

Outline of the Book of Matthew

Introduction:

Matthew 1:1 sets forth the theme of this study, “*The book of the generation (birth) of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.*” The caption in the American Standard Version Bible reads, “The Gospel: according to Matthew.” The word gospel is equated to “good news.” Jesus represents good news because He came into the world to save sinners from the condemnation of sin (Matt. 1:21). The apostle Paul writes, “*Faithful in the saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief:*” (I Tim. 1:15). The apostle John writes, “*For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ*” (Jn. 1:17). Grace is identified in the New Testament as the forgiveness of sins (cf. Eph. 1:7; Rom. 5:1-2). Paul tells the Romans, “*being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:*” (Rom. 3:24). Man’s eternal existence in heaven is contingent upon whether or not forgiveness is obtained. Considering the magnitude of the subject of grace and forgiveness it is entirely appropriate that “accounts” of the life of the one responsible for such attainment be given utmost attention.

The Author:

The caption records Matthew as the individual giving the “account” of the gospel message. Matthew was a tax collector (“*publican*”) before his conversion (cf. Matt. 9:9). Matthew is referred to as “*Levi the son of Alphaeus*” at Mark 2:14. Interestingly, as an apostle of Jesus Christ, he is not mentioned again in the NT after the events of Pentecost (Acts 2). In fact, outside of the gospels his name is only mentioned at Acts 1:13.

Date of Matthew:

Other than Matthew making mention of the coming destruction of Jerusalem there is no other real evidences of time. History reveals Titus to march on Jerusalem at 70 AD. It appears that Matthew speaks prophetic words regarding this as an event to come in the future (cf. Matt. 24:2ff). If we consider that Jesus was crucified at approximately 35 AD we can safely say that the book of Matthew was written sometime between 35 and 70 AD.

Contents of Book

The book of Matthew records the rise of Christ to popularity, his death by crucifixion, his resurrection and glorification. Jesus arose to popularity among the Jews from the region of Galilee. Jesus maintained his popularity during the early, middle, and latter stages of the Lord’s short preaching time. Multitudes of people literally mangled upon one another for an opportunity to see or touch Jesus (see Lk. 5:1). The more signs the Lord performed the greater his following (cf. Jn. 2:23). Matthew depicts this rise to popularity in the midst of a great struggle against the Jewish councilmen (i.e., the chief priests, elders, Pharisees, and Sadducees). Jesus would never let any man or council stand in the way of a soul’s salvation. Matthew records the Lord’s public exposure of these Jewish unbelievers (cf. Matt. 5:20; 7:15ff; 16:11-12; 23:1-4, 33). The public exposure of the Jewish leaders’ error eventually would lead to the death of Christ upon the cross (see Matt. 15:12). Jesus knew that this would occur (cf. Matt. 26:61). The time was thereby short for Jesus. He spent his time teaching and exercising compassion upon the people so that they might believe (cf. Jn. 20:30). Jesus’ message was the “gospel of the kingdom” (Matt. 4:23). Matthew spends a considerable amount of time identifying what the kingdom of God is and who would have entrance into it. The book as a whole is a letter that depicts the victorious life of Christ over sin and death. Matthew is a book that encourages Christians today to walk and hope in Christ.

Chronology and Geography of Jesus:

- Jesus was born in Bethlehem Judea (Matt. 2:1).
- Joseph and Mary take Jesus to Egypt to escape the wrath of Herod (Matt. 2:13).
- Joseph and Mary come back to Judea after the death of Herod and are then instructed to flee to Nazareth of Galilee (Matt. 2:19-23).
- Jesus spends his first thirty years in Nazareth (Lk. 3:23) and then travels to the Jordan River to be baptized by John the baptizer (Matt. 3:13) near Bethany (cf. Jn 1:28).
- Due to John the baptizer being “*delivered up*” Jesus withdraws from the Jordan River to Galilee (Matt. 4:12). The Lord comes to Cana and performs His first miracle (Jn. 2:1ff).
- Jesus leaves Cana and travels southward to Nazareth. The Lord taught in the synagogue the gospel of the kingdom (cf. Lk. 4:16ff).
- Jesus travels from Nazareth to Capernaum (Matt. 4:13; Lk. 4:31). While around the Capernaum and Sea of Galilee area the Lord delivers the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5-7).
- Jesus travels to the country of the Gadarenes (Matt. 8:28).
- Jesus travels back across the Sea of Galilee to Capernaum (Matt. 9:1 – 13:53).
- Jesus travels to Nazareth (Matt. 13:54).
- Jesus leaves Nazareth for the desert after hearing of John’s death (Matt. 14:13-14).
- Jesus travels back to the Sea of Galilee and then to Gennesaret (Matt. 14:35-36).
- Jesus travels to Magadan (Matt. 15:39).
- Jesus travels North to Caesarea Philippi (Matt. 16:13).
- Jesus travels back to Galilee (Matt. 17:22).
- Jesus leaves Galilee and travels to Judea near the Jordan (Matt. 19:1).
- Jesus comes to Jericho (Matt. 20:29)
- Jesus travels to Jerusalem (Matt. 21:1)

Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of OT Prophecies:

Matthew records over sixty quotations from the OT (more than twice the amount found in the other gospel accounts). Some thereby refer to Matthew as the apostle of fulfillment. Matthew quotes from twelve different OT scriptures with the uniform formula, “*This happened to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet...*” Jesus was the fulfilled promise of God to Abraham and David regarding their seed blessing all nations (cf. Matt. 1:1, 21). Jesus came into the world at a time when the Mosaic system was being observed. The Lord taught perfect obedience to the Mosaic Law while teaching the gospel of the kingdom (Matt. 4:17, 23). Jesus was revealing truths that would soon override the Mosaic system (Matt. 5:17ff). Matthew presents Jesus as the fulfillment of the OT promises of salvation. Here are the prophecies to prove this:

- Genealogies prove Jesus to be the Christ (cf. Matt. 1:1-14).
- Jesus was born of a virgin (Matt. 1:23 / Isa. 7:14).
- Jesus was born of Bethlehem of Judea (Matt. 2:6 / Mic. 5:2).
- Was called out of Egypt (Matt. 2:15 / Hosea 11:1).
- Attempt to kill the Messiah at birth caused great mourning (Matt. 2:17-18 / Jer. 31:15).
- Jesus was called a Nazarene (Matt. 2:23 / Isa. 11:1).
- Jesus was to have His way prepared by “*the voice calling in the wilderness*” (i.e. John the baptizer) (Matt. 3:3 / Isa. 11:3).
- Jesus preaches the light of the gospel message to those in Galilee and so fulfills Isaiah’s prophecy at Isa. 9:1-2 (cf. Matt. 4:14-16).
- Luke 4:21 / Jesus fulfills the Isaiah 61:1ff passage (Jesus foretold as one who would preach the gospel, release man from the bondage of sin, and heal the sick).
- Jesus came to fulfill the law and prophets (Matt. 5:17).

- Jesus fulfills Isaiah 53:4 by taking the sickness of the world and healing them (cf. Matt. 8:17).
- Matthew revealed that John the Baptizer was also part of the fulfillment of OT prophecies that had to do with Jesus (cf. Matt. 11:10 / Malachi 3:1).
- Jesus fulfills Isaiah 42:1ff in that his law would be universal (i.e., benefit Jew and Gentile) (cf. Matt. 12:18-21).
- Jesus fulfills the prophecy of Psalms 78:2 in that he came to this world and communicated to the people in parables.
- Jesus fulfills the prophecy of Isaiah 67:11 and Zechariah 9:9 in that he rides as a meek king into the city of Jerusalem on a donkey (cf. Matt. 21:4-5).
- Jesus fulfills the scriptures by dying to provide the world with the opportunity to be forgiven of sins (cf. Isa. 53 and Jer. 31:31 and Matt. 26:54-56).
- The thirty pieces of silver that Jesus was sold for (Matthew states that a Jeremiah prophecy is here fulfilled; however, no such passage is found in Jeremiah / cf. Matt. 27:9-10).
- Gambling over the Lord's clothing (Psalms 22:18 / Matt. 27:35).
- Numbered as a transgressor (Isa. 53:12 / Matt. 27:38).

The Kingdom of God (Heaven) in Matthew:

The terms "*Kingdom of God*" and "*Kingdom of Heaven*" are used interchangeably throughout the book of Matthew to mean the same thing (cf. Matt. 19:23-24; Mk. 1:15 comp. to Matt. 3:17). Matthew refers to the Kingdom of God (heaven) more than any of the other gospel accounts (three times as much as is found in the book of Mark).

Jesus is king of God's Kingdom

The Old Testament prophets foretold of God establishing David's throne as an eternal kingdom (cf. II Sam. 7:12-13). The government of God's eternal kingdom would rest upon the shoulders of the "*Mighty God*" and it was to uphold "*justice and righteousness*" (cf. Isa. 9:6-7). Luke plainly tells us that Jesus is the son of David that was to reign as king on his father's throne (Lk. 1:30-33). The king of God's kingdom is further identified as Jesus by Zechariah's prophecy regarding the Lord being "*lowly and riding upon an ass*" (Zech. 9:9). Matthew 21:4-5 records the fulfillment of Zechariah's prophecy as Jesus makes his triumphal entry into Jerusalem. The multitude of witnesses in Jerusalem who saw the Lord on the donkey recognized these Old Testament prophecies and thereby shouted, "*Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest*" (Matt. 21:9). Furthermore, the prophet Daniel referred to the king of God's eternal kingdom as the "*son of man*" (Dan. 7:13-14). Jesus applied the phrase, "*Son of man*" to himself at Matthew 8:20 and 29 other times in the book of Matthew. Jesus indeed fulfilled all scriptures relating to the king reigning in God's kingdom. The Lord came into the world during the days of the Roman Empire and thus fulfilled even the time frame (Dan. 2:44; Lk. 3:1-2). The king of God's kingdom is Jesus (Col. 1:13).

The Establishment of the Kingdom of God

Matthew records the coming of the kingdom of God to be the primary message of Jesus (cf. Matt. 4:17). Jesus taught His disciples the importance of teaching about the kingdom of God too (Matt. 6:9; 10:7). Jesus spoke of the nearness of the kingdom when he said that many currently alive would see its establishment (Matt. 16:28; Mk. 9:1). The Old Testament prophets foretold of God's kingdom being established in the "*latter days*" (Isa. 2:2-3; Dan. 2:28). These "*latter days*" would be a time of Roman rule (Dan. 2:43-45; 11:38-40). The geographic location of Jerusalem is given as the kingdom's starting place (Isa. 2:2-3). God's law was to go forth from the city of Jerusalem when His kingdom was established (Isa. 2:2ff; Lk. 24:46-49). Furthermore, the word of God tells us that the kingdom would be established with great power (Mk. 9:1; Lk. 24:49).

When one turns to the New Testament we find the Roman Empire reigning supreme on the earth (Lk. 3:1-2; Acts 18:1-2). After Jesus was resurrected he appeared to the apostles and commanded them to tarry in the city of Jerusalem until they be clothed with power to preach “*repentance and remission of sins*” (Lk. 24:46-49). The day of Pentecost came fifty days after Jesus was crucified. The apostles were tarrying in the city of Jerusalem just as the Lord had instructed them to. Acts 2 records the miraculous power of the Holy Spirit coming upon the apostles just as Jesus had said it would. Peter stands before the multitude and preaches the first gospel sermon (the law going forth from Jerusalem) (see Acts 2:1-5, 21, 37-39). These events add up to the establishment of the kingdom of God on the day of Pentecost after the Lord’s crucifixion just as the prophets had foretold.

Identity (what is the kingdom)

To successfully trace the establishment of God’s kingdom to Acts 2 is to identify it as the church of Jesus Christ. The word “church” is first used at Acts 5:11 in relation to the baptized believers in the kingdom of God. Luke records at Acts 4:4, “*But many of them that heard the word believed: and the number of the men came to be about five thousand.*” Recall that at Acts 2:41 there were about “*three thousand.*” After the word church is used in relation to the kingdom of God at Acts 5:11 Luke writes, “*and believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women...*” (Acts 5:14). This growing number of believers, who had been called into God’s kingdom by the gospel message, are referred to as “*disciples*” at Acts 6:1. Further proof of the church and God’s kingdom being terms that are interchangeably used in the scriptures may be found at Matthew 16:16-18 and II Thessalonians 1:4-5. God’s kingdom will always exist. After the Lord comes to judge the world and take his saints to glory, the kingdom will be handed over to God and will continue for eternity (I Cor. 15:24ff).

The church is comprised of people, and always will be. Said people are prepared at all times through meditation, prayer, and spiritual interest (cf. Matt. 25:1ff). God has a wonderful heavenly place prepared for these prepared people (Matt. 21:33ff). God’s kingdom is different than all other kingdoms because it is spiritual in nature (Matt. 22:15-22; Jn. 18:36) and endless in its boundaries (Matt. 13:31). The kingdom of God continues its growth as the gospel changes the hearts of sinners (Matt. 13:33).

Who is in the kingdom?

Peter said that those who hear, believe, repent, and are baptized enter into the kingdom of God (Acts 2:38-42). Said people are forgiven of their sins through the blood of Jesus Christ (see Col. 1:20) and comprise a “*kingdom and priests*” (Rev. 5:9-10). Peter said that God “*calls*” men according to His “*promise*” into this kingdom (Acts 2:39). The apostle Paul said that God’s call comes through the gospel message (II Thess. 2:13-14). People are added to the kingdom of God as they answer the call of the gospel to change their sinful style of life and be baptized for the forgiveness of those sins (I Thess. 2:12).

The Peculiarity of the citizens of the Kingdom of God

The book of Matthew has much to say about the identity of the kingdom of God. Throughout the book, Matthew “*likens*” the kingdom to various associations. When Jesus preached the Sermon on the Mount he revealed God’s kingdom people to be poor in spirit (Matt. 5:3), persecuted for righteousness sake (Matt. 5:10ff.), and those who keep the commandments of God (Matt. 5:19-20; 7:21). The peculiarities of citizens of God’s kingdom continued to be revealed by Matthew as those interested in spiritual matters (i.e., the eternity of the soul) (Matt. 13:11-12) and able to distinguish between things spiritually healthy and unhealthy (Matt. 13:24-30, 36-43). Citizens of the kingdom of God view their future spiritual well being as the greatest treasure that one may obtain (Matt. 13:44). Church people realize that to trust in this world’s riches is to be an eternal failure (Mk. 10:24). These peculiar people see immeasurable value to God’s kingdom (Matt. 13:45-46) and so they humbly submit to all of God’s commands (Matt. 13:47ff; 18:1-4; 19:14-15). Kingdom people are different than those of the world in that they exercise mercy, compassion, patience, and kindness toward others (Matt. 18:23-

35). Church people understand duty and are thereby loyal and obedient to God (cf. Matt. 25:14ff). The citizen of God's kingdom is different than the world (i.e., sanctified) in that their interest, goals, language, actions, and direction of life are governed by the word of God. Are you a citizen in the kingdom of God (cf. Eph. 2:19ff)?

Matthew's teaching on Discipleship:

The word "*disciple*" occurs 73 times in the book of Matthew (far more than the other three accounts of the life of Christ). Matthew terms the disciples "*sons of God*" at 5:9 and 5:45 just as the apostle Paul does (cf. Rom. 8:19; Gal. 3:26; Phil. 2:15). Matthew, speaking by inspiration, demands a life of lawful or righteous living as delivered by Jesus (cf. Matt. 5:20, 48; 6:1, 33; 7:21; 12:50; 21:31).

Matthew conjoins a righteous disposition with self-denial (Matt. 10:38ff; 16:24-26), suffering of persecution (Matt. 5:10-12; 10:16-25; 24:9-13), humility (Matt. 18:1-6; 20:26f; 23:11ff), and being childlike in innocence and subjection to the heavenly Father as a child is to their parents (cf. Matt. 18:1-4). Disciples are made by the act of baptism (Matt. 28:18-20).

The Character of Jesus (Every act of Jesus defines the word due to the fact that He is God):

- Compassionate (Matt. 9:36; 14:14; 15:32; 20:31-34).
- Wise (Matt. 13:54)
- Angered (Mk. 3:5-6).
- Blunt at times (Matt. 12:34; 15:7, 12; 16:23; 17:17; 23:33)
- Teacher (Jn. 3:2).
- Warned of false teaching (Matt. 16:11-12)
- Astonished people with His distinctive and authoritative preaching (Matt. 7:28; 9:2-8; 13:54).
- Demanding (Matt. 10:34-37; 12:33)
- Sharply criticized those who saw his miracles and heard his words yet continued in unbelief (Matt. 11:20).
- His miracles caused people to be amazed (Matt. 12:23).
- Righteous indignation against hard hearts (cf. Mk. 3:5ff).
- Did not tolerate damnable doctrines and precepts of men (Matt. 15:1-9; 16:11-12).
- Jesus is the "Son of Man" (Dan. 7:13; Matt. 8:20; 16:13).
- Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God (Matt. 16:16).
- Pure and Holy (Matt. 17:1-2).
- Merciful (Matt. 14:30-31; 17:7, 14).
- Confrontational (Matt. 21:12-17)
- Jesus illustrated a spirit that had no fear or favor of men (cf. Matt. 16:13ff; 22:16ff; 22:29-30).

The Authority of Jesus

- Over the Devil (Matt. 4:10).
- Over sickness, diseases, demons, epileptic, and palsied (Matt. 4:24).
- Palsy (Matt. 8:5-10).
- Over Peter's mother-in-law's fever (Matt. 8:14-15)
- Demons (Matt. 8:16-17).
- Jesus exercises authority over the wind and sea (physical elements) (Matt. 8:23-27)
- Over demons and swine (Matt. 8:30-32).
- Over sin (Matt. 9:2-8).

- Over Matthew (Matt. 9:9)
- Over life and death (Matt. 9:23-25)
- Eyesight (Matt. 9:27-29)
- Over gravity and water (physical elements) (Matt. 14:24-25)
- Over fish of the sea (Matt. 17:27).
- Over a fig tree (Matt. 21:20).

A Struggle for the Souls of Men

As one studies the life of Christ a foe emerges from the shadows of humanity. The scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees, chief priests, and elders (i.e., the Jewish Sanhedrin Council) were opposed to the Lord from the beginning of his ministry and Jesus knew it (see Matt. 5:20). These men loved the praise of others and Jesus took this from them (cf. Matt. 21:15-16; Jn. 12:43). Like two modern day politicians who vie for the popular vote of humanity so Jesus and the Jewish council members seemed to be in such a race. The victor of this race would not receive a government office but rather the souls of men. Jesus said that the Pharisees and Jewish council members, “*compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves*” (Matt. 23:15).

The Lord’s Popularity

Jesus’ popularity was gained due to his exercising authority over the physical elements of the earth (Matt. 8:23-27; 14:24-25; 17:27; 21:20), sickness and disease (Matt. 4:24; 8:5ff; 9:27-29), the devil (Matt. 4:10), demons (Matt. 8:16-17), life and death (Matt. 9:23-25), and even sin (Matt. 9:2-8). These miraculous acts caused the multitudes to follow him from many regions around Palestine (cf. Matt. 4:24-25). When following the life of Christ one notes the fame (Matt. 9:26, 31) the Lord gained as he astonished the multitudes with his preaching and miracles (Matt. 9:33; 12:23; 22:33). As word of Jesus’ miracles and preaching went abroad people were motivated to travel great distances to hear and see him (Matt. 13:1ff). Every where the Lord went the multitudes followed him hoping to be healed, fed, and to hear him preach (Matt. 14:13-14). After the multitude witnessed Jesus’ miracles they proclaimed him deity; i.e., they longed for Messiah (Matt. 14:17-21 compared to Jn. 6:14). The multitudes continue to follow Jesus every where he goes (i.e., to Galilee / Matt. 15:29ff; to the mount of transfiguration / Matt. 17:14; Lk. 9:43; to Judea near the Jordan / Matt. 19:1 and up to his final entrance into Jerusalem).

When Jesus entered into the city of Jerusalem, during the last week of his life, the throngs of people publicly proclaim their faith in His deity saying, “*Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest...*” (Matt. 21:9). Even as far as two days before Jesus is killed on the cross his popularity remained intact (cf. Matt. 26:1-5). A sharp decline in the Lord’s popularity among the Jews occurs; however, from Matthew 26:5 and 26:47. Within a few hour time frame the multitudes’ hearts were turned from confessing his deity to demanding Jesus’ death. What happened? What caused a change of heart among the multitudes? The answer to this question appears to be found at Matthew 27:20, “*Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the multitudes that they should ask for Barabbas, and destroy Jesus.*” The powerful and persuasive speech of the Jews was contagiously accepted. Jesus was apprehended as a common criminal (Matt. 26:47ff). The Lord was then taken to Caiaphas for trial and further persuasion by the council. The high priests said to Jesus, “*I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou art the Christ, the Son of God*” (26:63). The silence of Jesus only annoyed Caiaphas. The high priest forces Jesus to speak in an attempt to incite the crowd to his level of anger and seems to have succeeded. Here is the true matter as to their arrest and gathering against Jesus this night. His claims to be the Christ prophesied of in the OT was unacceptable to the high priest, elders, and chief priests. The Lord’s miracles and good standing with the people displeased them (cf. Matt. 21:15). His stern rebukes against their wayward lives affronted them (Matt. 21:45-46). They were altogether offended by Jesus (cf. Matt. 15:12). The pride of the high priest and Sanhedrin council is depicted here. Those who disagreed with their manner of life, even if sinful, would not be tolerated. Like the prophets

of old who exposed the people's sins were killed even so would it be with the Christ (cf. I Kings 19:10; Amos 2:12; Isa. 30:10; Matt. 23:31; Acts 7:52; Rev. 18:24). The multitudes are now completely opposed to Jesus (Matt. 27:22ff).

The Powerful and Leavening Effects of the Pharisees' False Teaching (cf. Matt. 16:12-13)

One may ask how people's minds can change so quickly. The events of the final days of the life of Christ ought to teach us the danger of false teachers and the importance of exposing them. Jesus never tolerated the error of the Jews. The Lord thereby warns his disciples and the multitudes to "*beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees. Then understood they that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees*" (Matt. 16:11-12). The Pharisees saw Jesus as a challenge to their authority among the people. Their focus was to expose Jesus as one who opposed the Mosaic Law and falsely set himself forth as the Christ. The Jewish council members repeatedly challenge Jesus before the multitude in hopes of causing him to be rejected (Matt. 16:1; 19:3; 21:23; 22:25; 26:3). While the Pharisees tried to trip up Jesus the Lord continued to pointedly expose them as wicked husbandmen (Matt. 21:33ff) and hypocrites (Matt. 23 all). Interestingly, even the Pharisees marveled at the answers Jesus gave them to their deviant questions (cf. Matt. 22:22). Many today seem to want to protect false teachers rather than exposing not only their doctrines but their person. Let all see from the life of Christ the dangers involved in letting false teachers work go unchallenged. It took only a matter of hours for the multitudes faith to be overthrown by the Jewish council. There is today, as in the days of Christ, a struggle for the souls of men.

Outline of the Book of Matthew

- I. **Matthew records the Genealogy of Christ to prove Him to be the promised Messiah of the OT (1:1-17):**
 - A. "*The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham*" (1:1).
 1. The ancestry of Jesus Christ, the son of God, is first examined by Matthew. Jesus is the long awaited Messiah that would save man from the consequences of their sins.
 2. Though God had hinted at a savior as early as Genesis 3:15 a clear promise is not revealed until Genesis 12. Jesus would come from the seed of Abraham and bless all nations with the opportunity to receive the forgiveness of sins (cf. Gal. 3:8, 16).
 3. God's purpose to forgive man of sin has always been (cf. Eph. 1:3ff). Said promise was made to Abraham and latter to David (cf. II Sam. 7:12ff).
 - B. "*Abraham begat Isaac; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat Judah and his brethren; and Judah begat Perez and Zerah of Tamar; and Perez begat Hezron; and Hezron begat Ram; and Ram begat Amminadab; and Amminadab begat Nahshon; and Nahshon begat Salmon; and Salmon begat Boaz of Rahab; and Boaz begat Obed of Ruth; and Obed begat Jesse; and Jesse begat David the king*" (1:2-6).
 1. Fourteen generations of the ancestry of Jesus are given (i.e., from Abraham to David).
 2. Note that Jesus was of the tribe of Judah (cf. Heb. 7:14) of whom the promised Messiah was to come (cf. Gen. 49:10).
 - C. "*And David begat Solomon of her that had been the wife of Uriah; and Solomon begat Rehoboam; and Rehoboam begat Abijah; and Abijah begat Asa; and Asa begat Jehoshaphat; and Jehoshaphat begat Joram; and Joram begat Uzziah; and Uzziah begat Jotham; and Jotham begat Ahaz; and Ahaz begat Hezekiah, and Hezekiah begat Manasseh; and Manasseh begat Amon; and Amon begat Josiah; and Josiah begat Jechoniah and his brethren, at the time of the carrying away to Babylon*" (1:7-11).
 1. Once again there are fourteen generations given between David and the carrying away into Babylonian Captivity.

2. Note that three kings (generations) are omitted (i.e., those between Joram and Uziah [Ahaziah, Joash, Amaziah]). Matthew may have deleted these names due to their close relationship to Ahab and Jezebel.
- D. *“And after the carrying away to Babylon, Jechoniah begat Shealtiel; and Shealtiel begat Zerubbabel; and Zerubbabel begat Abiud; and Abiud begat Eliakim; and Eliakim begat Azor; and Azor begat Sadoc; and Sadoc begat Achim; and Achim begat Eliud; and Eliud begat Eleazar; and Eleazar begat Matthan; and Matthan begat Jacob; and Jacob begot Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ”* (1:12-16).
1. Jechoniah was the king at the time of Babylon’s invasion and taking away of the people of Judah.
 2. Note that Matthew changes the course of writing when it comes to the birth of Jesus. Rather than saying that Joseph and Mary *“begat”* Jesus He proclaims, *“of whom was born Jesus.”* This may be Matthew’s way of illustrating a miraculous birth.
 3. Jesus is called the *“Christ.”* The English / Greek equivalent of Messiah. Matthew brings his readers to an understanding of the fulfillment of prophecy regarding the Christ.
- E. *“So all the generations from Abraham unto David are fourteen generations; and from David unto the carrying away to Babylon fourteen generations; and from the carrying away to Babylon unto the Christ fourteen generations”* (1:17).
1. The generations from Abraham to Christ, as listed by Matthew, divide up into threes.
 2. There is no apparent meaning behind the three divisions other than it being a possible memory aid.

II. A Record of Jesus’ Birth (1:18-25):

- A. *“Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: when his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found with child of the Holy Spirit”* (1:18).
1. To be *“betrothed”* (*mnesteuo*) = “to woo, court, seek in marriage... to woo and win, espouse... to promise in marriage, betroth” (LS 516). Modern day engagements are very similar to the Bible day’s betrothals. Matthew makes it very clear that Mary and Joseph are not married at this point.
 2. Before Mary and Joseph were married *“she was found with child of the Holy Spirit.”* Luke tells us that Gabriel had announced the birth of Jesus to Mary while she was in Galilee (cf. Lk. 1:26-32). Mary was a bit confused as to how this would happen *“seeing I know not a man”* (Lk. 1:34). The answer Gabriel gives is recorded at Luke 1:35, *“The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee: wherefore also the holy thing which is begotten shall be called the Son of God.”* To *“overshadow”* (*episkiazo*) = “to throw a shadow upon, overshadow” (LS 300), “to shade, to overshadow, met. To overshadow, to shed influence upon” (Moulton 160). By the power of God (His miraculous influence) Mary conceived a child and thereby fulfilled prophecy as mentioned in Matthew 1:23.
- B. *“And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily”* (1:19).
1. Note that Joseph is regarded by Matthew as Mary’s *“husband”* even though they have not been officially married. Clearly OT betrothal was equated to being married. Joseph *“was minded to put her away privily.”* To *“put away”* (*apoluo*) = “to loose from, to set free from, release or relieve from... to dismiss... to divorce a wife” (LS 102) (see study # 1; MDR).
 2. According to Mosaic Law, an adulterous wife was doomed to death (Deut. 22:23-24). Joseph was *“righteous”* and thereby knowledgeable of said law yet he too did not wish to make a *“public example”* of her. Joseph cared about Mary. Though her sin would have been against him and God he chose not to follow through with the death penalty. Apparently he had the choice in the matter since the sin was against him.
- C. *“But when he thought on these things, behold, an 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: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit”* (1:20).

1. Here are the facts so far:
 - a. A woman named Mary was in Galilee when the angel Gabriel announced unto her that she would miraculously have a child that would take the throne of David as King of God's eternal kingdom (cf. Lk. 1:26ff).
 - b. Gabriel explains that the Holy Spirit would “overshadow” her and thereby she would miraculously conceive a most holy seed (Lk. 1:35).
 - c. Joseph finds out and concludes that Mary is an adulterous woman.
 - d. An angel appears to Joseph explaining the miraculous Holy Spirit pregnancy of Mary.
2. First, note that the angel refers to Joseph as, “*thou son of David.*” No doubt, this was stated not only as fact but also to bring to Joseph’s remembrance the prophecies regarding the origins of the Messiah.
3. Secondly, note that the angel refers to Mary as Joseph’s “*wife*” though they had not been officially married yet (more evidence that helps us conclude that the betrothal was equated to marriage in the OT days).
4. Thirdly, the angel explains to Joseph Mary’s innocence. She had not been guilty of adultery but rather the seed within was miraculously planted by the Holy Spirit and so she remained a virgin just as the prophets had foretold.
- D. “*And she shall bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name JESUS; for it is he that shall save his people from their sins*” (1:21).
 1. The angel instructs Joseph regarding the son within Mary’s womb. He will be a son and his name is to be Jesus (i.e., deliverer or savior).
 2. He shall be called “*Jesus*” because “*it is he that shall save his people from their sins*” (see study # 2; The Objective of Jesus).
 - a. The objective and scope of the King is clearly stated. Jesus will save people from the awful consequences of sin.
 - b. Interestingly, we find here the meaning of God’s promise to Abraham and David. All nations would be blessed through their seed (i.e., Jesus) in that they would have the opportunity to be set free from the bondage of sin and death.
- E. “*Now all this is come to pass, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel; which is, being interpreted, God with us*” (1:22-23).
 1. The angel now tells Joseph that Mary’s miraculous conception of a son that shall cause man to be forgiven of sins was foretold of happening by the prophet Isaiah. The angel then quotes from Isaiah 7:14 to clearly connect Isaiah’s prophecy with what was now taking place. Mary is pregnant with the Messiah, the longed for King. She remains a virgin and thereby Joseph should take her as his wife.
 2. Note that the angel reveals the deity of Christ to Joseph. Jesus is termed “*God with us*” by the angel and Isaiah. Indeed Jesus was God in the flesh (cf. Jn. 1:1ff; 20:28; I Jn. 5:20) (cf. also Isaiah 9:6-7) (see study # 3; The Deity of Christ).
- F. “*And Joseph arose from his sleep, and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took unto him his wife; and knew her not till she had brought forth a son: and he called his name Jesus*” (1:24-25).

Chapter 2

I. The Time, Place, and Identity of Jesus’ Beginnings (2:1-12):

- A. “*Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, Wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? For we saw his star in the east, and are come to worship him*” (2:1-2).

1. Matthew is careful to distinguish the birthplace of Jesus (i.e., Bethlehem of Judea) from the Bethlehem found in Zebulun (cf. Josh. 19:15). The importance of this is the fact that the prophet Micah had foretold of the Messiah's birth place being "*Bethlehem Ephrathah*" (the name for the city located approximately 6 miles south of Jerusalem) (cf. Micah 5:2).
 2. The time of Jesus' birth is given by Matthew as, "*in the days of Herod the king*" of Palestine. Josephus records the date of Herod's reign to be from ~ 42 BC to 4 BC. The ISBE gives 47 – 4 BC. Herod was recognized as king of the Jews from 37 to 4 BC. Herod is known in history for his ruthless behavior. Upon taking the reigns as King in Palestine he punished and murdered Pharisees, Sadducees and any others who challenged him. He was a man ruled by rage and jealousy (see study # 5; King Herod).
 3. Luke records Jesus' birth to be during the days of Caesar Augustus and Quirinius the governor of Syria (cf. Lk. 2:1-7). Justin Martyr records the dates of Quirinius as governor of Syria at 4 BC. We conclude then that Jesus must have been born around 4 BC during the days of the Roman Emperors that Daniel speaks of in Daniel 2:44-45. The Birth of Jesus thereby marked the nearness of the kingdom of God and the "*fullness of time*" (Gal. 4:4-5).
 4. Note that "*wise men*" (magi) were the first recorded to acknowledge the kingship of Jesus. Jesus was to be king of His eternal kingdom as was prophesied (cf. Isa. 6:5; Jer. 23:5-7; Jn. 12:36ff; 18:33-37) (see study # 4; Jesus is a King). Who were these "*wise men*?"
 - a. Herodotus considered the magi to be priests from Persia who specialized in astrology, interpretation of dreams, and magic. The Greek term *magoi* is only found three times in the NT. Once here, another at Acts 8:9-11, and lastly at Acts 13:6 (see notes in the ISBE v. 4, pp. 1084-1085).
 - b. No where do we find the Bible telling of **three** wise men. The Word of God does not tell us how many came to worship Jesus.
 - c. It seems that God in some miraculous astrological way revealed to these magi that Jesus was born and that He was to be a king.
- B. "*And when Herod the king heard it, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him*" (2:3).
1. Apparently Herod gains intelligence of the announcement that the king of the Jews has been born into the world. Herod was not of Palestine and gained the rule over Judea by means of Rome. A home born king spelled rivalry to Herod who was at the end of his days.
 2. Not only did this news trouble Herod but it too affected "*all Jerusalem.*" With the news of a challenger to Herod came fears on the part of the Jews. A challenger to Herod's throne meant more chaos and bloodshed.
- C. "*And gathering together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ should be born. And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judea: for thus it is written through the prophet, And thou Bethlehem, land of Judah, Art in no wise least among the princes of Judah: For out of thee shall come forth a governor, who shall be shepherd of my people Israel*" (2:4-6).
1. At I Chronicles 24:6 and II Chronicles 36:14 we find that David had divided the priests into 24 classes and appointed "*chief priests*" over each class. It is likely that the chief priests under consideration here are these same chiefs. The scribes were lawyers. Herod thereby appeals to the learned men of law for the answer to his question; "*where is the Christ to be born.*"
 2. The chief priests and scribes answer Herod by quoting from Micah 5:2. The Messiah (anointed one) was to come from Bethlehem Judea.
- D. "*Then Herod privily called the Wise men, and learned of them exactly what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search out exactly concerning the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word, that I also may come and worship him*" (2:7-8).
1. With a spirit of deception the wicked king Herod privately calls for the wise men who had claimed to have miraculous knowledge of the King of the Jews birth.

