2 is based on the Lucan infancy narratives. Thus, the visit of the shepherds inspired Matthew's story of the magi, the visit to Jerusalem (Lk. 2:22) is reworked into the flight to Egypt, and the sacrifice of doves in the temple (Lk. 2:24) is changed into Herod's slaughtering of the babies. Yes, he really does say that (p. 34)! If you find this too fanciful to be taken seriously, then you must immerse yourself in the commentary for a few weeks and discover the subtlety of Matthew's mind as Gundry reconstructs it. Given such a mind, all things are possible, so that the passive *heurethē* (was found to be pregnant) of Matthew 1:18 can be derived from the active *heures* (found favour with God) of Luke 1:30; i.e., it is the word, not the meaning, which is the basis of association.

In this connection it is interesting to read (p. 37) that Matthew's claim to be recording things that 'happened' in order that Scripture might be 'fulfilled' is 'saved from fantasy' by the fact that 'his embellishments rest on historical data, which he hardly

means to deny by embellishing them'. Yet it is precisely in the 'embellishments' that the fulfilment is claimed to occur, while the events of the Lucan narratives themselves find no place in Matthew's story. No wonder Gundry concludes that in order to understand Matthew's procedure in this light 'we will have to broaden our understanding of "happened" as well as of "fulfilled"!

To return to Gundry's synoptic theory, this is essential to his commentary in a way it is not to most others, for the commentary is essentially on Matthew's use of his sources, rather than on the text of Matthew as such. Every verbal variation from the source is explained, even if it be only a *de* for a *kai*. It is remarkable how much theological blood can be sucked out of such linguistic stones, as for instance when the *elthōn* of 16:13 for Mark's *exēl*-then is taken as a reference to Jesus as 'the Coming One'. But may not authors have different stylistic habits, or deliberately go for linguistic variety, without a covert theological motive? Must every variation in grammatical structure or word order be 'explained'?

A major feature of the commentary is the regular provision of statistics setting out how often Matthew inserts a given word or phrase into traditional material, and how often it occurs in his own contributions. These are a useful resource, conveniently gathered in an index of Greek words at the end. They form the basis of Gundry's judgments as to what is characteristically Matthean vocabulary. Sometimes this is clearly a valid conclusion, but when the statistics run in single figures, as they very often do, one wonders how significant they are, and how far they merely reflect the subject-matter of the gospel. And how far do writers in fact conform to a 'preferred vocabulary' rather than vary their language, consciously or unconsciously, for literary effect? Even granted the validity of the selection of 'Mattheanisms', however, it does not follow, as Gundry tends to infer, that the presence of Mattheanisms indicates a Matthean creation, for presumably in telling a story derived from tradition Matthew is not bound to set aside his favourite vocabulary.

So I have some reservations about the method employed in the detailed analysis, not least the fear that it can reduce the humanity of the author and treat him as a linguistically and redactionally programmed machine. But my main complaint is that this is not what I turn to a commentary for. I am interested in the 'literary and theological art' displayed in the redactional work, but primarily I want to understand the text which has resulted, to see the flow of thought in the pericope as a whole and how it fits into the over-all development of the gospel. Now there is a good deal of exegetical discussion in this volume, but it is done in relation to each verse individually, and there it has to be disentangled from a mass of linguistic analysis, so that it is hard to keep it in perspective. There is often little or no discussion of a pericope as a whole, and therefore no discussion of the total meaning which is more than the sum of the minutiae.

I suppose much of this adds up to saying that this is not the sort of commentary I would have written (or rather am writing!). It is not necessarily the worse for that; it is for the potential reader to decide what he is looking for. He will certainly find here endless material for a fascinating detailed study of Matthew's 'art'.

Overall, then, an important book, a controversial book, a book to be aware of. But not, I think, the large-scale exegetical commentary on Matthew for which we have been waiting.

\*\* This is not a normal commentary, but a redaction criticism that minimizes interpretation to give overwhelming concentration of the mechanics of how Matthew composed and edited his Gospel. He thinks that Matthew freely rearranged Markan materials, inserting genealogy in a Markan framework, changing names as he wished (pp. 10, 14); holds that Matthew fused stories of Jesus and John, conflated separate healings, etc. (p. 20); maintains that Matthew turned the story of the visit of the shepherds into the adoration of the Magi; changed the going up to Jerusalem into the flight into Egypt, and the slaying of the turtledoves into the slaughter of the children at Bethlehem (pp. 26, 32, 34). It apparently never occurred to Gundry that these could refer to separate events. He notes special Mattheanisms (p. 50); thinks that Matthew interpolated the sayings of Jesus and turned "haters" into "peacemakers" (pp. 65, 72); charges that the "exceptive clause" came from Matthew, not from Jesus, as an editorial insertion (p. 90); claims that the Kaddish provided Jesus with a seed plot for the Lord's Prayer (p. 94; as though He needed any one else's prayer to help Him). Gundry holds that Matthew composed some verses (pp. 113, 119, 458); revised the tradition freely (pp. 128, 137). He argues that the demons died when the pigs drowned (p. 160); charges that Matthew repeated miracles (p. 176); calls 11:28-30 a distinctive composition of Matthew (p. 218). He claims that Matthew brings parables together (p. 250), composed parables (pp. 424, 497), and even composed discrepancies in parables (p. 430). He holds that Matthew wrote the description of the judgment of the nations in chapter 25 (p. 511); charges Matthew with using the traditions about Judas "creatively" (p. 553); claims that Matthew is responsible for the Trinitarian formula in the great commission (p. 596).

Although Gundry does argue persuasively for Matthean authorship (pp. 609-22), he has a radically different view of Scripture. In a theological postscript he writes, "The equation of the Bible with God's Word must stay, [sic] the straining to resolve all historical difficulties in the Bible must go" (p. 627). He clearly states, "the Gospel of Matthew does not have to give us unmixed history" (p. 627). He argues that "nobody has the right to insist that Scripture conform to standards of writing he happens to feel comfortable with and rule out those he does not" (p. 629). This leaves out of the equation the standards that Scripture declares for itself (Mat. 5:18; John 10:35; 17:17, etc.). He attacks the "literary insensitivity of conservative historical positivists" (p. 630). He is highly sensitive to literary phenomena, but highly insensitive himself to the meaning and power of the Book he studies so mechanically. He goes on to argue that the first century reader would recognize and approve of the "embroidery" of historical fact that Matthew used (p. 635). He ultimately declares his unbelief in the historic doctrine of inspiration: "By itself, inspiration does fail to guarantee historicity" (p. 637). He concludes by saying, "Matthew edited historical traditions in unhistorical ways ... he materially altered and embellished historical traditions and ... did so deliberately and often" (p. 639). The average pastor would be a better preacher of the Word of God if he never read Gundry's book.

! Hagner, Donald. *Matthew*, Word Bible Commentary, volume 33; 2 volumes, 1994. Thorough, on the Greek text, from an evangelical.



^^ Anything from the Word Bible Commentary series is going to be liberal. As with most liberal and evangelical “scholars”, Hagner is far too obsessed with the Septuagint, wasting much ink in continually referring to it.

\$\$ At last this long-awaited work by the George Ladd Professor of New Testament at Fuller Seminary in California is complete. These two volumes rank with the best the Word Biblical Commentary has produced to date. Hagner sees Matthew’s writing as largely historical narrative. He follows Markan priority and a form of the Q-hypothesis that admits the possibility of the apostle Matthew having penned a first draft of the logia of Jesus in Aramaic (so Papias). The final Greek draft we have maybe the later work of a disciple of Matthew’s, still pre-70, written to help Jewish-Christians understand their faith as the fulfilment of the hopes of Israel. It is also based on a generally stable and reliable oral tradition. Hagner discerns no detailed structure beyond major groupings of pericopes.

As we have come to expect of the WBC, each passage is introduced with thorough bibliographies and helpful, fresh translations. The ‘Form/Structure/Setting’ sections are not as helpful as some in the series, generally being limited to brief comments on narrative flow and subdivisions, an itemized listing of the differences between Matthew and his sources, and occasional comments on historicity. This ‘Comment’ sections, however, are uniformly strong. Hagner has clearly read a remarkable amount of the literature in his bibliographies and interacts with a broad cross-section of it, yet without overwhelming the reader with parenthetical data (both contra various other volumes in the WBC). The commentary blends the best of conservative and mainline contributions to scholarship. Specific interpretative positions adopted usually convince and always are worth considering. The ‘Explanation’ sections are brief but capture the heart of each passage without unnecessary repetition from previous sections.