2. Recognizing that there were divine or magical means by which the wise men gained their information Herod sends them out that they may find the exact location of Jesus. Herod lies to the wise men stating that he desired to worship the baby king (see study # 5).
- E. *“And they, having heard the king, went their way; and lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. And when they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy”* (2:9-10).
1. The wise men obeyed the instructions of King Herod and sought out the child’s location. Miraculously, the original star that had instructed them of the birth of the King now guides them to the King’s location.
 2. Again, we are not told what type of star this was that guided them. It seems highly unlikely that a literal star is under discussion. How could a star guide the wise men directly to the house of Jesus? Stars are very large. There could be no clear identification of where Jesus really was due to the area the star would have covered. Somehow, however, a star did point to the place of Jesus and the wise men thereby found him. Let us remember that all things are possible with God.
- F. *“And they came into the house and saw the young child with Mary his mother; and they fell down and worshipped him; and opening their treasures they offered unto him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way”* (2:11-12).
1. Upon finding the young King the wise men worship him and offered gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh to Jesus (see study # 3). Frankincense was “an aromatic compound that gives forth its perfume in burning” (Unger 615). Myrrh is “a well known gum resin extracted from the Arabian *Balsamodendron Myrrha, Nees*. It was used as a perfume, for embalming, and as an ingredient of the holy anointing oil” (Unger 1335).
 2. After the wise men visit with Jesus they are instructed of God not to return to Herod and give him any information regarding the whereabouts of Jesus. The magi obey the command of God and return to their homeland.

II. Joseph and Mary are instructed to Flee to Egypt (2:13-15):

- A. *“Now when they were departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared 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 tell thee: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him”* (2:13).
1. After the wise men leave, an angel of the Lord appears to Joseph in a dream. The angel instructs Joseph to take Jesus and Mary to Egypt. Furthermore they are to remain in Egypt until instructed otherwise by the angel.
 2. The reason for the move was that Herod would seek to do harm to the child. Egypt would be out of Herod’s jurisdiction and thereby a safe refuge for Jesus (see study # 5).
- B. *“And he arose and took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt; and was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt did I call my son”* (2:14-15).
1. Joseph immediately obeys the command of the angel of the Lord. When night came, they appear to have secretly left Bethlehem for the safety of Egypt. Jesus would remain in Egypt with his parents until the death of the wicked King Herod.
 2. Matthew quotes from Hosea 11:1 to further prove that Jesus is the OT Messiah.
 3. To this point Matthew has painted a clear picture of Jesus fulfilling the Messianic prophecies:
 - a. Jesus was of the seed of Abraham and David (Matt. 1:1).
 - b. Jesus was born of a virgin (Matt. 1:23).
 - c. Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea (Matt. 2:6).
 - d. God would call His son out of Egypt (Matt. 2:16).

III. Herod commands the Great Slaughter of Innocent Babies (2:16-18):

- A. *“Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the Wise-men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the male children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the borders thereof, from*

two years old and under, according to the time which he had exactly learned of the Wise-men” (2:16).

1. The word “*mocked*” (*empaizo*) = “to play upon, deride, mock, treat with scorn and contumely... to allude, delude, deceive” (Moulton 135). The King of Palestine had not shown any previous tolerance toward those who were not in his favor and nothing changes in this instance. Herod felt that the wise-men had purposely deceived him. To save face, Herod does the unthinkable. In the king's anger he sends forth a decree that all male children in Bethlehem two years and younger are to be murdered. We are not told how many children this included yet from the OT verse quoted below it is apparent that there were many (one was too many) (see study # 5).
2. Herod's sweeping murder decree was intended to catch the baby Jesus and murder him before he had the chance to threaten the king's reign in Palestine. A very valid thought comes to our minds. With the great pain this must have caused in many homes it seems as though such an event would remain in the minds of the people for a long time. They understood that the king was trying to kill Jesus, the Messiah. When Jesus did come into the world He was for the most part rejected. It seems that the people would have remembered this event, looked to the Lord's miracles, and concluded that He was the longed for Messiah. Matthew tells us, however, that the reason these people failed was due to their blinded and hard hearts (cf. Matt. 13:14ff) (see study # 6; Why People Did not Accept Jesus as their King).

B. *“Then was fulfilled that which was spoken through Jeremiah the prophet, saying, A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children; and she would not be comforted, because they are not” (2:17-18).*

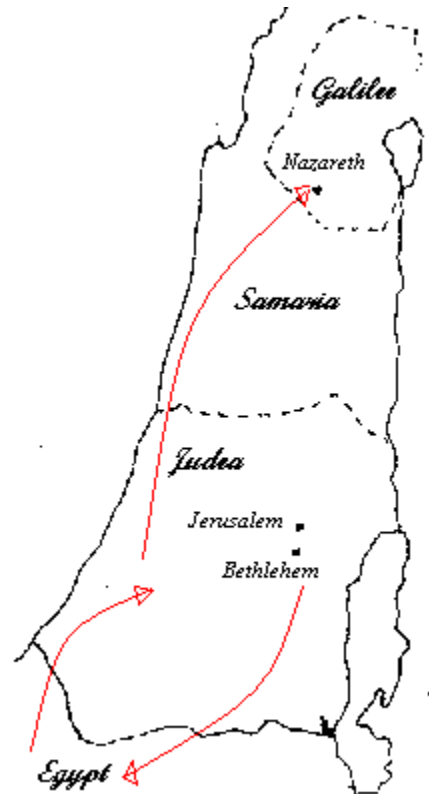
1. Here is another “*fulfilled*” statement by Matthew. The author is determined to prove that Jesus is the Messiah foretold of in the OT.
2. Jeremiah 31:15 is quoted from here. The prophet had in mind the exiled women who wailed and cried over the loss of their sons and husbands in the destruction of Jerusalem by the hands of the Babylonians. So deep was their sorrow that the wails could figuratively be heard from Rachael in her tomb. Likewise, the death of many Jewish babies caused great mourning that could once again be heard figuratively in the tomb of Rachael.

IV. **Jesus Returns to Nazareth with Joseph and Mary (2:19-23):**

A. *“But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, Arise and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead that sought the young child's life. And he arose and took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel” (2:19-21).*

1. Three times now, according to Matthew, an angel appears to Joseph in a dream. Joseph receives instructions to take Mary as his wife (1:20), leave Bethlehem for Egypt (2:13), and now the angel tells Joseph to return to the land of Israel. Note that on all three occasions Joseph was faithful and obedient to the angel's commands (see study # 7; Bible Inspiration / Dreams).
2. Herod the Great died near the date of Passover. The king was actually buried in the city of Bethlehem where he had caused the murdering of all the babies.

B. *“But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither; and being warned of God in a dream, he withdrew into the parts of*



Galilee, and came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through the prophets, that he should be called a Nazarene” (2:22-23).

1. Herod the Great’s son Archelaus took the throne of Palestine at the death of his father. Archelaus’ reign was likened unto his father’s. To begin with, Archelaus was responsible for killing three thousand Jews during the Passover so that he may suppress the crowds. The brutal king was to be divinely avoided. Once again, Joseph is instructed (warned of God in a dream) to leave Judea and travel to Nazareth.
2. Again, Matthew indicates that prophecy is “*fulfilled.*” It is difficult to determine just what “prophets” had said that Jesus should be called a “*Nazarene.*” Matthew may have had in mind the Lord’s humble beginnings from a city that was very insignificant in the eyes of the world. The name “*Nazareth*” means sprout or shoot and thereby it is generally conceded that Matthew had Isaiah’s Messianic prophecy in mind here when the prophet said, “*And there shall come forth a shoot out of the stock of Jesse, and a branch out of his roots shall bear fruit*” (Isa. 11:1) (see study # 8; The Identity of Jesus).

Chapter 3

I. John the Baptizer Prepares the way for Jesus (3:1-12):

- A. “*And in those days cometh John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying, Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*” (3:1-2).
 1. Tiberius Caesar Augustus was named Emperor of Rome September 17, AD 14. Fifteen years latter John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness (i.e., AD ~ 30) (cf. Lk. 3:1-2). We noted at Matthew 2:1 that Jesus was born at approximately 4 BC. Jesus would have thereby been about 33 years old. Twenty nine years go by in Christ’s life that Matthew skips as he goes from chapter 2 to chapter 3 (Luke records some of the events of the young Jesus’ life at Luke 2:40ff.). Luke tells us that Jesus was 30 years old when He began to preach (cf. Lk. 3:23). John had been publicly preaching for about 3 years before Christ began His ministry.
 2. John the Baptist:
 - a. Old Testament foretold of his coming to prepare the way for the Messiah (cf. Isa. 43:3ff; Mal. 3:1; 4:4-6).
 - b. John was the son of a priest named Zacharias. John’s mother was named Elizabeth (cf. Lk. 1:5).
 - c. John was filled with the Holy Spirit from the time he was in his mother’s womb (Lk. 1:15).
 - d. John’s objective was to turn a disobedient people back to God (Lk. 1:17).
 - e. John’s mission was to preach repentance, baptism, and the kingdom of heaven.
 - f. He was known as “*the baptizer*” (cf. Mk. 6:14, 24) because he went about baptizing people to prepare them for the Christ. John was the first one ordained of God to do the work of baptizing as far as I can tell.
 - g. To “*repent*” is to change the purpose of one’s mind due to convicting preaching. When one sees that a practice is not right we are to turn away from it and do it no more. We learn from the word of God what is sinful and not sinful and thereby repentance is contingent upon our knowledge of the word of God (cf. II Cor. 7:10).
 3. What is the “*kingdom of heaven?*”
 - a. Note that John preached repentance due to the fact that the “*kingdom of heaven was at hand.*” Said kingdom had apparently not yet been established, however, people were to get ready for its coming by repenting.
 - b. First, note that the “*kingdom of heaven*” and the “*kingdom of God*” are the same phrases (compare Matt. 19:23 with Mark 10:25; again, Matt. 11:11 with Lk. 7:28).

- c. The kingdom of heaven or kingdom of God is a reference name for the church (cf. Matt. 16:18-19; Heb. 12:23, 28; Col. 1:13-14; I Thess. 2:12) (see study # 9; The Kingdom of God).
- B. *“For this is he that was spoken of through Isaiah the prophet saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make ye ready the way of the Lord, Make his paths straight”* (3:3).
 - 1. Once again, Matthew is careful to mention a fulfillment in prophecy in regards to Jesus. Matthew quotes from Isaiah 11:3 to illustrate that Jesus was to have his way prepared by *“the voice of one crying in the wilderness”* (i.e. John the baptizer).
 - 2. Three years before Jesus began preaching John was preaching repentance and the kingdom of God and was baptizing people. When Christ came John’s message had prepared the people to hear Him. Note the association between the coming of Jesus and the coming of the kingdom of God (see study # 9).
- C. *“Now John himself had his raiment of camel’s hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his food was locusts and wild honey”* (3:4).
 - 1. To see John was to see one that would have the appearance of a mountain man type person. Some may have viewed him as a vagrant. John’s garments were comprised of cheap camel’s hair and a girdle of leather. His diet was locust (winged grasshopper insects which were deemed “clean” by the Mosaic Law cf. Lev. 11:22) and wild honey from bees.
 - 2. It seems that John’s dress and diet should have made it clear to his audience that Jesus’ kingdom had nothing to do with this world but was rather a spiritual kingdom. Here was a rugged man with a divine message designed to save men’s souls and that was it. Nothing about John’s life would have caused one to want to be like him unless one looked to spiritual matters (see study # 9 and # 10; John the Baptizer).
- D. *“Then went out unto him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about the Jordan; and they were baptized of him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins”* (3:5-6).
 - 1. John’s message of repentance, baptism, and the kingdom of God spread rapidly even though he only preached in the wilderness areas. Apparently his audiences would hear his message and go back to the cities and tell others. When those in Jerusalem, Judea, and all the region round about the Jordan gained knowledge of his preaching they were curious and went out to hear him. What they found was a rugged man telling them that they were in sin, they needed to repent and be baptized because God was about to establish His eternal kingdom with the Messiah as its king as the OT foretold (cf. Isa. 9:6ff; Dan. 2:44 etc.) (see study # 10).
 - 2. John’s baptism did not remove man’s sins as it would after the kingdom was established (cf. Acts 19:3-5). What John’s baptism did was to cause the people’s minds to desire God’s forgiveness through Christ and His kingdom.
- E. *“But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said unto them, Ye offspring of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?”* (3:7).
 - 1. Matthew introduces us, for the first time in his study, to the Pharisees and Sadducees. “Josephus stated that there were three schools at this time: the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Essenes” (ISBE v. 4, pp. 278).
 - a. The Pharisees: “A prominent religious party in Judaism during the late Second Temple period (ca. 100 BC to AD 70), the party most frequently mentioned in the NT... the name means ‘expound’ (‘the most accurate exegetes of the law’) or the ‘separate’” (ISBE v. 3, pp. 822). “A Jewish sect or party whose members voluntarily took upon themselves a strict regimen of laws pertaining to purity, Sabbath observance, prayer, and tithing” (ibid. pp. 822). The Pharisees had a great deal of influence in the communities they lived, however, they did not live as they preached; i.e., they were hypocrites (cf. Matt. 23) (see study # 11; The Pharisees).
 - b. The Sadducees: “The Sadducees were essentially aristocratic (i.e., a person of noble heritage and character)... they derived their power from their class, while the Pharisees derived theirs from learning... they denied the resurrection of the body, and did not believe

in any existence after death... and consequently denied future rewards or punishments in a life to come (cf. Mk. 12:18; Acts 4:12; 23:80). The consequent emphasis on life in this world was consistent with the Sadducees' concern with their position of power, status, and wealth, and it left no room for messianic hopes and a coming kingdom of God" (ISBE v. 4, pp. 279) (see study # 12; The Sadducees).

2. These two Jewish parties had obviously heard of John's work and sent representatives out to hear him. When John gets sight of them he proclaims, "*Ye offspring of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come.*" John knew that the Pharisees were hypocrites and the Sadducees cared only about the things of this world. Neither had a true spiritual care about the forgiveness of sins. Such a mind made them "*vipers*" (i.e., snakes whose bite was poisonous and deadly). Those who accepted their ways were snake bit. Like those in the wilderness who were bit with snakes because of their sin even so those who accepted the venomous doctrines of the Pharisees would die spiritually. The only remedy for such a snake bite was to be Christ (cf. Jn. 3:14-15). Note that John made a judgment based upon the evidences of their teaching and lack of faith and obedience (see study # 13; Making Judgments).
 3. John concludes that someone must have warned them of God's wrath against the ungodly or else they would not have been out there.
- F. "*Bring forth therefore fruit worthy of repentance: and think 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*" (3:8-9).
1. John makes it clear that all must repent of sins committed. It matters not what one's class or party is, to be in good standing with God one must repent no matter who you are. Said activity will take a spirit of humility (that which the Pharisees and Sadducees did not possess) (see study # 14; Bible Repentance).
 2. Before the Pharisees could pipe up and say that there was no need for repenting of any sins due to their ancestry of Abraham John squashes such erroneous thinking. This was a common misconception of the Jews (cf. John 8:31ff; Rom. 9:7). Paul proved that being of Abraham meant living obediently as he did so that he may attain God's promises (cf. Rom. 4:12) (see study # 15; The Connection between Grace and Obedience).
 3. Being a Jew was not the prerequisite of eternal salvation. John states that if God wanted to he could save the stones if they display a heart of repentance. The figurative language is clear. Whether Jew or Gentile, the prerequisite for the forgiveness of sins and hope of eternal life is "*fruits worthy of repentance.*" Said fruit includes humility (cf. Isa. 57:15; Psalms 51:1ff) and Godly sorrow over one's sin (II Cor. 7:9ff), and obedience (Jn. 3:36).
- G. "*And even now the axe lieth at the root of the trees: every tree therefore that brings not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire*" (3:10).
1. No matter the genealogy of the tree if it will not produce good fruit it is cut out of the orchard and removed.
 2. The individual who will not repent through godly sorrow over their sins is likened unto an unfruitful and worthless tree. They will be cut down and thrown into the fire (see study # 16; Pride verses Humility).
- H. "*I indeed baptize you in 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 in the Holy Spirit and in fire: whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly cleanse his threshing-floor; and he will gather his wheat into the garner, but the chaff he will burn up with unquenchable fire*" (3:11).
1. John's baptism illustrated that the individual had godly sorrow over their sin committed and was willing to turn away from that style and practice of life. John's baptism was "*unto repentance*" whereas Christ baptism will be "*unto the remission of sins*" (see study # 17; Baptism)
 2. Jesus' baptism (he that comes after John / cf. Jn. 1:27ff) will be "*in the Holy Spirit and in fire.*"

- a. Jesus' baptism had everything to do with the "*forgiveness of sins*" (cf. Jn. 1:29-34; Acts 2:38). Baptism in the Holy Spirit must thereby have something to do with the forgiveness of man's sins (see study # 17).
 - i. Note that Peter speaks of Holy Spirit Baptism as a "*gift*" from God (Acts 11:15-17). Secondly, note from this reading that baptism in the Holy Spirit and water baptism for the remission of sins cannot be the same thing (compare with Acts 10:44-48).
 - ii. Jesus told the apostles that they would be baptized in the Holy Spirit "*not many days hence*" (Acts 1:4-5). When they were baptized on Pentecost (cf. Acts 2:1ff) they received gifts of tongues (cf. Acts 2:4).
 - iii. Holy Spirit baptism thereby was for the purpose of giving miraculous gifts. Note that the "*certain disciples*," that Paul ran into at Acts 19:1-7, were immersed in the Holy Spirit after they were baptized for the remission of sins.
 - iv. Miraculous gifts served a two fold purpose: A. Gifts enabled men to speak the inspired word of God to the whole creation (cf. Hab. 2:14; Eph. 3:10-11). B. Gifts would confirm the word of God as being valid and true (cf. Mk. 16:20; Acts 1:8; Heb. 2:3). When the completed word of God was revealed there was no need for further gifts to introduce new revelation or confirm it (cf. II Pet. 1:3).
 - v. Acts 1:8 helps us see that HS baptism was for the purpose of receiving miraculous gifts.
- b. Baptism in fire clearly represents punishment for those unwilling to repent due to godly sorrow over sins.

II. Baptism of Jesus (3:13-17):

- A. "*Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to the Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John would have hindered him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? But Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it now: for this it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness. Then he suffereth him*" (3:13-15).
 - 1. Jesus had resided in Nazareth of Galilee to this point and was about 30 years old (cf. Lk. 3:23). The Lord now comes to John to be baptized and John replies that he is certainly not worthy to do so. John felt that it should be Jesus baptizing him. Clearly, John was aware that Jesus was the Messiah (cf. Jn. 1:33).
 - 2. Jesus insists on John doing the baptism to "*fulfill all righteousness.*" God had commanded baptism through John and thereby Jesus followed faithfully and obediently the command even though he had no sin (cf. Heb. 10:7)
- B. "*And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway from the water: and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming upon him; and lo, a voice out of the heavens, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*" (3:16-17).
 - 1. The apostle John gives a similar account of Jesus' baptism at John 1:32. Note that John's statement at John 1:33 reveals that John the baptizer would know Jesus when he saw the Holy Spirit descending upon Jesus.
 - 2. It seems to me that this event may have signified two things. First, the descending of the Holy Spirit upon Jesus may have served to establish in the minds of these witnesses the fact that Jesus was the Messiah and that His mission in this life was now to begin. Secondly, the coming upon Jesus of the Holy Spirit may have signified the point at which Jesus receive full knowledge or divine inspiration of the message he was to preach (see Numbers 11:26 – 12:6 on information regarding what takes place when the Spirit rest upon an individual).

Chapter 4

I. Jesus is tempted in the Wilderness (4:1-11):

- A. *“Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil”* (4:1).
1. At Mark 1:12 the word of God reads, *“And straightway the Spirit driveth him forth into the wilderness.”* These statements help us realize that it was the will of God for Jesus to be tempted of the devil. The author of Hebrews states, *“For we have not a high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but one that hath been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin”* (Heb. 4:15). No man can say that Jesus does not understand my temptation for He too went through such a trial. Yet one may say, “Why did the Holy Spirit have to lead Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted, will he not experience temptations in everyday life?”
 2. We are to be careful not to search for too much in this verse. The point is that Jesus was lead into the wilderness to undergo temptation like all humanity experiences. Jesus had a head on test with the devil and came through victorious. He now represents a battle tested example that we may follow during our temptations.
- B. *“And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he afterward hungered”* (4:2).
1. The fact that Jesus was hungry illustrates His humanity (see study # 18; The Humanity of Christ).
 2. The Old Testament reveals both Moses (Ex. 34:28) and Elijah (I Kg. 19:8) to have gone the same length of time with no food (Moses had no water either).
 3. Why did Jesus decide to fast for this amount of time at a critical moment such as this? Fasting, in its purest form, was performed for spiritual purposes. Jesus was clearly in fervent prayer and spiritual meditation during these days. The reading of Mark 1:13 and Luke 4:2 indicate that the devil’s temptation occurred during the forty days in the wilderness. Apparently, at the most weakened state, the devil makes an effort to seduce Jesus by deception and lies.
- C. *“And the tempter came and said unto him, if thou art the Son of God, command that these stones become bread”* (4:3).
1. Note that the devil is called the *“tempter”* (*peirazo*) = “to try or tempt a person, put him to the test” (LS 616) (see study # 19; The Devil).
 2. In what way was this challenge to Jesus a temptation? Jesus is the Son of God and He could certainly turn the stones to bread if he so desired. Jesus would not be toyed with by the lowest of creation (i.e., the devil). At times people try to get us to do things just so they can laugh at us. The issue seems to be their control over you. They know that it is possible for you to perform a task; however, they just want to see the task done at their command. Jesus knew that He was the Son of God and thereby needed to prove nothing to the devil. Neither did Jesus need to do anything the devil suggested.
- D. *“But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God”* (4:4).
1. Let us first note that Jesus met every temptation with *“it is written.”* Jesus’ existence was dependant upon the authority of God. His every action and word took into consideration the will of God the Father (cf. Luke 22:42) (see study # 20; How to deal with Temptation).
 2. Jesus quotes from Deuteronomy 8:3 to illustrate His supreme understanding that the true bread man needed for eternal survival was the bread from heaven. As one puts their faith in the promise of God a since of eternal security comforts and sustains.
 3. The Israelites were to learn to trust in God through His providing manna, quail and water in the desert wilderness. Jesus had the utmost trust in God the Father and thereby needed not to perform a miracle against the Father’s purpose. As Israel was proved even so Jesus was proved. The author of Hebrews states that Jesus learned obedience by the things in which He suffered (cf. Heb. 5:8).

4. Latter Jesus would teach that He represents the eternal soul sustaining manna from heaven (cf. Jn. 6:47-51).
- E. *“Then the devil takes him into the holy city; and he set him on the pinnacle of the temple and saith unto him, If thou art the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and, on their hands they shall bear thee up, Lest haply thou dash thy foot against a stone”* (4:5-6).
1. How Jesus and the Devil came to the *“holy city”* (i.e., Jerusalem) on the pinnacle of the temple is unknown.
 2. Again, the devil uses the weapon of doubt by saying, *“if thou art the Son of God...”* One may similarly say today, “if you are truly a Christian, let me see you withstand such and such circumstance...” Like the bully at school that demands that you prove all things so the devil uses said tactics (see study # 21; The Devises of the Devil). If I give in to such foolish proving then I have set myself in a situation where I may give in to the temptation I am being confronted with. One who would make such a request has no spiritual mind whatsoever. They know not that the Christian realizes that the moment one puts self into a sinful situation they have sinned. Let the Christian thereby *“flee”* all potential sin (cf. I Cor. 6:18).
 3. Note that the devil can use the scriptures too (see study # 21). Apparently the devil has knowledge of the written word of God. Jesus quotes the scriptures to the devil with the knowledge that the devil understood the source of the quote. The devil uses his knowledge of the scriptures to tempt Jesus. The devil twists the meaning of Psalms 91:11. Said Psalm teaches that there is eternal security in the one who trust in the Lord. If Jesus throws himself off the temple trusting in said Psalm He then puts God to the tests. This is not the intention of the Psalm and so Jesus makes the proper reply.
- F. *“Jesus said unto him, Again it is written, Thou shalt not make trial of the Lord thy God”* (4:7).
1. The apostle Peter wrote, *“but sanctify in your hearts Christ as Lord: being ready always to give answer to every man that asks you a reason concerning the hope that is in you, yet with meekness and fear”* (I Pet. 3:15). Jesus gave a ready answer to the devil in each tempting situation. Again, the Lord proclaims, *“it is written.”*
 2. Jesus quotes from Deut. 6:16 which is a reference to Exodus 17:7. The people of Israel, in a state of extreme thirst, proclaimed *“Is Jehovah among us or not?”* They knew God was with them due to the cloud by day and pillar fire by night guiding them along. They were thirsty and thereby were making demands upon God rather than trusting that He would care for them as He had done with the manna and quail. One today may look to the Lord’s statements regarding caring for our physical needs at Matthew 6:28 and conclude that no one should work at all. The true Christian will look rather to other passages such as II Thessalonians 3:10 where Paul states, *“If any will not work, neither let him eat.”*
 3. This part of Jesus’ temptation illustrates that quoting scripture out of context and twisting the meaning is sinful. Jesus takes the whole law into consideration. Today, one may say that Romans 10:9 says, *“if thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.”* Their intention may be to prove to you with the scriptures that it is alright to simply believe and confess Christ and all will be saved. While I may agree with this verse I must also consider other texts such as the Lord’s command to be baptized at Acts 2:38.
- G. *“Again, the devil taketh him unto an exceeding high mountain, and showeth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and he said unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me”* (4:8-9).
1. Again, in some unrecorded way the devil took Jesus to an unspecified *“high mountain”* and showed the Lord all the kingdoms of the world with their glory.
 2. To renounce God and worship the devil would be to glorify Satan. It seems clear that the devil’s temptation is that if Jesus would forgo the cross he would give him an earthly kingdom with great power in the world. To receive the kingdom under Jehovah God would mean

suffering death on the cross. Satan's promise is a kingdom with no suffering. What would be the Lord's answer?

- H. *"Then said Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve"* (10:10).
1. Finally, Jesus commands the devil to get lost. The three English words, "*get thee hence*" are one word in Greek (*hupago*) = "to draw off or retire slowly... on with you" (LS 830). Moulton defines the word as "to go away, depart... get behind me, away, be gone" (413). The devil's efforts are useless.
 2. The Lord turns once again to the authority of the scriptures as He quotes from Deuteronomy 6:13. There is only one God to worship. No amount of treasures or worldly renown should be able to pull us away from the everlasting heavenly Father.
- I. *"Then the devil leaveth him; and behold, angels came and ministered unto him"* (4:11).
1. The devil obeyed the command of Jesus. The Lord basically tells the devil to get out of his face or get lost and the devil did so. We carefully note that Luke records, "*And when the devil had completed every temptation, he departed from him for a season*" (Lk. 4:13). Though we are promised that if we resist the devil he will flee (James 4:7) we are not forever rid of our ancient foe. He will find favorable seasons to attack us again and again.
 2. As Elijah was ministered to in the desert place with food and water it is very likely that the angels served the Lord (cf. I Kg. 19:1ff).
 3. Having gone through temptations in this life Jesus is not only made a qualified High priests (cf. Heb. 4:15) but also one who understand what we go through and is able to give help through His word (cf. Heb. 2:18).

II. **Jesus Retires to Galilee (4:12-17):**

- A. *"Now when he heard that John was delivered up, he withdrew into Galilee;"* (4:12).
1. For a full account of why John was imprisoned and what happened please see notes at Matthew 14:1-12.
 2. Matthew skips many events going from the temptation of Jesus to John's imprisonment and Jesus retiring to Galilee. We will discuss this at Matthew 4:23ff.
- B. *"and leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the borders of Zebulun and Naphtali: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through Isaiah the prophet, saying, The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, Toward the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles, The people that sat in darkness saw a great light, and to them that sat in the region and shadow of death, to them did light spring up"* (4:13-16).
1. Here is the eighth fulfillment passage of Matthew that he may show Jesus to be the Christ, the Son of the Living God.
 2. Matthew quotes from Isaiah 9:1-2 to illustrate that those in the region of Galilee (the land of Zebulun and Naphtali) would see a great light. As yet, these people lay in the darkness of ignorance. The light that would give them hope is the gospel of the kingdom that Jesus preached. So Jesus fulfilled another OT prophecy.
- C. *"From that time began Jesus to preach, and to say, Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand"* (4:17).
1. Jesus preached a message of repentance and the coming of God's kingdom just as John the baptizer (cf. Matt. 3:1-2). Note that Mark calls the Lord's preaching of repentance and the kingdom of God the "*gospel*" (cf. Mk. 1:14-15).
 2. Jesus said that the kingdom of God (i.e., church / cf. notes at Matt. 3:1-2) was "*at hand*" (*eggizo*) = "to approach, draw near... to be at hand" (Moulton 111). So close was the kingdom to being established that Jesus said some standing before Him would live to see its establishment (cf. Mk. 9:1) (see study # 9).

III. **Jesus calls four Disciples to Follow Him (4:18-22):**

- A. *"And walking by the sea of Galilee, he saw two brethren, Simon who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishers. And he saith unto them, Come ye after*

me, and I will make you fishers of men. And they straightway left the nets, and followed him. And going on from thence he saw two other brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them. And straightway left the boat and their father, and followed him” (4:18-22).

1. There are some apparent events that Matthew skips over in his gospel account of the life of Christ. John’s account tells us that Jesus met John, Andrew, Simon (who Jesus called Cephas or Peter), Philip, and Nathanael shortly after his baptism by John the baptizer. Jesus was therefore still in the region of Bethany and the Jordan River where John had been baptizing people (cf. Jn. 1:28, 35ff).
 - a. When Jesus leaves the region of the Jordan he travels northward to Galilee with his five disciples. All are invited to a wedding feast in Cana and there the Lord performs his first recorded miracle (i.e., turning water into wine / cf. Jn. 2:1ff). After the Cana incident, Jesus travels to Nazareth and then to Capernaum where we pick up with Matthew’s account.
 - b. Luke reveals even more details. Matthew tells us nothing of the events taking place while in Nazareth; i.e., before coming to Capernaum but Luke does. Luke records that Jesus entered into the synagogue on the Sabbath day and “*stood up to read*” (cf. Lk. 4:16ff). This event somewhat surprises us because it is a “*fulfillment*” passage yet Matthew does not record it (cf. Lk. 4:21). The Jews apprehended him and attempted to kill him, however, he slipped away.
 - c. Luke also records events that transpire in Capernaum before the disciples are called that Matthew does not. Jesus taught on the Sabbath day and cast an unclean demon spirit out of a man (cf. Lk. 4:31-37).
 - d. Jesus heals Simon’s wife’s mother from a high fever (Lk. 4:38-39).
 - e. Jesus heals a multitude of people in Capernaum and cast out many demons (cf. Lk. 4:40-41).
 - f. Multitudes pressed upon the Lord to see and hear him preach the gospel of the kingdom (cf. Lk. 4:42-43).
 - g. Luke now gives the account of Jesus calling Andrew, Simon, John, and James (Lk. 5:1-11). The fisherman had not caught any fish all day and Jesus commands them to go to the deep waters and cast their nets. They do so and catch a multitude of fish.
2. No longer would these men be fishers of fish but of man’s soul (i.e., fishers of men).

IV. Jesus performs miracles and gains a great Following (4:23-25):

- A. “*And Jesus went about in all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of disease and all manner of sickness among the people. And the report of him went forth into all Syria: and they brought unto him all that were sick, holden with divers diseases and torments, possessed with demons, and epileptic, and palsied; and he healed them*” (4:23-24).
 1. Jesus performed miracles for three reasons (see study # 48): first, he had compassion on the people (cf. Matt. 14:14). The second reason Jesus performs miracles was to amaze or cause men to marvel and wonder so that he may gain an audience to preach to (cf. Acts 2:22). Thirdly, the miracles confirmed His message as having a divine origin (Mk. 16:20; Jn. 20:30-31).
 2. People began hearing of Jesus all over the region and they came to hear and be healed.
- B. “*And there followed him great multitudes from Galilee and Decapolis and Jerusalem and Judea and from beyond the Jordan*” (4:25).
 1. Word of Jesus’ authoritative preaching and miracles spread quickly.
 2. This study shall bear out that unfortunately many were more interested in a show than receiving the forgiveness of their sins.

Chapter 5

The Sermon on the Mount

Prelude to Study:

The Sermon on the Mount is the gospel of the Kingdom, the church of Jesus Christ to come (Matt. 4:23). Its principles are timeless. The sermon primarily, and successfully, portrays the supreme value of the soul. Secondly, Jesus gives principles that regulate the hearts of men and divine principles that govern our conduct. Lastly, the sermon expresses the all sufficient authority and deity of Jesus. Moses recorded at Leviticus 11:44, “*For I am Jehovah your God: sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy; for I am holy.*” The Law revealed a way to *be holy* before Jehovah God to the ancients through the process of ceremonial cleaning. The prophet Jeremiah foretold of a day when the laws of God would be written on the hearts of man and forgiveness of sins obtained through Christ (Jer. 31:31ff comp. to Heb. 8:6ff). The perfect and holy man of God, in the NT days, would be one who had the laws of God written on his heart, that is, individuals whose inner man was governed by the revelation of Jesus Christ (Acts 3:22ff).

The Sermon on the Mount marks the beginning of instructions given to man that would eventually enable him to have complete fellowship with God. Jesus said, “*think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets: I came not to destroy but to fulfill*” (Matt. 5:17). God’s expectations of man’s perfection had not changed at the time Jesus delivered this sermon and even now. Jesus reveals in the Sermon on the Mount that God continues to demand perfection. Jesus said, “*Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect*” (Matt. 5:48).

Man’s Thoughts can Condemn Him

The Sermon on the Mount takes into consideration man’s activities and thoughts. The prophet Jeremiah said that “*it is not in a man that walks to direct his steps*” in relation to spiritual matters (cf. Jer. 10:23). Jesus preaches the “*gospel of the kingdom*” (Matt. 4:23) in this sermon and reveals a standard by which man is to walk. One has aptly said, “The greatest of all sins is to be conscious of none.” When we complete a study of the Sermon on the Mount, we are left feeling exposed and bare. We see our shortcoming ever so clearly. The intense sting of guilt is ever enlightening and causes us great fear. Jesus reveals that the emotion of anger, the look of lust, the spoken word of swearing, the thought of revenge and hatred toward enemies are all sinful. Who among us has not been guilty of such thoughts of sin? We are all condemned in this Sermon, and this is why we are left with guilt, yet not without hope, at its conclusion.

The heart of man is what Jesus is after in the Sermon on the Mount. The Psalmists said, “*Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life*” (Prov. 4:23). Jesus teaches that the thought of sin is just as wrong as the action itself. The heart of man must be trained, and this is the task of Jesus and later the inspired apostles. When man’s heart is right with God, his service will be more than mere mechanical movements (cf. Malachi 1:6-14). Man’s good deeds of giving, praying, and fasting will be more than mere signs to be seen of men (Cf. Matt. 6:1ff). The conduct of man will have purpose, “*laying up for yourselves treasures in heaven*” (Matt. 6:20) (See study # 22; Learning to be Just).

The Deity of Christ Revealed

Jesus delivers a powerful sermon that not only defines man’s conduct but also defines His deity and authority. Six times in the sermon Jesus states the Law of Moses on a particular issue and follows it with, “*but I say.*” “Who but God could speak thus: with words of such absolute authority, such sublime insight into man’s failures and needs, and the consciousness of the perfection of heaven?” (Foster 485). The multitudes that heard this sermon were astonished and concluded that Jesus’ preaching was done with great authority (Matt. 7:28-29).

A Contrast between Those of the World and Those of Christ

Those who would be of Christ are depicted in the beatitudes (Matt. 5:3-10) (i.e., be poor in spirit, mourn over sin, meek, hunger and thirst for righteousness, be merciful, be pure in heart, be peacemakers, and be persecuted for righteousness' sake). Those of the world care for the things of this world. Their motivation is immediate gain. Jesus singles out the scribes and Pharisees and exposes their worldly interest (cf. Matt. 5:20). The scribes and Pharisees were interested in doing their "*righteousness before men to be seen of them*" (Matt. 6:1). These men reveled in the attention they received from others when they gave to the poor, prayed, and fasted. Jesus tells all that do such things that, "*They have received their reward*" (Matt. 6:5). The Christian, on the other hand, looks not to the treasures of this life but rather to the treasures in heaven (Matt. 6:20) (see study # 23; A Worldly Mindset).

A Standard is in Place Whereby Man is to be Judged

Let not the Christian judge others by his own opinions, but rather judge righteous judgments (cf. Matt. 7:1ff; Jn. 7:24). The truth belongs to those who humbly seek after an eternity with God as opposed to those whose care is only for this world (Matt. 7:6). Truth seekers will "*seek, ask, and knock*" in diligent effort to walk the straight and narrow path revealed in God's word (Matt. 7:7-14) (see study # 24; A Passion for Heaven). Knowing that truth alone saves, we are to "*beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves*" (Matt. 7:15). Jesus explains to the multitudes that said individuals will always be known by the fruit or teaching they represent.

The standard of God's word determines whether one produces good or evil fruit. Many today are walking in ignorance, and some teach and receive erring doctrines from pure motives; however, when the standard of revealed truth is not upheld, all shall fall into condemnation (Matt. 7:21-23). The standard is the rock foundation of Christ's teachings (cf. Matt. 7:24ff; Eph. 2:20). All who neglect by design or in ignorance shall lose their soul into eternity (see study # 25; The Standard of Truth).

The Greatest Sermon Ever Delivered?

Jesus gives man the information needed to live a model spiritual life. The Lord prescribes specific instructions regarding man's character (Matt. 5:1-10), thinking (Matt. 5:17-48), acting (Matt. 6:1-17), goals (Matt. 6:19-24), approach to life (Matt. 6:25-34), efforts in spiritual living (Matt. 7:1-12), and respecting the standard of truth (Matt. 7:15-29). Rather than viewing the Sermon on the Mount as the greatest sermon ever delivered, the Christian today ought to view it as a lesson designed to lay the foundation of faith for the future disciples. Later, the apostles would continue to teach by the authority of Jesus Christ and all those who gave heed did well (cf. II Jn. 9ff).

I. The Beatitudes (5:1-12):

- A. "*And seeing the multitudes, he went up into the mountain: and when he had sat down, his disciples came unto him: and he opened his mouth and taught them saying,*" (5:1-2).
 1. The people were pressing upon the Lord trying to touch him and learn more of him.
 2. Jesus takes the opportunity to preach the gospel of the kingdom to the people. He arose to a higher point on an unspecified mountain and sits down that he may preach to the people. There must have been a quiet of the multitudes as Jesus began to speak to them.
- B. "*Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven*" (5:3).
 1. The "*blessed*" statements are often termed beatitudes meaning happy. Jesus states happy is the man or woman who is "*poor*" in spirit. The literal word "*poor*" (*ptochos*) = "One who crouches or cringes, a beggar" (LS 709)... "reduced to beggary, mendicant (beggar); poor, indigent" (Moulton 356). The man reduced to begging is in dire need. Without the help of others he or she may not survive. Those who are beggars spiritually are those whose character (i.e., their spirit / cf. Eph. 2:2; I Jn. 4:1ff) is one determined to receive the forgiveness of their sins... they are brought low by their sin and desperately beg God for forgiveness (cf. Psalms 51:17; Isa. 57:15) (see study # 24 and # 26; Humility).

2. Those who beg God for the forgiveness of sins are assured “*the kingdom of heaven.*” While we have earlier taken note that the kingdom of heaven is often used to describe the church (cf. comments at Matthew 3:2) we see too that it is a reference to the eternal heavenly abode. The true church is comprised of the saved so that the future kingdom of heaven and true church of Christ seem to overlap each other (The church on earth is the future kingdom of heaven) (see study # 9).
- C. “*Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted*” (5:5).
1. The sadness here cannot possibly be sorrow over lost loved ones (cf. I Thess. 4:13). We could possibly say that the sorrow is due to persecution; however, the Lord deals with that specifically at Matthew 5:10. The only real sorrow that could be under consideration is the sorrow we have over our sinful state that moves us to repent and asks the Lord to forgive us (cf. II Cor. 7:8-10) (see study # 24).
 2. When man is moved by sorrow to repent of sins the Lord promises “*comfort*” (cf. I Thess. 4:18). We are confident that our sins are removed when we beg the Lord’s forgiveness because the Lord has so promised (cf. I Jn. 1:9-2:2).
- D. “*Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth*” (5:5).
1. The “*meek*” (*praus*) = “meek, gentle, kind, forgiving” (Moulton 340). “Mild, soft, gentle, meek” (LS 666). “Showing patience and humility; gentle” (AHD 782). Both Jesus (cf. Matt. 11:29) and Moses (cf. Numb. 12:3) are said to be meek. The thought seems to be that one who is meek knows his or her place. They know that they are sinners, they beg God to forgive them, they have deep sorrow over their sins, and they are thereby humbled by the human experience of sin. Such a one is thereby meek in the sense that he or she is brought low by their sin. They realize that all sin and thereby have a gentle and kind disposition toward others found to be in sin. Humanity has a common plight and that is that we sin (Rom. 3:23). The meek have a proper disposition or spirit in this experience.
 2. How shall the meek “*inherit the earth?*” The Jehovah’s Witnesses have published an article titled, “The Meek Shall Inherit the Earth: How?” through the Watchtower dated October 1, 2004. The article sets out to prove that the earth will remain for ever and those who are faithful to God will inherit it (thoughts based upon passages like Matt. 5:5). The New Testament teaches that the current earth; however, will be destroyed with great heat and a new established (cf. II Pet. 3:7, 12; Rev. 21:1). The inheritance of the saints thereby has nothing to do with this current earth but rather the earth to come (i.e., the new Jerusalem or heaven) (cf. Gal. 3:28-29; Heb. 9:15).
- E. “*Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled*” (5:6).
1. Without food and water man is weakened and may eventually die. Man naturally has a hunger and thirst for food and water that they may continue in existence. The man or woman who has the same need for “*righteousness*” will be greatly happy. The word “*righteousness*” (*dikaiousune*) = “right, lawful, just” (LS 202)... “just, upright, innocent, pious” (Moulton 102). That which determines justice is the word of God. Those who hunger and thirst for the word of God and place those teachings into application are truly happy.
 2. Righteous happy people “*shall be filled.*” Paul prayed that the Ephesians would be “*filled unto all the fullness of God*” (Eph. 3:19). We are commanded to be filled with God’s word (cf. Phil. 1:11; Col. 1:9). Those who seek God’s word will not only find it but too be filled with its instructions.
- F. “*Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy*” (5:7).
1. The “*merciful*” (*eleemon*) = “compassionate” (LS 249). The NT reveals Jesus to be a man of compassion (cf. Matt. 9:36; 14:14).
 2. Those who show compassion for their fellow man in this life shall obtain such mercy from their heavenly Father. As we try to aid those in spiritual and physical need so God will aid the merciful in their hour of need. A great attribute of God is mercy and so we ought to be (cf. Lk. 6:36).

- G. *“Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God”* (5:8).
1. The Bible heart is our thinking and reasoning abilities. Jesus proclaims that the happy ones are those who have “*pure*” thinking and reasoning abilities. To be “*pure*” (*katharos*) = “clean, pure, unsoiled... void of evil” (Moulton 206). The word of God draws the line between clean and unclean thinking by distinguishing between good (clean) and evil (un-clean) (cf. Col. 2:8). Jesus clearly puts great emphasis upon the inward man’s thinking due to the fact that one’s outward actions are the results of their inward thoughts.
 2. To see God is to obtain the ultimate achievement in life; i.e., a heavenly home (cf. Rev. 22:4).
- H. *“Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called sons of God”* (5:9).
1. A “*peacemaker*” (*eirenopoios*) = “peaceful, peaceable” (LS 230). “Freedom from quarrels and disagreement; harmonious relations... promoting calm... undisturbed by strife, turmoil, or disagreement; tranquil” (AHD 912).
 2. Consider the following character traits revealed in the Bible:
 - a. God is a God of peace (cf. I Cor. 14:33; Phil. 4:9).
 - b. Christ is the prince of peace (Isa. 9:6).
 - c. The Holy Spirit delivered a message (i.e., the gospel) of peace (Eph. 6:15).
 - d. Christians are to be peaceable (Romans 12:18; Heb. 12:14).
 3. The Christian is to seek peace with all but not at the cost of their souls or the souls of others:
 - a. We generally tolerate other’s opinions that do not affect the soul (cf. I Cor. 8; Rom. 14).
 - b. When the doctrine of Christ is affronted our first response is patience, forbearance, and longsuffering (cf. I Thess. 5:13-14).
 - c. There may come times; however, that vigorous contending is necessary to maintain the purity of the doctrine of Christ (cf. Jude 3).
 4. Those who are peace seekers shall be called “*sons of God*.” God loves the one who seeks peace (cf. I Jn. 3:1). The “*sons of God*” are those who exercise faith in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:26).
- I. *“Blessed are they that have been persecuted for righteousness’ sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye when men shall reproach you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets that were before you”* (5:10-12).
1. To be “*persecuted*” (*dioko*) = “to pursue a person, to chase, hunt... seek after... bring an action against a man” (LS 207)... “to pursue with malignity, persecute” (Moulton 104). “To oppress or harass with ill-treatment” (AHD 925). Those who are upright in conduct and heart are often ill-treated or harassed by those of the world (cf. Heb. 10:32ff). Paul tells us that it is the lot for all who would live by the standard of God’s word (cf. II Tim. 3:12). To the Philippians Paul said such treatment was “*granted*” (Phil. 1:29) and to the Thessalonians he said Christians are so “*appointed*” (I Thess. 3:3).
 2. The prophets were ill treated (cf. Jer. 20:1-2; 37:15; 38:1-6; Ezek. 2:5-6), apostles (I Cor. 4:10-13), and Jesus (I Pet. 2:23) were all ill-treated.
 - a. Jesus was called names (Samaritan, had a devil, was a mad man cf. Jn. 8:48; 10:20).
 - b. Paul was called names (i.e., deranged [II Cor. 5:13], a coward [II Cor. 10:1, 10], and an idiot [II Cor. 11:5]).
 - c. Christians today will be called names and ill-treated as we stand for truth.
 3. Those so treated today are to consider themselves “*blessed*” and are commanded to “*rejoice, and be exceeding glad*” because there is a great reward in heaven awaiting the faithful (cf. Rev. 2:10b).
 4. An apparent problem: Though the NT has much to say about the Christian’s persecution we do not find it happening much today. Let us make sure that we are letting our light shine before men and when this occurs there will be persecution (see study # 27; Bible Persecution).
- II. **Salt and Light of the World (5:13-16):**
- A. *“Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost its savor, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out and trodden under foot of men”* (5:13).

1. Jesus tells His disciples that they are the “*salt*” (*halas*) of the earth. The Greek word *halas* = “to salt, season with salt, preserve by salting” (Moulton 16).
 2. How can disciples of Jesus be considered “*salt*?” Clearly the word is used metaphorically to denote the effects the Christian has on the people they come in contact with. Salt both flavors and preserves food. The Christian flavors and preserves the souls of men through teaching truth (cf. Rom. 1:16). Truth is directly connected to the potency of the salt. If truth is separated from the salt it certainly has no flavoring and preserving values. Jesus terms such an individual as worthless and to be thrown out to be trodden under foot of men.
 3. This salt statement by Jesus illustrates a teaching that demands responsibility upon the disciple who occupies truth; i.e., we must flavor and preserve the souls of men with the gospel message (see study # 28; Personal Work).
- B. “*Ye are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid*” (5:14).
1. Again, the word “*light*” (*phos*) is used metaphorically rather than literally here. The Greek *phos* “is continually used as figurative of holiness and purity (Prov. 6:23; Isa. 5:20; Rom. 13:12)” (New Unger’s Bible Dictionary, pp. 777). “Light is often used as a symbol of goodness, uprightness, or blessing” (ISBE; V. 3, pp. 135). Clearly, light represents holiness, righteousness, justice, a state of sinless perfection (cf. Eph. 5:8ff). The gospel message is viewed as a message of light (cf. Jn. 12:36; II Cor. 4:3-6). Christians who accept and obey the gospel message are viewed as a people of light (cf. Col. 1:12; I Thess. 5:5).
 2. Light dispels the darkness of ignorance (cf. Eph. 4:17ff). The Christian is to take the light of the gospel message to the world and dispel their ignorance so that forgiveness of sins may belong to them as well (Matt. 28:18ff) (see study # 28; Personal Work). One who lets the light of the gospel shine bright in their lives “*cannot be hid*” no matter what wicked men may do to suppress it.
- C. “*Neither do men light a lamp, and put it under the bushel, but on the stand; and it shines unto all that are in the house*” (5:15).
1. Jesus reminds His disciples what the function of a light is in the house and thereby makes a comparison to their function. When one lights a lamp in the house it is to illuminate it. Surly one does not light a lamp and then cover the light. Said action would be contrary to the purpose of the lamp.
 2. Likewise, the Christian should let the light of the gospel message shine bright in this wicked world we live in.
- D. “*Even so let your light shine before men; that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven*” (5:16).
1. What light should I let shine before men? Jesus calls upon His disciples to let the shining light of the gospel message reveals sin and salvation in the world we live. I can let my light shine bright by living godly and teaching truth so that when the world sees and hears these things they would desire such a life of hope.
 2. My objective, as a disciple of Christ, is to bring men to “*glorify your Father who is in heaven*” through their hearing, believing, repenting, confessing Christ, being baptized for the remission of sins and walking worthily of the calling wherewith they are called.

III. **Jesus is the Fulfillment of the Law and Prophets (5:17-20):**

- A. “*Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets: I came not to destroy, but to fulfill*” (5:17).
1. The ninth “fulfillment” passage is now given in the book of Matthew (see introduction under fulfilled prophecy). Chronologically speaking the Pharisees had already accused Jesus of being a Mosaic Law breaker due to the Lord’s works on the Sabbath (cf. Mk. 2:24; Jn. 5:16ff).
 2. Apparently some believed that Jesus came to destroy the Mosaic Law. Jesus and John the baptizer preached the gospel of the kingdom (cf. Matt. 3:1ff; 4:17, 23). Jesus thereby explains to the multitudes that He did not come to destroy the Law of Moses or the revelation of the prophets but rather to fulfill what the law foretold. Though Jesus lived under the Mosaic Law

he taught kingdom truths (cf. Jn. 14:26; 15:20; Matt. 28:20; Lk. 16:16). These truths had not taken a full form yet were known as a prolepsis form of teaching (speaking of future events as though they were present actions) (cf. Matt. 18:15-17; Jn. 3:1-12). Analogous to kingdom preaching, Jesus too taught obedience to the Mosaic Law because He lived under this law (Matt. 5:23-24; Gal. 4:4). Jesus delivered scorching blows of condemnation to those who did not keep the Mosaic Law (cf. Matt. 23:13ff).

3. The big picture: Jesus came into the world preaching the gospel message at a time when the Mosaic Law was in force. The Lord precisely adhered to the Law He was under (cf. Heb. 4:15). Jesus was thereby preparing the people for the gospel age (the time when man would be forgiven of their sins through His blood sacrifice on the cross) (cf. Col. 2:14-15). The Lord lived and taught during a transitional period. The Mosaic Law was to be ushered out and the Law of Christ ushered in and so the prophets foretold of this event (cf. Jer. 31:31ff).
 4. Jesus thereby fulfills the Law of Moses in that He meets its every prediction regarding the coming of the Messiah. Jesus is the “*Emmanuel*” of Isaiah 7:14 and Matthew 1:18ff. Jesus is the “*Son of Man*” as Daniel referred to him as and so He wore the title (cf. Matt. 8:20). Jesus fulfills all Old Testament predictions regarding the coming of the Messiah.
 5. The Lord himself said, “*Ye search the scriptures, because ye think that in them ye have eternal life; and these are they which bear witness of me*” (Jn. 5:39). The Lord explains that the OT scriptures “*bear witness*” (*martupousai*) = “give evidence, bear testimony, to bear witness to a thing, testify it... to testify that a thing is” (LS 488).
- B. “*For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, till all things be accomplished*” (5:18).
1. The “*jot*” and “*tittle*” were two of the smallest components in the Hebrew lettering system. The term became a proverbial statement which denoted observing minute details of the law. Jesus is saying that even the minute parts of the law are to be observed while it is in force. Jesus is not here to destroy it.
 2. Note that there will be a time when “*jots*” and “*tittles*” shall pass away from the law (i.e, man will not be responsible for adhering to the details of the Mosaic Law). The time of the Mosaic Law’s end will be when “*all things are accomplished.*” When Christ hangs upon the cross for the remission of man’s sins then God’s promises, revealed in the OT scriptures, will be fulfilled and man will be under a new covenant law. The law will have served its purpose of pointing up sin (Rom. 7:7) and bringing man to understand their need for the Messiah (Gal. 3:24).
- C. “*Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven*” (5:19).
1. The “*least commandments*” would be the “*jot*” and “*tittles*” of verse 18. To “*break*” (*luo*) = “to loosen, unbind, unfasten... relax... to undo, do away with, put an end to... unravel” (LS 481-482). “Loosen, unbind, unfasten... to infringe” (Moulton 255). Moulton also illustrates the fact that *luo* (*lusi*) is used at I Corinthians 7:27 to indicate a “release from the marriage bond, a divorce” (Moulton 255) (see study # 1).
 2. If a man was to relax, loosen, or unbind laws that God had bound upon mankind and then go about teaching such things then he “*shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven.*” The word “*least*” (*elachistos*) = “smallest or least” (Moulton 130). Interestingly, the same Greek word *elachistos* is used in this same verse to illustrate the minute parts of the Mosaic Law (see study # 30).
 3. Bible authority is under consideration here (see study # 29; Bible Authority). He that respects the authority of God will keep even the minute details of the laws of God. He that does not respect the authority of God will not only violate the minute details of the law but also teach others that it is ok to do so. This being the case how can it be that such a one is viewed as “*least in the kingdom of God?*” Someone would say, “well, its ok to violate some commands of God and remain in good standing with him due to this verse.” Let us remember that “*all*

unrighteousness is sin” (I Jn. 5:17; see also I Jn. 3:4). If sin separates from God (cf. Isa. 59:1ff) then how can I participate in a little sin and find myself in the kingdom of God? James wrote, “*For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is become guilty of all*” (James 2:10).

4. It is clear that Jesus is not giving degrees of good people in the church (i.e., some violate little laws and some do not therefore do not judge me type attitude) but rather indicating that those who are least will eventually be cast out of the kingdom of God at the time of judgment and those who are great shall continue in the kingdom of God (cf. Matt. 8:11-12).
 5. We must see that teachers today who violate and teach others to violate even the smallest of commands are guilty of disrespecting the authority of God (see study # 30; False Teachers).
- D. “*For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven*” (5:20).
1. The inference is undeniable and all those who heard this statement knew that Jesus was implicating the scribes and Pharisees of taking parts of the Mosaic Law and not only denying its validity but teaching others to violate it as well.
 2. Herein is a thematic statement in the Sermon on the Mount. The scribes and Pharisees practiced and taught the people error. Jesus is warning the people against their error and hypocritical living. Jesus said of their sort, “*they loved the glory that is of men more than the glory that is of God*” (Jn. 12:43). The Sermon on the Mount reveals this attribute of the scribes and Pharisees (cf. Matt. 5:20; 6:1, 5, 16). Interestingly, Jesus concludes the sermon saying, “*Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves...*” (cf. Matt. 7:15ff). The entire sermon contrasts the ungodly character of the Pharisees with the Godly character God desires in His people.

IV. Christ’s Authoritative Teaching that Looks to the Heart of Man’s Anger (5:21-48):

- A. “*Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment:*” (5:21).
1. The audience Jesus addressed “*had heard*” an interpretation of the Mosaic Law instead of the Law itself.
 2. The Mosaic Law (Ex. 20:13) condemned murder, a sin that carried with the penalty of death (Ex. 21:12).
- B. “*but I say unto you, that every one who is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment; and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council; and whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of the hell of fire*” (5:22).
1. Matthew 5:21-48 records six uses of the phrase, “*but I say unto you*” in five different topics of the Mosaic Law. With each of these five “*but I say unto you*” statements come five “*ye have heard*” statements. This is an example of the authoritative preaching conducted by our Lord (Cf. Matt. 5:28-29; 7:21-23; Matt. 21:24-25). This is why the apostles gave commands in the name of Jesus (cf. I Cor. 1:10; 5:4-5; I Thess. 2:13; II Thess. 3:6).
 2. Jesus reveals the true meaning of the Mosaic command, “*thou shalt not kill.*” Jesus goes back to the very roots of the sin of murder which is anger.
 3. Jesus is concerned with the heart of man as was God from the beginning when he made this command to Moses. To murder was to be angry, to be angry is to say *raca*, and to say *raca* is to accuse one of being a fool. The point being is that there are no variations of sin. If one violates one part of the law he is guilty of the whole law (cf. Gal. 3:10; James 2:10).
 - a. When I become angry with another I have illustrated a lack of self control, care, and concern for others. Even in persecution Paul said, “*Bless them that persecute you; bless, and curse not*” (Rom. 12:14ff) (see study # 27). My anger is thereby a product of my lack of love for others. Said behavior subjects me to “*danger of the judgment.*”
 - b. If I say “*Raca*” (*rhaka*) = “an Aramaean term of bitter contempt, worthless fellow” (Moulton 358). To call someone names out of bitter contempt is to expose a heart of anger and murder. Said one is in danger of the council (i.e., the Sanhedrin council). Notice the

progression of authority that one is to answer to for crimes committed against the Mosaic Law. Anger leading to murder would find one answering to the civil authorities (Rome), contemptuous language hurled at another would find one giving answer to the Sanhedrin Council, and calling one a fool will put one under the greatest condemnation; i.e., to God.

- c. If I call another a “*fool*” (*moros*) = “dull, sluggish, stupid” (LS 524). Here is a derogatory remark being hurled at another. Such a remark potentially puts one in “hell fire” (see study # 31; Hell).
 - d. Let us now note that as the progression of courts gains prominence in the eyes of the Jews, i.e., Rome, Sanhedrin, God even so the progression of crimes goes from greatest to least; i.e., murder to calling someone a fool. The point Jesus makes is that no matter the level of crime there is law that is violated. One is just as condemned for calling another a fool as the one who murders another.
- C. *“If therefore thou art offering thy gift at the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift”* (5:23-24).
1. “*Therefore*” connects this statement to what was just said about calling people names, having bitter contempt toward another, and expressing anger toward another being on equality with murder due to the fact that it is all sin. What ever Jesus says here is directly connected to all sin being equal in that judgment is due.
 2. The word “*aught*” (*tis*) = “any thing” (LS 809). Jesus says if your brother has anything “*against*” (*kata*) = “motion from above down... in a hostile sense, against... esp. of judges giving sentence against a person” (LS 402). Have you left the impression with a brother that you are angry with him? Have you called someone a fool? Have you exercised contemptuous behavior toward someone? Jesus says, “stop what your doing and go be reconciled and then proceed with your worship” (to paraphrase).
 - a. Under said circumstance it is clear that I am in error when I express anger toward another.
 - b. Secondly, it is equally clear that I need to seek to be reconciled before I can go worshipping God as though all were well (see study # 32; Bible Worship).
 - c. Thirdly, to perform the Lord’s command will take humility on my part. If I have recently expressed anger toward another it may not be easy to do but Jesus tells me to take a 180 degree turn and go make up with this person. Why? Because I have clearly sinned! Again, these ideas take into consideration the character of being poor in spirit, mournful, and meek that Jesus discussed at the beginning of the sermon.
- D. *“Agree with thine adversary quickly, while thou art with him in the way; lest haply the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou have paid the last farthing”* (5:25-26).
1. Jesus gives a second example. A parable is given here illustrating one who owes money and is being taken to court to settle the matter. Jesus says the sensible thing to do would be to settle the matter with the creditor before the case goes to court.
 2. The interpretation is clear: Be reconciled to your brother before you are called upon to stand before God in judgment.
 3. The scribes and Pharisees perverted the Mosaic Law on a regular basis. Let us not be guilty of removing a part of Jesus’ law from our minds. Such conduct leads to a false sense of security regarding our salvation. If I show contempt, anger or condemn my brother without just cause, I have sinned and am just as guilty as one who murders another.
- V. **Christ’s Authoritative Teaching that Looks to the Heart of Man’s Lusts (5:27-32):**
- A. *“Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt not commit adultery:”* (5:27).
1. The second *“Ye have heard that it was said...but I say unto you statement”* deals with the issue of marriage. God is interested in our hearts. Jesus’ teaching is designed to penetrate even the hardest hearts. A heart filled with anger and contempt is the source of murder and therefore

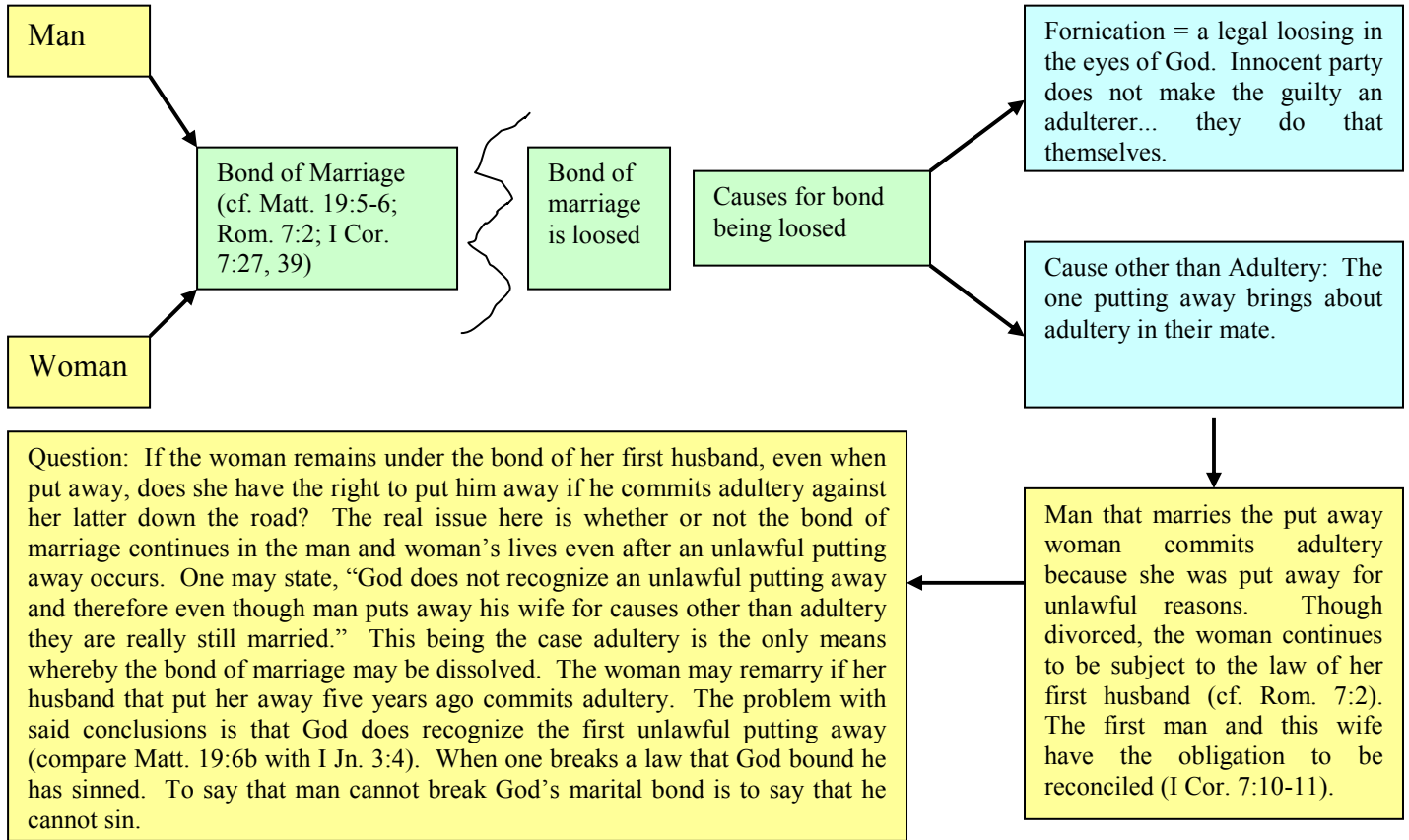
- holds an equal punishment (Matt. 5:21-26). Jesus tells us in Matt. 5:27-32 that a heart that lusts for unlawful things is just as guilty as a heart that moves one to the very act of adultery. Again, Jesus is not explaining the Mosaic Law in the Sermon on the Mount, he is introducing, by authority, the gospel of the Kingdom (Matt. 4:23). Let's get our hearts right with God so that true blessedness may be experienced (Psalms 51:10; Matt. 15:10-20).
2. Adultery, like murder, carried with it the punishment of death (Lev. 20:10; Deut. 22:22-27).
- B. *“but I say unto you, that every one that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart”* (5:28).
1. The contrast is evident; looking with lust verses the actual act of adultery.
 2. The word *“looketh”* (*blepon*) = “To cast a look on” (Moulton 71).
 - a. *Blepon* (VPPANM-S) (Friberg 13)
 - b. A verb in **present tense** is important: it denotes action in progress (Matt. 5:28; one is not merely looking, he or she is continuing to look).
 3. *“Lust”* (*hepithumesai*) = “to set one’s heart upon a thing, lust after, long for, covet, desire... to desire to do, eagerness for it” (LS 292).
 - a. Verb aorist tense (Friberg 13)
 - b. The **aorist tense** denotes past action without indicating completion, continuation, or repetition of this action. The *“lust”* is the past action that has occurred due to the persistent looking at.
 4. The one guilty of such a lustful gaze *“hath committed adultery”* with the woman in his or her mind. This entire phrase is *hemoicheusen* = “to commit adultery with a woman, to debauch her” (LS 517). Again the teaching is clear, the thought of the sin is just as worthy of judgment as the deed itself. If I am angry with one there is no difference in my sin, as far as spiritual judgment goes, then if I would go through with murdering one. Note, there are two different actions spoken of (i.e. the thought and the deed). The two are only equated with each other in that the punishment for both exists. Adultery, in the heart (lustful thoughts) is not grounds for lawful divorce and remarriage. Jesus is not delivering instructions for divorce and remarriage but rather teaching a divine principle in relation to sin.
- C. *“And if thy right eye causeth thee to stumble, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not thy whole body be cast into hell. And if thy right hand causeth thee to stumble, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not thy whole body go into hell”* (5:29-30).
1. Jesus gave sound law, in relation to harboring anger or contempt against another, saying be reconcile before judgment comes (Matt. 5:21ff). This section identifies another serious state of the heart. Though adultery has not taken place, the heart is contemplating such thoughts.
 2. The admonition is to first cut away the diseased section of the heart (Col. 2:11; Rom. 2:29). Secondly, exercise self-control (Job 31:1-4; Ps. 119:37-38; Col. 3:5-8; James 4:7).
 3. The Logic of our Lord is clear: if the thought of anger equals the punishment of the act of murder and if lust carries with it the same punishment as the act of adultery, then the heart must be purified. Jesus gives the remedy for a lustful gaze before it leads to the act of adultery. Cut off the part that causes the sin (figuratively). The illustration indicates a cleansing of a part of the whole, not total destruction.
 4. If one were to take this thought literally and thereby lop off a hand or gouge out an eye unfortunately for that person, the sinful heart had not been cleansed and the opportunity to sin remains. Jesus is appealing to man to cleanse his or her thoughts.
- D. *“It was said also, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement:”* (5:31).
1. Another example is given in light of the Lord’s instructions to cleanse the heart and there being no degrees of sin. When one is angry they are just as subject to judgment as the man who murders. When one looks with a lustful eye at another woman while he himself is married, he

- is just as subject to God's judgment as if he would have gone ahead and fulfilled the lustful thought.
2. Now Jesus turns to the marriage relationship itself. To "*put away*" (*apoluo*) = "to loose from, to set free from, release or relieve from... to be set free from... in legal sense, to acquit of the charge... to let go free on receipt of ransom... to discharge or disband an army... generally, to dismiss... to divorce a wife" (LS 102). "To loose; to release from a tie or burden... to divorce... to liberate, discharge... to dismiss... to allow to depart, to send away... to be rid" (Moulton 46). This same word is found at Matthew 1:19... Joseph was minded to "*put away*" Mary due to his thoughts of her adultery. Note the close relation with the word "*break*" found at Matthew 5:19; (*luo*) = "to loosen, unbind, unfasten... relax... to undo, do away with, put an end to... unravel" (LS 481-482). There is a clear connection with the "*bond*" of marriage and the "*loosing*" of God's commands. The apostle Paul tells the Romans, "*For the woman that hath a husband is bound by law to the husband while he lives; but if the husband die, she is discharged from the law of the husband*" (7:2). Again, to the Corinthians Paul states, "*Art thou bound unto a wife? Seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? Seek not a wife*" (I Cor. 7:27). The word "*bound*" (*deo*) = "to bind, tie, fetter... put in bonds... metaphorically to bind, enchain" (LS 181)... "to bind by a legal or moral tie, as marriage" (Moulton 89). Thereby when one "*breaks*" the marriage "*bond*" he or she has loosed what God enchaind. It is important to note that man can break or loose God's commands even though this does not change the command. When man looses God's marital bond for causes other than adultery he has sinned. God recognizes the individual's sin. To say that man cannot loose what God joined is to say that man is incapable of sinning in this area. When Jesus said, "*What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder*" (Matt. 19:6) the Lord recognized the possibility of an unlawful loosing occurring. When man looses God's laws he sins (cf. I Jn. 3:4). This is the whole reason for Jesus bringing in the teachings of the Mosaic Law regarding causes for divorce.
 3. The loosening of God's marriage bond took place in the OT times as it did the NT times. Under the Mosaic Law, people got divorced for "*unseemly*" matters. They "*wrote a divorcement*" (a bill of divorcement / Nestle and Marshall pp. 17). The entire English phrase is one word in the Greek, i.e., *apostasion* = "a writing or bill of divorcement" (LS 107). "Defection, desertion, as of a freedman from a patron (one who once supported another now defects / jcr); in N.T. the act of putting away a wife, repudiation (the refusal to acknowledge a contract or debt... to disown), divorce... a bill of repudiation, deed of divorce" (Moulton 62). There was apparently some sort of written document that indicated one's desire to no longer recognize the marriage bond or contract.
 4. Consider the Mosaic Law on Divorce at Deuteronomy 24:1-4:
 - a. Lawful divorce for the "*unseemly*" matter found in the wife (vs. 1). The word "*unseemly*" is from a Hebrew word *ervah* which means "nudity, literally (especially the *puenda*) or figuratively (disgrace, blemish); nakedness, shame, unclean (ness)" (Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible #6172). At Matthew 19:3 the Pharisees quote from Deuteronomy 24:1 stating that the divorce for "*unseemly*" matters means "*for every cause.*"
 - b. Secondly, we must understand that this "*unseemly*" cause was not adultery. Adultery was punished by death (cf. Lev. 20:10; Deut. 22:22). Evidently, a man was at liberty to put away his wife for any reason other than adultery, because of "*the hardness of their hearts*" (Matt. 19:8).
- E. "*but I say unto you, that every one that puts away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, makes her an adulteress: and whosoever shall marry her when she is put away commits adultery*" (5:32).
1. Here is the third "*but I say unto you*" statements of Jesus in this section. Though the Mosaic Law permitted divorce for "*every cause*" Jesus says this is not God's will. Those who "loose" the marriage bond that God "*joined*" (cf. Matt. 19:5-6) have "*broke*" God's commandments (cf. Matt. 5:19) (they have loosed where God has not allowed loosing). The exception clause is the