Illustrations of the numerous strengths of Hagner’s exegesis would include his handling of typology in Matthew 1–2 and the Sermon on the Mount as kingdom ethics: ‘a proper antidote to a Paulinism that (unlike Paul himself) champions a gospel of cheap grace’ (p. 192). Jesus fulfils the law (5:17–20), including the Sabbath (12:1–14), by ‘bringing it to its intended meaning’ in his own person and teaching (p. 106). Hagner correctly stresses Matthew’s christological focus in the miracles (chs 8–9, 14), the role of chapter 16 (Peter’s confession) rather than chapter 13 (parables) as the key turning point in the gospel, and the need for a limited recognition of allegory in the parables. Jesus did intend to found a messianic community (the ‘church’), actually predicted his sufferings and death, and viewed the latter as substitutionary (20:28). Hagner sensitively handles the ‘anti-Semitic’ passages in chapter 23 and the passion narrative without denying their authenticity or generalizing beyond their immediate historical context. He recognizes that the ‘parable’ of the sheep and the goats is not about helping all the needy in the world but about the nations’ responses to Christian witnesses (25:31–46). And he closes volume two with a vibrant defence of the historicity of the resurrection of Jesus.

Occasional questions might still be raised about this or that interpretation. Hagner seldom considers the possible influence of pre-Markan sources in the material Mark and Matthew share; hence, the exception clause in 5:32 and 19:9 must be inauthentic. He demonstrates a marked ambivalence to harmonization. For example he believes that Matthew and Levi must be the same person, and he solves the contradiction with Josephus in 14:3–4 by allowing for there to have been two Herod Philips. Yet he dismisses as inappropriate all of the proposed harmonizations of John and the Synoptics

concerning the date of Christ's death and abandons any attempt to harmonize the resurrection narratives in detail (notwithstanding the fact that an entirely convincing harmonization was made by the very professor after which Hagner's chair is named—G.E. Ladd, in *I Believe in the Resurrection of Jesus* (1975)). In two instances, Hagner argues that pairs of similar miracles are doublets—variant accounts of only one historical event (the feedings of 5,000 and 4,000 and miracles of sight for the blind in 9:27–31 and 20:29–34). The resurrection of the saints in 27:51–53 never happened; it is a piece of 'realized and historicized apocalyptic' (p. 851). Perhaps the biggest weakness of all is Hagner's treatment of Matthew 24 and related eschatological material. In a curious inversion of Schweitzer, Hagner believes that although Jesus clearly separated the destruction of the temple from his second coming, the disciples, including Matthew, could not imagine the former without the latter, and so made the two indistinguishable in the Olivet discourse. The bottom line of the excursus on p. 711 is that Matthew misunderstood and was convinced Jesus would return in the first century.

These caveats notwithstanding, the commentary overall is a masterpiece. Luz and Davies/Allison will be the exhaustive, critical standards for years to come. Evangelicals have already been well served by the short contributions of Carson and France (and, I could hope, perhaps by my offering in the NAC series). But for a length of treatment in between these, Hagner's stands as unrivalled. Here will be all any pastor or lecturer could normally want or use, and much of what scholars in their more detailed studies need. Anyone considering writing a commentary on Matthew today, unless it is for some highly specialized purpose or unique audience, should invest their efforts in a less duplicated enterprise. Hagner has rendered most commentary-writing on Matthew redundant, at least for a generation.

@ Hare, Douglas R. A. *Matthew*, 1993. Prepared for teachers, preachers, and students, the expository series claims interpretation faithful to the text and theologically relevant to the church. One must remember that this is but a claim. The writer assumes that the author was not Matthew but a later Jewish Christian ca. A. D. 80 (2). Strange statements appear on Mary's supernatural conception, also a fuzzing in place of clarity. Hosea 11:1 is treated as if Matthew 2:15 stamped a foreign sense on it. The Parable of the Four Soils is discussed in a way that can create doubt (153) rather than giving readers a straightforward view, free of criticizing it. Other parabolic explanation here often offers more perplexity. The work is not as consistently and reliably helpful as a number of others are, and can even frustrate more aware users at times.

\*\* Hargrove, Hubbard Hoyd, *At the Master's Feet*, 1963, 211 pages. Conservative passages on the Sermon on the Mount. He strongly advocates the need for the new birth (p. 182). Although there are errors in fact ("synagogue" for "temple," p. 82), there are many helpful comments.

@ Harrington, Daniel J., *Matthew*, Sacred Pagina, 1991. This Jesuit author is also the editor for this Catholic NT series, which is of greater interest to the student than the preacher. Evaluating the series as a whole, I judge the SacP vols. on the Gospels as most valuable; that being said, the Matthew contribution is the weakest of the four.

@ Hauerwas, Stanley, *Matthew*, Brazos Bible Commentary, 2006. This exposition by a famous American theologian will prompt preachers to think hard about the meaning of Matthew today. Reviewers are less sanguine about the quality of exegesis underlying the sometimes insightful exposition; see p.18 for a hint of his personal struggle to launch into the rough waters of commentary-writing and for his scheme to retell Matthew's story. Here is a provocative quote, reflecting on ch. 4: "Give the devil his due. He understands, as is seldom acknowledged particularly in our day, that politics is about worship and sacrifice.'

% Hendriksen, William, *Exposition of the Gospel According to Matthew*, New Testament Commentary, 1973. A very capable geographical (rather than thematic) study. Highlights the discourses of Christ, does not discern the interim form of the Kingdom in chapter 13, and follows an amillennial interpretation of chapters 24-25. The work is enhanced by the author's use of exegesis in his exposition, making this a most valuable contribution for preachers.

## Verbose, preachy and not always acquainted with current discussions when he wrote, but his obvious love for Scripture and concern to expound the text make him a useful, if stodgy, guide for the preacher who will wade through.

@ This 1,015-page work is one of the best recent works of solid evangelical scholarship for teachers, preachers, and serious lay readers who desire to see views, detailed arguments at times, and explanations at length on problem passages. Yet Hendriksen as always maintains a warmth that speaks to the heart. He has many good footnotes of length documenting sources and providing further help. He is amillennial on chapters 24-25.

% Hill, David. *The Gospel of Matthew*, New Century Bible, 1972. A form-critical study which discusses recent developments in New Testament scholarship, followed by comments on the text of the RSV. The author does not expound the purpose of Gospel and his treatment of Matthean theology beclouds the issues.

## The introduction is useful and the commentary itself is a model of compression; but its most helpful remarks are usually a digested (and not always acknowledged) form of P. Bonnard.

% Hobbs, Herschel H., *An Exposition of the Gospel of Matthew*, 1965. Echoes the thoughts of Broadus, Robertson, and other Baptist writers and follows Broadus' amillennial explanation of the Olivet Discourse.

\*\* 422 pages. Expository comments (not verse-by-verse). He advocates Scofield's view of the parables of treasure and pearl but picks Broadus' view of the leaven and mustard seed. He also holds to Broadus' amillennial explanation of Mat. 24-25. He strongly defends the Virgin Birth, dates Matthew after Mark

\*\* Hoeksema, Herman, *The Perfect Prayer*, 1956, 224 pages. A conservative exposition of the Heidelberg Catechism questions dealing with the Lord's Prayer. He speaks out against modernism (p. 48). He goes out of his way to attack the view that James' "prayer of faith" has anything to do with physical healing (pp. 135-139).

\*\* Howard, Fred D., *The Gospel of Matthew*, 1961, 98 pages. Brief survey of Matthew, giving the main argument. He defends the Virgin Birth (p. 19), immersion (p. 24), Christ's resurrection (p. 98); gives an amillennial interpretation of Mat. 24-25 (pp. 78ff), misinterpreting, however, the premillennial view (p. 81).

^^ Huebner, Roy, A., "The Sermon on the Mount" in *Elements of Dispensational Truth, volume 4*, 2007, pages 1-136. A study of the dispensational applications and interpretations of Matthew 5-7, based on the teachings of John Nelson Darby. Huebner wrote a number of volumes explaining, defending and outlining Darby's dispensational teachings.

% Hunter, Archibald Macbride *A Pattern for Life*, 1953. Mildly evangelical, but advocates the documentary sources for Matthew, and provides an ineffectual commentary on the text.

\*\* 124 pages. Liberal explanation of the Sermon on the Mount. Advocates documentary sources: Q, Mk., M (pp. 11-14); holds that style is poetical, pictorial, and proverbial (pp. 16-20); outline (p. 28); in exegesis he uses methods of hyperbole (p. 56), principles-not-acts (pp. 29-92); throws out 5:18-20 (jot, p. 43) and 5:32 (exceptive clause, p. 50); 5:39 (cheek) means "non-retaliation in cases of personal wrong" (p. 53), not a non-resistance; surveys six different methods of interpretation (pp. 95-99). "It is an unattainable ethic which, as Christians, we must nevertheless try to attain" (p. 106).