- phrase, “*saving for the cause of fornication.*” “*Saving*” (*parektos*) = “besides or except for” (LS 606). The only exception to God’s law of the bond of marriage being loosed is for the cause of fornication (unlawful sexual intercourse). I may commit sins against my mate yet none are grounds for a divorce save fornication. Such a command helps us to see that God intends for a man and wife to be together sexually. The intimate side of marriage belongs to them alone. To violate God’s commands in this area is to commit adultery against one’s mate. Such a depraved incident is cause for the innocent to put away the guilty. Solomon wrote, “*He that commits adultery with a woman is void of understanding: he does it who would destroy his own soul*” (Prov. 6:32).
2. Note that the man or woman who puts away their mate for causes other than adultery are said to “*make her an adulteress.*” To “*make*” (*poieo*) someone something is to “bring it about” (AG 681)... “to make, produce, create... to do something to another” (LS 650-651). To put away a wife for causes other than adultery is to bring about her adultery. Jesus clearly puts blame on the individual putting away a mate for causes other than adultery. If the woman goes on to commit adultery with another man the one who originally loosed the bond unlawfully is to blame. Both are now in sin. “*Adulteress*” is in the aorist tense (Friberg 14) indicating past action without indicating completion, continuation, or repetition of this action (AHD 117). Though she lay with only one other man on one occasion she is an adulteress.
 3. Furthermore, Jesus states that if this put away woman for causes other than adultery decides to marry another man then he “*commits Adultery*” (i.e., present tense) (Friberg 14). The two continue in an adulterous relationship as long as they are together. The one sharing the blame is the woman’s original husband who put her away for causes other than adultery. The inference is clear; divorce for reasons other than adultery is sinful and causes the mate to sin.
 4. Interestingly, some today would say that this innocent woman who was put away may remain celibate in hopes that her husband would come to his senses and the two be reconciled as commanded in I Cor. 7:10-11. While the woman waits, her husband decides to have a fling or he may decide to marry another woman. Question: Does the innocent woman who was put away for reasons other than adultery now have the right to put away her husband for adultery and marry another? No. She was put away unlawfully and her only recourse is to be reconciled to her husband. Matthew 19:9 illustrates that there is only one putting away that occurs. The woman cannot, five years later for example, perform her own putting away because she has already been put away. How can she loose that which has already been loosed? One may say, “But God did not recognize the first putting away because it was not for fornication... therefore the bond is still in place.” Note that man does have the power to loose the marital bond though it is sinful in the case of causes other than adultery (cf. Matt. 19:5-6). Again, to say that one cannot loose where God bound is to say that man is incapable of sin.
 5. **Main Point:** Though divorce was aloud under the Mosaic Law for any cause (other than adultery) Jesus says that divorce for causes other than adultery is not permitted. **Reason: If I cause another to sin I have sinned.** Jesus said, “*but whoso shall cause one of these little ones that believe on me to stumble, it is profitable for him that a great millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be sunk in the depth of the sea*” (Matt. 18:6). Even if the woman never commits adultery I have provided an environment of sin for her by putting her away for causes other than adultery. This thought gets back to the context of the Lord’s Sermon on the Mount. Jesus is exposing the inner man’s heart. The sermon is a call for pure thinking. Not only are thoughts found sinful (i.e., anger and lust) but here we find that even though I am not acting on sin I can cause someone else to sin by my actions. Adultery was a sin punishable by death. I may not commit adultery, however, the moment I put away my wife for causes other than adultery I bring about the sin of adultery in her life. I have truly no regard for my wife in said case and thereby found to be a sinner. Someone says, but I just cannot get along with her... He is beating me... he rejects my desire to serve God... and so forth. Surely these are serious issues, but again, Jesus clearly states that God’s bond is intended for life. Self

preservation will cause one to do what is necessary in dangerous cases yet the bond remains. All these things being said one certainly sees the seriousness of marriage in the eyes of God and should thereby consider such things when choosing a life long mate. Let us respect the silence of the scriptures. Jesus said that adultery is the only just cause for loosing the marital bond. Any other cause is not justifiable (see study # 1).

6. Consider the following paradigm for Matthew 5:32



But again, one will say that it is ok to divorce a wife "for the kingdom of God's sake" so long as there is no remarriage to another. To argue such a point is to miss the clear teaching of Jesus. The angry man is just as guilty as the murderer. The lustful man is just as guilty as the adulterer. Jesus now says that the one who puts away a wife for reasons other than fornication makes her an adulterous because you have given an occasion for the sin. Though adultery has not taken place you are providing an environment for it to occur and are thereby guilty. Jesus said "everyone" that does such a thing is a sinner (Matt. 5:32). Everyone would include the one being beat by a husband and so forth. What ever scenario one may find that would seem to justify a divorce fails Matthew 5:31-32 and Matthew 19:3ff. Those who argue this point believe that the divorced in such a case cannot get remarried. I ask them why not? If man can break God's marital bond without it being sinful then why can they not remarry without it being sinful (see study # 1)?

F. "Again, ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths:" (5:33).

1. Let us keep in mind to this point that angry thoughts are as the sin of murder (Matt. 5:21ff), the lustful look is as the sin of adultery (5:27ff), and divorcing for causes other than adultery is to bring about or gives occasion to adultery in another's life. Jesus now speaks of the error of making oaths.
2. To "forswear" (*epiorkeo*) = "to swear falsely, forswear oneself" (LS 298). "One who violates his oath, perjured" (Moulton 158). Forswear = "To perjure oneself" (AHD 526). Perjury =

- “the deliberate, willful giving of false, misleading, or incomplete testimony under oath” (AHD 924).
3. “*Oath*” (*horkos*) = “The object by which one swears, the witness of an oath, as the Styx among the gods” (LS 568). “*Oath*” = “a solemn, formal declaration or promise to fulfill a pledge, often calling upon God or a god as witness” (AHD 856).
 4. Under the Mosaic system one may make an oath in the name of God and was obligated to keep said oath (cf. Lev. 19:12; Numb. 30:2; Deut. 23:21). Examples in the OT of said oaths:
 - a. One may leave an animal with another to care for while traveling. If the animal is killed or stolen from the care person without his knowledge then a simple oath is to be said to the owner and satisfaction should exist (Ex. 22:10ff).
 - b. Some may make a vow to be separate and holy to the Lord (a Nazirite vow) (Numb. 6:1ff).
 - c. God commanded His people to swear their allegiance to all His commandments (cf. Deut. 6:13).
- G. “*but I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by the heaven, for it is the throne of God; nor by the earth, for it is the footstool of his feet; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, for thou canst not make one hair white or black*” (5:34-36).
1. The authority of Christ and the gospel of the kingdom is greatly magnified here. While the Mosaic Law commanded swearing (i.e., oaths) Jesus looses this command and summarily tells His audience to just always do the lawful thing. While the kingdom of God had not been established at this point its laws were being revealed by the Lord.
 2. Apparently the Pharisees were teaching that one may not only swear by the name of Jehovah God but also “*heaven, earth, Jerusalem, and one’s own head.*” Jesus condemns said swearing because all these things have a direct correlation to God.
 3. Jesus explains the why of saying oaths (swearing) by the name of God is unacceptable in the next verse.
- H. “*But let your speech be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: and whatsoever is more than these is of the evil one*” (5:37).
1. The command of oaths under the Mosaic Law is now abolished by Christ’s authority. The multitude of sacrifices made under the Mosaic system was abrogated as well (cf. Heb. 10:1-2). A clear distinction exists between the Law of Moses and the Law of Christ. They are two different laws with two different purposes. One may not pick parts of the Mosaic Law (i.e., musical instrumentation in worship) and apply it to New Testament Christianity. The Lord Jesus Christ, the prophets and apostles delivered a divine message whereby some parts of the Mosaic system were carried over to the Law of Christ (i.e., murder is sinful) and some parts did not (see above examples). When Christ died on the cross man was no longer subject to the Mosaic Law (it was no longer binding) (cf. Col. 2:14) (see study # 29; Bible Authority).
 2. One’s “*speech*” (*logos*) = “the word or that by which the inward thought is expressed... that which is said or spoken... words, i.e. language” (LS 477). Such language proceeding from the heart is to be either yes or no. The Christian is one who lives and speaks in such a fashion that he needs not accompany his thoughts with oaths. Truth governs the Christian’s language. Again, Jesus is getting back to the heart of man. The integrity of man is here addressed. When my character and manner of life is godly the world sees this and thereby can trust that my statements represent the truth. Such a life eliminates the need for oaths.
 3. Jesus then states, “*and whatsoever is more than these is of the evil one.*” If one is to say “*more*” [*perissos*] = “over and above” (Moulton 317)] than a yea or nay (yes and no) the Lord proclaims that this is of “*the evil one*” (*poneros(u)*) = “bad, worthless, knavish... laboriously wicked, base” (LS 661). “Evil, wrong, wickedness” (Moulton 336). Jesus states that the individual who goes over and above a simple yes or no (i.e., saying, ‘I swear to God’) in relation to answering questions or giving testimony has participated in wrongful, worthless, and wicked behavior. Why?

4. James may help us here. James said, “*but above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by the heaven, nor by the earth, nor by any other oath: but let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay; that ye fall not under judgment*” (James 5:12). Jesus said that swearing oaths is wrong, worthless, and wicked and James tells us that such conduct will cause us to “*fall under judgment.*” But again this does not tell us the why. Consider the third commandment: “*thou shalt not take the name of Jehovah thy God in vain: for Jehovah will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain*” (Deut. 5:11). The Hebrew word “*vain*” (*shav'*) = “vanity (lack of usefulness, worth, or effect), falsehood” (Young 1020). Speaking by the name of Jehovah God entails authoritative speaking where as language that does not represent God’s truths is vain (useless, worthless, and false). The teacher or preacher of false doctrines is thereby wrong, wicked, and subject to God’s judgment.
5. A man or woman who claims to speak by the authority of God yet spills out false doctrines is one who makes worthless oaths in the name of God. Latter in this sermon Jesus says, “*by their fruits ye shall know them...*” (Matt. 7:20).
 - I. “*Ye have heard that it was said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: but I say unto you, Resist not him that is evil: but whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also*” (5:38-39).
 1. Again, let us review:
 - a. **Angry thoughts** are as the sin of murder (Matt. 5:21ff).
 - b. The **lustful look** is as the sin of adultery (Matt. 5:27ff).
 - c. Divorcing for causes other than adultery is to **bring about or give occasion** to adultery in another’s life (Matt. 5:31-32).
 - d. Man’s **speech** is to be governed by truth and thereby has no need of accompanying oaths (Matt. 5:33-37). I need not validate truth through an oath because truth is already validated by divine revelation.
 2. The Mosaic Law commanded “*an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth*” at Ex. 21:24; Lev. 24:20 and Deut. 19:21. The purpose of this law was to judicially thwart stealing, killing, mistreatment and so forth.
 3. Again, the authoritative teachings of Jesus are revealed (remember, when the covenants man was to be responsible toward changed so did the instructions / cf. Jer. 31:31ff and Heb. 8). Rather than seeking immediate recompense for harm done Jesus instructs His disciples to not “*resist*” the evil doer. The word “*resist*” (*anthistemi*) = “to set up against or in opposition to... to stand against, esp. in battle, to withstand, oppose” (LS 70-71). The disciple of Christ is not to go to battle against the wicked one who has wronged us. The Lord gives four examples to expose this truth:
 - a. “*Whosoever smites thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.*” The Law of Christ provides judicial protection against wrong doing just as the Mosaic Law (cf. Rom. 13:4). To be slapped in the face has always been a common mode of insult (cf. I Kings 22:24; Lam. 3:30; Matt. 26:67; Jn. 18:22; 19:3; Acts 23:1ff; II Cor. 11:20). To be humiliated or harmed by others (especially when we did nothing to deserve the treatment) naturally raises feelings of vengeance. We may want **to strike back either by word or fists**. The Christian way of handling all such cases is leave wrath and vengeance to God (cf. Rom. 12:17-21). We should treat our enemies no different than those who treat us well because all have an eternal soul (cf. Prov. 25:21-22). Let us not “*resists*” the one who wrongs us.
 - b. “*And if any man would go to law with thee, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also*” (5:40). The apostle Paul, by divine revelation, gave instructions regarding brethren taking brethren to courts of law to defraud each other at I Corinthians 6:1, 5ff. Here, Jesus includes “*any man*” in the example. The example given indicates that one has been wronged and is now seeking recompense for his loss. Such an individual is not to be “*resisted*” (i.e., battled). Does the example take into consideration a disciple wronging someone else or does it consider one’s perception of me wronging them? Either way, we

should not battle the individual but rather give them what they desire. While the world may see this as weak Jesus commands this disposition of heart. **To battle others over my rights or to prove I am right is not the spirit of the Christian** (see Eccl. 5:8).

- c. *“And whosoever shall compel thee to go one mile, go with him two”* (5:41). The English “*compel*” or Nestle and Marshal’s translation of “shall impress” (NM 18) is *aggareusei* in Greek meaning “a Persian courier, or messenger, who had authority to press into his service men, horses, etc... to press, or compel another to go somewhere, or carry some burden” (Moulton 3)... “to press one to serve as a courier, to press into service” (LS 4). The Persian couriers apparently had the authority from the state to force its citizens to carry some burden or lend animals to achieve the governments needs. Many applications can be made here. At times some may approach us and demand our services or help. It may be that I really don’t want to perform the task or spend my time doing something for someone else. We may feel like the person is taking advantage of us. Jesus says (to paraphrase), “so what, why not take the wrong and go even further... i.e., an extra mile.” Often times we are so into what we are doing and are so conscientious of our “free time” that we simply do not want to do anything for others. Whether someone is compelling us to use our time or materials to help them let us do so.
 - d. *“Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away”* (5:42). The context seems to indicate that the one asking a favor of us is one that we have become exasperated with due to ill treatment. Jesus commands that I not “*resists*” such a one. If my enemy is in need I should give to him. If my enemy asks to borrow something let me give. While others may hold **grudges** and treat the wicked with contempt the Lord demands that the Christian **be in control of our passions of bitterness** and hatred at all times.
4. Let us put this study into proper perspective. The disciple of Christ is to not oppose the evil man or woman when they do harm to us, take the necessities of life from us, compel us to do unreasonable things for them, and asks of us favors. The examples given have to do with worldly living. While the wicked may desire the Christian’s worldly goods the Christian should display a disposition that indicates his desire for the wicked man’s repentance. Such an attitude will certainly be detected in the Christian by the wicked man and thereby he shall be **shamed** into repentance. The apostle Paul said, *“But if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him to drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head”* (Rom. 12:20). The Christian should thereby oppose the wicked man’s sinful ways (cf. Gal. 2:22; Eph. 5:11-12; 6:13; II Tim. 4:15; I Jn. 4:1ff). We do not turn the cheek when the teachings of Christ are affronted (cf. Jn. 18:19-23). When the truth is affronted the Christian is not compelled to go the extra mile in tolerance (cf. Acts 5:29). Yes we should give to those who thirsts and are hungry yet at the same time we are not to be taken advantage of (cf. II Thess. 3:10-12).
 5. To **summarize** this fifth *“ye have heard but I say unto you”* statement we may say that the Christian is not one so concerned about personal worldly gain but the spiritual gain of self and others. If I believe in eternity I should not be so concerned when I am wronged or taken advantage of here on this earth. There are far greater and eternal matters to be concerned with. My rights and personal goods on earth can be sacrificed for the betterment of someone else’s soul.
- J. *“Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy:”* (5:43).
1. The sixth and final *“ye have heard that it was said... but I say unto you”* statements by the Lord again expresses the divine authority that Christ posses. Jesus completely reversed the Mosaic Law on these subjects and thereby exhibited His deity.
 2. *“Love”* (*agapao*) = “To love, **value, esteem,** feel or manifest generous **concern** for, be faithful towards; **delight in**” (Moulton 2).
 3. Leviticus 19:17-18 reveals the Mosaic Law on love. Moses writes, *“Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart: thou shalt surely rebuke thy neighbor, and not bear sin because of him.*

- Thou shalt not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people; but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself: I am Jehovah.*” Note that the Jew’s “neighbor” was none other than the “*children of thy people*.”
4. The true enemy of the Israelite was the Gentile **out of covenant with God** (Deut. 7:1-2; 22-24; Ps. 139:21-22). The Gentile could become a proselyte (Ex. 12:43-50; Lev. 17:8-9; 22:17-19; Num. 15:14ff). Deut. 23:1-3 put strict limitations on proselytes. This ban, however, was later eased as Ruth was a Moabite and Tobiah was an Ammonite (Cf. Ruth 1:4; Neh. 13:1-9). Conclusion: the enemy of Matt. 5:43 (Lev. 19:17) was the non-proselyte Gentile.
- K. “*but I say unto you, Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you; that ye may be sons of your Father who is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the just and the unjust*” (5:44-45)
1. Jesus states the boundless limitations of love. Not only are citizens of the New Kingdom to love (value, delight, and be concerned for) their own, but their enemies as well. The enemies Jesus alludes to would be those who are not members of the New Kingdom, the church.
 2. Such loving conduct has purpose: “*that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven.*” Sons of God share the same character traits as does God Himself (cf. Matt. 5:48; I Pet. 2:21-22). The Word of God reveals baptized believers to be termed “*sons of God*” (cf. Gal. 3:26; I Jn. 3:1). Such character loves souls no matter what their social, ethnic, economic or religious background may be (cf. Gal. 3:28). The Lord does not mean that we fellowship all peoples of all faiths but rather be concerned and value them (cf. I Jn. 1:1-7) (see study # 33; Bible Fellowship).
 3. “*For he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust.*”
 - a. God is not a respecter of persons, it is His will that ALL will come to repentance (Rom. 2:5-13; II Pet. 3:9).
 - b. God does not limit his love to only those who love Him and neither should the Christian (Matt. 5:46-47; Cf. Rom. 2:4).
- L. “*For if ye love them that love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? Do not even the Gentiles the same?*” (5:46-47).
1. It is easy to love those who love you but to **love those who hate you takes a mature mindset**. A mind that truly cares for the souls of men like God (cf. I Jn. 4:10ff).
 2. To “*salute*” (*aspazomai*) = “to salute, greet, welcome, express good wishes, pay respects... to treat with affection” (Moulton 56). While such greetings often are found in relationship to individual’s spiritual fellowship (cf. Rom. 16:1-16) we also find that the word has to do with general affection for all men (Christian and non-Christian). I should love all peoples; i.e., have a care and concern for their soul, physical and emotional well being (see study # 34; Bible Love).
 3. I see then, in the Law of Christ, my **attitude toward those who are not Christians** (see study # 35; My Relationship to those of the World):
 - a. I should treat them with affection (Matt. 5:47).
 - b. Never seek to “avoid them like the plague” (Matt. 28:19-20; I Cor. 5:9-11).
 - c. We are to “*walk in wisdom toward them that are without* (i.e., lost in sin)” (Col. 4:5).
 - d. I should be careful not to allow them to influence me to do evil (I Cor. 15:33; Phil. 3:17-18).
 - e. I should take care to present the truth to them with boldness (Eph. 6:18-20).
- M. “*Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect*” (5:48).
1. Jesus connects the Christian’s perfection with Bible love (my affection for the human race). The apostle Paul stated, “*and above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfectness*” (Col. 3:14).

- a. The word “*bond*” (*sundesmos*) = “a bond of union, bond, fastening... metaphorically, the bond that keeps the state together” (LS 770).
 - b. Love thereby is a bond that keeps the state of being perfect intact (see study # 34). This being the case we need to understand the state of being perfect that Jesus speaks of. Since the heavenly Father is perfect so must I be.
2. The New Testament considers three forms of Christian perfection (see study # 36; Bible Perfection):
 - a. *Teleios* (perfect) = “... of persons, absolute, complete, accomplished, perfect in his or its kind” (LS 797). “Fully accomplished in Christian enlightenment” (Moulton 400). The Greek *teleios* is an adjective that indicates a mindset bent on making it to heaven (see Friberg 15). Heaven is the “*goal*” and that which the Christian is to “*press*” toward (cf. Phil. 3:13-15). Said pressing is the perfection of the saint. Consider Thayer’s definition of the Greek *teleios*, “The more intelligent, ready to apprehend divine things, I Cor. 2:6; of mind and character, one who has reached the proper height of virtue and integrity: Matt. 5:48; 19:21; Phil. 3:15; James 1:4” (Thayer 618). Here is one that is giving it his or her all to please the Lord (cf. Heb. 5:11-6:1).
 - b. Another form of perfection mentioned in the NT is being cleansed from one’s sins through the blood of Christ (cf. Matt. 26:26ff; II Cor. 7:1; Heb. 7:18-19; 9:9; 10:1; 12:23). I am considered perfect when clean from sin.
 - c. Lastly, one is considered perfect when at the last day of our lives we have **finished** our course and are ready to stand before the Lord in judgment. This “*perfection*” (*teleioo*) is defined as, “To be brought to the goal, to reach the end of one’s course, Luke 13:32; Phil. 3:12; Heb. 11:40; 12:23” (Moulton 401). The Greek *teleioo* is VIRP--XS (Friberg 608). The verb is passive, that is, the action has already occurred. This perfection is the result of one’s faith, it is to reach your final goal. The apostle Paul wrote, “*I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day; and not to me only, but also to all them that have loved his appearing*” (II Tim. 4:7-8).
 3. The above study proves that Bible perfection does not mean that the Christian has attained a perfect knowledge of all Bible truths. Some make said conclusion and then proclaim that some believe that they cannot be proved wrong on any given subject. What is Bible perfection? Bible perfection is having a mind to do all within one’s power to make it to heaven through diligence. Bible perfection is having one’s sins forgiven. Lastly, Bible perfection is completing the race of life in good standing with the Lord. The heavenly Father is perfect and so must we be as His servants.
 4. Bible “**love**” is thereby the “*bond of perfect-ness*” in that it keeps me pressing forward in my life to obtain that heavenly home. My concern for the souls of men and my own soul will keep me pressing forward to that wonderful place.

Concluding Thoughts:

A focal point of the Sermon on the Mount is man’s inner thoughts that are to be governed by truth. Jesus’ point is that our thinking must be in the right direction else we fall in sin. Jesus tells us that **Angry thoughts** are as the sin of murder (Matt. 5:21ff). The **lustful look** is as the sin of adultery (Matt. 5:27ff). Divorcing for causes other than adultery is to **bring about or give occasion** to adultery in another’s life (Matt. 5:31-32). Man’s **speech** is to be governed by truth and thereby has no need of accompanying oaths (Matt. 5:33-37). I need not validate truth through an oath because truth is already validated by divine revelation. The Christian is not one so concerned about personal worldly gain but the spiritual gain of self and others (Matt. 5:38ff). If I believe in eternity I should not be so concerned when I am wronged or taken advantage of here on this earth. There are far greater and eternal matters to be concerned with than my feelings, rights, and personal goods. Said things can be sacrificed for the betterment of someone else’s soul. Lastly, the Lord instructs Christians to

value and delight in the souls of all men rather than just a select few. Each of the six issues dealt with in this chapter illustrate the need for man to be spiritually minded in all aspects of life.

Chapter 6

I. A Serious Warning against Doing Good for the sake of being seen of Men (6:1-4):

- A. *“Take heed that ye do not your righteousness before men, to be seen of them: else ye have no reward with your Father who is in heaven”* (6:1).
1. Let us remember that Jesus had said *“except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven”* (Matt. 5:20). The King James Version translates the Greek word *dikaiousunen* “alms” while the ASV and the Nestle text translate the word *“righteousness”* (NM 19). The meaning of the Greek word is “right, lawful, just, justice” (LS 202). Moulton defines the Greek word as “Generosity, alms; Matt. 6:1; II Cor. 9:10” (102).
 2. The Sermon on the Mount gets back to the inner being of a man; i.e., what he thinks, what makes him or her do what she does... etc. Jesus states the obvious. Do right things because it is the right thing to do. Some, like the Pharisees, did what was right in front of others to uphold an image of righteousness yet their inward being was rotten.
 3. Note the serious warning against such inner rottenness: Jesus said *“Take heed”* (*prosechete*) that you do not do such things. The Greek *prosechete* = “to beware of, take heed of, guard against” (Moulton 349). The Christian is to be on guard against such thinking. One who does generous or right things for the purpose of being seen of others does not have a proper approach to Christian living.
 4. The heavenly Father has a reward of eternal life in peace and happiness for those who live by His standards. Those who reject God are rejected of God and verily they will have their reward in hell (cf. Lk. 6:23; Col. 3:24; II Tim. 4:14; Heb. 2:2; Rev. 22:12).
- B. *“When therefore thou doest alms, sound not a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you they have received their reward”* (6:2).
1. Jesus gives an example of how one can do right without the world seeing it because it is the right thing to do. It has always been right to care for the needy and poor of this world (cf. Deut. 15:7-11). Consider these OT commandments regarding the poor:
 - a. Once per year the poor were allowed to *“glean”* the fields (Lev. 19:9-10 etc.).
 - b. No man could legally charge a poor man interest on a loan (Lev. 25:35-38).
 - c. If a man could not maintain himself and his family, no one was to sell food to the man for profit (Lev. 25:37).
 - d. The year of Jubilee allowed a poor man who had sold himself to slavery or sold his land to regain either his freedom or land. Every 50 years counting from the Day of Atonement was a year of Jubilee (Lev. 25:25-28; 47-55).
 - e. Lastly, the poor needed atonement just as the rich; however, they did not have the flocks that many of the sacrifices at the altar required. God allowed for the poor by reducing their price for atonement (Lev. 14:21ff; 27:8).
 2. The NT has somewhat to say about the poor and needy as well:
 - a. Jesus said, *“For ye have the poor always with you; but me ye have not always”* (Matt. 26:11).
 - b. Respecting the rich over the poor is sinful (James 2:1-9).
 - c. Pure religion is to help the needy in their affliction (James 1:27).
 - d. Individual Christians that have needy parents or relatives are to help them (I Tim. 5:8, 16). The apostle Paul said; however, *“if any will not work, neither let him eat”* (II Thess. 3:10).
 - e. Paul was always mindful of the poor (Gal. 2:10).

3. What is “*doing alms*” (*eleemosune*)? The Greek *eleemosune* = “pity, mercy: a charity, alms, compassionate” (LS 249). Here is an aspect of Bible love that considers the physical well being of others (see study # 34; Bible Love). When others are in need how shall I help them? Should I blow a trumpet (metaphorical use indicating getting people’s attention so that they know that I am helping someone in need). Such an act is not only wrong on my part but it would embarrass the person I am helping. I would be saying, “Look how righteous I am and look how wretched and destitute this needy person is.” Said attitude in giving is termed by Jesus as “*hypocrisy*.”
 4. Yes, said people receive a “*reward*.” Their reward would be given now (i.e., the glory of men). To have others say, “wow, what a caring and loving person this is” meets the objective of such a person.
- C. “*But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: that thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father who seeth in secret shall recompense thee*” (6:3-4).
1. My charitable and merciful acts should be done through a heart of compassion directed toward those in need. Jesus explains that said giving will be done because I know this is the right thing to do. I am not doing it to be seen of men but because I have compassion on the man in need. Those who do things to be seen of others really don’t have a genuine concern for the destitute in the world. Their care is to be elevated in their social circles.
 2. So second nature is this almsgiving on my part that Jesus states, “*let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth*.” I give to the poor when no one is looking because my concern is for the needy. To have concern in other areas in this work is to have one’s priorities on self rather than others.
 3. Note the omnipresence of God (i.e., He sees and knows all things). Though I do my compassionate work in secret so that no one else knows I can rest assured that God’s all seeing eye is upon me (see study # 37; The Omnipresence and omniscience of God).

II. Jesus gives Instructions regarding Prayer (6:5-15):

- A. “*And when ye pray, ye shall not be as the hypocrites: for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, they have received their reward*” (6:5).
1. Another example of doing your righteousness before men rather than God (cf. Matt. 6:1) is to pray out loud in the hearing and site of all so that people will perceive that you are religious or holy.
 2. Again, such individuals receive their immediate reward (i.e., to be seen and perceived of men as holy). Sometimes we are all guilty of looking to what this world can offer us in the here and now. We sometimes desire the acceptance of the world, the riches of the world, the finest delicacies of food, the greatest recreational experiences and so forth. Jesus teaches that our treasures ought to be laid up in heaven (i.e., do right things now for the sake of right... endure times of difficulties with the eye of contentment... do not set your heart to gain greatness, fame, and riches in this earth... cf. Lk. 6:22-26).
 3. The motivation for prayer in the heart of the worldly is that men may see you and think such and such of you. The motivation for the man of faith who prays is to communicate with God the heart’s troubles and spiritual desires.
- B. “*But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thine inner chamber, and having shut thy door, pray to thy Father who is in secret, and thy Father who seeth in secret shall recompense thee*” (6:6).
1. Prayer, i.e., communication with the Lord, is a private issue to the unseen but living God. Jesus expresses the private nature of prayer when instructing His disciples to go behind closed doors to pray. Some go behind close doors to do wicked deeds in private yet note that what takes place in private or secret areas, “*thy Father seeth in secret*.”
 2. Those who do good in the privacy of their homes receive the great reward of heaven. What shall the wicked receive? The wicked receive their just reward too (see above).

- C. *“And in praying use not vain repetitions, as the Gentiles do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not therefore like unto them: for your Father knows what things ye have need of, before ye ask him”* (6:7-8).
1. The idea of “*vain repetitions*” (*battologeō*) = “To say the same thing over and over” (LS 148). The Gentiles apparently were of the practice of saying things to God in prayer over and over as though they were trying to get His attention.
 2. There is a clear difference in persistent often prayers (cf. Lk. 18:1ff) and prayers that have as their content repetitive language.
 3. Again, the omniscience of God is depicted in that He already knows of our needs before we ask of Him (see study # 37). The fact that prayers are directed to God regarding our needs indicates proper subject matter for prayer (only do not repeat the need over and over in prayer) (see study # 38; Prayer).
- D. *“After this manner therefore pray ye. Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one”* (6:9-13).
1. After addressing the pretentious prayer practice of the scribes and Pharisees Jesus delivers instructions for a model prayer.
 2. First, when we pray let us address the heavenly Father that is in heaven.
 3. Secondly, acknowledge that God’s name is “*hallowed*” (*hagiazo*) = “to hallow (set apart as holy, to respect or honor greatly, revere), dedicate” (LS 5).
 4. Thirdly, pray for the kingdom of God. As indicated earlier in this study the “*kingdom*” of God is the church. During the days of Jesus the church had not been established (see study # 9). The Lord thereby states that His disciples ought to pray for its coming. We can pray for the church today:
 - a. Pray for open doors of opportunity to preach so that the kingdom may be enlarged (I Cor. 16:8-9).
 - b. Pray for saints to remain steadfast in the faith (I Cor. 15:58).
 - c. Pray that saints grow spiritually in the knowledge of Jesus (I Pet. 2:1).
 5. Fourthly, Jesus instructs His disciples to pray for their daily sustenance (i.e., bread).
 - a. Physical bread: Certainly all need daily food to sustain themselves in life. Such sustenance shall keep us alive and capable of giving God glory.
 - b. Spiritual bread: Again, all need this bread as well. Such bread shall cause one to never hunger again (Jn. 6:26-35). Paul prayed that the saints of God in Ephesus would be filled with this bread (Eph. 3:14-19).
 6. Fifthly, let us pray for the forgiveness of sins (debts). The word “*debts*” (*opheilema*) = “That which is owed, a debt” (LS 580)... “One who fails in duty, a delinquent, offender Matt. 6:12; a sinner Luke 13:4” (Moulton 296). Jesus reminds His disciples that an important part of prayer is not only to asks for things needful for the body but for the soul as well. When Simon sinned he was commanded to pray to God that his sins may be forgiven (Acts 8:22). Christians are to do no less today (cf. I Jn. 1:8 – 2:3).
 7. Sixthly, let us also pray in relationship to forgiving others of sins committed against us. To seek forgiveness takes an act of humility (cf. Psalms 51). When we sin we ought to humble ourselves and ask the Lord to forgive us (cf. Isa. 57:15; I Jn. 1:8ff). Likewise, when others desire our forgiveness they ought to break the hard pride and asks us to forgive them. When such a spirit of humility is seen in others we are to forgive and go on in a spirit of love (cf. Matt. 18:21-22). A good illustration to prove these points (forgiveness of a debt or sin) is found at Matthew 18:23-35 (the parable of duty toward offenders).
 8. The seventh and final part of the model prayer has to do with “*temptation*” (*peirasmos*) = “trial, temptation” (LS 616)... “a putting to the proof, poof, trial... direct temptation to sin (Lk. 4:13); trial, temptation” (Moulton 314). Jesus explains that His disciples should pray not to be

brought or led into temptation. To “*lead*” or “*bring*” (*eisphero*) = “to bring (suffering) in or upon... to introduce, bring forward, propose... to be brought in, introduced” (LS 234). There are two possibilities of interpretation. First, we know that we can defeat any tempting vice of the devil if we will only resist him and draw near unto God (James 4:7-8). Secondly, one may conclude that if the Lord requests that we pray not to be led of the Father into temptation then there is certainly the capability of the Father to do so. Knowing that God does not and cannot tempt man to sin we know that sinful temptations are not under consideration here (cf. James 1:12ff). Clearly it is appropriate for the Christian to pray that he or she be kept from being introduced to various trials of life (cf. James 1:1ff). Interestingly, we are told that trials are necessary in life yet very grievous to deal with (cf. Rom. 5:3; Heb. 12:11; James 1:2-4) (see study # 39; Trials of Life).

- E. Some translations insert the phrase, “*For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory for ever.*”
- F. “*For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses*” (6:14-15).
 1. The word “*for*” (*gar*) indicates a “because” statement. We ought to pray as Jesus commanded, i.e., pray for our physical and spiritual well being and be willing to forgive others.
 2. One who refuses to forgive others who have asked in humility will not receive forgiveness from God. Why? Because they are in violation to God’s word and the one who does not ask to be forgiven will not receive forgiveness (cf. I Jn. 5:16-17).

III. Jesus Gives Instructions Regarding Fasting (6:16-18):

- A. “*Moreover when ye fast, be not as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces that they may be seen of men to fast. Verily I say unto you, they have received their reward*” (6:16).
 1. Let us keep two things in mind here. First, Jesus is no doubt addressing the scribes and Pharisees here when referring to hypocrites (cf. Matt. 5:20). The scribes and Pharisees were quoting law to the people and doing their righteousness before men to be seen of them. Secondly, let us recall that Jesus is giving examples of ostentatious religious practices. The scribes and Pharisees were guilty of giving to the poor, praying in the street corners, and now fasting and looking like death all so that they may gain the attention of others. Jesus instructs men and women to do these good things before God rather than man.
 2. The word “*fast*” (*nesteuo*) = “fasting, want of food... a fast, religious abstinence from food” (Moulton 277). Jesus instructs His disciples on the methodology of fasting.
 3. The one abstaining from food for spiritual purposes is to first of all not draw attention to yourself with a “*sad countenance*” (*skuthropoi*) = “Of a stern, morose, sour, gloomy, or dejected countenance” (Moulton 370).
 4. Secondly, Jesus states that the one fasting is not to “*disfigure*” (*aphanizousin*) their faces; i.e., “Disfigure in hypocritical sadness” (LS 137).
 5. Those who fast for spiritual purposes and then go about with a look of gloom and doom upon their faces indicate that their purpose is not spiritual but rather an attempt to gain the sympathy and attention of man. When they gain such sympathy and attention Jesus states, “*Verily they have receive their reward.*”
- B. “*But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thy head, and wash thy face; that thou be not seen of men to fast, but of thy Father who is in secret: and thy Father who sees in secret, shall recompense thee*” (6:17-18).
 1. Jesus explains to His disciples that when they fast they ought to “*anoint*” their heads and “*wash thy face.*” Such a fresh look will not give cause of others to notice that you are fasting.
 2. Giving, praying, and fasting are acts of care and reverence toward God. Why should I want others, who have no part in my personal service, to see me doing these things? As my heart looks to the rewards of heaven I ought not to do these personal spiritual practices to be seen of men but rather because I know the omniscience of God in that He see all things done in secret.

- C. Let us consider the history of fasting (see study # 40; Fasting):
1. The Mosaic Law prescribed one fast on the tenth day of the seventh month (The Day of Atonement {Lev. 16:29}). The Israelites were “*afflicting their souls*” (Lev. 16:29) because of the sin that rested upon them.
 2. Other times of fasting are found in Israel’s history:
 - a. Times of national emergency or distress (Judges 20:26; I Sam. 7:6; II Chron. 20:3; Ezr. 8:21-23; Neh. 1:4; Est. 4:16; Jer. 36:9).
 - b. Times of repentance (I Kings 21:27; Neh. 9:1).
 - c. Times of prayer (II Sam. 12:16; Ps. 35:13).
 - d. Times of mourning (II Sam. 1:12; 12:21; Isa. 31:13).
 - e. Fasting during and after the Exile:
 1. The ninth day of the fourth month for the fall of Jerusalem (II Kg. 25:3ff).
 2. The tenth day of the fifth month for the destruction of the temple (Cf. Jer. 52:12ff).
 3. The second day of the seventh month, for the murder of Gedaliah (II Kg. 25:23-25).
 4. The tenth day of the tenth month for the first attack on Jerusalem (II Kg. 25:1).
 3. Length of a fast:
 - a. One day (I Sam. 14:24; II Sam. 3:35).
 - b. One night (Dan. 6:18).
 - c. Three days (Est. 4:16).
 - d. Seven days (I Sam. 31:13; II Sam. 12:16-18).
 - e. Forty days (Ex. 34:28; I Kg. 19:8).
- D. NT history of fasting:
1. Times of mourning: Jesus did not bind fasting on his disciples because there was no time for mourning while he was on earth (Mark 9:14-15).
 2. Jesus fasted before His temptation (Cf. Matt. 4:2; Mk. 1:13).
 3. Those who practiced fasting were warned of ostentatious practices by both Jesus (Matt. 6) and the prophets of old (Isa. 58:5; Joel 2:13; Jer. 14:12).
 4. The apostle Paul fasted after seeing Jesus on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:9).
 5. Paul fasted before his first tour of preaching (Acts 13:2ff).
 6. As Paul is being delivered to Rome as a prisoner, he fasted for fourteen days during the storm in the Mediterranean Sea (Acts 27:33).
- E. Practical applications: Did Jesus or the apostles command fasting upon NT Christians?
1. “Superstitious ignorance could easily interpret this compulsion into an expression of divine will, and so consider fasting as a religious duty. It was believed that the gods were jealous of the pleasures of men and that abstinence would propitiate their favor. As a result we find that fasting as a religious duty is almost universal” (Unger’s Bible Dictionary pg. 401).
 2. Consider Paul’s statement to the Roman brethren: “*Let not him that eateth set at nought him that eateth not; and let not him that eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him*” (14:3). Though this text is speaking of eating or not eating meats the principle remains the same. “*The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit*” (Romans 14:17).
 3. A test of fellowship can in no way be imposed upon the man who decides by conviction to eat or not eat in a fast. “*Destroy not with thy meat him for whom Christ died*” (14:15b).
 4. Paul told the Corinthian brethren, “*But food will not commend us to God: neither, if we eat not, are we the worse; nor, if we eat, are we the better*” (I Cor. 8:8).

IV. True Treasure (6:19-24):

- A. “*Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust consume, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth consume, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where thy treasure is, there will thy heart be also*” (6:19-21).

1. A story is told of a rich man named David, an owner of a beautiful mansion, giving a friend a tour. David directed the attention of his visitor to valuable pictures and other articles of treasure, expecting to be praised for his taste; but the moralist said, "Ah, David, these are the things that make death terrible!" (unknown source). The pretentious practices of the scribes and Pharisees are now put in contrast with what God desires from the heart of man.
 2. "*Treasure*" (*thesaurus*) = "To collect and lay up stores or wealth, treasure up" (Moulton 195). Jesus compares and contrasts two treasures. First, there is the treasure of the world. The treasure of the world is subject to moth, rust, and thieves. Said treasure has a fixed life and then it is gone forever. Secondly is the heavenly treasure. Heavenly treasure is eternal and thereby is not affected by moth, rust, or thieves.
 3. Jesus makes a penetrating statement regarding the heart of man by saying, "*where thy treasure is, there will thy heart be also.*" The human mind (bible heart) is the storehouse, bank or treasury. The mind that is set on accumulating the worlds' goods will receive the temporal reward. The mind that is set on accumulating spiritual treasures shall have an eternal reward:
 - a. The heart acceptable to God is he who mines the scriptures for wisdom (Eph. 2:1-5).
 - b. The heart that truly says, "*thy testimonies also are my delight and my counsellors*" (Psalms 119:24) is a mind interested in eternity.
 4. Question: is it sinful to have a house, car, savings account, retirement fund, etc. Is it sinful for you to desire your child to excel in a music class, athletics, or academics? Is it sinful for me to exercise so that I remain trim and feeling full of energy? All of these things really have nothing to do with my spiritual well being and it is possible that this is the reason that the apostle Paul once wrote, "*For bodily exercise is profitable for a little; but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life which now is, and of that which is to come*" (I Tim. 4:8). Jesus is not saying that it is sinful to have things or to desire to loose weight but rather He is examining where the true treasure of man's heart is.
 5. Jesus' clear message is that one whose purpose in this life is to gain more and more of this worlds goods rather than storing up spiritual treasures of knowledge and wisdom will gain their immediate reward (i.e., riches, fun, weight loss and comfort). There is nothing wrong with having the goods of this world; however, when the treasures of this world take precedence in my life I need to do some re-prioritizing. No one can take away my heavenly home; however, earthly goods can be stolen and consumed due to their temporal nature.
- B.** "*The lamp of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. 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 the darkness!*" (6:22-23).
1. This verse is thematic of the study going back to Matthew 5:21. If my heart's purpose is anger, lust, selfish, untrue, vengeful, selective in love, and desiring the praise of men my mind's "*eye*" is evil. To have a "*single*" (*haplous*) eye = "simple, uncompounded; sound, perfect" (Moulton 40)... "simple, absolutely true" (LS 94). A lamp is used to make manifest areas that would otherwise be dark and unknowable. Without a lamp we would stumble in the dark. Apparently Jesus is using the eye of our bodies as a representative an individual's purpose, intentions, or interest in this life. If my intentions, purpose, and interest in life is sound and true to God then my whole body shall be "*full of light.*"
 2. "*Light*" and "*darkness*" are often contrasted in the Bible.
 - a. "*Light*" (*phos*) = "pure radiance, perfect brightness" (Moulton 432)... "light" (LS 878). "Light is continually used as figurative of holiness and purity (Prov. 6:23; Isa. 5:20; Rom. 13:12)" (New Unger's Bible Dictionary, pp. 777). Bible light, in relationship to God and man, indicates holiness, righteousness, justice, and a state of perfection (cf. Eph. 5:8ff). The apostle Peter sates, "*And we have the word of prophecy made more sure; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts:*" (II Pet. 1:19). Light represents the state of God and His

throne (I Jn. 1:5; I Tim. 6:16); God's word (Jn. 12:36; II Cor. 4:3-6), God's Son (Jn. 9:5); and God's people (Col. 1:12; I Thess. 5:5).

- b. *"Darkness"* (*skotia*) = "moral darkness" (Moulton 370). The word of God reveals *"darkness"* to be the abode of the wicked (Isa. 13:9-11; Amos 5:18-20; Eph. 6:12; Col. 1:13) and the state of the un-repenting (cf. Matt. 6:22-24; Luke 11:34-36; Acts 26:18; Eph. 5:14).
3. The *"evil eye"* is thereby a heart whose intention and interest is things of this world (wickedness and unwilling to repent of sins committed). The *"single eye"* is a heart whose intentions and interest are in the things of God's word.
- C. *"No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon"* (6:24).
 1. One's whose eye is evil is one whose heart is set upon the treasures of this life. Such a one does not look to eternity but rather *"serves mammon."* The *"single eye"* is one that *"serves God."* Said eye looks to eternity and is interested in the word of God. Two paths in life are thereby examined.
 2. What is *"mammon?"* *"Mammon"* (*mammonas*) = "wealth and riches" (Moulton 257). "Riches" (Smith's Bible Dictionary, pp. 377). Refers to wealth, property, anything of value. The word stood in antithetic parallelism to God" (ISBE; V. 3, pp. 232). A case point and excellent example of one who seeks to serve wealth and God is seen in the scribes and Pharisees. Apparently the scribes and Pharisees were guilty of treasuring up riches in this world rather than with God as is evidenced in their *"doing their righteousness before men to be seen of them"* (cf. Matt. 6:1). Their real interest was in man rather than God (see study # 11).
 3. Jesus tells us that we cannot be divided in service. I cannot have one foot in the world and the other used in service to God. Each direction of life represents a purpose that is opposed to each other. To go two different directions at the same time is impossible.

V. **Do not be Anxious in regards to the things of this Life (6:25-34):**

- A. *"Therefore I say unto you, Be not anxious 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 the food, and the body than the raiment?"* (6:25).
 1. The word *"anxious"* (*merimnao*) = "to expend careful thought, to concern one's self" (Moulton 263). "To care for, be anxious about (worried and distressed about some uncertain event or matter), think earnestly upon, scan minutely" (LS 499). Sometimes we worry and expend earnest care and concern over matters such as food, drink, and clothing.
 2. Jesus challenges His audience to think on things higher than food, drink, and clothing. Yes we need such things in this life but should my energy be expended in attaining these things?
- B. *"Behold the birds of the heaven, that they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not ye of much more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add one cubit unto the measure of his life? And why are ye anxious concerning raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God doth so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?"* (6:26-30).
 1. If God takes care of the birds of the heaven that do no storing into barns and clothes the lilies of the fields that neither toil nor spin then surely God wants me to sit back and do no work in this life to sustain myself. Not so! God's design in His universe is one of gracious favor upon those who complete His instructions (look to the examples of Noah and the flood, Joshua and Jericho, Namaan and his leprosy, Nadab and Abihu, etc.). There is always something for the Lord's people to do in order to obtain His favors. Paul refers to this "doing" as *"obedience"* in Romans 6:16ff.
 2. Jesus is not instructing us to quit our jobs and sit back waiting for His second appearance like some of the Thessalonians were doing (cf. II Thess. 2:1ff). We are told to work hard in this life

- (cf. II Thess. 3:10-11). The author of Hebrews uses an illustration of an inheritance in relation to man's eternal abode at Hebrews 9:15ff. The Proverb writer tells the slothful and lazy to look to the ant for an example of one who wisely stores a way for a rainy day (cf. Prov. 6:6ff). People work their whole lives and have something to turn over to their children and there is nothing sinful in this (cf. II Cor. 12:14).
3. The point is that when I have my purpose directed in the right paths through God's word I will be working hard and attaining things yet my true goal in this life is eternity with God. Paul was a tentmaker by trade (cf. Acts 18:1-3) but the one thing he did was to press into heaven (cf. Phil. 3:13-15). Paul did not sin by making tents for money and neither did he sin by taking wages from churches for preaching (cf. II Cor. 11:7ff).
- C. *"Be not anxious, saying, what shall we eat? Or, what shall we drink? Or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the Gentiles seek; for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all things"* (6:31-32).
1. If I am doing my part to work hard and earn my wages God's promise is that He will care for my physical needs in this life (I need not worry about those things) (cf. Eph. 6:6-7; Col. 3:22-24).
 2. God knows all my needs so I need not exhaust the Lord with repetitive prayers (Matt. 6:7) nor should I worry myself to death over the things of this world.
- D. *"But seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Be not therefore anxious for the morrow: for the morrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof"* (6:33-34).
1. God's *"kingdom"* is His church (cf. Matt. 4:23) on earth and in heaven eternally. The church is comprised of citizens of heaven (cf. Eph. 2:19ff).
 2. Jesus instructs His disciples to *"seek"* (*zeteo*) = "strive for" (Moulton 182)... "to search after... to search or inquire into, investigate... desire" (LS 344). The true affections of the Christian's heart ought to be spiritual. We ought to set our affections on things above (Col. 3:2). Paul tells the Galatian brethren, *"And they that are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with the passions and the lusts thereof"* (Gal. 5:24) (see study # 24).
 3. When I am doing my part all things needful will be supplied. So don't worry about the things of tomorrow.

Chapter 7

Prelude to chapter 7

Jesus continues distinctive preaching against the religious hypocrisy of his day. He identifies the supposed pious men calling them by name; i.e., the scribes and Pharisees (Cf. Matt. 5:20). These were the false teachers of Jesus day (see study # 30). They put the traditions of men before the word of God (Matt. 15:3). For this cause Jesus says at the conclusion of this sermon, *"beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves"* (Matt. 7:15). These men were guilty of murder, adultery, making false oaths of blasphemy, vengeance and hypocritical piety in the form of the ostentatious religious practices of giving to the poor, praying, and fasting. The treasure in their heart was set on the world rather than on God. Chapter seven of Matthew opens with the issue of judging. Apparently the scribes and Pharisees had no problem with judging everyone else, yet they could not see the enormity of their own faults.

I. When to judge and not judge (7:1-6):

- A. *"Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured unto you"* (7:1-2).
1. The word *"judge"* (*krino*) = "to separate, distinguish... pick out... to judge unjustly... to bring to trial, accuse... to pass sentence upon, to condemn" (LS 451). "Of the judgment which people

- customarily pass upon (and thereby seek to influence) the lives and actions of their fellowmen... b. esp. in an unfavorable sense pass an unfavorable judgment upon, criticize, find fault with, condemn” (AG 452). “To separate; to make a distinction between; to exercise judgment upon; to estimate” (Moulton 241). The activity is obviously a singling out of an individual and putting him or her on trial for a supposed crime.
2. The Lord instructs His disciples not to “judge” (i.e., to condemn or separate one from others because of a fault on their part). We must be careful not to assign a teaching to Jesus that He never intended for man to accept. Some believe that all judging is sinful because of this verse. If this is so, how could a church ever make judgments over individuals who desired to serve as an elder (I Tim. 3:1-7) and deacon (I Tim. 3:8-13)? How could we withdraw from the disorderly if we have not made a judgment regarding their wicked works? Paul was not even among the Corinthian brethren when he “judged him that hath so wrought this thing” (I Cor. 5:3). How can the Christian exercise Bible love without passing judgments on others spiritual state (I Cor. 5:5; Eph. 5:11; I Jn. 4:7-11)? Jesus instructed the disciples on judging at John 7:24 saying, “Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment.” The word “appearance” (*opsis*) = “Aspect (particular facial expression, appearance to the eye) of a person or thing” (LS 582). If I were to make a judgment upon the scribes and Pharisees by mere appearance (i.e., what I see them doing and hear them saying in the public’s eye) I may draw the wrong conclusions. I may say that these men are godly because they pray, fast, and teach the laws of God in the public hearing. I may go on to say that the scribes and Pharisees are caring because I see them giving to the poor. My judgments would be erroneous in this case because I made my judgments based upon mere “appearance.” Herein is another important piece of the puzzle in determining a man’s inner character. I cannot always tell what one’s character is based on “appearances.” One may come to worship service every Sunday and Wednesday; however, their homes are wrecked because of what they do in secret places. Therefore I cannot judge the matters that I do not have the facts on (see study # 41; Judging Others).
 3. But again, some will turn to the apostle Paul’s statements on judging at Romans 14. Paul states, “Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge ye this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock in his brother’s way, or an occasion of falling” (Rom. 14:13). We ought to pay careful attention to the word “therefore” at the beginning of verse 13. The word “therefore” demands that we take into consideration the context. The context of Romans 14 is the area of religious indifference. Christians are not to pass condemning judgments upon other Christians who do things in religious service to God that are neither prescribed by God nor forbidden (see Rom. 14:3-4).
 4. The Christian is thereby not to judge by appearance (cf. II Cor. 13:1) and neither is he or she to judge another in areas of religious indifference (Rom. 14:13). Judgments must be made; however, in matters that appertain to the souls of men (i.e., righteous judgments) (Jn. 7:24; Rom. 16:17; II Thess. 3:14).
 5. If you are one who runs down brethren for their choices in life: i.e. whether or not one has two or ten children, whether or not those children are home-schooled or public schooled, how many vehicles or the model of vehicle others own etc. etc., you will be judged by the same measure. Are you prepared for that?
 6. The measure you “mete” (*metreo*) = “to measure in any way... to be measured” (LS 507). What standard I judge others by will be the standard I am measured by too. Here is a principle or rule of thumb that would be good to remember when I am judging others.
- B. “And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother’s eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me cast out the mote out of thine eye; and lo, the beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, ast out first the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother’s eye” (7:3-5).

1. Sometimes we are so eager to pass a judgment upon others that we become fault finders to our own fault. We look diligently at our brethren trying to find a fault with them yet we cannot see that much fault lies with ourselves.
 2. It seems easy to see everyone else's faults and poor judgments but ever so difficult to judge ourselves by the same standard we judge others.
 - a. A "*mote*" is "a dry stalk or twig, a straw; chaff" (Thayer 326).
 - b. A "*beam*" is "a bearing-beam, in the roof or floor of a house" (LS 208). "Beam of wood" (AG 203).
 3. The contrast is easily understood. One man has a speck of wood in his eye; the other has the entire beam in his. What that says is one truly believes he is better, smarter, stronger, more informed etc. than others because "I" am filled with pride.
 - a. How readily we sometimes see the tiniest shortcoming of others yet refuse to measure ourselves by the same standard.
 - b. We all have been guilty of judging others by a higher standard than we judge ourselves.
 - c. Where is our love for each other and ourselves (I Pet. 1:22)????
 - d. The solution is to examine first your own self: "the pot should not call the kettle black." If the scribes and Pharisees felt that others were not giving enough to the poor, they ought to first examine what they are doing for the poor. If the Pharisees felt that others were not praying as much and fervently as they, let them first examine their own prayer life. If others did not fast as often as the scribes and Pharisees, let them examine their own practices first.
- C. "*Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast your pearls before the swine, lest haply they trample them under their feet, and turn and rend you*" (7:6).
1. Verse 6 is inseparably connected to verse 1-5. Our judgments must be restrained and measured; however, they too must be judiciously discriminate.
 2. If "*dogs*" and "*swine*" are representations of men on this earth then Jesus is telling His disciples to make a judgment to determine said individual's status. Dogs and swine care nothing about holy matters such as the gospel of Jesus Christ. Trying to do something good for a stray dog or wild swine can often turn out detrimental. The animal may turn on you and do harm. A dog or swine man would be one who makes it manifest that their desires are for the things in the here and now. They are set on gratifying the fleshly desires and needs and there is no spiritual thought to their actions.
 3. That which is holy is depicted as pearls. Why would I want to throw pearls at a dog or swine and conclude that I have helped them? Likewise, if I try to teach the precious gospel message (i.e., it is compared to being more precious than rubies at Prov. 3:15) to those who have no spiritual care they will only "*rend*" me. The spiritual man views the gospel as more to be desired than food, gold, or silver (cf. Ps. 19:9-10) while the fleshly minded dogs and swine care nothing and see no value in the gospel message.
 - a. Jesus did not cast His precious and holy pearls of truth to dogs and swine (cf. Jn. 6:66ff).
 - b. The apostles did not cast their pearls before dogs and swine (Acts 13:46).
 - c. No Christian today is to cast their pearls before dogs and swine (Matt. 7:6; II Tim. 3:5).
 4. One may conclude that we are to thereby judge wicked men unworthy of the gospel and never even attempt to teach them. Thanks be to God that the one who taught me did not draw this conclusion. Note that the word "*give*" is a Greek verb in the aorist tense which indicates "past action without indicating completion, continuation, or repetition of this action" (AHD 117). The word clearly indicates a "past" attempt at teaching but **not** a "continuation" of said act. When we examine the lives of Jesus and the apostles (as the examples above indicate) we find that they did teach the wicked; however, before the wicked turned and rend them they gave them up to their unclean desires.

II. Take an interest in Spiritual things and you will not be Disappointed (7:7-11):

- A. *“Ask, and it shall be give you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asks receives; and he that seeks finds; and to him that knocks it shall be opened”* (7:7-8).
1. Jesus instructs His disciples to do three things in reference to giving spiritual effort in this life (see study # 24):
 - a. First, the Lord tells His disciples to *“ask”* i.e., “as for, crave, demand” (LS 24). The inquisitive mind must have answers to life’s questions. God’s Word provides all the necessary answers to spiritual questions for those who desire to know. Jesus said, *“ye shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free”* (Jn. 8:32).
 - b. Secondly, Jesus instructs His disciples to *“seek”* i.e., “search after, search out” (LS 344). Those who really don’t care about a particular object or subject will give little effort to research and search after things. Things of little value are rarely sought after as well. When the Christian realizes the importance and value of the eternal soul we will give great diligence to find all necessary to secure our eternal heavenly abode (cf. II Pet. 1:10-11).
 - c. Thirdly, the Lord tells His disciples to *“knock”* i.e., knock at the door (LS, AG). The Christian is metaphorically going from door to door seeking out the right paths to salvation. With each open door come further opportunities to learn and teach others. All three of these terms, “ask, seek, and knock” indicate a disposition of interest and effort to find. Each of these words are Greek present tense which indicates ongoing action (Friberg 20). Heaven is not going to fall into our laps on accident. We must ask, seek, and knock (that is, we must give some effort).
 2. The Lord explains that those who demonstrate such interest and efforts in life will not be disappointed.
- B. *“Or what man is there of you, who, if his son shall ask him for a loaf, will give him a stone; or if he shall ask for a fish, will give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father who is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?”* (7:9-11).
1. When I strive in this life to please the heavenly Father by asking, seeking, and knocking to find the right path in this life the Lord will not ignore me. The apostle John said, *“And this is the boldness which we have toward him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us: and if we know that he heareth us whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions which we have asked of him”* (I Jn. 5:14-15).
 2. I would not give my son a rock or a serpent for food. When we are viewed as God’s children He will give us the things needful for our spiritual sustenance as we ask, seek, and knock (cf. I Pet. 2:2; I Jn. 3:1).
- C. *“All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them: for this is the law and the prophets”* (7:12).
1. This verse is often referred to as the “golden rule.” To do to others as you would have them do to you is a statement of respect, kindness, friendliness, gentleness and any other mode that I would like to be treated as by others. I should display these same attributes toward others if I expect to be treated by them in this manner.
 2. A lawyer once asked Jesus what the *“great commandment in the law”* was. Jesus replied by quoting to him from Deut. 6:5 regarding loving God with all your heart and mind. The Lord then said that a second great command is that we *“love our neighbor as thyself”* (quoted from Lev. 19:18) (cf. Matt. 22:34-40). The law and the prophets identified these teachings as authoritative.
 3. The point is that if I want to be treated fair, kind, friendly, gentle etc. by others then I need to treat others with the same attitude because this is what God’s law says. I would not want others to judge me by their opinions or treat me with disrespect so the Lord commands that I treat others as I would have them treat me.

- D. *“Enter ye in by the narrow gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many are they that enter in thereby. For narrow is the gate, and straightened the way, that leads unto life, and few are they that find it”* (7:13-14).
1. Interestingly, the word “*enter*” is in the aorist tense which indicates past action without completion (see Friberg 20). The fact of the matter is that all of us have already chose a path to take and are currently following it. Whether we end up on that course in the end will be determined by the choices we make now and in the future. Some have “*entered in by the narrow gate*” and others are walking down the path of the “*wide gate.*” Note that if we have already chosen a path to follow this verse cannot be talking about entering into heaven but rather it is speaking of a course that leads to heaven (life) or “*destruction*” (hell).
 - a. The word “*life*” is generally used to indicate one’s spiritual standing before God. One is alive as opposed to dead spiritually when walking according to the commandments of God (cf. Eph. 2:1ff). The path of life is a “*straitened*” way (*stene*) = “narrow, strait... metaphorically : narrow, close confined” (LS 744). The “*straitened*” way of life is identified by truth.
 - b. The word “*destruction*” (*apoleia*) = “eternal ruin, perdition” (Moulton 45). “Done for, lost, ruined” (LS 101). This Greek word is found in various NT texts such as Romans 9:22; Phil. 3:19 etc. Interestingly, Paul used the word to speak of those who follow a life that is not governed by the authority of Jesus Christ at II Thessalonians 2:3. At II Thessalonians 1 Paul is speaking of those who walk the path of destruction and the punishment they face for performing unauthorized works in this life. Paul writes, “*who shall suffer punishment, even eternal destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of his might...*” (II Thess. 1:9). No doubt the destruction spoken of here is the place of eternal torment in the lake of fire (i.e., hell) (cf. Rev. 20:10, 15).
 2. The way of destruction is considered a “*wide and broad*” path to follow in life because it is no holds bared. The way of destruction is a way of doing whatever one feels is the right way for self to follow (II Cor. 2:17). This life is not governed by God’s laws. The flesh governs this life. Paul writes, “*because the mind of the flesh is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be: and they that are in the flesh cannot please God*” (Rom. 8:7-8).
 3. Such a wide and broad path in life is attractive to the “*many*” whereas a governed life is sought after and followed by the “*few.*”
 - a. “*Many*” (*polus*) = “many, multitudes” (LS 658). The Greek word *polus* is used at Matthew 26:28 when Jesus said, “*for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many unto remission of sins.*” Though the Lord was crucified for the masses of humanity only a few would receive the remission of sins and continue on the narrow path of authorized living.
 - b. “*Few*” (*oligos*) = “small in number” (Moulton 286)... “of number or quantity, few, little, scanty, small; too few to do a thing” (LS 551). In relation to those who walk in error the truth seekers are few. The exact Greek word *oligos* is used again at Matthew 22:14 when Jesus said, “*For many are called, but few chosen.*”
 4. Jesus said, “*strive to enter in by the narrow door: for many, I say unto you, shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able*” (Lk. 13:24). The word “*strive*” (*agonizomai*) = “to contend for a prize, esp. in the public games... generally, to struggle, to exert oneself” (LS 11). I see two aspects of the Christian’s life that are a must (see study # 24):
 - a. First, we are to recognize the attainment of heaven as a prize to be won (cf. I Cor. 9:24-25; Phil. 3:14, 20). I need to exert all of my competitive juices to win this prize.
 - b. Secondly, we must note that the prize is obtained by great struggle and exerted energy. Luke records the teachings of Paul and Barnabas at Derbe of Galatia saying that they were, “*confirming the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God*” (Acts 14:22).

5. Attaining heaven will not be impossible; however, it will be a struggle that is exhibited in the life of all who give great diligence to make it (cf. II Pet. 1:10 / cf. Jesus' statements in the sermon at Matt. 7:7).

III. Beware of False Prophets (7:15-20):

- E. *“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves. By their fruits ye shall know them”* (7:15-16a).
 1. We noted above (i.e., Matt. 7:13-14) that the *“broad path”* in life is governed by self will and the flesh (cf. Rom. 8:7-8). The *“narrow path”* leads to eternal life with the heavenly Father and is a life governed by the authority of Jesus Christ (Col. 3:17). The instructions or teachings I follow and obey determine what path I am currently on.
 2. Jesus, seeing the importance of His disciples remaining on the *“narrow path,”* delivers a warning by saying, *“Beware of false prophets.”*
 - a. To *“beware”* (*prosecho*) = *“To beware of, take heed of, guard against”* (Moulton 349).
 - b. *“False prophet”* (*pseudo-prophetes*) = *“a false prophet, one who falsely claims to speak by divine inspiration, whether as a foreteller of future events, or as a teacher of doctrines”* (Moulton 442). The NT mentions by name various prophets such as Agabus (Acts 11:28; 21:10), Philip’s daughters (Acts 21:9), the apostles were also considered prophets (I Cor. 14). Though many definitions of the word prophet reveals him (or her) to be one who foretells of future events we also find that they taught people spiritual principles. Jeremiah records, *“Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, Harken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you: they teach you vanity; they speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of Jehovah”* (Jer. 23:16). The test as to whether the prophet was of God or not was the validity or origin of his teachings (cf. Deut. 18:20-22). The NT gives a multitude of warnings against pseudo prophets and teachers (cf. pseudo-Christ Matt. 24:24; pseudo apostles II Cor. 11:13 and pseudo teachers II Pet. 2:1). The pseudo teacher does not teach the totality of truth but rather *“another doctrine”* (cf. Gal. 1:6; I Tim. 1:3).
 3. Jesus warns that the *pseudo’s* have an exterior of sincerity, humility and love; however, within they have no love of the truth. Their true identity, though they would deny it, is a ravening wolf. Such an animal has the capability of tearing to shreds the spiritual soul of man.
 4. How do Christians identify and avoid such individuals? Jesus tells us in the future tense, *“by their fruit you shall know them”* (7:15, 20) (see study # 30).
- F. *“Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree brings forth good fruit; but the corrupt tree brings forth evil fruit”* (7:16b-17).
 1. Teachers of spiritual instructions are compared to trees that bear fruit such as grapes, figs, and evil fruit.
 2. The good tree or true disciple of Christ teaches nothing but the purity of the doctrine of Jesus Christ. The tree that produces evil fruit is the teacher who teaches false doctrines (teachings that are not revealed in the word of God or a twisted version thereof).
- G. *“A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that brings not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Therefore by their fruits ye shall know them”* (7:18-20).
 1. It is impossible for one who is teaching truth to bring about evil fruit as a result of his teaching. This does not say that it is impossible for a man or woman who loves God to teach false doctrines but rather when truthful teaching takes place there is no evil in it. Likewise, when the false teacher teaches a damnable doctrine there is nothing good that can come of it. The fruit is thereby the teaching and the consequential spiritual life or death that results from the one who ingest it. If I take in the fruit of false teaching I will die spiritually.
 2. Jesus concludes the matter by stating, *“By their fruits (teaching) ye shall know them.”* Many trees are similar in appearance (a multitude of varieties of oaks in the *quercus* family). Without a knowledge of dendrology (the science of tree identification) one may not be able to differentiate one oak from another (especially during the winter months of dormancy).

Likewise many teachings of the pseudo may have a ring of truth to the untrained ear; however, those who diligently study God's Word ought to make the clear distinction. We must be aware that the devil and his doctrines can have the appearance of an "*angel of light*" (II Cor. 11:14). Knowledge and understanding is thereby a must for the Christian (see study # 30).

IV. Deceived or not deceived, that is the Question (7:21-23):

A. "*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 who is in heaven*" (7:21).

1. There are multitudes of honestly mistaken people. They truly believe that their worship and acts of goodness are pleasing to the Lord when in all reality the Lord has rejected them. Many false teachers teach error not with the purpose of being a raving wolf; however, their fruit identifies them as such (see study # 30). Jesus now deals with such individuals. Jesus reveals the fact that truth alone ("*the will of my Father*") is the **standard** by which a man is judged. When one teaches and practices truth they are accepted of God. When one teaches and practices error they are rejected of God. Truth is the standard by which man and woman will one day be judged (cf. Jn. 12:48) (see study # 42; The Standard of Truth).
2. The "*kingdom of heaven*" under consideration would be the saved on into eternity. Honestly mistaken people will not be saved. Honestly mistaken teachers will not be saved. Only those who "*do the will of my Father*" will be saved from eternal punishment (see study # 30; Sincere False Teachers). Please note that one's interpretation of God's word does not determine the truth. Truth stands alone and is not subject to a variety of interpretations. There is only one truth for all mankind and is to be understood by all alike (cf. Lk. 8:15; I Jn. 2:4; 3:7-8).

B. "*Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy name, and by thy name cast out demons, and by thy name do many mighty works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity*" (7:22-23).

1. Judgment of man's soul is under consideration in relation to the standard of God's word (cf. Jn. 12:48). "*That day*" must thereby be the final judgment day of mankind (see study # 43; The Final Judgment of Mankind). The Day of Judgment will come and all humanity will stand before the Lord and give account of the things done while in the flesh (cf. Rev. 20:12). The Lord shall make a judgment upon the soul of each man based upon what they did and taught while on this earth in relationship to revealed revelation. When the Lord states to the erring, "*Depart from me, ye that work iniquity*" there will be much clamoring by those who thought their ways were correct when in all reality they have been weighed in the balance and found wanting in relation to truth.
2. The word "*iniquity*" (*anomia*) = "lawlessness" (LS 74). I John 3:4 reveal lawlessness to be sin. The individual governed and teaching by the flesh has ignored the authoritative teachings of God and will in no way receive a heavenly home. There will be no un-forgiven lawless person in the kingdom of heaven. Jesus is admonishing us not to deceive ourselves. Truth is here for all to take advantage of now.

V. Wise or Foolish, which will it Be? (7:24-27):

A. "*Every one therefore that hears these words of mine, and does them, shall be likened unto a wise man, who built his house upon the rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon the rock*" (7:24-25).