@ Jeremias, Joachim. *The Sermon on the Mount*, 1963. The 36-pp, work first appeared in German as *Die Bergpredigt* in 1959. Jeremias was a long time Professor of New Testament Studies at Gottingen University. He reacts against Hans Windisch's charge (The Meaning of the Sermon on the Mount) that Matthew 5-7 gives complete heresy, law righteousness by works and not gospel. He shows four great differences between Jesus' demands and the ethic of late Judaism in the Talmud (pp. 5, 6). He also finally turns away from the view that the sermon is an impossible ideal to drive men to God's mercy, and the view that the sermon gives an interim ethic (Albert Schweitzer, etc.). For the view Jeremias favors, he thanks literary and form criticism: the sermon, he concludes, is not a continuous sermon Jesus delivered but a collection of His sayings. The key verse is 5:20 speaking of a righteousness of theologians (scribes), another of pious laymen (Pharisees), and that of the disciples of Jesus. The instructions strung together in one place originally functioned as catechetical helps for candidates for baptism or as discipleship instruction for the newly baptized. If so, it was preceded by preaching the gospel, conversion, and empowering (p. 23). This, Jeremias argues, makes understandable Jesus' heavy demands. Lives rooted in the kingdom show the victory of that kingdom. So we have not law but gospel.

! Keener, Craig S. *A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, 1999. Thorough, including thoughtful insights on the social and literary world of the first century and Matthew's interaction with it, at points idiosyncratic.

& Like France and Carson, Keener is an outstanding exegete. His commentary is distinctive in its emphasis on the social-historical context of the Gospel. It also contains a very useful 150-page bibliography of secondary resources on the Gospel of Matthew.

## He has written a massive commentary that in some respects sets new standards. It is engagingly written, and always with the preacher and teacher in mind. Its primary strengths are twofold: first, its unpacking of the socio-historical; context of the ancient Mediterranean world, including Jewish-Christian relations; second, its focus on moral lessons. But these very strengths sometimes raise questions: for example, here and there one could argue strenuously against the reconstructions Keener adopts. More important, while admitting that no commentary can cover everything, Keener's focus on the socio-historical context comes at the expense of penetrating comment on structure, grammar and sometimes theology.

\$\$ It is not easy to get a commentary published that is not part of an established series. Such a commentary must earn its way more than others by being of special merit. Keener's commentary eminently qualifies and further enriches the considerable resources now available to the student of Matthew's Gospel. Keener is also the author of a more popular commentary on Matthew in the *IVP Commentary Series* (1997), as well as *The IVP Bible Background Commentary* (1993).

While the commentary proper is 649 pages long, it is followed by a bibliography of no less than 150 pages and indexes comprising a further 167 pages! The index of 'ancient sources' is itself 140 pages long, with about 50 pages devoted to OT, Apocrypha and NT and no less than a further 90 pages (with triple columns) devoted to other ancient literature! The bibliography and indexes thus combine to form nearly one third of the book! This is indicative of the thick richness of the scholarly apparatus that supports the commentary, which abounds in highly detailed footnotes and numerous erudite excursions. This is nevertheless not a commentary only for scholars, but also—indeed, especially—for readers who want help in understanding what Matthew means for Christian living today. Keener provides his readers with a 71 page, comprehensive—if somewhat rambling—introduction. He describes the distinctive focus of the commentary as twofold: the social-historical context of Matthew on the one hand, and the nature of Matthew's exhortations to his Christian readers on the other. Keener describes the former as a Jewish-Christian community, the second located perhaps in Syria. He writes: 'My most striking discovery while writing this commentary was how often Matthew "re-Judaizes" his sources'. Assuming the common two-source hypothesis, Keener rightly notes that for the sake of his readers Matthew consistently makes Mark's Jesus, more 'Jewish'.

As for the relationship between Matthew's community and the synagogue, Keener takes the minority view that a definitive break with the synagogue had not yet taken place. He affirms the argument of Andrew Overman that Matthew's Christianity is best conceived of as a different form of Judaism from that of the non-Christian Jews. This conclusion, in my opinion, undervalues the radical newness of Matthew's Christianity that made continuance in the synagogue virtually impossible. For all the Jewishness of Matthew's viewpoint, there are marks in the Gospel that point to the Christianity of Matthew as necessarily separate from Judaism, though continuing in dialogue with it.

On the question of authorship, Keener notes that he has changed his mind since the 1993 commentary mentioned above, being now willing to accept, 'the possibility of Matthean authorship on some level'. He is inclined to date the Gospel in the late 70s, thus a little earlier than the consensus. I note two striking characteristics of Keener's

commentary. First is his resilient and untiring defence of the historical reliability of Matthew. This position is not taken in a naive or dogmatic way, but is intelligently argued. Keener places the burden of proof on those who are sceptical about the historicity of the narratives. As an example, Keener says that the conclusion that Matthew invented the material that is unique to his Gospel 'appears to be simply imagination run amuck'. Second is Keener's refreshing defence of the supernatural.

Opposition to the possibility of miraculous events occurring in history Keener attributes to prejudiced Enlightenment presuppositions. This is a commentary, then, that is solidly evangelical, reflecting both a high caliber of scholarship and a firm commitment to the verities of the Christian faith.

It must be said that the format of the commentary itself is rather unusual. Keener does not proceed in the usual verse by verse manner, nor does he discuss everything in every verse. The result is that it can occasionally be difficult to find what one is looking for, and the treatment of the text is not equally thorough (some passages get very thin treatment for a volume of this size). Furthermore, instead of introducing his remarks in the customary fashion, by a lemma from the text, he employs his own analytical headings, in bold type, presumably based on the text's 'lessons or morals'. This presents an advantage in that the commentary can focus on the important and neglect the incidental. It may also present a slight disadvantage, however, in that it adds a level of interpretation as well as making it possible for the headings to drive the commentary as much as, or more than, the text itself.

Unfortunately, it is not possible to sample the commentary in this short review so I will risk a few generalizing statements. The strengths and weakness of the commentary are the result of the approach Keener has chosen. It is clearly a fine success in getting at the teaching of the Gospel, and that after all is of the greatest importance. At the same time however, those who turn to commentaries often want to know about the incidental, the problematic, the supportive detail. Often Keener does not deal with this kind of material in sufficient depth, despite the huge scholarly apparatus already noted. For example, the discussion of the difficult 27:51–53 is given in a mere 16 lines of text in which Keener affirms the resurrection of the dead saints but deals with none of the difficulties in accepting the story as a historical event. Keener has produced a distinctive and valuable and insightful commentary. With its abundant references to ancient literature and secondary literature, it can only be described as a remarkable tour de force. Solidly evangelical, deeply thoughtful, always informed and eminently practical, this is a commentary that will faithfully lead readers to the heart of Matthew.

\* Kelly, William, *Lectures on the Gospel of Matthew*, 1868. We cannot accept the forced and fanciful interpretations here given.<sup>273</sup>

% Valuable because the writer does not willingly avoid any interpretative problem.

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<sup>273</sup> Charles Spurgeon had an almost irrational hatred of the so-called "Plymouth Brethren". His comments are not objective or fair. He treated outright heretics better than he did the Brethren. This attitude leaves a stain on his legacy. You don't have to agree with them but they were not heretical and deserved better treatment from Spurgeon. Notice Spurgeon does not identify what these "forced and fanciful interpretations" are.

^^ The problem with Plymouth Brethren commentaries is their style not their content. They tend to be paragraph-by-paragraph or even chapter-by-chapter comments rather than verse-by-verse. This limits the usefulness of these commentaries. But his content is good.

@ Kent, Homer A., Jr. *Matthew*, in Wycliffe Bible Commentary, 1962. 1,525 pp. Kent, who served several years as president of Grace Theological Seminary, Winona Lake, IN, did this dispensational study. He brought a lot of understanding to the task, and provides a reliable commentary on many matters, often giving good reasoning for views.

% King, Guy Hope *The New Order*, 1954. A devotional exposition of real merit.

@ King was minister at Christ Church, Beckenham and a speaker at Keswick. As in his other books he writes in a freshly devotional, creative strain. He ties the truth of the sermon in with biblical truth elsewhere. He is persuaded that while Christ will set up His kingdom at His Second Coming and the principles will apply then, the truth is His mind and will for His people also apply now, just as principles in the epistles (pp. 11, 12). The life-style here is lived in dependence on the Holy Spirit through grace by those who first have been born again (12). Many apt side captions appear over sections, and the outline of the sermon runs throughout in larger headings. The print of the commentary is small. King's work is a devotionally edifying treat, served in an appetizing manner with many things suggestive for a closer walk with God, leading Bible studies, or preparing sermons.

@ Kingsbury, J. D., *The Parables of Jesus in Matthew 13, A Study in Redaction Criticism*, 1969. This 180-page book views chapter 13 as being in a pivotal place in Matthew and a good test case for redaction-critical procedure. The detailed verse-by-verse discussion, growing out of a doctoral dissertation at Basel (1966), takes the view that this gospel presents parables here to allow Jesus as Lord to speak to circumstances in the church later but Jesus may not have said them in His day (not a position this reviewer holds).

@ Kissinger, W. S., *The Sermon on the Mount: A History of Interpretation and Bibliography*. American Theological Library Association, Bibliography Series, Number 3, 1975. Kissinger, a cataloguer of religion at the Library of Congress in Washington, D. C., surveys the history of the interpretation from the early fathers to the present, then gives a lengthy bibliography (148 pp.) of literature on the sermon and issues in Matthew 5-7. He has a similar work on parables.

\*\* Lange, John Peter. *Matthew, In Commentary on the Holy Scriptures*, 1857, 568 pages. Conservative Lutheran exposition. He holds to the Matthean authorship (pp. 41-42), dates it A.D. 67-69 (p. 42), defends the Virgin Birth (p. 53), defends the miracles (p. 153), classifies them (p. 154), gives a variety of views and notes on Peter's confession (pp. 296-299), defends the resurrection (pp. 541-542), gives the Lutheran view of baptism (p. 557).

% Laurenson, L., *Messiah the Prince*, 1924. An interesting and, in many respects, original outline and exposition of Matthew's Gospel. Long out of print, this devotional book will richly repay the reader. Plymouth Brethren.

^^ Lee, Witness, *Life Study of Matthew*, Living Stream Ministry. From the Watchman Nee group, giving a unique, Oriental perspective of Scriptures. There are numerous "quirks" of interpretation since the exposition is more "Oriental" and "Chinese". Thus, it is based on some different cultural foundations than Westerners are used to. The books are pricy (including the Kindle editions) but they are still worth consulting, but with discernment.

\*\* Lenski, Richard Charles Henry. *The Interpretation of St. Matthew's Gospel*, 1943, 1181 pages. Very thorough, strongly Lutheran interpretation of Matthew. He holds to Matthean authorship and an early date (p. 19), militantly defends the Virgin Birth (pp. 38ff), the miracles (pp. 320, 350), the resurrection (p. 1153). He has a great amount of material on Peter's confession and Christ's words following it (pp. 618-633). He attacks the idea that the Sermon on the Mount is nothing but law (pp. 179-180).

\*\* Lloyd-Jones, David Martyn. *Studies in the Sermon on the Mount*, 2 volumes, 1959-60, 320, 337 pages. Careful and thorough expository messages, which still retain their original sermonic form. He manifests good common sense and a warm heart. He stresses principles, not just actions (p. 220); he often harmonizes the Sermon on the Mount with Paul's teaching (p. 207); he holds that Christ was giving the proper interpretation of the Mosaic law (pp. 213-214). Although the style is certainly British, it is a most helpful work.

^^ Not a commentary but sermon transcriptions. He does not hesitate to correct the Authorized Version, which grates on our nerves and lowers the value of the work. The sermons are wordy and follow many rabbit tails, but this volume is generally useful.

\*\* Lohmeyer, Ernest, *Our Father*, 1965, 320 pages. A most thorough liberal exposition of the Lord's Prayer. Although one will not agree with everything found here, the exposition is most careful and a help. His treatments of "Father" (pp. 41-56), "will of God" (p. 115-123), the "evil one" (pp. 214-225) are memorable. On temptation: "The person who is tempted... does not have a choice between two ways on which he could go; he has the unconditional duty to go the one way prescribed for him. The other way which temptingly attracts him is only apparently a way; in reality, it is a fall into the abyss" (p. 200).

@ Long, Thomas G. *Matthew*, Westminster Bible Companion. Louisville, KY, 1997. A popular preacher in the Presbyterian Church (U. S. A.), who also teaches preachers, wrote to show Matthew's relevance to lay people. Long presents a survey of which there are many just as helpful or more so already on the market. He is not confident that Matthew wrote the gospel (3), and believes in such sources as Mark and Q. One is left unsure what Isaiah 7:14 meant, but wording gives the impression that Matthew 1 uses it artificially to suit its own aim (15). This suggests a rigged case and a slam at reliability. Baptism with the Holy Spirit appears to be confused with the different matter of the Spirit



bestowing gifts (31), and some other texts are not made really clear, or to the point, or they offer unfortunate wording. Many verses are handled fairly well, but overall the work does not contribute as helpfully as several others of comparable length do (331 pp.). If one does use it, he will find some ideas for preaching, though this is also the case in many better works.

\*\* Lowe, John, *The Lord's Prayer*, 1962. 77 pages. Brief liberal comments on the Lord's Prayer. He has a few interesting thoughts, but mostly he evaluates the opinions of other liberals (p. 16) or discusses critical problems (p. 34). He is indebted to Lohmeyer.

\*\* Luther, Martin, *The Sermon on the Mount*, volume 21 of *Luther's Works*, 1956, 294 pages. Pungent sermons. The fury of the battle he was waging is apparent in phrases like "that jackass of a pope" (p. 3). Although he has much common sense, his doctrine of the two realms (life divided into the secular and the sacred) is dangerous (p. 105); he applies the Sermon on the Mount only to the sacred (p. 114). He has an interesting point on the "salt." Salt bites (pp. 55-57); therefore Christians should be stinging the world for its sin; other warnings he calls "a pinch of salt" (p. 84). His confidence in Christ is moving (p. 47).

@ Luz, Ulrich. *Matthew 8 – 20*, 1997, 2001; *Matthew 21-28*, 1997 - 2002, 2005; *Matthew 1 – 7*, 2002, 2007. If you have means and are an academic, buy this. A brilliant technical work translated out of the German EKK, this commentary is more accessible than ICC — for example, there is not a lot of textual criticism — and more concerned with interpreting Matthew's theology. Luz, a prof at Bern, is certainly worth consulting, particularly for the attention he pays to what German-speakers call *Wirkungsgeschichte* (more "reception history" than "history of interpretation"); there is much artwork included. The four vols. in German (1997 — 2002) become three in English. Note that this is a distinctive contribution to this Fortress series, one that is more useful to preachers than the vols. on Mark and John.

% M'Neile, Alan Hugh, *The Gospel According to St. Matthew*, 1915. A critical commentary in which the author denies the Matthean authorship and discounts the Virgin Birth as being "imaginative". Helpful, however, in unfolding the theme of the Gospel.

\*\* 483 pages, Critical commentary on the Greek text. Date: A.D. 80-100 (p. xxiii); denies Matthean authorship (p. xxiii); he does not deny miracles as such, nor does he deny the legendary; each miracle must be decided on its own merits (p. xv); does not deny the Virgin Birth, even though admitting that the narrative contains an "imaginative element" (p. xiv); maniac frightened the swine into a panic (p. 114); suggests that feeding of 4,000 is duplicate of 5,000 (p. 233); condemns confession in 14:33 on literary grounds (p. 240); very thorough; once in a while helpful.

\*\* Maclaren, Alexander, *Matthew*, volumes 6 and 7 of *Expositions of Holy Scripture*, 1944, 1208 pages. Expository messages on selected texts from Matthew, not a verse-by-verse commentary. He has remarkable messages on "The New Sinai," the Beatitudes (6:97-108), and "The Obscure Apostles" (7:55-67).

\*\* McArthur, Harvey K., *Understanding the Sermon on the Mount*, 1960, 192 pages. Careful discussion of four main topics: the Sermon on the Mount and Mosaic law; Sermon on the Mount and Paul's teaching; Sermon on the Mount and eschatology; Sermon on the Mount and ethics. Although liberal in his presuppositions, he gives a very helpful survey and evaluation of 12 different methods of interpreting the Sermon on the Mount (pp. 106-127). He gives illustrations of all his points by quoting everyone from the early fathers to modern liberals and dispensationalists.

\*\* Macartney, Clarence Edward, *The Lord's Prayer*, 1942, 87 pages. An exposition of each of the clauses of the Lord's Prayer by a famous preacher. Popularly written, helpful, good illustrations.

@ MacArthur, John Jr. *Matthew*. 4 volumes, MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985-90. This is a conservative, premillennial, and very readable exposition that often deals in some detail with problem verses and elaborates on vital lessons of Jesus' teachings. The author often explains customs and gives differing viewpoints and supporting reasons. In Matthew 13, he takes only the fourth soil to represent genuinely saved people and understands the leaven in a good sense. In Matthew 24, the one taken is removed in judgment and the one left is preserved on earth safely to enter the earthly kingdom promised in the Old Testament.

## A hybrid difficult to classify, part commentary, part expository sermon. These books are wordy and often betray too little time and care with the text, so they cannot be read as reliable commentary; but the amount of information goes beyond that of most expositions. Doubtless they will well serve the well-read layperson and the poorly trained preacher.