1. The way to heaven is compared to being a "*narrow*" or "*straitened*" way (Matt. 7:13-14). Christians ought to thereby beware of those who teach a different gospel that leads one down the "*broad*" path of "*destruction*" (Matt. 7:15ff). One's position in truth rather than one's own fleshly will determines where eternity is spent (Matt. 7:21-23). With truth being the standard whereby man is judged set before us Jesus now states the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount.
2. Hearing and doing the words of Jesus Christ are compared to one building a house upon a foundation of "*rock*." The "*rock*" is the truth (cf. Eph. 2:20) and there is no other way to be saved (Acts 4:12) (see study # 42).

3. When the destructive rain, flood, and winds of discouragement and erroneous teaching come upon such a one there is no hurting it. Such a one is grounded in truth and will not be swayed away (cf. Col. 1:23).
- B. *“And every one that hears these words of mine, and does them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and smote upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall thereof”* (7:26-27).
1. No doubt the *“house”* in the Lord’s illustration represents the soul of man.
 2. The soul that is founded in truth will not fall into destruction yet the soul that is founded upon the loose sands of false teaching, error, self will, and fleshly desires will certainly crumble in the day of judgment.
- C. *“And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished these words, the multitudes were astonished at his teaching: for he taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes”* (7:28-29).
1. *“These words,”* i.e., the Sermon on the Mount, was preached to the *“multitudes”* (cf. Matt. 5:1).
 2. The multitude’s response to the sermon was *“astonishment”* (*ekplesso*) = “to drive out of one’s senses, to amaze, astound... to be astonished at a thing... to be struck with panic fear of...” (LS 243).
 3. Jesus had now thoroughly exposed the scribes and Pharisees. The people were able to see a difference in the Lord’s teaching and the teaching of the scribes. The Lord’s teaching was authoritative and of divine origin whereas the scribes were obviously teaching a watered down spiritual message (see study # 44; Distinctive Gospel Preaching / cf. Titus 2:1).

Summary of the Sermon on the Mount

The Sermon on the Mount is the gospel of the Kingdom, the church of Jesus Christ to come (Matt. 4:23). Its principles are timeless. The sermon primarily, and successfully, portrays the supreme value of the soul. Secondly, Jesus gives principles that regulate the hearts of men and divine principles that govern the very conduct of men. Lastly, the sermon expresses the all sufficient authority and deity of Jesus. Moses recorded at Leviticus 11:44, *“For I am Jehovah your God: sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy; for I am holy.”* The Law revealed a way to *be* holy before Jehovah God to the ancients through the process of ceremonial cleaning. The prophet Jeremiah foretold of a day when the laws of God would be written on the hearts of man and forgiveness of sins obtained through Christ (Jer. 31:31ff comp. to Heb. 8:6ff). The perfect and holy man of God, in the NT days, would be one who had the laws of God written on his heart, that is, individuals whose inner man was governed by the revelation of Jesus Christ (Acts 3:22ff).

The Sermon on the Mount marks the beginning of instructions given to man that would eventually enable him to have complete fellowship with God. Jesus said, *“think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets: I came not to destroy but to fulfil”* (Matt. 5:17). God’s expectations of man’s perfection had not changed at the time Jesus delivered this sermon and even now. Jesus reveals in the Sermon on the Mount that God continues to demand perfection. Jesus said, *“Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect”* (Matt. 5:48).

Man’s Thoughts can Condemn Him

The Sermon on the Mount takes into consideration man’s activities and thoughts. The prophet Jeremiah said that *“it is not in a man that walks to direct his steps”* in relation to spiritual matters (cf. Jer. 10:23). Jesus preaches the *“gospel of the kingdom”* (Matt. 4:23) in this sermon and reveals a standard by which man is to walk. One has aptly said, “The greatest of all sins is to be conscious of none.” When we complete a study of the Sermon on the Mount, we are left feeling exposed and bare. We see our shortcoming ever so clearly. The intense sting of guilt is ever enlightening and causes us great fear. Jesus reveals that the emotion of anger, the look of lust, the spoken word of swearing, the thought of revenge and hatred toward enemies are all sinful. Who among us has not been guilty of such thoughts of sin? We are all condemned in this Sermon, and this is why we are left with guilt, yet not without hope, at its conclusion.

The heart of man is what Jesus is after in the Sermon on the Mount. The Psalmists said, “*Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life*” (Prov. 4:23). Jesus teaches that the thought of sin is just as wrong as the action itself. The heart of man must be trained, and this is the task of Jesus and later the inspired apostles. When man’s heart is right with God, his service will be more than mere mechanical movements. Man’s good deeds of giving, praying, and fasting will be more than mere signs to be seen of men (Cf. Matt. 6:1ff). The conduct of man will have purpose, “*laying up for yourselves treasures in heaven*” (Matt. 6:20).

The Deity of Christ Revealed

Jesus delivers a powerful sermon that not only defines man’s conduct but also defines His deity and authority. Six times in the sermon Jesus states the Law of Moses on a particular issue and follows it with, “*but I say*.” “Who but God could speak thus: with words of such absolute authority, such sublime insight into man’s failures and needs, and the consciousness of the perfection of heaven?” (Foster 485). The multitudes that heard this sermon were astonished and concluded that Jesus’ preaching was done with great authority (Matt. 7:28-29).

A Contrast between Those of the World and Those of Christ

Those who would be of Christ are depicted in the beatitudes (Matt. 5:3-10) (i.e., poor in spirit, mourn over sin, meek, hunger and thirst for righteousness, merciful, the pure in heart, peacemakers, and those persecuted for righteousness’ sake). Those of the world care for the things of this world. Their motivation is immediate gain. Jesus singles out the scribes and Pharisees and exposes their worldly interest (cf. Matt. 5:20). The scribes and Pharisees were interested in doing their “*righteousness before men to be seen of them*” (Matt. 6:1). These men reveled in the attention they received from others when they gave to the poor, prayed, and fasted. Jesus tells all that do such things that, “*They have received their reward*” (i.e., immediate as opposed to eternal gains) (Matt. 6:5). The Christian, on the other hand, looks not to the treasures of this life but rather to the treasures in heaven (Matt. 6:20).

A Standard is in Place Whereby Man is to be Judged

Let not the Christian judge others by his own opinions, but rather judge righteous judgments (cf. Matt. 7:1ff; Jn. 7:24). The truth belongs to those who humbly seek after an eternity with God as opposed to those whose care is only for this world (Matt. 7:6). Truth seekers will “*seek, ask, and knock*” in diligent effort to walk the straight and narrow path revealed in God’s word (Matt. 7:7-14). Knowing that truth alone saves, we are to “*beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves*” (Matt. 7:15). Jesus explains to the multitudes that said individuals will always be known by the fruit or teaching they represent.

The standard of God’s word determines whether one produces good or evil fruit. Many today are walking in ignorance, and some teach and receive erring doctrines from pure motives; however, when the standard of revealed truth is not upheld, all shall fall into condemnation (Matt. 7:21-23). The standard is the rock foundation of Christ’s teachings (cf. Matt. 7:24ff; Eph. 2:20). All who neglect by design or in ignorance shall lose their soul into eternity.

The Greatest Sermon Ever Delivered?

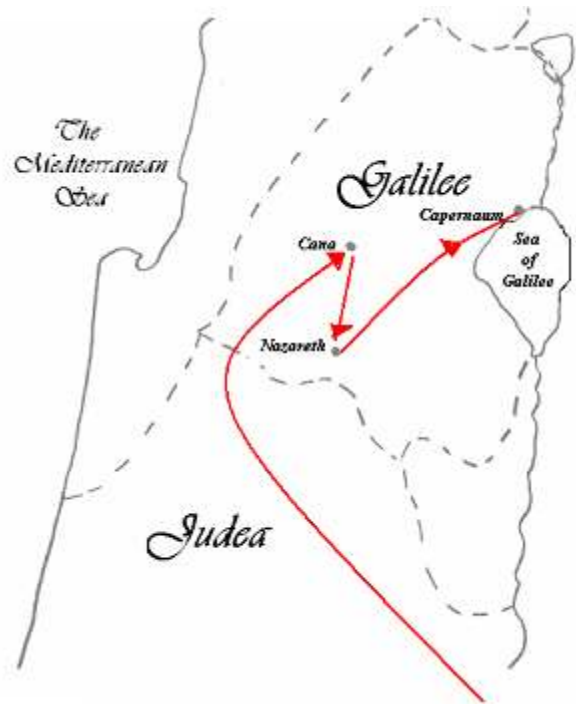
Jesus gives man the information needed to live a model spiritual life. The Lord prescribes specific instructions regarding man’s character (Matt. 5:1-10), thinking (Matt. 5:17-48), acting (Matt. 6:1-17), goals (Matt. 6:19-24), approach to life (Matt. 6:25-34), efforts in spiritual living (Matt. 7:1-12), and respecting the standard of truth (Matt. 7:15-29). Rather than viewing the Sermon on the Mount as the greatest sermon ever delivered, the Christian today ought to view it as a lesson designed to lay the foundation of faith for the future disciples. Later, the apostles would continue to teach by the authority of Jesus Christ and all those who gave heed did well (cf. II Jn. 9ff).

Chapter 8

Geographic Reminder:

(See Outline on Chronology and Geography of Jesus)

- Jesus was born in Bethlehem Judea (Matt. 2:1).
- Joseph and Mary take Jesus to Egypt to escape the wrath of Herod (Matt. 2:13).
- Joseph and Mary come back to Judea after the death of Herod and are then instructed to flee to Nazareth of Galilee (Matt. 2:19-23).
- Jesus spends his first thirty years in Nazareth (Lk. 3:23) and then travels to the Jordan River to be baptized by John the baptizer (Matt. 3:13) near Bethany (cf. Jn 1:28).
- Due to John the baptizer being “*delivered up*” Jesus withdraws from the Jordan River to Galilee (Matt. 4:12). The Lord comes to Cana and performs His first miracle (Jn. 2:1ff).
- Jesus leaves Cana and travels southward to Nazareth. The Lord taught in the synagogue the gospel of the kingdom (cf. Lk. 4:16ff).
- Jesus travels from Nazareth to Capernaum (Matt. 4:13; Lk. 4:31). While around the Capernaum and Sea of Galilee area the Lord delivers the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5-7).



Outline of Chapter 8

I. Jesus heals the leper and the servant with Palsy (8:1-13):

- A. *“And when he was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him. And behold, there came to him a leper and worshipped him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And he stretched forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou made clean. And straightway his leprosy was cleansed. And Jesus saith unto him, See thou tell no man; but go, show thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them”* (8:1-4).
1. After preaching the Sermon on the Mount in the hearing of the multitudes (cf. Matt. 7:28) they followed the Lord wherever He went. One of those in the multitudes of people was a “*leper*” (*lepros*) = “scaly, scabby, rough, leprous” (LS 469)... “to peel or strip off... a scale, shell, rind, crust, incrustation... leprosy” (Moulton 250). The New Unger’s Bible Dictionary describes leprosy as a swelling of body joints and or sores upon the scalp and head that come to be white and scaly.
 2. The leper approaches Jesus, worshipping Him, asking if He would be willing to heal the disease. Mark records that the man came kneeling down before Jesus (Mk. 1:40) and Luke tells us that the man fell on his face before Jesus (Lk. 5:12). With an approach of great respect the man desired to be healed and thus displayed his faith that Jesus was able, by the power of God, to cleanse him.
 3. Being moved with compassion the Lord touches the leper and cleanses him. Jesus tells the man to tell no one of this (possibly because He had much work to do and if word got out He would be faced with request from all to heal their maladies??). Secondly, Jesus tells the man to go to the priest and “*offer the gift that Moses commanded.*”
- c. At Leviticus 13 Moses gives instructions for the priest to examine a man who may have leprosy. If found to be infected with leprosy, the individual would be banned from social

- contact of others and to wear mourning clothing. The leper was to dwell outside the camp of Israel as long as the leprosy remained.
- d. Returning to the society of Israel could only take place upon the healing of the leprosy. Moses gave instructions as to how to receive a leprous man back into the community at Leviticus 14. The cleansed leper was to have a priest take two living birds to a stream outside the camp. One bird would be sacrificed and the other set free. Secondly, after seven days, the cleansed leper was to offer two male lambs, one ewe lamb, and flour mingled with oil.
 - e. Jesus had these ceremonies in mind when He thus instructed the leper.
- B. *“And when he was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him, and saying, Lord, my servant lieth in the house sick of the palsy, grievously tormented”* (8:5-6).
1. Jesus had come into Capernaum from the outskirts of the town. The Lord is immediately met by a *“centurion”* (*hekatontarches*) = “leader of a hundred” (LS 235). The centurion had a servant that must have been dear to him. Hearing of the power of Jesus he approaches the Lord and makes a faithful requests due to the grievous and tormenting sickness of *“palsy.”*
 2. Palsy = “designates various conditions characterized by a loss of ability to move or to control movements of the body. It generally results from damage to the brain or spinal cord or from a disease of the central nervous system” (ISBE, v. 3, pp. 649).
- C. *“And he saith unto him, I will come and heal him. And the centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof; but only say the word, and my servant shall be healed. For I also am a man under authority, having under myself soldiers: and I say to this one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it. And when Jesus heard it, he marveled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel”* (8:7-10).
1. Apparently the Centurion was familiar with the Jewish laws regarding the Gentiles. He knew that Jesus would be unable to enter his house and thereby asks the Lord to exercise His authority over the disease. The centurion understood authority and compared his military position to the Lord’s spiritual authority over creation. The centurion had the authority to command soldiers and servants to come and go. Likewise, the centurion concludes that Jesus has the authority over diseases in that He can command them to come and go (see study # 45). The centurion concludes that Jesus need only to command that this palsy depart from his beloved servant.
 2. Upon hearing the centurion’s line of thought Jesus *“marveled”* at the man’s faith and understanding. Jesus had not seen such understanding and great faith throughout Israel. The Jews had Moses’ Law and the prophets to instruct them regarding the Christ yet most remained in unbelief while this Gentile centurion based his faith upon the things he had heard.
- D. *“And I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven: but the sons of the kingdom shall be cast forth into the outer darkness: there shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth. And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And the servant was healed in that hour”* (8:11-13).
1. Jesus takes this opportunity to warn the Jews of their lack of faith. The Gentiles would come from the east and west with faithful obedience to the Lord whereas many of the Jews (i.e., the sons of the kingdom) would be cast out and denied entrance into the kingdom of heaven due to unbelief. Note that within the kingdom there is peace and without there is darkness, weeping (sorrow) and gnashing of teeth (pain and agony). Whether the Lord intends the subject of the kingdom of heaven to be the church or eternal heaven is not explained. Certainly we do understand the nature of the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God is the church on earth and the eternal abode of the righteous in heaven (cf. I Cor. 15:24). Those who *“die in the Lord”* are those who will continue in the kingdom of God for eternity (cf. Rev. 14:13).
 2. The moment Jesus determined to heal the palsied servant the man was made whole.

II. Jesus heals Peter's mother-in-law and cast out demons (8:14-17):

- A. *"And when Jesus was come into Peter's house, he saw his wife's mother lying sick of a fever. And he touched her hand, and the fever left her; and she arose, and ministered unto him"* (8:14-15).
1. We note from this information that Peter was married (Matthew does not tell us whether Peter's wife was still alive or not).
 2. Jesus simply touches her and she is restored to her health. Luke tells us that the Lord *"rebuked the fever"* (Lk. 4:38-39). Note that Peter's mother-in-law began ministering unto Jesus (giving him food and drink). When one is down with fever there is very little energy to do anything. Peter's mother-in-law is now fully restored and serving Jesus (see study # 45; Jesus Authority over all Things).
- B. *"And when even was come, they brought unto him many possessed with demons: and he cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all that were sick: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through Isaiah the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our diseases"* (8:16-17).
1. With a *"word"* of authority Jesus commanded the demons and sicknesses to leave the bodies of the affected. No one but deity could command and such healing occur.
 2. Once again, Matthew records a *"fulfillment"* fact regarding Jesus and the Old Testament. Isaiah had recorded, *"surely he hath borne our griefs (sicknesses), and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of god, and afflicted"* (Isa. 53:4). It seems that Jesus was so moved with compassion that He actually felt the disease and sickness people had and exercised empathy in healing them.

III. A scribe and one who lost his father to death desire to follow Jesus (8:18-22):

- A. *"Now when Jesus saw great multitudes about him, he gave commandment to depart unto the other side. And there came a scribe, and said unto him, Teacher, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. And Jesus saith unto him, the foxes have holes, and the birds of the heaven have nests; but the Son of man hath no where to lay his head"* (8:18-20).
1. The *"other side"* is likely the other side of the Sea of Galilee. There were too many people pressing upon Jesus and he thereby commands his disciples to depart to the other side to escape the throngs. We are not told as to whether this scribe (one who records and teaches the law) went with Jesus or met him on the other side. The scribe makes a great statement saying that he would follow Jesus any where he went.
 2. The Lord puts the scribe's faith to the test by explaining to him that even the foxes and birds have a place to seek shelter; however, when one follows Jesus there is no such place of comfort and rest while doing the work at hand. It seems clear that Jesus is illustrating to the scribe that following Jesus meant experiencing hardships and sufferings while in this life (cf. II Tim. 2:12). We are not told as to whether the scribe took this challenge or not (see study # 27).
 3. Note that Jesus refers to himself as, *"the Son of man."* The prophet Daniel was given a vision of a future kingdom (the church) and the king (i.e., the Son of man) as king of that kingdom in reference to the Messiah at Daniel 7:13. It is clear that when Jesus refers to himself as the *"Son of man"* that he intends for his hearers to understand that he is the Christ.
- B. *"And another of the disciples said unto him, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. But Jesus saith unto him, Follow me; and leave the dead to bury their own dead"* (8:21-22).
1. We are not given any of the facts surrounding this event other than a man approaches Jesus, desiring to follow him, yet needing to take care of the business of burying his dead father first.
 2. The clear lesson is that when one makes a decision to follow Jesus all other issues of life must wait in line behind Him. Christ and His teachings are to be put first in our lives and all other things will take care of themselves (the dead will bury the dead). We often make pledges in our lives saying, "Lord, if only I can finish this task (college or anything else) then will I serve you with all of my heart." Let us always put the Lord first and other things will be taken care of if it be his will.

IV. Jesus calms the great storm upon the Sea of Galilee and travels to Gadarenes (8:23-34):

- A. *“And when he was entered into a boat, his disciples followed him. And behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the boat was covered with the waves: but he was asleep”* (8:23-24).
1. Is Matthew taking a chronological step back now and describing what took place as the Lord and His disciples traveled to the other side of the Sea of Galilee? We are not really told yet it seems that this is the case when reading both Mark and Luke’s account of this event. At any rate, as they were traveling a *“great storm”* (cf. Mk. 4:37) occurred whereas the waves *“covered”* the boat they were in.
 2. While panic and fear fills the hearts of the Lord’s disciples He is sound asleep.
- B. *“And they came to him, and awoke him, saying, Save, Lord; we perish. And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm. And the men marveled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?”* (8:25-27).
1. In a state of panic the disciples come to Jesus and say, *“Save, Lord; we perish.”* Other said, *“Teacher, carest thou not that we perish?”* (Mk. 4:38b). And still others said, *“Master, Master, we perish”* (Lk. 8:24).
 2. Jesus asks the disciples why their hearts were filled with fear (especially since they had that same day witnessed His authority over man’s sicknesses). Jesus simply commanded and the sickness and demons came forth from the sick and possessed. Did the disciples not know that the Master could also command the elements of the wind and sea to be calm? Jesus *“rebuked the winds and the sea”* in the hearing of His disciples by saying, *“peace, be still”* (cf. Mk. 4:39). Upon this command the seas were calm and the winds were gone. The disciples marveled and said, *“What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?”* This was the *“Son of man”* deity in the flesh (Jn. 1:1ff). He had created all things by His spoken word and by his spoken word he commanded the elements obedience (cf. Ps. 33:6-9).
- C. *“And when he was come to the other side into the country of the Gadarenes, there met him two possessed with demons, coming forth out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man could pass by that way. And behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, thou Son of God? Art thou come hither to torment us before the time?”* (8:28-29).
1. The country of the Gadarenes was located on the southeast side of the Sea of Galilee in the province of Decapolis. The tombs of the Lord’s day were cave like structures and provided shelter for the two possessed with demons. These demon possessed men were very fierce and did not allow any to pass by their way without confrontation. When they see Jesus, they confess him to be the *“Son of God.”* The conversation that pursues indicates the demon’s knowledge and belief that Jesus was the Christ in whom all authority existed (cf. James 2:19). Mark records Jesus asking the demon what his name was and he replied *“Legion; for we are many”* (Mk. 5:9).
 2. Note that the demons understood that there comes a day of great torment for the sons of disobedience and all demonic angels of the devil (cf. II Pet. 2:4; Jude 6). This would be a time of eternal *“torment;”* however, now was not the time for their eternal casting away and so they proclaim, *“before our time?”* (see study # 31).
- D. *“Now there was afar off from them a heard of many swine feeding. And the demons besought him, saying, if thou cast us out, send us away into the herd of swine. And he said unto them, Go. And they came out, and went into the swine: and behold, the whole herd rushed down the steep into the sea, and perished in the waters”* (8:30-32).
1. Mark’s account tells us that there were *“about two thousand”* swine (cf. Mk. 5:13). Note that at the command of Jesus the swine left the two men and entered into the swine and they rushed headlong off a cliff and into the Sea of Galilee where they perished.
 2. Aside from many unknown factors (i.e., what became of the demons etc.) we do note that the demons obeyed the authoritative voice of Jesus as did the diseases and physical elements of the earth (Matt. 8:1-27). The lesson is simple. If the elements of this earth, sickness, and demons

obey the authoritative voice of Jesus when He commanded shouldn't we of the human race (cf. Matt. 7:23; Jn. 3:36; II Thess. 1:7ff)? There is much at stake for us in relation to our obedience and disobedience (II Thess. 1:8) (see study # 15).

- E. *“And they that fed them fled, and went away into the city, and told everything, and what was befallen to them that were possessed with demons. And behold, all the city came out to meet Jesus: and when they saw him, they besought him that he would depart from their borders”* (8:33-34).
1. Once the citizen's curiosity was satisfied they ask Jesus to leave the country.
 2. They may have been fearful of him or it may have been that they were upset that much swine was lost???

Lesson Learned from Matthew 8

If Jesus has authority over sickness, disease, spirit beings, and physical elements of the world shouldn't we obey His every word (cf. Col. 3:17)?

Matthew 9

I. **Jesus proves the validity of His Authority to Forgive Sins (9:1-8):**

- A. *“And he entered into a boat, and crossed over, and came into his own city”* (9:1).
1. Those of the Gadarenes had asked the Lord to leave their borders at Matthew 8:34 and so we now find Jesus entering the boat and trekking back across the Sea of Galilee.
 2. The place known as *“his own city”* is likely Capernaum.
- B. *“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 are forgiven. And behold, certain of the scribes said within themselves, This man blasphemeth”* (9:2-3).
1. Upon arrival in Capernaum the people present Jesus with another man sick of the palsy (for a study of this disease see notes at Matthew 8:6 above).
 2. The first thing Jesus does is to forgive the man of his sins rather than heal his infirmity. To forgive one of their sins is to make one not liable to the punishment that is due for the violation of law. When the scribes heard this they thought within themselves that Jesus committed *“blaspheme”* (*blasphemo*) = “to drop evil or profane words, speak lightly or amiss of sacred things... to utter ominous words... to speak impiously or irreverently of God” (LS 151). Since God pronounced punishment upon the disobedient Jesus was in effect overturning God's punishment. Such an idea was blaspheme to the scribes because they did not recognize the deity and authority of Christ (see study # 46; A Character Sketch of the Scribes).
- C. *“And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts? For which is easier, to say, Thy sins are forgiven; or to say, Arise, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath authority on earth to forgive sins (then saith he to the sick of the palsy), Arise, and take up thy bed, and go unto thy house. And he arose, and departed to his house. But when the multitudes saw it, they were afraid, and glorified God, who had given such authority unto men”* (9:4-8).
1. The divinity of Jesus is seen in His ability to read the hearts (thoughts) of man (cf. Jn. 2:24-25). When the scribes heard Jesus' remarks regarding their thoughts they should have been terrified and gained faith in His claims (see study # 3).
 2. Jesus asks the scribes a question: is it easier to forgive a man of sins or to heal him of palsy? To do either one was a miraculous event that only the divine may accomplish. To prove the power of one is to prove the power and authority to perform the two. Jesus thereby states that he shall heal the man of his palsy to prove that He has the authority to forgive man of sins.

3. When the multitudes saw the miracle and put the teachings of Jesus as truth in their minds they were afraid and glorified God. Not only does Jesus have the authority to remove sickness, diseases, and demons (cf. chapter 8) but he has the authority to remove sins from man!

II. Jesus calls Matthew and has a meal in the Tax Collector's House with Sinners (9:9-17):

- A. *"And as Jesus passed by from thence, he saw a man, called Matthew, sitting at the place of toll: and he saith unto him, Follow me. And he arose, and followed him"* (9:9).
 1. Matthew's own account of his calling to be an apostle is very brief in comparison to Luke's account at Lk. 5:27-32. Luke refers to him as "*Levi*" and it is probable that Jesus changed Levi's name to Matthew which means, "the gift of God." Luke tells us that Matthew was a "*publican*" (*telones*) = "a collector of taxes" (LS 799).
 2. Note that at the word of Jesus sickness, diseases, spirits, elements, and sins obeyed the Lord and did as he proclaimed. Matthew is the next to hear a command from Jesus. The Lord said, "*Follow me*" and Matthew immediately obeyed.
- B. *"And it came to pass, as he sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with Jesus and his disciples. And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your Teacher with the publicans and sinners?"* (9:10-11).
 1. Luke tells us that this gathering of publicans and sinners along with Jesus and His disciples occurred at Matthew's house (cf. Lk. 5:27ff).
 2. The Pharisees note the event and privately asks the Lord's disciples why such an event is transpiring. Such individuals were morally unclean in relation to the Mosaic Law and were thereby to be avoided (see study # 11; The Pharisees / hypocrites).
 3. An interesting point to notice is that apparently there were "*sinners*" who had completely given up on following the Mosaic system.
- C. *"But when he heard it, he said, They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick. But go ye and learn what this meaneth, I desire mercy, and not sacrifice: for I came not to call the righteous, but sinners"* (9:12-13).
 1. Jesus tells them why it is that he is eating and communicating with publicans and sinners. Those who are guilty of no sin (whole) are not in need of a physician to heal them from the malady of sin so why go to them? We should **not** get from this that "Jesus hung out with sinners so it must be ok for me to do so." Jesus was with the sinners to heal them of the blight of sin.
 2. Jesus takes a quote from Hosea 6:6 and applies it to the current situation. To have mercy upon the sinful of the world is to teach them rather than ignoring and avoiding them. Sacrifices are needful yet it ought not be elevated above mercy. Remember that Samuel once told Saul, "*Hath Jehovah as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of Jehovah? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams*" (I Sam. 15:22). The point is that we are not to simply go through religious services in a mechanical manner but rather to do service to the Lord because He has commanded and our heart's desire is to please Him (see study # 32).

III. Disciples of John Question Jesus over Fasting (9:14-17):

- A. *"Then come to him the disciples of John, saying, Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not? And Jesus said, unto them, Can the sons of the bride chamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then will they fast"* (9:14-15).
 1. Fasting was discussed in detail at Matthew 6:16. To fast is to abstain from food. There was only one prescribed fast in the OT and that was on the Day of Atonement. The purpose for this fast was the "*afflicting their souls*" (Lev. 16:29). The OT examples of people fasting were occasions of mourning over the loss of a loved one or sin.
 2. Jesus uses the illustration of a joyous occasion of a bride and bridegroom coming together in marriage. What cause is there for sorrow in such an occasion? Jesus is likened unto the bridegroom and the disciples like the "*sons of the bride chamber*" (i.e., friends of the

bridegroom). The Lord reveals here that there will come a time when He would be taken away from the disciples and this would be a time of sorrow and fasting. Now; however, is a time to be joyous.

- B. *“And no man putteth a piece of undressed cloth upon an old garment; for that which should fill it up takes from the garment, and a worse rent is made”* (9:16).
 - 1. Common sense tells you not to patch a set of pants with a new piece of *“undressed cloth”* because the moment it gets wet it will shrink and make the hole worse that it was at the beginning.
 - 2. Likewise, to fast when there is no need for sorrow is to make matters worse than what they may appear.
- C. *“Neither do men put new wine into old wine-skins: else the skins burst, and the wine is spilled, and the skins perish: but they put new wine into fresh wine-skins, and both are preserved”* (9:17).
 - 1. *“New wine”* would be grape juice pressed freshly from the vine. This wine had not been exposed to yeast particles that would begin the fermentation process whereby carbonic gases are produced (i.e., massive expansion). When freshly squeezed grape juice is put in a brand new skin *“both are preserved”* (i.e., the wine and the skin). Emphasis ought to be placed upon the word *“both.”* The wine is preserved from fermenting and the skin preserved from stretching and breaking open. Some have concluded that Jesus is condoning alcoholic drinking here due to the fact that He instructs new wine to be placed in new skins so that there would be room for the expansion of carbonic gases (i.e., the fermentation process). This being the case the Lord would be saying that it is ok to drink intoxicants. Again, note that BOTH wine and skin are preserved which indicates that no fermentation has taken place. If fermented wine is placed within any kind of skin it would expand and explode.
 - 2. The Lord’s point is that as it would be foolish to put new wine in an old wine skin because the old would likely have the yeast particles that would begin the fermenting and expansion process. Likewise, it is foolish to fast while the master is with them (see study # 47; Bible Wine).

IV. **Jesus heals a woman with an issue of blood and raises the Ruler’s Daughter from the Dead (9:18-26):**

- A. *“While he spake these things unto them, behold, there came a ruler, and worshipped him, saying, My daughter is even now dead: but come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live. And Jesus arose, and followed him, and so did his disciples”* (9:18-19).
 - 1. Word of Jesus’ authority over sickness, disease, spirits, the physical elements of the world, and sin had reached the ears of the masses. A ruler now comes in a spirit of faith and request that Jesus exercise His authority over life itself.
 - 2. Jesus responds favorably and begins the walk to the ruler’s house.
- B. *“And behold, a woman, who had an issue of blood twelve years, came behind him, and touched the border of his garment: for she said within herself, if I do but touch his garment, I shall be made whole”* (9:20-21).
 - 1. Having also heard (and possibly witnessing) the miracles of Jesus as He exercised authority over sickness, disease, spirits, the physical elements of the world, and sin the woman approaches Jesus to touch His garment. Her sickness was an *“issue of blood”* (Gr. *haimorrhoeo*) = *“a discharge of blood”* (LS 21)... *“to have a flux of blood”* (Moulton 9). There is a host of reasons an individual can have discharges of blood due to some sort of illness.
 - 2. The woman had concluded that the Lord was so holy that even to touch him was to be healed.
- C. *“But Jesus turning and seeing her said, Daughter, be of good cheer; thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour”* (9:22).
 - 1. The moment the sick woman touched Jesus’ garment in hopes of being healed Jesus knew it (indeed he was deity). The Lord perceived that power had gone out from Him (cf. Lk. 8:43-48) (see study # 3).

2. Without the woman saying a word Jesus knew that she was in need of healing. The Lord heals the woman due to her faith in his authority over sicknesses.

D. *“And when Jesus came into the ruler’s house, and saw the flute-players, and the crowd making a tumult, he said, Give place: for the damsel is not dead, but sleeps. And they laughed him to scorn. But when the crowd was put forth, he entered in, and took her by the hand; and the damsel arose. And the fame hereof went forth into all that land”* (9:23-26).

1. Luke’s account tells us that the ruler’s name was Jairus (Lk. 8:41ff). Upon entering the Ruler’s house Jesus saw the crowd mourning the loss of this woman. Jesus thereby explains that she is not dead but merely sleeping (i.e., she was in the realm of the dead but not forever lost).

2. Jesus asks the crowds to give him a moment alone with the girl. Luke tells us that the Lord took with Him Peter, John, James, and the father of the maiden into her room. Five alive and one dead were to turn into six alive. Jesus *“taking her by the hand, called, saying, Maiden, arise. And her spirit returned, and she rose up immediately: and he commanded that something be given her to eat”* (Lk. 8:54-55). The damsel then arose from the dead. Thus Jesus illustrated His authority over life and death.

V. **Jesus Restores the Sight of Two Blind Men (9:27-31):**

A. *“And as Jesus passed by from thence, two blind men followed him, crying out, and saying, Have mercy on us, thou son of David. 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? They say unto him, Yea, Lord”* (9:27-28).

1. The two blind men had heard of Jesus’ authority over sickness, diseases, spirits, the physical elements of the earth, life and death. They were confident that Jesus could also restore their sight.

2. Jesus asks the blind men if they thought that he was able to do such a thing and they said, *“Yea, Lord.”*

B. *“Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it done unto you. And their eyes were opened. And Jesus strictly charged them, saying, See that no man know it. But they went forth, and spread abroad his fame in all that land”* (9:29-31).

1. As Jesus had previously illustrated His authority over sickness and diseases even so He now commanded that the men’s sight return unto them and so it was.

2. Though the Lord sternly tells the men not to say anything they are too joyous over the occasion to not say anything. They spread the news abroad about Jesus’ healing abilities.

VI. **Jesus cast a demon out of a dumb man (9:32-34):**

A. *“And as they went forth, behold, there was brought to him a dumb man possessed with a demon. And when the demon was cast out, the dumb man spake: and the multitudes marveled, saying, I was never so seen in Israel”* (9:32-33).

1. The idea of being *“dumb”* is to lack the ability to hear or in some context the ability to speak (i.e., a mute). This man was not only dumb but he was *“possessed with a demon.”*

2. When brought to Jesus the man is healed of his being dumb and the demon is cast out. The people marveled. They had now witnessed the Lord’s authority over sickness, disease, demonic spirits, the physical elements of the earth, life, death, eyesight, and now hearing or speaking impairments.

B. *“But the Pharisees said, By the prince of the demons cast he out demons”* (9:34).

1. The Pharisees were previously mentioned at Matthew 3:7; 5:20; 9:11, and 14. Rather than giving God glory they pronounce, *“By the prince of the demons cast he out demons.”*

2. They have clearly rejected Jesus even though the Lord had performed many signs in their site. The Pharisees, in the hardness of their hearts, concluded that if the Lord was not from God he must be a demon (see study # 11).

VII. **Jesus displays compassion upon the Multitudes (9:35-37):**

A. *“And Jesus went about all the cities and the villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of diseases and all manner of sickness. But*

when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion for them, because they were distressed and scattered, as sheep not having a shepherd" (9:35-36).

1. The life of Christ was continued spiritual work. The Lord was "*compassionate*" in that he healed the sick and diseased in addition to teaching them "*the gospel of the kingdom.*" Latter Jesus will describe himself as the good shepherd of the sheep because he truly cares about man's eternal well being (see study # 8; The Character of Jesus / i.e., compassionate).
 2. Note that the performance of miracles went together with the preaching of the gospel. Mark records, "*And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word by the signs that followed*" (Mk. 16:20). The miracles confirmed the gospel of the kingdom as being of divine origin (see study # 48; Miracles and Preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom).
- B.** "*Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest indeed is plenteous, but the laborers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of harvest, that he send forth laborers into his harvest*" (9:37-38).
1. The lost throughout humanity need someone to exercise compassion upon them and teach them the gospel of the kingdom that they might be saved from the eternal consequences of their sins. Jesus instructs his disciples to pray that there would be more willing to do so.
 2. The kingdom of God needs laborers just as badly today. There are masses of people who need to hear and obey the blessed gospel of the kingdom. Let us so pray and let us so work as the opportunity arises (see study # 28).

Matthew 10

I. Jesus sends the 12 disciples out on a Limited (i.e., Jews only) Preaching Tour (10:1-15):

- A.** "*And he called unto him his twelve disciples, and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of disease and all manner of sickness. Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; Philip, and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the publican; James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon the Cananaean, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him*" (Matt. 10:1-4).
1. It is significant to note that Jesus "*gave them authority*" over spirits, disease, and sickness. Many today claim to have the ability to perform exorcisms and heal sick and diseased people. Their premise is that they do these things by faith and those who are healed are healed because of their faith. Note that in order for the disciples to cast out unclean spirits and heal the sick and diseased that Jesus had to "*give*" them authority over these things as He had already displayed. Once again this verse indicates that when Jesus cast out demons and healed those who were sick and diseased He did so by divine authority (i.e., power). Man is not innately endowed with such authority and power yet Christ, being God in the flesh, exercised a natural authority over all things as the creator. All things (sickness, disease, life, death, the physical elements of the world, and spirit beings) obeyed His words because He was (and is) God. "All things" would only obey the words of the twelve disciples when they spoke by the authority of Christ as it was given them to do so by the Lord. Latter, in the New Testament, these same apostles would be given the special gift of the ability to pass the Lord's authority on to others by the laying on of their hands (cf. Acts 8:15-17). When Simon the sorcerer sought after the ability to pass on this authority Peter replied, "*Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter*" (Acts 8:21). The purpose of gifts had always been to confirm the truths that Jesus and the apostles taught (cf. Mark 16:20). When all truth had been delivered there was no need for further miraculous events to occur (I Cor. 13:10) (see study # 48).
 2. Jesus now has 12 disciples that are referred to as "*apostles.*"

- B. *“These twelve Jesus sent forth, and charged them, saying, Go not into any way of the Gentiles, and enter not into any city of the Samaritans: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of Heaven is at hand”* (10:5-7).
1. Though the Gentiles had eternally been in God’s plan to save (cf. Gen. 12:3-4 as compared to Gal. 3:8, 16, 28) they were not yet made ready for the message of the kingdom of God. The Jews had been given the oracles of God (cf. Rom. 3:1-2) and were very familiar with the prophecies regarding the coming kingdom of God (cf. Dan. 2:44ff). The Jews would be the first to have the opportunity to be saved from their sins and then the Gentile would be taught next (cf. Romans 1:16; Acts 18:5-6).
 2. Note that at this point of Jesus’ ministry the *“kingdom of Heaven”* had not yet been established. The phrase, *“at hand”* (*eggizo*) = “of time, nigh at hand” (LS 220). “Close at hand... near... to approach, draw near.... to be at hand” (Moulton 111). The church that had been prophesied of throughout the OT was about to come into existence with Christ as head and king (see study # 9).
- C. *“Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons: freely ye received, freely give”* (10:8).
1. The apostles are *“freely”* endowed with all the powers of Jesus in the area of performing miracle.
 2. They were to freely use these gifts to help the sick, diseased, demonic, and dead to be restored.
- D. *“Get you no gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses; no wallet for your journey, neither two coats, nor shoes, nor staff: for the laborer is worthy of his food”* (10:9-10).
1. Note that Jesus refers to the disciples as *“laborers”* as they are going about teaching and preaching the gospel message (please note Matthew 9:38). The laborious work of preaching and teaching is under consideration.
 2. The Lord instructs the laboring disciples to take no money, extra clothing, shoes, or staff with them *“for the laborer is worthy of his food.”* The Lord thereby lays down a NT principle in relation to the work of preaching and teaching. Those who forsake other occupations in life to teach and preach cannot possibly do so without some sort of financial support. The apostle Paul touched on this at I Corinthians 9:6-14. Some do not believe a preacher should be paid for their labors yet Jesus and the apostles command that it be so (see study # 49; Preachers and Preaching).
 3. We need also to consider the fact that this was a one time mission on the part of the apostles. Jesus is not commanding that men go forth today and demand hospitality, lodging, and pay from brethren as they go from city to city preaching. There are; however, principles in this text that help us to understand the responsibilities revolving around the work of preaching and teaching the gospel.
- E. *“And into whatsoever city or village ye shall enter, search out who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go forth. And as ye enter into the house, salute it. And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you”* (10:11-13).
1. This commission to preach appears to be a whirlwind tour (i.e., go to a city, find a place to stay, preach your message, and go to the next).
 2. As the disciples went about doing this task they would run into people who were hospitable and gracious to receive their message and on the other hand they would run into knot heads that cared nothing for them nor their message.
- F. *“And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, as ye go forth out of that house or that city, shake off the dust of your feet. 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”* (10:14-15).
1. The disciples of Jesus were to do all within their authorized power (i.e., perform miracles to confirm the truth they taught) to convince the people that the kingdom of God was at hand.
 2. Though these miracles and good teaching were witnessed and heard there would be many of a hard hearted disposition that would continue to reject the message. Such individuals are subject

to judgment and cannot be taught (see study # 43). Jesus thereby instructs the disciples to “*shake off the dust of your feet*” and move on to the next city (Paul did this at Acts 18:6 indicating that their guilt was upon them; i.e., he did all that he could do to change their mind).

II. Jesus gives the apostles instructions to benefit them in all their future work of Preaching and Teaching (10:16-33):

A. “*Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves*” (10:16).

1. Jesus tells the apostles before they begin their work that they will be like sheep among wolves. The objective of wolves is to devour sheep. When the apostles bring the gospel message it will certainly irritate the wolf (men of error). Though the apostles are compared to sheep they are not to be foolish and sit back to be voluntarily devoured by the wolves. There must be some wisdom exercised on their part to avoid being destroyed.
2. Interestingly, Jesus tells his disciples to be wise as “*serpents*.” The serpent is the symbol used for the devil in the word of God (Rev. 12:9; 20:2). The devil’s primary way is subtlety or craftiness (Gen. 3:1; II Cor. 11:3). The Greek for subtlety is *panourgia* = “knavery, roguery, villany” (LS 591). “Ready to do anything; hence, crafty, cunning, artful, wily” (Moulton 300). It may be that the best way of describing the meaning here is with the word shrewd. To be shrewd is to have keen insight or to be astute (keen or sharp in judgment and perception). While the disciples of Christ were to be keenly perceptive of man’s motives they were also to be harmless as doves. The dove is used in the scriptures in comparison to the Holy Spirit and seems to stand for purity (cf. Lk. 3:22). The disciples of Christ are to thereby be wise as serpents in that they are keen insight, judgment, and perception all the while being pure and harmless as doves.

B. “*But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to councils, and in their synagogues they will scourge you; yea and before governors and kings shall ye be brought for my sake, for a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. But when they deliver you up, be not anxious how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you*” (10:17-20).

1. The wolf like character of some warrants a warning from Jesus. The Lord tells His disciples that as they teach the gospel of the kingdom that they would be accused of folly before both Jewish and Gentile courts. When such occurs the Lord’s disciples are to testify of Him before these officials.
2. Jesus tells them not to worry about what to say to these governing officials for “*the Spirit of your Father... speaks in you*.” As God spoke through the mouths of prophets in times past (cf. II Pet. 1:21) so He would speak through the disciples that these governing authorities would hear the truths of the Kingdom of God.
3. Some today believe that this verse gives way to men miraculously speaking by the Holy Ghost. Note that Jesus is speaking to his immediate disciples who have a specific duty; i.e., to the household of the Jews. Secondly, miraculous gifts had a time and purpose both of which have been met (see study # 48).

C. “*And brother shall deliver up brother to death, and the father his child: and children shall rise up against parents, and cause them to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake: but he that endures to the end, the same shall be saved. But when they persecute you in this city, flee into the next: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone through the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come*” (10:21-23).

1. Jesus now forewarns the apostles that all disciples who put their faith and trust in the teachings of Jesus will be at risk of persecution. The intensity of said persecution is depicted in the Lord’s example of brothers, fathers and their children, and children against parents all in turmoil with one another due to one’s stand in Jesus.

2. Jesus tells the disciples that *“ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake.”* Jesus said the same thing at John 7:7 and John chapter 15. Those who endure said persecutions will not be disappointed but rather saved from the eternal consequences of sin (cf. Rev. 2:10).
 3. Part of the disciple’s serpent like wisdom was to be able to discern when the appropriate time to leave a city was. The disciples were not to stick around and be killed.
- D. *“A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his teacher, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more them of his household! Fear them not therefore: for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known”* (10:24-26).
1. Jesus tells his disciples that their association with Him makes them liable to the same treatment He receives (i.e., persecution). If the master of servants is seen as *“Beelzebub”* then so must his servants be. *“Beelzebub”* (*Beelzeboul*) = at Matthew 12:24 we learn that Beelzebub is the prince of demons. Beelzebub seems to be another name for Satan. The Pharisees at Matthew 9:34 accused Jesus of working under the authority of the prince of demons.
 2. Though the enemies of Jesus may be fierce, deadly, and mean spirited the Christian is commanded not to *“fear”* them. Paul tells Timothy, *“For God gave us not a spirit of fearfulness; but of power and love and discipline”* (II Tim. 1:7).
- E. *“What I tell you in the darkness, speak ye in the light; and what ye hear in the ear, proclaim upon the house-tops. And be not afraid of them that kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell”* (10:27-28).
1. Though the disciples of Jesus will be hated by all men they were not to shrink back in cowardice and neglect the preaching of the gospel. There were souls to save and the more preaching that is conducted the more likely we are to find that one soul who truly cares about justice and righteousness.
 2. When we contemplate the reality of our existence we know that we are eternal beings. Why should I fear the man who has the power to kill my body and thereby neglect God’s commands to teach and be hated? True fear should come from Him who is able to *“destroy my body and soul in hell.”* Hell is the name of the abode of the wicked of all time who shall be tormented day and night for ever (cf. Rev. 20:10) (see study # 31).
- F. *“Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them shall fall on the ground without your Father: but the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows”* (10:39-31).
1. God created man in His own image and therefore we have an eternal soul. He knows us with an omniscient eye even to the number of hairs upon our head.
 2. If God knows and cares about each sparrow that is sold or falls to the earth dead He certainly cares and knows about us. If God so cares for the sparrows then we ought to be confident in His magnified love for us. He will care for us and provide all things necessary for our well being. If we die for our faith then He will care for us into eternity.
- G. *“Every one therefore who shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father who is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father who is in heaven”* (10:32-33).
1. Consider the context in which these verses are found. All men will hate the one who represents Jesus in his teaching and manner of life. To *“confess”* Christ must have something to do with living by His standards. A close examination of I John 2:23; 4:2-3; and II Jn. 9 reveals that confessing the name of Jesus is accepting, abiding, and teaching nothing but truths revealed through Jesus Christ (see study # 50; Confessing the Name of Jesus).
 2. Likewise to *“deny”* Jesus is to reject His authoritative teachings (cf. I Jn. 2:23). Such a one who does so has the spirit of antichrist. Those who so reject Christ and His teachings will be rejected by God.

III. The Lord’s Mission (10:34-42):

- A. *“Think not that I came to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I came 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: and a man’s foes shall be they of his own household”* (10:34-36).
1. Again, we must consider the context. Jesus said that those who would stand by Him and confess him through acts of obedience and truthful teaching will be hated by the world. Not every one in each house will have the same desire to serve Jesus with all their heart. One brother may fervently accept the teachings of Jesus while another brother does not. The rejecting brother will hate the brother who accepts Christ because the disciples of Christ expose the errors of the world (cf. Jn. 7:7).
 2. Jesus thereby predicts that a man’s enemies will not only be found in the world we live in but even closer to home there will be enemies within the home itself.
- B. *“He that loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he that loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me”* (10:37).
1. What does it mean to put Christ first in one’s life? Here is a great example to answer the question. I ought to love Jesus and His commandments and never allow even a family member to sway me to disobedience.
 2. Those worthy of Christ will not tolerate sin in a son, daughter, wife, mother, or father simply because of a physical relationship.
- C. *“And he that doth not take his cross and follow after me, is not worthy of me”* (10:38).
1. Jesus has foreknowledge of the great persecution that he faced. He would be scourged of men and made to carry a cross to Galgotha to be crucified. Those unwilling to remain faithful to Christ and His teachings till death are not worthy of His eternal reward (see study # 24).
 2. The cross is thereby a representation of persecution. Those today who are unwilling to be persecuted for Christ’s sake are not worthy of the Lord (see study # 27).
- D. *“He that finds his life shall lose it; and he that loses his life for my sake shall find it”* (10:39).
1. Again, in this context, the one who would *“find his life”* is apparently the one who saves his physical life from torment and persecution by denying Christ (cf. Gal. 6:12). Though a temporary comfort may be obtained in this life there awaits an eternity of torment (cf. Rev. 20:10) (see study # 31).
 2. The individual who *“looses his life”* due to standing for truth in persecutions shall actually find eternal life in Christ Jesus where there is comfort (see study # 24).
- E. *“He that receiveth you receives me, and he that receives me receives him that sent me. He that receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet’s reward: and he that receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man’s reward. 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”* (10:40-42).
1. Note the formula: To receive Jesus is to receive His teachings. To receive a prophet is to accept his inspired words. To receive a righteous man is to accept his truthful teachings. To aid a disciple of Christ because of his stand in truth when he is in need is to accept truth.
 2. One who does these things shall in no wise loose his heavenly reward.

Chapter 11

I. Jesus reveals John the Baptizer to the Public (11:1-19):

- A. *“And it came to pass when Jesus had finished commanding his twelve disciples, he departed thence to teach and preach in their cities”* (11:1).
1. Jesus preached a sermon to the twelve regarding the cost of discipleship. When the disciples went forth to preach that *“The kingdom of heaven is at hand”* (Matt. 10:7) they would be received by some and rejected by others (Matt. 10:13-14). Jesus tells the disciples that they would be like sheep among wolves (Matt. 10:16ff). The message they preached would divide

- households (Matt. 10:21, 34-36), cause them to be hated (Matt. 10:22), and called names (Matt. 10:25) yet they are not to fear (Matt. 10:28) (see study # 27).
2. When Jesus finished these words to the disciples they went to the lost Israelites to preach the kingdom of God. Note that Jesus also went and preached.
- B. *“Now when John heard in the prison the works of the Christ, he sent by his disciples and said unto him, Art thou he that cometh, or look we for another?”* (11:2-3).
1. Interestingly at John 1:29-30 John professed that Jesus was the Lamb of God who had come to take away the sins of the world. Again, at John 3:23-30 John admits to the Messiah-ship of Jesus.
 2. Why does John now question whether Jesus is the Christ? At this point of our study John has been in prison for some time (Matt. 14:1ff). Could he have become fearful and discouraged in prison and desired to know more about Jesus? Was he questioning the authority of Jesus? Did Jesus meet John’s expectation of the Christ? The fact of the matter is that we are not told why John inquires of Jesus in this matter and we ought to leave it at that.
- C. *“And Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and tell John the things which ye hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good tidings preached to them. And blessed is he, whosoever shall find no occasion of stumbling in me”* (11:4-6).
1. If John was looking for comfort and confidence in the Christ he now receives just that. Jesus tells John’s disciples to tell him of all the miraculous events that they had witnessed (i.e., blind, lame, lepers, deaf, and dead are all healed and caused to walk in good health). Only deity could perform such acts.
 2. The *“blessed”* individual is one who receives eternal salvation by the forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ (Acts 3:26; Rom. 4:6-8; Gal. 3:8-9; Col. 1:12). Said one is not offended in Christ but rather loves Him.
- D. *“And as these went their way, Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness to behold? A reed shaken in the wind? But what went ye out to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they that wear soft raiment are in kings’ houses. But wherefore went ye out? To see a prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and much more than a prophet”* (11:7-9).
1. Apparently John’s disciples had questioned Jesus in the hearing of the multitudes that were following and listening to the Lord preach and perform miracles. Jesus takes the opportunity to speak about John lest any one think less of him since he was not the Christ.
 2. The multitudes were familiar with John. John preached before large crowds as rumors spread abroad of him (Lk. 3:7):
 - a. When they went out to see and hear him they did not find a weak man that was swayed like the reeds in the wind but rather a rugged man that stood up and preached a message of repentance that all needed to hear (including king Herod) (cf. Lk. 3:7, 18-20).
 - b. John was no sissy wearing soft cloths but rather a rugged man who wore *“raiment of camel’s hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his food was locusts and wild honey”* (Matt. 3:4). John cared nothing about what the world had to offer in relationship to comfort and dainty foods. John’s mission was to preach and prepare the way for Jesus.
 - c. Jesus finally identifies John as a *“prophet.”*
- E. *“This is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, who shall prepare thy way before thee”* (11:10).
1. Jesus quotes from the OT scripture that foretold of John’s coming and his work (Mal. 3:1). Again, we note that Matthew is the author of fulfillment. John fulfilled OT prophecy. The Lord’s intentions for John was not to save the world from their sin but rather to *“prepare”* the people’s mind for Christ who would provide the remission of man’s sins. John prepared the people through preaching repentance and the coming of the kingdom of God.
 2. Truly John the baptizer was much more than a prophet.

- F. *“Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist: yet he that is but little in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he”* (11:11).
1. At verse 10 Jesus quotes from Malachi 3:1 and applies this to John. John was the messenger of God sent forth to prepare the people’s minds for the coming of Jesus. All prophets that preceded John knew of the coming of Christ and some prophesied of His coming (I Pet. 1:10). John, however, actually prepared the way for Christ just before the Lord’s entrance into His ministry. John’s greatness among them born of women takes these facts into consideration.
 2. Though John’s work made him great in the eyes of Jesus he was nonetheless not a citizen of the kingdom of God. Said condition makes even the least or little in the kingdom of God greater than John because such a one is forgiven of sin and enjoys the rich blessings of Jesus Christ. The Lord thereby seeks to illustrate the importance of the kingdom of God; i.e., His church (see study # 9).
- G. *“And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and men of violence take it by force”* (11:12).
1. This is somewhat of a difficult verse but seems to indicate the multitudes that John baptized to confess their faith in the coming kingdom and willingness to repent of sins. These multitudes took the kingdom by force in that they had a different view of the kingdom of God (heaven) on this earth than did John and the Lord.
 2. God’s kingdom would be a spiritual organization that would last into eternity. Many, however, looked to a physical kingdom whereby the Christ would reign supreme as king and physically rule the world.
- H. *“For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. And if ye are willing to receive it, this is Elijah, that is to come. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear”* (11:13-15).
1. Consider Luke’s translation of this thought at Luke 16:16, *“The law and the prophets were until John: from that time the gospel of the kingdom of God is preached, and every man entereth violently into it.”* The Mosaic Law and the prophets who operated under this system taught until the point that John began preaching. The time frame of the coming Kingdom of God was now *“at hand”* and so John preached. It would be fruitless for John to preach and teach the Mosaic system due to the fact that it was about to be abrogated. The people, however, entered *“violently into it”* in that they did as commanded yet had the wrong expectations of it. Many rushed to be baptized by John if it meant being a part of a kingdom on this earth ruled by God. A conquering kingdom that none could possibly stand against (see study # 51; The Establishment of the Church).
 2. John was once asked if he was *“Elijah”* and he declared, *“I am not”* (cf. Jn. 1:21). John meant that he was not Elijah in the flesh. Jesus, however, declared John to be the Elijah of Malachi’s prophecy (cf. Mal. 4:5). As the Elijah of prophecy his objective was to prepare the people’s mind for the coming of the kingdom of God.
 3. Jesus proclaims, *“he that hath hears let him hear.”* The meaning of this is that all that heard these words were to contemplate and understand the greatness of the teaching.
- I. *“But whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the marketplaces, who call unto their fellows and say, We piped unto you, and ye did not dance; we wailed, and ye did not mourn”* (11:16-17).
1. Jesus compares the people, who violently enter the kingdom of heaven for reasons other than receiving the remission of their sins, to children in the marketplaces. The marketplaces were areas where business transactions took place (i.e., buying and selling of goods). Children also gathered here and played while their parents bought, sold, and traded goods.
 2. When the children performed various acts they expected the others to respond in a prescribed way. When they did not get the reaction they were looking for they complained. Likewise, when the people who sought out a kingdom of God for purposes other than receiving the remission of their sins saw and heard John and Jesus they did not receive what they wanted. They wanted a physical kingdom to take Rome by force and when they got only a roughly

dressed man in John and a meek and lowly Jesus it did not meet their expectations (see study # 52; Jesus and His Kingdom did not meet the Expectations of Many).

J. *“For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a demon. The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold, a gluttonous man and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners! And wisdom is justified by her works”* (11:18-19).

1. John the baptizer was a Nazarite who had vowed a life of separation from unholy things (cf. Lk. 1:15). John thereby, would not participate in drinking wine of any amount. He had all the appearances of a true prophet yet the people rejected him. Jesus, on the other hand, was not unlike the common man. The Lord ate and drank wine at feasts and gatherings; however, the people rejected Him as well as John.
2. The people appear to be frustrated. They knew of the prophecies of the coming Messiah and John the baptizer, however, now that the two are here they did not live up to their legendary fanciful ideas that the Jews had dreamed up in their minds. They wanted to see war lords who conquered with the sword the surrounding Roman Empire. They had deluded their perception of Jesus and John by looking for men to give them an immediate solution to their problems. The failure of many Jews was that they were blind in relation to the Lord’s eternal solution to their immediate problem of sin (see study # 52).

II. **Jesus Pronounces the Eternal Outcome of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum due to their Gross Negligence to Repent of their Sinful Acts (11:20-24).**

A. *“Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not”* (11:20).

1. The people’s general view of the kingdom of God skewed their understanding of their real responsibility to repent of their sins. Jesus and John’s preaching was not only of the coming kingdom but also repentance (cf. Matt. 3:2; 4:17).
2. Throughout the cities where Jesus performed miracles and illustrated his authority over life and death, disease and sickness, and the physical elements of the earth He began to *“upbraid”* them due to their lack of repentance. To *“upbraid”* (*oneidizo*) = “to censure (to criticize or reprove sharply... reprimand)” (Moulton 289). “To reproach, censure, blame...” (LS 559).
3. The miracles should have established Christ’s authority over creation and evidenced His deity, however, many remained in unbelief as is evidenced by their lack of repentance.

B. *“Woe unto thee, Chorazin! Woe unto thee, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon which were done in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes”* (11:21).

1. Chorazin is a town that is thought to be about five miles to the North of Capernaum. Bethsaida was located about five miles to the east of Capernaum on the coast of the Sea of Galilee. Jesus had traveled through these cities and performed many *“mighty works.”* Herein is a great example of the purpose of miracles. Jesus performed miracles to establish the faith in people that they may hear and obey His words. Often times the design of the miracles was not accepted by the multitude. The same may be said today. We all have the blueprint for God’s church yet many are not satisfied with it and thereby reject the Lord’s teachings regarding it. They decide to follow their own design rather than God’s and then have the audacity to call it pleasing to God (see study # 48; and # 52).
2. Tyre and Sidon go down in history as towns filled with wealth, pride and condemned by the prophets (cf. Ezek. 27 and 28). The people’s of these two towns had heard the prophecies of a Messiah yet never experienced the Lord’s great power in miracles. Chorazin and Bethsaida not only witnessed great and powerful miracles but they too heard Jesus preach divine revelation regarding the kingdom of God and repentance. Tyre and Sidon would have repented if the inhabitants would have seen the things that Chorazin and Bethsaida witnessed.

C. *“But I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment, than for you”* (11:22).

1. Will God “*tolerate*” Tyre and Sidon’s wickedness because it was done in ignorance to God’s laws? Will Tyre and Sidon’s inhabitants have a lesser degree of punishment than the inhabitants of Chorazin and Bethsaida.
 2. To say that God tolerates the sin of those who do so in ignorance is to misunderstand the nature of God. God is light and in him is no darkness (I Jn. 1:5). The apostle John wrote of heaven saying, “*and there shall in no wise enter into it anything unclean, or he that maketh an abomination and a lie: but only they that are written in the Lamb’s book of life*” (Rev. 21:27). One becomes morally clean and free from abomination when baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 22:16). One maintains a state of moral cleanliness through prayer, confession, and repentance (I Jn. 1:8-10). Baptism in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins was not taught in the OT, however, Jesus and the apostles taught it (cf. Acts 2:38). Repentance, on the other hand, was taught in the OT and was an indication of one’s faith in God’s teachings (Jer. 26:13). The Lord has always demanded a humble disposition on the part of His followers that they may be pleasing to Him (cf. Isa. 57:15).
 3. The “*day of judgment*” will occur on a set day that no man knows (Matt. 24:6). The word of God will judge man (Jn. 12:48). These things being so the Lord is simply saying that it will be easier to hammer the gavel of guilt upon Chorazin and Bethsaida than it will be on Tyre and Sidon due to their not having the same opportunities. Nonetheless, God will pronounce a guilty verdict upon all who refuse humble themselves in repentance before Him (see study # 43).
- D. “*And thou, Capernaum, shalt thou be exalted unto heaven? Thou shalt go down unto Hades: for if the mighty works had been done in Sodom which were done in thee, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee*” (11:23-24).
1. Jesus had performed many mighty works in Capernaum as well, however, it is apparent that the citizens did not receive His teachings. Jesus explains that in said state of mind (rejection of repentance as a result of His teachings) they have nothing to look forward to but Hades. Jesus draws a contrast between Hades and heaven. The word “*Hades*” is used at Luke 16:23 to indicate a place of torment for the souls of the wicked. The word Hades is also used to describe the place for disembodied souls of the righteous (Acts 2:27-31). “*Hades*” (*hades*) = “The invisible abode or mansion of the dead; the place of punishment, hell; the lowest place or condition” (Moulton 6). Context determines whether one is speaking of the place of torments or place of comfort for the dead. Capernaum had a place in torments reserved for them due to their lack of repentance (see study # 43; and # 31).
 2. Once again the Lord speaks of an evil city; i.e., Sodom, experiencing more tolerance in the Day of Judgment than another due to the fact that they did not see nor hear the preaching of the Lord. We know that the inhabitants of Sodom were cursed due to their gross sin and thereby the Lord is not saying that God will overlook their sin due to the fact that they did not have the same opportunities as those in Capernaum (see study # 43).

III. Jesus Prays to the Heavenly Father (11:25-30):

- A. “*At that season Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding, and didst reveal them unto babes: yea, Father, for so it was well-pleasing in thy sight*” (11:25-26).
1. Jesus now prays a prayer of thanksgiving to the Father. The truths of Jesus were hidden from the wise and those of supposed understanding because of their own volition. We will discuss this issue in greater depth when studying the parable of the sower at Matthew 13:1ff. We shall note that to some it is given to know the gospel and some it is not. Those who do not understand the gospel are in said condition because of self pride and arrogance. They have a different expectation of Christ and the gospel than what is revealed and thereby they reject the Lord and His message (see study # 52). Jesus gave thanks to the Father not because some would be condemned but rather because He recognized that only those who hear, believe, and

obey His words would be justified from their sins. God's system is one of obedience and conditional grace. Those who reject this system reject God. Jesus would in no way desire for God haters to be included in heaven and so He thanks the Lord for keeping the message of salvation hidden from the hard hearted.

2. Interestingly, while the "*wise and understanding*" cannot know truth due to their thick and calloused hearts the babes do hear, believe, and obey (see study # 53; Hard Hearts).
- B. "*All things have been delivered unto me of my Father: and no one knoweth the Son, save the Father; neither doth any know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him*" (11:27).
1. The "*all things*" that were delivered to Jesus of the Father are His powers to perform miracles and the teachings that the miracles confirmed as truth (cf. Matt. 9:8).
 2. Notice that the Father and Son have a perfect relationship of understanding in truth. Those who hear, believe, and obey truth represent a class of people that can know both the Father and Son through truth. Jesus wills that all man would know the Father and the Son.
- C. "*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*" (11:28-30).
1. This statement must take into consideration the context. Woe was pronounced upon the cities of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum because they saw the Lord's miracles and heard His teachings yet refused to "*repent*" of their sins. Jesus thereby thanks God for establishing a **teaching** that some would reject through the hardness of their hearts and others would hear, believe, and obey due to their willingness to be saved from the consequences of their sins. Note that the Father and Son know each other in respect to their being one in the spiritual teaching they represent (cf. Matt. 11:27). Others who may be one with the Father and Son are those who hear the revealed teachings of Christ (which are the Father's), believe, accept, and repent of their sins.
 2. Thereby Jesus invites all to "*come unto me...*" The "*rest*" would not be an immediate reprieve from the toils of this life but rather an eternal rest from the onslaught of sin and persecution (see study # 24). To gain this eternal rest man is to "*take my yoke upon you, and learn of me.*" There is a connection between Jesus' teachings, the Father, eternal rest, "*learning*," and this "*yoke*." The word "*yoke*" (*zugos*) as used in Matt. 11:29-30; Acts 15:10; Gal. 5:1 represents a doctrine. Liddell and Scott define *zugos* as "anything which joins two bodies; used metaph. as the yoke of slavery" (344). The yoke is "something that connects or joins together" (AHD 1402). Two things that are yoked together generally work together for a common goal. Example; two ox yoked together plowing work at the same objective. That which yokes man with the Lord is the teachings of Jesus and thereby the Lord explains that we ought to "*learn*" of Him. The teachings of Jesus and a spiritual union with the Lord is "*easy*" and "*light*." There is nothing difficult and heavy about the Lord's doctrine that unites man with God. Let us all thereby repent of sins as they are revealed to us through God's holy word (see study # 54; Bible Unity).

Chapter 12

I. Jesus and His disciple are accused of violating the Sabbath Laws (12:1-8):

- A. "*At that season Jesus went on the Sabbath day through the grain fields; and his disciples were hungry and began to pluck ears and to eat. But the Pharisees, when they saw it, said unto him, Behold, thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the Sabbath*" (12:1-2).
1. Moses had commanded in Deuteronomy 23:25 saying, "*When thou comest into thy neighbor's standing grain, then thou mayest pluck the ears with thy hand; but thou shalt not move a sickle*

- unto thy neighbor's standing grain.*” One who passed by a grain field had the God given privilege to take some of the grain for his current hunger but not to harvest his neighbor's crop.
2. The Pharisees quarrel with Jesus and His disciples was not the eating of the grain but rather the day in which they were doing this; i.e., the Sabbath. The Sabbath laws are revealed at Exodus 20:10; 35:2ff; Numb. 15:32ff. To conduct a harvest upon the Sabbath would surely be a violation of God's laws, however, to merely take some grain and put it to the mouth for food was no sin.
- B. *“But he said unto them, Have ye not read what David did, when he was hungry, and they that were with him; how he entered into the house of God, and ate the showbread, which it was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them that were with him, but only for the priests? Or have ye not read in the law, that on the sabbath day the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath, and are guiltless? But I say unto you, that one greater than the temple is here”* (12:3-6).
1. Jesus gives two examples from the OT of individuals whose eating unlawful things seem to indicate a violation of God's law. The first example is David. David was being pursued by Saul and stopped at the tabernacle and ate of the bread from the table of showbread because it was the only food available (I Sam. 21:1ff). The Mosaic Law had commanded the showbread to be eaten by the priests alone (Lev. 24:9). David was not a priest yet he ate in a state of hunger. Jesus and His disciples had been pursued by the Pharisees and weary from their persecutions. To avert great hunger they have simply ate some food. If the Law commanded that no man save the priests eat the show bread yet David ate it why do the Pharisees praise David as a righteous man yet condemn Jesus and His disciples for eating to avert hunger?
 2. Secondly, Jesus asked the Pharisees if they had ever read the law regarding the priests performing work on the Sabbath, however, they are considered *“guiltless.”* The priests would prepare burnt offerings, sacrificed, and dressed the sacrificial animals on the Sabbath. Was this not work? The clear meaning is that the Pharisees have misinterpreted the Law of Moses. They have applied stricter standards to the law than God. Jesus is saying that it has always been ok to do minor labor on the Sabbath such as eating food and sacrificing animals.
 3. The priests did their work on the Sabbath in the temple of God with no guilt. Jesus states that a greater than the temple is present and thereby can not possibly be charged with sin (cf. Heb. 3:3).
- C. *“But if ye had known what this meaneth, I desire mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless. For the Son of man is lord of the Sabbath”* (12:7-8).
1. Jesus explains to the Pharisees that if they had knowledge of Hosea the prophet's statement, *“I desire mercy, and not sacrifice”* they would not be condemning Jesus and His disciples for picking the grain and eating it on the Sabbath (cf. Hosea 6:6). We may recall that Jesus said this exact same thing at Matthew 9:13 in relation to being accused of sin by the Pharisees because he ate with publicans and sinners with the intention of teaching them. To have mercy upon the sinful of the world is to teach them rather than ignoring and avoiding them. Sacrifices are needful yet it ought not be elevated above mercy. Remember that Samuel once told Saul, *“Hath Jehovah as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of Jehovah? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams”* (I Sam. 15:22). The point is that we are not to simply go through religious services in a mechanical manner but rather to do service to the Lord because He has commanded and our heart's desire is to please Him. The Pharisees were guilty of mechanical worship (see study # 11).
 2. Jesus had claimed to be greater than the temple and now claims to be the lawgiver of the things the Pharisees were attempting to follow. This was an open profession of his deity to the Pharisees. Certainly the one who the law originates from can give the proper interpretation thereof (see study # 3; The deity of Christ).