^^ MacArthur is useful but he does have his problems. His animosity toward the Authorized Version is well known, as is his weakness of the blood of Christ and the sonship of Christ, which he later recanted. MacArthur was behind the flawed revision of the already flawed New American Standard Version with his Legacy Standard Version project, which we critique in this commentary. He supposedly abandoned his earlier teaching where he denied the eternal sonship of Christ. In his comments on Matthew 2:9-12, he calls the apostate church father Origen "the great church Father..." MacArthur also mistakenly hold to a pre-church age Septuagint. One thing MacArthur does not do is endlessly cite what other commentaries say. D. A. Carson does this in his commentary on Matthew. MacArthur's commentaries are wordy, as they read like sermon transcriptions rather than true commentaries.

@ These Matthew vols. were among the first published in this ambitious project to cover the whole NT. About 27 vols. are out. I have to say I'm not real impressed with these expositions. There is some fine sermonic material in them, and I'm glad they're out there for lay preachers and Sunday School teachers, but I would not consider them the most dependable tools for seminary-trained pastors. Only to be used after one's own exegesis.

@ Mann, C. S., and W. F. Albright, *Matthew*, Anchor Bible, 1971. Has a huge introduction, but spotty and disappointing exegesis. They defend the Griesbach

Hypothesis (i.e. reject Markan priority and Matthew's dependence on the Second Gospel). This hypothesis, which goes back to the early Church and held sway until it went into eclipse in the early 1800s, was revived by W. R. Farmer's *The Synoptic Problem* (1964).

\* Marloratus, Augustine, *Exposition*, 1570. Marlorate was an eminent French reformer, preacher, and martyr. His commentaries contain the cream of the older writers, and are in much esteem, but are very rare. He wrote on the whole New Testament, but we have in English only the Gospels and Jude.

\*\* Meyer, Frederick Brotherton, *The Directory of the Devout Life*, 1954 reprint, 191 pages. Devotional meditations on the Sermon on the Mount. He warns against taking certain statements (resist not evil) too literally (pp. 78-81), has a good section on the Lord's Prayer (pp. 110-133). Some of his statements sound a little Victorian (on Mat. 5:28, pp. 60-66).

\*\* Marshall, F. *The School and College St. Matthew*, n.d., 239 pages. Very brief conservative notes on Matthew. He holds to the Matthean authorship (p. vii). The 74-page introduction to Matthew is valuable; he has articles on the characteristics and peculiarities of Matthew: parables, miracles, Kingdom of Heaven, teaching of the Lord, use of the Old Testament, demon possession, titles of Christ, etc.

@ Meier, John P., *Matthew*, New Testament Message, 1979. A critical Catholic commentary by a man who has taken a lead role in Gospel scholarship since the 1980s. His influence continues today, and the controversial 5-vol. set, *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus*, doesn't please evangelicals. Meier has contributed to the spate of recent critical books, which amounts to a Third Quest to reconstruct the Jesus of history. This movement, while not as radical as the "New Quest" Renewed (exemplified in the works of Mack and Crossan), alleges there is less continuity between the historical Jesus and the Christ of faith.

\*\* Meyer, Heinrich August Wilhelm, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 1884, 591 pages. Technical and critical commentary. He holds that the present Matthew is a Greek translation from a Hebrew original that had the authority of Matthew (pp. 2-3), dates the translation just before A.D. 70 (p. 18), admits the Virgin Birth (p. 48), but believes that the temptation of Christ (p. 108) and demonic possession (pp. 190-191) were legends. He would limit Mat. 24:15 to the Zealots before the Roman war (p. 414).

\*\* Micklem, Philip A., *St. Matthew. Westminster Commentaries*, 1917, 340 pages. A liberal exposition of Matthew. He dates it shortly after A.D. 70 (p. ix), denies the Matthean authorship (p. xix), does not deny the Virgin Birth (p. 8), but implicitly denies the reality of demons (p. 81), has a poor understanding of inspiration (p. 31, etc.), limits the fulfillment of 24:15 to A.D. 70.

% Morgan, George Campbell, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, 1929. An able expository treatment with numerous practical observations. Particularly helpful on the Sermon on the Mount. Includes some novel ideas on the parables of chapter 25.

# This work consists of seventy-three expository messages that amount to a verse-by-verse commentary. He strongly defends the virgin birth and the other miracles.

\* Morison. James, *Matthew's Memoirs of Jesus Christ*, 1870. We differ greatly in doctrinal views from Morison, but we set a great price upon his Matthew and Mark, which deserve the utmost praise.

% A practical and devotional phrase-by- phrase commentary. In many instances, provides helpful comments on textual problems. Although the interpretation of the Greek nuances is not always accurate this work should be purchased if found.

!! Morris, Leon, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary, 1992 In the Christian Church the Gospel of Matthew has been considered the most important portrait of Jesus' life and message. Containing Jesus' Sermon on the Mount and a uniquely rich collection of parables, among many other things, Matthew has made a major contribution to the church throughout the centuries, and it still has much to say to the church today. This superb commentary in the Pillar series explores the meaning and relevance of Matthew in an eminently straightforward fashion. Leon Morris writes for readers who use commentaries to discover further what the Bible means. Throughout, he makes clear what he considers to be the meaning of the Greek text that Matthew has bequeathed to the church. A perceptive introduction precedes Morris's warmhearted verse-by-verse exposition of Matthew, an exposition based on his own literal translation of the text. Now a standard reference work on the Gospel of Matthew, this mature, evangelically oriented commentary will continue to meet the needs of students, pastor, and general readers alike.

@ Morris, Leon, *Matthew*, Pillar New Testament Commentaries, 1992. This joins his earlier commentaries on John and Romans; all are useful works for the expositor. This work on Matthew is not scintillating and doesn't break new ground, but it is solid, basic, and dependable. Like Hendriksen, its size and thoroughness is a major strength. Compare with Blomberg's more incisive and up-to-date work.

@ One of the world's best-known evangelical, amillennial NT scholars provides a thorough, clear, well-studied and mature tool based on the Greek but highly readable even for those who do not know Greek. Morris usually surges quickly to the crux, and gives main views, reasons for his choices, word meaning, contextual factors, background, and customs. His work here is right up with the No. 1 commentaries in all-around contribution. In prophetic passages such as Matthew 24-25, one will see an amillennial perspective near its best. Footnotes that often are substantial, and various indexes, provide more help.

\$ Morrison, George H., *Matthew*, 3 volumes, 1978. These eloquent messages expound the meaning of Matthew's Gospel with a force that is both compelling and persuasive.

@ Mounce, Robert A., *Matthew*, New International Biblical Commentary, 1985. Highly regarded by some as a basic work for introducing this Gospel to beginning students.

\*\* Nicholson, Edward Bryon, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, 1881, 298 pages. A commentary which professes complete neutrality on all theological issues. Since the author will not take a stand on the authenticity of any passage, the book amounts to a collection of critical problems without solutions and some background information from Jewish literature.

!! Nolland, John, *Gospel of Matthew*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary, 2005. Having devoted the past ten years of his life to research for this major new work, John Nolland gives us a commentary on the Gospel of Matthew that engages with a notable range of Matthean scholarship and offers fresh interpretations of the dominant Gospel in the history of the church. Without neglecting the Gospel's sources or historical background, Nolland places his central focus on the content and method of Matthew's story. His work explores Matthew's narrative technique and the inner logic of the unfolding text, giving full weight to the Jewish character of the book and its differences from Mark's presentation of parallel material. While finding it unlikely that the apostle Matthew himself composed the book, Nolland does argue that Matthew's Gospel reflects the historical ministry of Jesus with considerable accuracy, and he brings to the table new evidence for an early date of composition. Including accurate translations based on the latest Greek text, detailed verse-by-verse comments, thorough bibliographies for each section, and an array of insightful critical approaches, Nolland's *Gospel of Matthew* will stimulate students, preachers, and scholars seeking to understand more fully Matthew's presentation of the gospel narrative.

@ As expected, Nolland has largely followed the research methods used in his 3-vol. WBC on Luke and produced a redaction-critical exegesis which is exceedingly thorough (nearly 1300pp. + 200pp. of bibliography). One difference is the more contemporary feel of Matthew, as Nolland gives greater attention to narrative criticism. I regard this as a better work for pastors than the earlier Luke because it is a little more focused on the text as we have it and spends much less time on the ins-and-outs of scholarly discussion. Contrariwise, some students might want more interaction with other exegetes. This is clearly one of the best commentaries on the Greek text, more accessible than Davies-Allison. The bibliographies are nearly exhaustive. Nolland wants to date Matthew prior to AD 70, yet thinks it "most unlikely" that the apostle Matthew authored the Gospel.

^^ North, Gary, *Priorities and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Matthew*, 2000, 2003, 626 pages. Not verse-by-verse but an economic commentary on selected verses. North is a Reconstructionist and anti-dispensationalist so many of his doctrinal applications but be carefully evaluated. He does have many good practical applications.

\$\$ Osborne, Grant R. *Matthew*. Zondervan Expository Commentary on the New Testament, 2010. Osborne has been teaching NT at the seminary-level for nearly forty years while he has also been heavily involved in church-ministry. This not only qualifies him to capably handle a text so important as the First Gospel, but it also demands that we as readers listen with humility and expectation to what he has to say. Likewise, the

editors and the contributors of this series comprise a virtual “who’s who” of contemporary, mature American evangelical scholarship, and this causes us to take note.

In terms of evaluating the series overall, it posits itself as part of the tradition of confessional commentary on Scripture with an eye toward the pastor especially. It also sees itself as a series that makes some unique contributions to the commentary genre. Particularly, this series stands apart in that for each passage the commentator provides a clear, succinct, and demarcated “main idea” of the passage. This is then followed by a detailed “exegetical outline” that includes a chart with a simple discourse-analysis type of outline of the passage, complete with indented clauses and tags that indicate the relationship of clauses to each other. Anyone familiar with the various tools for discourse analysis available (such as “arc-ing,” “tracing,” “thought flow diagrams,” etc.) will recognize this kind of work and also that this is unique to the commentary genre. This is followed by the more normal verse-by-verse commentary on the text and some ventures into the “Theology in Application” of the passage. Overall the series appears to be scholarly in its research while pastoral in its orientation. These commentaries are written for the pastor and teacher who has had some level of Greek training, but with no expectation that this person is an expert or is interested in all the scholarly details and debates. This is wise and I think does aim appropriately at a large readership, including many readers of this journal. The editorial philosophy and aims of this series are evidently well thought-out, and if the Osborne volume is any indication, this series will indeed be of great benefit to the pastor and teacher of Holy Scripture.

Turning to Osborne’s work in particular, the voice and level of discussion is very accessible and serviceable for its pastoral aims. Osborne personally testifies to his desire for the format and style of the commentary to be such that it will help pastors rediscover the centrality of the Bible in their ministries (p. 13). In most cases he successfully accomplishes this admirable goal. While not being a commentary that focuses on the academic debates, Osborne does regularly provide notes that clarify which contemporary scholars hold certain views under discussion. His verse-by-verse comments are succinct and helpful. The layout of the commentary is also quite handy with clear and large headings that walk the reader through aspects of the text, including its place in the overall literary outline of the book, its main idea, its translation broken down via a phrase-by-phrase discourse analysis, followed by easily findable and succinct verse-by-verse comments. The “Theology in Application” piece at the end of each section has clear, numbered points and explanations that can easily be accessed and digested. Overall, the pastor who makes this one of the main commentaries in sermon preparation will not be disappointed, and in this it seems Osborne’s volume accomplishes its goal.

At the same time, in terms of evaluating this commentary relative to other ones, I may offer a few critiques and raise a few concerns. First, overall the academic engagement strikes me as a bit dated, or I should say, limited. This is certainly not to say that either new or very old is always better, but simply to note that in some instances the research behind the commentary could have benefitted from both more recent and more ancient approaches and insights. This is apparent in the first instance by observing that most of the footnoted references date from the 80’s and 90’s, and much in the bibliography from the 1970’s. Again, this is not necessarily a bad thing and

in part reflects Osborne's and our own situatedness. Nevertheless, this aspect is noticeable both in its lack of contemporary work and especially in its almost total neglect of any commentaries or homilies from the pre-modern period. This chronological short-sightedness is not atypical of the modern commentary, but it is lamentable nonetheless. This is especially true now when there is a groundswell of renewed appreciation of and accessibility to pre-modern Christian readings of Scripture. It seems to me that any commentary that seeks to serve and guide the pastor and teacher would ignore the great tradition of devotional preaching and commentary only to its own neglect. Ideally this is not an either-or between pre-modern and academic readings, but when push comes to shove and space is limited, it seems today's pastor would likely benefit more from hearing from Augustine, one of the Gregory's, or even Maldonatus than Betz, Casey, and what is on offer in JBL. But we mustn't be too harsh or unfair. Osborne is balanced, sagacious, and pastorally oriented. But great treasures await us if we will begin to read more widely than modern academic works on Matthew.

This constrained range of resources and datedness also manifests itself in Osborne's introduction. For example, while his method for interpreting the Gospels has much to commend it (pp. 21–27), in my opinion there is still far too much weight placed on the value of a Gospel-comparing, redaction-critical approach (all the rage in the 70's). Likewise, his discussion of the relationship of history and theology and Matthew's historical trustworthiness (pp. 27–30) misses what is now a further and very important step beyond that represented by the Third Quest (which Osborne describes as “1985 to the present”): work in epistemology and historiography in recent years has precipitated yet another valuable approach that gets beyond the history-theology impasse that the Third Quest and “critical realism” remains mired in, particularly with the idea of Testimony.

Moving beyond this concern about datedness, I may also raise a couple of questions about the way the commentary functions. First, regarding the discourse analysis aspect of the commentary, I sometimes wonder how effective this element is. I do see great value in reading the story closely and intensively, and such a tool helps toward this end; it is much better than what I call the typical WSM (“whatever strikes me”) approach to narrative. But in looking over the discourse charts of each passage, it is not immediately apparent to me how much these provide in analyzing the text or offering much insight, especially when applied to narrative. (I think there is inherently more value in this kind of analysis with didactic literature.) This kind of analytic work does provide the opportunity to get one's hands dirty with the text, and this is very valuable. But it doesn't seem to necessarily lead to a more astute and thickly theological reading of the text. This manifests itself in the actual commentary in that it is difficult to see how the graphical discourse analysis of the passage actually has much or any effect on what is said in the commentary. That is, would the “Explanation of the Text” and “Theology in Application” sections be any different or lacking if the discourse analysis were absent? It seems not as far as I can tell. This is a question that will need to be asked of each volume in the series.

A second question to be raised is how theological the “Theology in Application” sections really are. That is, in terms of being actually theological comments or applications of the text, they seem a bit thin and not greatly connected to a robust intra-canonical, orthodox, or biblical theology of Scripture. Rather, they are more akin to

“main points” of the passage or “things to highlight in a message” than actual theological reflections. For example, are such typical statements as those on 4:23–25 really best described as “Theology in Action”: “An itinerant preacher and minister,” “Jesus’ incalculable power,” “Great excitement,” and “Jesus’ miraculous works transferred to the disciples”? Some maybe; others not. There is great benefit in such succinct observations drawn from the passage. Nevertheless, in terms of pushing the reader (and thereby the preacher) to greater theological reflection and application, it seems to fall a bit short.

We must not end on a negative note, however, lest I give the wrong impression. The shortcomings articulated above are not deal-breakers and are not specific to this commentary only, though they should be noted in evaluating the work at hand.

Professor Osborne’s commentary is a notable achievement and will indeed serve its educated-pastoral purpose well in many ways. I would recommend it as one to have on any pastor’s shelf as they go to study and proclaim the Gospel from the First Gospel.

\* Overton, Charles, *Course of Lectures on Matthew*, 1850. Scarce. Solid, sound, soporific sermons; intended for lay helpers to read, with the prayers appended. They will not make the hearers lie awake at nights, or cause them palpitations of heart through excess of original and striking thought.

\* Parker, Joseph, *Homiletic Analysis. Matthew*, 1870. Parker is an able though somewhat——. But stop, he is a near neighbor of ours.

\* Penrose, John, *Lectures on Matthew*, 1832. The author says of his work, “no novelty of any kind, no originality either of thought or research will be found in it.” Why, then, did he print it?

\$ Pettingill, William, *The Gospel of the Kingdom*, 1940. Tens of thousands of believers across the American continent are deeply indebted to the life and ministry of this beloved Bible teacher. He was one of the editors of the Scofield Bible. He wrote for the busy Christian who has not too much time for meditation. A valuable addition to that of Gaebelein’s.

^^ Phillips, John, *Exploring The Gospel of Matthew*, 1999, 560 pages. Solid, Bible-believing work, based on the Authorized Version. His outlines alone are worth the price of the book.

\*\* Pink, Arthur Walkington, *An Exposition of the Sermon on the Mount*, 1951, 442 pages A very thorough, phrase-by-phrase exposition. There is much that is genuinely helpful here; he is particularly good on “Resist not evil” (pp. 109-120), but the work is seriously marred by many “Pinkian peculiarities.” He limits the “salt” and “light” to ministers only (pp. 43ff), advocates strict Sabbatarianism (p. 59), is an avowed foe of the Scofield Reference Bible (p. 266), and of premillennialism in general (p. 81), uses the phrase “Give not that which is holy unto the dogs” to launch an attack on the literal four-footed animals (p. 294)! Matthew, being the 40th Book in the canon, marks probation (p. 9).



% Plummer, Alfred, *The Gospel According to St. Matthew*, 1956. A most helpful technical and critical commentary. Plummer denies Matthew's authorship and believes that there are inaccuracies in Scripture; yet he defends the virgin birth and the reality of miracles. In spite of the weaknesses inherent in this volume, it is one of the best expository treatments of this Gospel.

@@ Holds to a date a little after A. D. 70 (p. xxxiii)...defends the reality of demonic possession (pp. 134ff). He has a wretched doctrine of inspiration, wishing to remove the Lord's prayer from the sermon on the mount (p. 93).

\*\* 497 pages. The most helpful technical and critical commentary on Matthew. He denies Matthean authorship (p. x), holds to a date a little after A.D. 70 (p. xxxii), has an interesting section on the plan of the Gospel (pp. xviii-xxv). He defends the Virgin Birth (pp. 3-11), the reality of the miracles (pp. 51-53, 122), demonic possession (pp. 134ff), but he has a wretched doctrine of inspiration, wishing to remove the Lord's Prayer from the Sermon on the Mount (p. 93), admitting inaccuracies in Scripture (pp. 132-33), etc.

\*\* Plumptre, E. H., *The Gospel According to Matthew*. The Layman's Handy Commentary, 1903. 460 pages. Popular exposition. He holds to Matthean authorship, defends the Virgin Birth, most miracles, but in an excursus he leaves open whether the Lord accommodated His teaching on demons to popular superstition or whether He put His seal of approval on such teaching (pp. 430-433). He interprets Mat. 24:1-28 as happening in A.D. 70, giving an amillennial view.

^^ Rice, John R., *The King of the Jews*, 1955. With all of Rice's commentaries, they are rather thin and are skewed to evangelistic applications. Rice was not dispensational so his value in Matthew will be limited. There are some occasionally good devotional applications, but commenting was not Rice's first calling. He always styled himself as a scholar and desperately wanted to be acknowledged as a scholar.

\*\* 504 pages. Baptist Bible study lessons expanded into a commentary. He strongly defends the verbal inspiration of the original manuscripts (p. 12), the Virgin Birth (pp. 31-38), etc. He attacks extreme dispensationalism (p. 504), but he also gives some idiosyncratic interpretations (attacking life insurance, p. 110; attributing continuous action to the future tense, p. 244; etc.). He is at his best preaching on prayer (pp. 228-230).

@ Ridderbos, Herman N., *Matthew*. Bible Students Commentary, 1987, 556 pages. This work is from the famous Dutch series (e.g., Aalders on Genesis, etc.) originally published in 1950-51. It provides expositors with much help with its competent interpretations and definitions and defenses of varying viewpoints. Ridderbos is amillennial and does not deal with critical issues as much as other scholars. Because of its earlier publication, it does not reflect awareness of works on Matthew since the 1940's.

\*\*\* Robertson, Archibald Thomas. *Commentary on the Gospel According to Matthew*, 1911, 307 pages. Conservative comments on Matthew. He has a thorough introduction (50 pp) in which he evaluates many liberal theories ("Q," etc.), usually showing that they

are not settled by the evidence. He defends the Virgin Birth (p. 57), the miracles (p. 120), the resurrection (pp. 281-282), and has an interesting exposition of Peter's confession (pp. 190-192).

@ Robertson, Arthur. *Matthew*, Everyman's Bible Commentary, 1983. 168 pp. An evangelical work of a concise nature with a brief introduction looking at the importance, uniqueness, theme (King), purpose, relationship to the other gospels, author, date (A.D. 50-60), Jesus' teaching methods, relevance to today, etc. The commentary follows a clear outline, has apt comments usually, and is right to the point on problem verses. Robertson is only rarely unclear, as on mystery (ch. 13), third soil (13), etc. He interprets 24:40-41 to mean taken in deliverance and left to face judgment, yet sees chapters 24-25 overall in a premillennial, dispensational way.

@ Robinson, Haddon W., *What Jesus Said about Successful Living: Principles from the Sermon on the Mount for Today*, 1989. 298 pp. The author is an outstanding preacher, a former professor at Dallas Theological Seminary and president at Denver Conservative Baptist Theological Seminary and now a distinguished professor at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. The book is popularly written and devotionally enriching and is a resource for sermon preparation and life application. Like Don Carson, D. M. Lloyd-Jones, and John R. W. Stott, Robinson develops the meaning for today in graphic style.

% Robinson, Theodore H., *The Gospel of Matthew*, Moffatt New Testament Commentary, 1927. An exceedingly inadequate treatment.

\*\* 257 pages. Old-line liberal commentary. Date: after A.D. 70 (p. 198); denies Matthean authorship (p. xiii); denies the Virgin Birth, translates 1:16 according to Syriac: "Joseph the father of Jesus" (pp. 2-3). Matthew united the Sermon on the Mount into one passage (p. 26); the demoniac needs to be understood in light of the first century: "Men believed themselves to live in a world peopled by spiritual beings" (p. 76); swine dying was a coincidence (p. 77); "The miracle of the stilling of the storm may have been a complete change in the minds of the disciples rather than in the actual state of the weather" (p. 85).

^^ Ruckman, Peter, *The Bible Believer's Commentary on Matthew*, 1970, 2000, 906 pages. Strongly dispensational, premillennial and based on the Authorized Version, focusing on the establishment of the Kingdom of Heaven in the Millennium. A very useful and practical work. Ruckman makes it a continuing point to point out the errors of the modern English critical text translations. One of his better commentaries. Recommended. Don't expect any of the "mainline" commentary reviewers in the Scholar's Union to pay any attention to any of Ruckman's commentaries.

# Ryle, J. C., *Expository Thoughts on Matthew*, 1856. This is a four-volume set on the four Gospels. It is a very good commentary by a classic writer of the 1800s.

^^ Not really a full commentary but a collection of good and useful devotional thoughts as Ryle works his way through the text.

\*\* Saphir, Adolph, *The Lord's Prayer*, 1870, 428 pages. Devotional and inspirational messages on the Lord's Prayer. These fervent messages contain much more than an exposition of the text, but they do contain that. He gives a strongly premillennial exposition of "Thy Kingdom Come." A typical outline is "The Daily Gift": I. The Giver: Our Father in Heaven. II. The Gift: Bread. III. The Expansion of the Gift: Our bread. IV. The Limit of the Gift: Today. (p. 252).

@ Schnackenburg, Rudolf, *Matthew*, 1985 — 87, 2002. From a leading German NT scholar. This commentary can be consulted by students who want a more historically oriented and theological work from a Catholic and critical perspective. It is heavy on redaction criticism. I'd say this Eerdmans pb (329pp.) was not one of his stronger efforts. Schnackenburg is better known for his works on John's Gospel, Ephesians, and John's Epistles.

% Schweizer, Eduard, *The Good News According to Matthew*, 1975. Designed for preachers, teachers, and students, this thorough exposition includes matters of theological importance and frequently applies the principles of a passage to the contemporary scene. Uses the text of *Good News for Modern Man*.

@ Senior, Donald, *Matthew*, Abington New Testament Commentary, 1998. Though not often interacting with other scholarly positions — see the skimpy bibliography — Senior's work is among the best compact exegetical commentaries on this Gospel from the critical side. Cf. the Allison abridgement. The author, a recognized expert on Matthew, teaches at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago.

\*\* Simcox, Carroll E., *The First Gospel*, 1963 319 pages. Devotional and practical meditations from an Anglican background. He defends the Virgin Birth (pp. 8-9), the miracles (p. 87), reality of demons (p. 134); holds to the Anglican interpretation of Baptismal Regeneration (p. 311). Weak on the doctrine of inspiration (p. 144).

^^ Spurgeon, Charles Haddon. *The Gospel of the Kingdom*, 1893. The remarks are often too short and thin to be very useful. He also occasionally quotes from the highly defective Revised Version of 1881. He thought the abomination refers to "Roman ensigns, with their idolatrous emblems," at the destruction of Jerusalem in A. D. 70 (page 215). His work on Matthew is not to be mentioned in the same breath as his *Treasury of David*.

@ Talbert, Charles H., *Matthew*, Paideia Commentaries, 2010. "What is offered here is an attempt at a fresh reading of the First Gospel" (Preface), with a first-century reader-centered approach ("reading with the authorial audience"). The author is a respected Baylor academic, learned in his field; I think his essays are more valuable than some of his commentary work (over 320pp.). He usually brackets historical issues, but dates the Gospel a bit later (80 - 100). As Davids notes, there is nary a Greek letter or a transliterated word in the book

% Tasker, Randolph Vincent Greenwood, *The Gospel According to St Matthew* Tyndale Commentaries on the New Testament, 1961. Provides some interesting historical details which illumine the text but shows what happens when a conservative scholar is unduly influenced by higher critical theories.

\*\* 285 pages. Questions Matthean authorship "though it contains material which was originally recorded in Aramaic by the apostle Matthew" (p. 17). Defends the Virgin Birth (pp. 83ff); holds that Matthew assembled sayings uttered at various times into one discourse (p. 59) (Sermon on the Mount); Sermon on the Mount was written against a legalistic attitude; we can't keep it now (p. 60); Mat. 24:1-36 refers to A.D. 70 (pp. 226ff). On the whole, an inferior commentary. He is lavish in his praise of the New English Bible (pp. 278-285).

\*\* Tholuck, A., *Commentary on the Sermon on the Mount*, 1869, 451 pages. An exhaustive exposition of the Sermon on the Mount. Although he is conservative, he spends much time citing 19th- century liberals such as Bauer, De Wette, etc. He holds that the Sermon on the Mount is identical with the message in Lk. 6. He has a fine survey of the older literature on the Sermon on the Mount (pp. 41-49).

\* Thomas, David, *Genius of the Gospel. Homiletical Commentary*, 1873. We hardly know a more suggestive book.

% A homiletical and practical exposition which overlooks many difficulties in interpretation.

\*\* 576 pages. Homiletical and practical exposition, divides Matthew into preaching sections, gives outlines and exhortations for each in a Puritan style. It overlooks many difficulties, but is helpful for the preacher.

\*\* Thomas, William Henry Griffith, *Outline Studies in the Gospel of Matthew*, 1961, 476 pages. Homiletical and expository outlines, conservative and thought-provoking. This work lacks the unity of his other books, because it was compiled after his death from notes which he left. He gives a dispensational interpretation of Mat. 24-25.

% Toussaint, Stanley Dale, *Behold the King A Study of Matthew*, 1980. A work which expounds the theme of Matthew's Gospel with a thorough grounding in the exegesis of the text. Toussaint's exposition demonstrates that Jesus is indeed the Messiah, the King of Israel, and he describes the kingdom purpose in this portion of God's Word as no one else has yet done. Excellent.

!! Turner, David L., *Matthew*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, 2008. New Testament scholar and professor David L. Turner offers a substantive yet highly accessible commentary on Matthew in this latest addition to the BECNT series. With extensive research and thoughtful chapter-by-chapter exegesis, Turner leads readers through all aspects of the Gospel of Matthew--sociological, historical, and theological--to help them better understand and explain this key New Testament book. He also includes important insights into the Jewish background of this Gospel. As with all BECNT volumes, Matthew features the author's detailed interaction with the Greek text. This commentary admirably achieves the dual aims of the series--academic

sophistication with pastoral sensitivity and accessibility--making it a useful tool for students, professors, and pastors. The user-friendly design includes shaded-text chapter introductions summarizing the key themes of each thought unit.

\$\$ David Turner has been authoring articles on Matthew with some frequency for nearly two decades, and this excellent commentary shows the great benefit derived from decades of familiarity with primary and secondary literature.

Perhaps more so than most commentaries, the author's theological convictions are worth noting, as they reflect recent shifts in American Evangelicalism and on occasion come to bear on the commentary in important ways. Turner writes from the so-called 'progressive dispensational' perspective. Matthew was a favorite fount for older dispensationalism, and almost all of his interaction with previous dispensational interpreters challenges their previous exegetical tenants.<sup>274</sup> He cites and discards such dispensational staples as a 'future-only' interpretation of Matthew 24–25 and a strong conceptual distinction between kingdom of God and kingdom of heaven. He acknowledges that for Matthew the church consists of Jews and Gentiles (pp. 516–18) and takes the Sermon on the Mount as normative for Christian ethics rather than only for first-century Jews or for the post-rapture period. Turner rejects traditional dispensational approaches to Matthew 25:31–46 and appreciates the present reality of the kingdom along the lines of already/not yet eschatology (p. 43), though I am not aware of any amillennialists who 'tend to think of the kingdom as the present rule of Christ' more or less exclusive to a future component of that rule.

In this reviewer's opinion, the results of such a shift away from classic dispensationalism are salutary from an exegetical standpoint and greatly encouraging with respect to the future of evangelicalism. One hopes that such a volume can aid in moving Christian scholarship, congregations, and institutions beyond certain ecclesial and eschatological divides of previous generations (of course, we strongly disagree with this reviewer, whose name is Jason Hood).

The bibliography is not comprehensive (works omitted include published dissertations by J. Gibbs on the Eschatological Discourse and Themelios review editor Alistair I. Wilson on Matthew 21–25; both might contribute to a slightly different take on Matthew 24–25), discussions of the Greek text are not always full, and Turner generally avoids source criticism and synoptic dependence. Yet this is in the end perhaps a help rather than a hindrance to the use of the text, which is far more accessible than its companion in the BECNT on Luke and many other Matthew commentaries; Turner is content to abbreviate arguments or even simply cite contradictory studies without picking page-eating exegetical fights. This reviewer has not always enjoyed the BECNT layout, but it works well in this text. In many respects the utility of Turner's work and insights therein (especially for pastors and teachers) competes favorably with the best commentaries on Matthew. Graced with many nice quotes from other authors and Turner's own pleasant prose, this commentary will greatly aid those engaged in the construction of preaching outlines and assembling of exegetical insights. Finally, this marvelous commentary is also all but error-free.

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<sup>274</sup> His "progressive dispensationalism" is a vain attempt to repackage classical dispensational teachings to make them more palatable to non-dispensations. It is like "theistic evolution" and it simply does not work.

# Van Ryn, August, *Meditations in Matthew*, 1957. Ryn is a descendant of the renowned Dutch painter, Rembrandt van Rijn. This is not a verse-by-verse commentary, but it does unfold the book in a detailed subject manner.

\*\* 319 pages. Brief devotional thoughts from a strongly dispensational view. Some of his dispensational teaching comes from strange passages: the order of the historical events in Mat. 8 and 9 (pp. 57-60). Few expositors will agree that the holy family was "undoubtedly" living in Nazareth when the wise men came (p. 33). The thoughts are very warmhearted, but not always appropriate.

% Vos, Howard Frederick, *Matthew, A Study Guide Commentary*, 1979. A careful presentation. Ideal for discussion groups.

% Walvoord, John Flipse. *Matthew; Thy Kingdom Come*, 1974. In this book we have a modern, scholarly attempt to expound Matthew's Gospel thematically. While lacking a solid introduction this commentary deserves a place in the library of the expository Bible teacher and preacher.

# This book by a prominent writer is both expositional and devotional. He is dispensational but premillennial.

\* Ward, Richard, *Theological Questions, Dogmatical Observations, and Evangelical Essays upon the Gospel according to Matthew. Wherein about two thousand six hundred and fifty profitable Questions are discussed; and five hundred and eighty points of Doctrine noted, &c., &c.*, 1640. A huge mass of comments, in which are thousands of good things mostly set forth by way of question and answer. Few could ever read it through; but to a wise minister it would be a mine of wealth.

% Watson, Thomas,, *The Beatitudes An Exposition of Matthew 5:1-12*. A Puritan work originally published in 1660. Deeply devotional but fails to interpret this passage in the light of the writer's theme.

@ Wilkins, Michael J., *Matthew*, NIV Application Commentary, 2004. The largest vol. in the series (over 1000pp.) and built upon a strong exegetical foundation. Wilkins develops the theme of discipleship, upon which he has written a monograph. The author completed his PhD at Fuller Seminary, has done pastoral ministry at a Presbyterian church, and now teaches at Talbot Seminary. As a preacher's companion alongside the more exegetical works, Wilkins has a much fuller discussion (e.g. see the Beatitudes) than most preacher's commentaries, but Green may be just as good a value for the money. Both are worth buying.

\*\* Williams, A. Lukyn, and B. C. Caffin, *Matthew*, Volume 15 of *The Pulpit Commentary*, 1950. (Reprinted) 1246 pages. A massive quantity of homiletical material, some of it platitudinous, some genuinely helpful. They hold to the Matthean authorship (p. xii), the reality of the Virgin Birth (1:6) and the miracles (2:328-329); they give a Postmillennial view of the leaven (2:21), refer Mat. 24:15 solely to the destruction of Jerusalem (2:448).

\*\* Windisch. Hans, *The Meaning of the Sermon on the Mount*, 1951, 224 pages. Liberal view of the Sermon on the Mount; agrees and disagrees with Johannes Weiss, A. Schweitzer, Bultmann, etc.; holds that the Sermon on the Mount must be interpreted apart from Pauline views and therefore contradicts Rom. 7, 3, 8, etc.; salvation should come through keeping these commands. This at least was Matthew's view; he may decide to side with Paul! He believes that the Sermon on the Mount was not a theological unity; some sayings are not genuine, etc.

\*\* Zodhiates, Spiros, *The Pursuit of Happiness*, 1966, 681 pages. An exhaustive (and sometimes exhausting) exposition of the Beatitudes. He is conservative, knows the Greek very well, and sometimes gives excellent differentiation between Greek words (p. 58), but once in a while his imagination goes beyond what Scripture says (pp. 200-201). In any work of this length on so few verses there will be much repetition, digression, and illustration.