II. Jesus heals a man with a Withered Hand on the Sabbath (12:9-21):

- A. *“And he departed thence, and went into their synagogue: and behold, a man having a withered hand. And they asked him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day? That they might accuse him”* (12:9-10).
1. Let us recall that at Matthew 9:34 the Pharisees said, *“By the prince of demons cast he out demons.”* The Pharisees did not care to be instructed and neither did they care about this man with the withered hand. Their objective was to find an occasion *“that they might accuse”* Jesus. If they could show the multitudes that Jesus’ miracles violated the principles of God then he must not be considered the divine Messiah of the OT.
 2. Mark records this same event and adds, *“And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved at the hardening of their heart, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thy hand. And he stretched it forth; and his hand was restored. And the Pharisees went out, and straightway with the Herodians took counsel against him, how they might destroy him”* (Mark 3:5-6). It amazes us that such miraculous events took place and yet the Pharisees were voluntarily blind to them. Again, Jesus did not meet their expectation of the Messiah and so it really didn’t matter what He did or said they rejected him (cf. Matt. 11:16).
- B. *“And he said unto them, What man shall there be of you, that shall have one sheep, and if this fall into a pit on the Sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? How much then is a man of more value than a sheep! Wherefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath day”* (12:11-12).
1. The question is; can a man be healed on the Sabbath day and remain in good standing with God? Jesus answers their question with a question of His own. If you have a sheep that has fallen into a pit on the Sabbath are you going to leave it there to die or take hold of it and get it out? The answer is obvious.
 2. Likewise Jesus says the answer to the question of whether or not a deformed man should be healed on the Sabbath is obvious. Man ought to do good things on the Sabbath and healing one of such a malady is certainly a good deed.
- C. *“Then saith he to the man, Stretch forth thy hand. And he stretched it forth; and it was restored whole, as the other. But the Pharisees went out, and took counsel against him, how they might destroy him”* (12:13-14).
1. Jesus had already claimed to be greater than the temple and even the Lord of the Sabbath (12:6-8). His deity has been well established to this point. He had healed the sick, lame, blind, and caused the dead to rise (Matt. 11:4-6). The Lord had authority over sin (Matt. 9:2-3) and the physical elements of the world (Matt. 8:25-27). His preaching was done with authority and so he commanded new commandments (cf. the Sermon on the Mount). Though the Lord did all these things the Pharisees hardened their hearts against him and sought to destroy Him (see study # 11).
 2. We are left with the picture of the Pharisees leaving the scene in a hurry to assemble with others regarding this matter.
- D. *“And Jesus perceiving it withdrew from thence: and many followed him; and he healed them all, and charged them that they should not make him known: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through Isaiah the prophet, saying, Behold, my servant whom I have chosen; My beloved in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my Spirit upon him, and he shall declare judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not strive, nor cry aloud; Neither shall any one 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. And in his name shall the Gentiles hope”* (12:15-21).
1. Jesus looked into the hearts of the Pharisees and knew that they went about to destroy him. He was not safe in their presence and so he removed himself from the synagogue. As Jesus went away so did the multitudes and he *“healed them all.”* We get the picture of the Lord’s fame and the multitude’s desire to be healed by him. They followed him every step he took. When Jesus healed them he commanded that they not reveal to others His identity. The Lord had much more work to do and the time of his seizure had not yet arrived.

2. Again, Matthew is the author of fulfillment and tells us that Jesus fulfils Isaiah's prophecy given at Isaiah 42:1-9. These verses discuss the type of ministry Jesus would perform. Jesus would have the "*Spirit*" placed upon him (Is. 42:1).
 - a. When Jesus was baptized, the Holy Spirit descended upon him as a dove (Matt. 3:16-17).
 - b. Isaiah 11:1-2 speaks of the Holy Spirit's work in the Messiah as well. God gave Jesus the Spirit to fully equip him with the necessities of deity that he could perform his work perfectly (Cf. Jn. 3:34). For more on the "Spirit" of God upon man see Numbers 11-12.
3. Jesus "*will bring forth justice to the Gentiles*" (Is. 42:1).
 - a. The word "*justice*" means "law, rule, or government." Apparently the idea was that Jesus would establish a universal law that would include the Gentiles.
 - b. It had ever been the intention of Jehovah God to provide salvation to the Gentiles (Gen. 12:1ff).
4. Jesus would "*not cry, nor lift up his voice, nor cause it to be heard in the street*" (Is. 42:2).
 - a. In Jesus' early ministry, he healed people of maladies and charged the witnesses not to go around telling everyone about what he did as to stir up an early trip to the cross (Matt. 12:15-17).
 - b. Jesus was to be accepted for what he taught, and his teaching would not be of loud, clamoring and boisterous demonstrations. Jesus was a meek and gentle man.
5. "*A bruised reed will he not break, and a dimly burning wick will he not quench:*" (Is. 42:3).
 - a. The "*reed*" was a marshy growing plant. "That which is fragile, weak, easily waved by the wind, or broken down; and stands in contrast with a lofty and firm tree (comp. Matt. 11:7): 'What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind?'"¹
 - b. Those individuals weak and unable to bear up under the load of sin would be strengthened by the life-giving work of the Savior. The flicker of hope would not be allowed to be extinguished! (see study # 55; Bible Hope)
6. Jesus would "*bring forth justice and truth*" (Is. 42:3b). Again, the word "*justice*" is from a Hebrew word meaning "law or statutes." Jesus would be a lawgiver as was Moses (Cf. Deut. 18:15; Acts 3:22). This law would be known as truth upon which his kingdom would be established (Cf. Jn. 18:36-38).
7. "*He will not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set justice in the earth; and the isles shall wait for his law*" (Is. 42:4).
 - a. The servant (Messiah) would accomplish his purpose of establishing a law or government that allowed for the remission of sins upon the earth.
 - b. Jesus would not be weak nor discouraged in his work, though he would face much difficulty and persecution.
 - c. This law will be a universal law and thereby the "*isles (nations) shall wait for his law.*"
8. That which indicated the truth of the things spoken was that Jehovah was the creator of the "*heavens...; he that spread abroad the earth and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein:*" (Is. 42:5). Indeed God was the source of life to both man and beast!
9. Jehovah promised to "*hold the hand; keep thee and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles*" (Is. 42:6b). The holding of the servant's hand and keeping him indicated the Father's care and protection that His will may be accomplished (Cf. Jn. 8:29). Jehovah would give this servant as a covenant (law) to the people to sustain them in the hope of eternal salvation (Cf. Isaiah 49:8). This new law was to be a light or revelation to the Gentiles as well as Jews!
10. This revelation or light would:
 - a. "*Open the blind eyes*" (Is. 42:7). Those who were blind spiritually to the redemptive work and law of Jehovah God would see clearly what God's purpose was (Cf. Eph. 3:9-11).

¹ Barnes, A. Barnes' Notes; A Commentary on Isaiah. Volume 2; pg. 99-100

- b. *“To bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house”* (Is. 42:7b). Sin separates man from the fellowship of God (Cf. Isa. 59:1-2; I Jn. 1:3-7). Jehovah would send for His servant to release man from the dark prison dungeons of sin through obedience to His law of forgiveness (Cf. Jn. 8:31-36).
 - c. Jehovah was the one true and living God who would not share His glory with any other false god (42:8).
11. *“Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare; before they spring forth I tell you of them”* (42:9).
- b. God proved His deity by declaring events, and they surely came to pass. The Jews were promised a land and to be a great nation, and that surely had come to pass (Gen. 12:1ff).
 - c. The prophecies of the coming Messiah who would set up a kingdom and government with law designed to save man from sin were sure to come to pass as well.

III. **The Pharisees accuse Jesus of working by the Power of Beelzebub (12:22-29):**

- A. *“Then was brought unto him one possessed with a demon, blind and dumb: and he healed him, insomuch that the dumb man spake and saw”* (12:22).
1. A very similar incident took place at Matthew 9:32-34 when Jesus removed a demonic spirit from a dumb man and caused him to speak. On that occasion the multitudes marveled greatly yet the Pharisees charged Jesus with working by the power of demons.
 2. The only difference with this miracle is that the man was not only demon possessed and dumb but he too was blind.
- B. *“And all the multitudes were amazed, and said, Can this be the son of David? But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This man doth not cast out demons, but by Beelzebub the prince of the demons”* (12:23-24).
1. The purpose of miracles is twofold. First, miracles cured the sick, diseased, and possessed. Secondly, miracles produced amazement in the witnesses. Mark tells us that said reaction would cause the witnesses to believe the words of the miracle worker to be of a divine origin (cf. Mark 16:20; Jn. 20:30) (see study # 48).
 2. Note that such a miracle caused the people to asks, *“Can this be the son of David?”*
 - a. Recall that after Jesus raised the ruler’s daughter from the dead that Matthew records two blind men following Jesus proclaiming Him to be the *“son of David”* (Matt. 9:27). Matthew’s genealogy of Jesus also indicates that He was the *“son of David”* (cf. Matt. 1:1 compared with II Sam. 7:12-16) (see study # 56; The Development of the Multitudes’ Faith).
 - b. The NT reveals Jesus to be *“of the seed of David”* (cf. Jn. 7:42; Rom. 1:3; II Tim. 2:8).
 3. The Pharisees want no part of Jesus being associated with the Christ of the OT scriptures. Their objective is to prove that Jesus does his miracles by the power of Beelzebub and thereby cannot possibly be the longed for Messiah. This is the second time that they have used this argument (cf. Matt. 9:34). Jesus knew that their tactics were to confuse and persuade the multitudes that he was not the Christ (cf. Matt. 10:24-26) (see study # 11).
- C. *“And knowing their thoughts he 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 then shall his kingdom stand?”* (12:25-26).
1. The deity of Christ is depicted here in that He miraculously read the thoughts of the Pharisees (see study # 3). Jesus was omniscience as was God (cf. Jer. 23:23-25).
 2. A divine response to the Pharisees thoughts about Jesus doing his miracles by the power of Satan (i.e., Beelzebub). Jesus states that a kingdom that conducts operations contrary to what they represent is a kingdom that is divided and will eventually be brought to desolation. Secondly, a city or house that has opposing purposes shall not stand together. Lastly, Jesus brings his audience to the point where he wants them. Jesus says that if he does miracles by the power of Satan then Satan is divided. Satan cares nothing about the physical well being of others. Satan is behind the demonic possessions. Why would Satan cast out his demons from

men in the name of Jehovah God? Such a state will cause Satan's kingdom to fall (Note that Satan does have a "*kingdom*" (i.e., he is the prince of this world). Demons are thereby representatives of Satan. Satan is not divided and neither is Jesus doing Satan's work (see study # 19).

3. The word "*demon*" (*daimonion*) = "a malignant demon, evil angel, Matt. 8:31; Mark 5:12; Lk. 8:29; Rev. 16:14; 18:2...to be possessed, afflicted, vexed, by a demon, or evil spirit, Matt. 4:24; 8:16, 28, 33... a heathen god, deity, Acts 17:18; I Cor. 10:20-21; Rev. 9:20; a demon, evil spirit, Matt. 7:22; 9:33, 34; 10:8, 12, 24... pertaining to or proceeding from demons; demoniacal, devilish, Jam. 3:15" (Moulton 84). "An inferior divine being, a demon... evil spirit" (LS 171). "Demon, evil spirit, of independent beings who occupy a position somewhere between the human and the divine" (AG 169). "Usually referring to the ministers of the devil (Lk. 4:35; 9:1, 42; Jn. 10:21 etc.); inferior spirit beings, Satan's angels who 'did not keep their own domain' (Jude 6; Matt. 25:41; Rev. 12:7,9). Satan is said to be the ruler of demons (Matt. 9:34; 12:34; Mk. 3:22; Lk. 11:15)" (Unger's Bible Dictionary pp. 297) (see study # 57; Demons).

4. Matthew latter writes, "*Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels:*" (Matt. 25:41).

D. "*And if I by Beelzebub cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore shall they be your judges*" (12:27).

1. Some of the "*sons*" (followers) of the Pharisees had claimed the power to exercise demons from men by the Spirit of God (cf. Mk. 9:38; Acts 19:13).
2. When the followers of the Pharisees proclaimed their ability to cast out demons by the name of God, just as Jesus did, how is it that they are not demons and Jesus is? Jesus exposes the prejudice of the Pharisees. This is a great argument and is very applicable in many circles of religious ideas today. Some condemn the actions of others yet find themselves practicing other sinful things. They are blind to their own sin yet condemn the sin of others. Sometimes if we are not careful we may sin in areas of prejudices. It may be that I don't mind sinning in a particular area yet when you sin in an area that disgust me I am really upset with you even if both of us repent and ask the Lord to forgive (see study # 58; Prejudicial Sin).

E. "*But if I by the Spirit of God cast out demons, then is the kingdom of God come upon you*" (12:28).

1. Jesus concludes His argument: If it be so that Satan will not do works that oppose his objectives then he is not going to perform such miracles through a man like Jesus. Secondly, there is no doubt that a miracle has been performed (the Pharisees are not denying this due to the fact that they claim they must be the miraculous work of Satan). Thirdly, since a true miracle has been performed and Satan would certainly not do this else he is a divided one it must follow that Jesus has performed these miracles by the power or "*Spirit of God*."
2. The kingdom of God must be very near if Jesus is performing miracles by the power of God. Jesus was interconnected with the coming of the kingdom of God in the OT (cf. II Sam. 7:12ff; Isa. 9:6-7) (see study # 51).

F. "*Or how can one enter into the house of the strong man, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? And then he will spoil his house*" (12:29).

1. Jesus had entered the house of Satan (this man that was possessed of a demon).
2. Not only did the Lord enter but he bound the strong man's power and delivered the man of the demon by the power of God.

IV. Jesus exposes the wicked Hearts of the Pharisees (12:30-37):

A. "*He that is not with me is against me, and he that gathers not with me scatters*" (12:30).

1. The Lord has made a powerful argument that revealed the source of His miracles. Since Satan is not divided against himself the miracles must be from God. Now the Lord calls upon the Pharisees to make a decision as to who they want to take sides with (i.e., Christ or Satan).

2. There is no middle ground in the realm of spirituality. One cannot opt out and neither can one claim allegiance to both sides. One is either with Christ or against Him. One either accepts and teaches truth or accepts and teaches error. One either brings others to Christ or scatters.
- B. *“Therefore I say unto you, Every sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven. And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever shall speak against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, nor in that which is to come”* (12:31-32).
1. Man is given the opportunity to be forgiven of sins upon baptism (Acts 2:38), confession (I Jn. 1:8-10), and prayer with repentance (Acts 8:22). The scriptures reveal sin (I Jn. 3:4) and what one must do to be forgiven of sin. We must understand that it is the Holy Spirit’s role in the godhead to bring divine revelation whereby man is instructed in the ways of righteousness and sin (cf. Jn. 16:8-10) (see study # 59; The Holy Spirit).
 2. Man can speak evil (blasphemy) about the Son of man and eventually be forgiven when enlightened to the error. To speak words of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is to reject truth because revelation of truth was the work of the Holy Spirit. How can I be forgiven when I do not know or care about the instructions that lead me to repentance? I am not forgiven because I do not seek out God’s forgiveness. The un-forgiven sin is thereby the sin that I do not asks forgiveness for (cf. I Jn. 5:16-17) (see study # 60; The Unforgivable Sin).
- C. *“Either make the tree good, and its fruit good; or make the tree corrupt, and its fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by its fruit”* (12:33).
1. Jesus had earlier warned against those false teachers who would preach and teach lies that are not found in divine revelation (cf. Matt. 7:16ff).
 2. One’s fruit at Matthew 7:16ff is recognized as his teaching or what he represents spiritually. Jesus’ point here is that if your going to represent error then get on with it... don’t try to represent goodness and error at the same time. Spiritual fence riders have no place in the kingdom of God.
- D. *“Ye offspring of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks”* (12:34).
1. Drawing up character sketches of individuals generally includes actions and reactions. Here we find a reaction of Jesus after knowing the thoughts of the Pharisees (cf. Matt. 12:24-25). Jesus was a bold realist. The Lord simply proclaimed factual truths (see study # 8). Eternal heaven and hell was at stake for a multitude of people and so He could not afford to dismiss the Pharisees error. Too many people looked up to them and thereby their poison had the opportunity of being widespread.
 2. The Lord has clearly proven the origin and power behind His miracles. Secondly, he has revealed that man cannot serve God and Satan at the same time. One is either with or against God.
 3. Furthermore, Jesus proves that their denial of His deity has exposed the corrupt tree and fruit that they represent in their professions and denials.
 4. The Lord now publicly exposes the wicked hearts of the Pharisees in the hearing of *“the multitudes”* (remember the Lord is speaking before a large audience / cf. 12:23) (see study # 61; A Battle for Souls).
 5. The Pharisees were *“offspring of vipers”* in that their teachings and hypocritical actions, if followed, will result in spiritual death. The hardness and impenitent nature of their hearts has been fully exposed in that they have accused Jesus of performing miracles by the power of Satan. At the blink of an eye the Lord has now proved that the only workers of Satan were the Pharisees (see study # 11).
- E. *“The good man out of his good treasure brings forth good things: and the evil man out of his evil treasure brings forth evil things”* (12:35).
1. Good and evil are exposed in a man’s words and actions. The *“good man”* speaks words of truth that edify and cause one to attain and maintain spiritual life.

2. The “*evil man*” speaks words of error and causes all those who follow him to die spiritually.
 3. Sometimes we hear our own brethren speaking well of those who represent error by saying, “they have good intentions... their character is not flawed (i.e., the “errorist” never intended to lead people astray)... he has honest and honorable purpose... he is honestly mistaken... and so forth. Rather than giving these “*evil men*” excuses and justifying their error brethren ought to rise up as the Lord has and call them an “*offspring of vipers*” for their doctrine causes spiritual death. Too many today want to play with the snake and even allow it to strike them and they will thereby be as the one at Matt. 7:22-23 wandering why it is that they are being cast into the eternal fires of hell (see study # 30).
- F. “*And I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by their words thou shalt be justified, and by their words thou shalt be condemned*” (12:36-37).
1. An “*idle*” (*argos*) word = “unprofitable, or by implication injurious” (Moulton 50; LS 114). Understand that Jesus is considering the words of the Pharisees; i.e., they have claimed that Jesus is performing miracles by the power of Satan. Such a thought or words will not go unpunished “*in the day of judgment.*” Such words are ‘unprofitable and injurious’ to its hearers.
 2. The Lord tells us that the words that escape the mouth prove what is in the heart. If the words of man are unprofitable and injurious then certainly they shall be condemned for the bad tree and fruit that they represent. Note that it is not the intention of the individual but rather what is actually being said that is under consideration. To say that one’s intentions determine good and evil character elevates the will of man above the will of God. Paul referred to such activity as “*the man of sin revealed, the son of perdition*” (II Thess. 2:3). The words are proved ‘injurious’ by their meanings no matter what the individual’s intentions are (see study # 30).

V. **The Pharisees asks for a Sign (12:38-45):**

- A. “*Then certain of the scribes and Pharisees answered him, saying, Teacher, we would see a sign from thee*” (12:38).
1. The word “*then*” helps us understand that the same scribes and Pharisees are under consideration and that they have heard the stinging words of Jesus.
 2. They refer to Jesus as “*teacher*” and asks to see a “*sign*” that would prove His words of rebuke. Interestingly, we know that they had already seen signs from Jesus yet demanded that he perform one on the spot (cf. Matt. 12:22) (see study # 11).
 3. A “*sign*” (*semeion*) = “a sign, a mark, token... a sign from the gods, an omen... a sign or signal to do a thing... proof” (LS 727). The scribes and Pharisees want proof that Jesus is the Christ. It has already been made apparent that it doesn’t matter what Jesus does or says they have already rejected him.
- B. “*But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet.*” (12:39).
1. The Lord answers the foolish request of the scribes and Pharisees with a definitive no. Jesus had already given ample evidence of his deity yet they have rejected him. The only sign left for the hard hearted scribes and Pharisees was the “*sign of Jonah.*”
 2. The scribes and Pharisees represented an “*evil and adulterous generation.*” They were evil in that they chose Satan rather than Christ (this is a necessary conclusion to the Lord’s remarks above when he said, “*He that is not with me is against me*” Matt. 12:30). These Jews were adulterous in that they had left the scriptures and sound reasoning which they were wedded to as God’s people.
- C. “*for as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth*” (12:40).
1. Jesus draws a comparison between the time that Jonah spent in the belly of a whale (or “*great fish*” / cf. Jonah 1:17) and the time He will spend in the earth among the dead.

2. The Lord was to be crucified and his spirit go into the realm of the hadaan world (cf. Acts 2:31) (the heart of the earth) for three days and nights. The sign of Jonah is thereby a correlation between Jonah's coming out of the whale alive and Christ resurrection from the dead eternally alive. When the scribes and Pharisees witness this they will have their longed for sign.
- D. *"The men of Nineveh shall stand up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, a greater than Jonah is here"* (12:41).
1. The city of Nineveh was the capital of the Assyrian Empire. Jonah preached to them at the height of their power. It is thought that the city occupied around 600,000 people. Jonah did not want to preach to them due to their wicked acts yet in the end he does and they repent of their sinfulness.
 2. Jesus now announces to the sign seeking scribes and Pharisees that the one time wicked Assyrians will condemn them on the day of judgment because they repented and the scribes and Pharisees would not. Furthermore, there is all the more reason to repent now because a greater than Jonah preaches to them; i.e., the Lord Jesus Christ.
- E. *"The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, a greater than Solomon is here"* (12:42).
1. The *"queen of the south"* is the queen of Sheba as recorded in I Kings 10:1-13. She had *"heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of Jehovah, she came to prove him with hard questions"* (I Kg. 10:1). The distance she traveled to do this is recognized as *"the ends of the earth."* She was not disappointed. After her questions and experience with Solomon the queen pronounces, *"Blessed be Jehovah thy God, who delighted in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel: because Jehovah loved Israel for ever, therefore made he thee king, to do justice and righteousness"* (I Kg. 10:9).
 2. Like the case with Nineveh above so now the queen of Sheba would condemn the scribes and Pharisees because a greater than Solomon stood before them and preached repentance.
 3. There is a clear difference between the disposition of the repenting Assyrians, the Queen of Sheba, and the scribes and Pharisees!
- F. *"But the unclean spirit, when he is gone out of the man, passes through waterless places, seeking rest, and finding it not. Then he saith, I will return into my house whence I came out; and when he is come, he finds it empty, swept, and garnished. Then goeth he, and takes with himself seven other spirits more evil than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man becomes worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this evil generation"* (12:43-45).
1. Apparently Jesus has in mind the demonic spirit He just cast out (cf. Matt. 12:22). Where did the demonic spirit go? Jesus explains that he *"is gone out of the man, passes through waterless places, seeking rest, and finding it not..."* This reminds us of the account of Satan traveling to and fro in the earth (Job 1:7) seeking whom he may devour (I Pet. 5:8). Finding no resting place (the soul of a wicked man who receives him) the unclean spirit determines to go back to the one he was cast out of. Coming to the man the unclean spirit finds the soul of the man *"empty, swept, and garnished."* The condition is so favorable for the demonic spirit that he goes and finds seven other spirits *"more evil than himself"* and there they dwell in the heart of this man.
 2. The unrepentant heart of the man under consideration is made evident by the fact that by the power of God the unclean spirit was removed yet the power of God is no longer in the man. The heart of this man is receptive to the demonic spirits. Now other demonic spirits have found their way to this man's unrepentant heart and so he is in a worse state than at the start (see study # 62; Receiving Demons into one's Heart).
 3. Jesus now compares the current evil generation of scribes, Pharisees, and all unbelievers to such an individual who is filled with unclean spirits. The longer one turns a blind eye to Jesus the harder his heart grows against the good things of Christ.

VI. Jesus Speaks of a Spiritual Family of Believers (12:46-50):

- A. *“While he was yet speaking to the multitudes, behold, his mother and his brethren stood without, seeking to speak to him. And one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, seeking to speak to thee”* (12:46-47).
1. The mother and brothers of Jesus sought to speak with Jesus while he was teaching on the judgment of the Pharisees.
 2. Jesus had four physical brothers (i.e., James, Joseph, Jude, and Simon) (cf. Matt. 13:55). The Lord also had sisters (cf. Matt. 13:56) (see study # 18).
- B. *“But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? And who are my brethren? And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold, my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father who is in heaven, he is my brother, and sister, and mother”* (12:48-50).
1. If Jesus ever intended Mary to be worshipped and adored as a spiritual icon this was the opportunity. Yet the Lord explains to His audience that His spiritual mother, brothers, and sisters were those who heard, believed, and obeyed the gospel message (see study # 63; The Identity of the Saint).
 2. The family of God are those who are united in the teachings of Christ and obey from the heart His doctrines and thereby form one body (Rom. 12:3-8; I Cor. 12:12ff; Eph. 4:1-4). Those who do not obey the teachings of Jesus are not considered a part of the family of God (II Jn. 9-11). Those qualities that bring the family of God together as His kingdom of priests are founded upon gospel truths (cf. Eph. 2:19ff) and outwardly illustrated in brethren’s unity (I Cor. 1:10) (see study # 54).
 3. Taking the negative of verse 50 leaves us with the thought that those who do not the will of God cannot be viewed as brothers and sisters in Christ. Going further one may say that a brother or sister who has proved to be enemies of the cross cannot possibly be considered brethren.

Chapter 13

I. The Parable of the Sower (13:1-17):

- A. *“On that day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the sea side. And there were gathered unto him great multitudes, so that he entered into a boat, and sat; and all the multitude stood on the beach. And he spake to them many things in parables,...”* (13:1-3a).
1. Jesus continues in Galilee and no doubt is on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. A great multitude gathers around the Lord to see and hear him. Jesus enters a boat and uses it as a pulpit to preach to the multitudes that were on the beach.
 2. Jesus spoke to the multitudes in *“parables”* on this occasion. A *“parable”* (*parabole*) = “a placing one thing by the side of another; a comparing; a parallel case cited in illustration; a comparison, simile, similitude” (Moulton 301).
- B. *“Behold, the sower went forth to sow; and as he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the birds came and devoured them: and others fell upon the rocky places, where they had not much earth: and straightway they sprang up, because they had no deepness of earth: and when the sun was risen, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. And others fell upon the thorns; and the thorns grew up and choked them: and others fell upon the good ground, and yielded fruit, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. He that hath ears, let him hear”* (13:3b-9).
1. The parallel accounts of Jesus preaching the parable of the sower are found at Mk. 4:3ff and Lk. 8:5ff.
 2. Teaching in parables gives one the opportunity to challenge the audience to pick up on comparisons. Jesus associates a farmer who sows seed into the soil with a disciple who teaches God’s word to various types of people. The seed clearly represents the word of God (cf. Lk. 8:11).

3. The farmer has dropped seeds on four types of soils (i.e., the way side, rocky places, thorns, and good ground). Seeds may grow in these various soils, however, the success of their life is dependant upon things such as drainage, depth of soil, and availability of nutrients.
- C. *“And the disciples came, and said unto him, why speakest thou unto them in parables?”* (13:10)
1. Apparently Jesus spoke the parable and did not explain it to the multitudes on the beach.
 2. The question of the disciples indicates that they did not understand why Jesus would teach in such veiled sayings rather than just speaking his message plainly.
 3. No doubt that in the audience were more of the scribes and Pharisees who cared nothing for the miracles and teachings of Jesus.
- D. *“And he answered and said unto them, Unto you it is **given** to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that which he hath”* (13:11-12).
1. Note that Jesus uses the word “*given*” three times in these three verses. To the faithful disciples of the Lord were “*given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven...*” but to “*them it is not given.*”
 - a. Consider Jesus’ statement at John 6 in relation to such gifts to some. Jesus had taught a lesson on the bread of life and demanded that all partake of him to obtain eternal life (cf. Jn. 6:52-59). The multitudes were appalled at Jesus’ teaching and thereby turn away from him. Jesus then explains to his disciples, “*For this cause have I said unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it be **given** unto him of the Father*” (Jn. 6:65). Earlier in the chapter, Jesus had explained how men “*come unto*” him saying, “*No man can come to me, except the Father that sent me draw him: and I will raise him up in the last day. It is written in the prophets, and they shall all be taught of God. Every one that hath heard from the Father, and hath learned, cometh unto me*” (Jn. 6:44-45).
 - b. The thought is thereby simple. God the Father gives the gospel to those who are interested in hearing about the eternity of their soul. Many just do not care and thereby the gospel is not for them. God is not at fault in such hearts (cf. II Pet. 3:9) but rather many do not care about their own soul’s eternal abode. It is just not a topic that they are interested in.
 - c. The gospel message is given and received by those who desire it. God’s gifts are thereby conditioned upon the hearers desire to gain it (see study # 15).
 2. Those who truly desire truth and an eternity with God will receive truth “*abundantly,*” however, those that do not have truth are in such a state voluntarily and so they receive nothing from God. Some have initial interest yet over time they allow the love of the world to choke out the cares of an eternal abode. That truth that he had is snatched away by the cares of the world.
- E. *“Therefore speak I to them in parables; because seeing they see not, and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand”* (13:13).
1. Many have the ability to hear, understand, believe, and obey but few have the desire. Athletes, musicians and artist may have tremendous ability; however, if there is no desire there will be no gain (see study # 24). Note that Jesus does not say that man cannot see or hear but rather they can see and hear yet the do not see, hear, or understand. The point is clear. People can see, hear, understand, believe, and obey but the problem lies within their heart.
 2. Paul said, “*And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled in them that perish*” (II Cor. 4:3). A voluntary veil exists in the minds of the hard hearted against the word of God and Jesus identifies it as being a lack of **desire** to know.
 3. A paradox is given, “*because seeing they see not...*” The paradox indicates their ability yet their rejection of truth (cf. Acts 7:51).
 4. They do not understand truth because they willfully ignore it. Let no one say that truth is unattainable. Truth is understood only by those who so desire to understand it. Jesus said, “*And that in the good ground, these are such as in an honest and good heart, having heard*

the word, hold it fast and bring forth fruit with patience” (Lk. 8:15). The phrase “*heard the word*” (*akouo logos*) is defined as “to hear and understand” (LS 29) the word of God (cf. Matt. 13:14) (see study # 64; Can We Know Truth?)

- a. To know truth is to know Jesus (Jn. 14:6).
 - b. Truth reveals instructions for salvation (Eph. 1:13).
 - c. Truth reveals instructions for unity among baptized believers (Jn. 17:20-21; I Cor. 1:10; Eph. 4:1-2).
 - d. If truth cannot be completely understood then John gave us an impossible task (II Jn. 9), we cannot therefore know Jesus, the instructions of truth for salvation would be vague and useless and there would of course be no unity among baptized believers.
- F. “*And unto them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall in no wise understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall in now wise perceive: For this people’s heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest haply they should perceive with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should turn again, and I should heal them*” (13:14-15).
1. Jesus quotes from Isaiah 6:9-10 saying, “*unto them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah...*” No OT scripture is quoted more than Isa. 6:9-10 (cf. Matt. 13:14, 15; Mk. 4:12; Lk. 8:10; Jn. 12:40; Acts 28:26, 27; Rom. 11:8; II Cor. 3:14).
 2. Isaiah experienced the same condition of heart in his day. The antecedent to the pronoun “*them*” are those who see but do not see and hear but do not hear. Isaiah identifies the source of their problem: “*For this people’s heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing and their eyes have they closed*” (Matt. 13:15).
 - a. A heart that is “*waxed gross*” (*pachuno*) = “Thick, stout, fat; of things, thick, massive, thick witted, gross, dull, stupid” (LS 614).
 - b. Their ears are “*dull of hearing*” (*bareos*) “heavy to bear, grievous, burdensome, oppressive, wearisome” (LS 147).
 - c. Their “*eyes have they closed*” (*kammuno*) “to shut or close the eyes, hence to drop asleep, doze” (LS 411).
 3. A clear attitude toward truth is revealed by Jesus. There are those who do not understand truth because God’s commands are a burden and oppressive. Through their lack of fear of God they display stupidity (being ‘thick headed’) in seeking the things of this world rather than hearing, understanding and following God’s instructions (cf. I Jn. 2:15-17).
 4. Why preach in parables Jesus? Because the word of God sifts the mind that is burdened by God’s gracious offer of eternity from those who truly desire a heavenly home (cf. Matt. 13:16-17)! Jesus said, “*he that is not with me is against me*” (Matt. 12:30) and the Lord was not going to preach a message that marred the lines of true discipleship. Jesus’ preaching exposed those who were dull of hearing, stupid (thick headed) and one’s who lack desire toward His word that the true disciples would not be influenced by them (cf. Matt. 7:15ff; II Cor. 11:3-4). For this cause are Christians to expose false teachers and doctrines today (Eph. 5:11; II Jn. 9-11). Thick-headedness is like a contagious disease (cf. II Tim. 2:16-17).
 5. Jesus is saying that the multitudes heard his preaching, saw the miracles, and should have understood his message yet they did not. Their dull uninterested ears and eyes were only looking to preconceived ideas of the kingdom of God (see study # 52). When Jesus preached repentance it was not what they wanted to hear. A hard heart is here defined. When God’s instructions / commands are given they are not words that willful man wants to hear. The heart is thereby hardened against God’s commands (see study # 53). Pharaoh of Egypt was of this sort (cf. Ex. 10:3).
- G. “*But blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, that many prophets and righteous men desired to see the things which ye see, and saw them not; and to hear the things which ye hear, and heard them not*” (13:16-17).

1. A contrast is drawn between the Lord's disciples (the one's he is now talking to / cf. Matt. 13:10) and "*them*" (i.e., the unbelieving and no repenting Pharisees, scribes, and general public that follow after their ways).
2. The key word in distinguishing the two contrasted groups is "*desire*" (*epithumeo*). *Epithumeo* is defined as "to set one's heart upon a thing, lust after, long for, covet, desire... to desire to do... eagerness for it" (LS 292). The Lord's disciples set their hearts and longed for the Lord's teachings whereas others could care less about the instructions (see study # 24).
3. Jesus explains to his disciples that they are a blessed people due to the fact that they are living in a time in which the gospel message is being revealed by the Lord Jesus Christ. This is a time that the prophets and righteous men of old longed for yet did not live to see or hear the things that are not being seen and revealed (cf. I Pet. 1:8ff).

II. Jesus Explains the Parable of the Sower (13:18-23):

- A. "*Hear then ye the parable of the sower. When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the evil one, and snatcheth away that which hath been sown in his heart. This is he that was sown by the way side*" (13:18-19).
 1. The first of four types of hearts depicted in the parable of the sower is the "*way side*" heart. Jesus had explained that as the sower went along planting seeds some fell by the way side (an area compacted by walking or heavy animal traffic. Hard soils leave seeds upon the surface with little chance to root. The birds pluck the seeds off the soil surface and devour them.
 2. Here is a mind that is compacted with the ways of the world and the "*word of the kingdom*" (gospel message) can scarcely penetrate the surface. The gospel message is unlike any thought or pattern of reasoning the person knows. To repent of things that were previously enjoyed, to turn the cheek when an enemy strikes, to go the extra mile, and so forth are foreign thoughts and go against the grain of the individual's hardened heart. This man is introduced to spiritual instruction but there is no root of acceptance and thereby the revelation is easily snatched away by Satan and his demonic angels.
- B. "*And he that was sown upon the rocky places, this is he that heareth the word, and straightway with joy receiveth it; yet hath he not root in himself, but endureth for a while; and when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, straightway he stumbleth*" (13:20-21).
 1. Some of the seeds the sower was sowing (i.e., the gospel message) fell upon rocky places. Here is the heart of man that hears the word of God and receives it (i.e., he understands and gladly accepts it). Rocky places have cracks of soil yet it is limited by space and has little chance of survival.
 2. Jesus explains that the rocky place heart is an individual who gladly receives the truths of the gospel, however, when he is called into question for his beliefs or even persecuted he does not endure very long. This man is one who considers the cost of discipleship and determines that the hardships and persecution are not worth the promises of the truth (i.e., eternal life). Such a one is short sighted and unable thereby to endure to the end.
- C. "*And he that was sown among the thorns, this is he that heareth the word; and the care of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful*" (13:22).
 1. Some seeds fell among weeds and thorns. Such a condition allows limited nutrients and space for the germinating seed. The plant will generally shoot up yet through time its appearance is like one of the weeds; i.e., it is spindly and virtually useless.
 2. Here is an individual who's mind is cluttered with the desires of the world. There is a love for truth yet there is an equal love for the world's riches. Such a one is "*deceived*" in that he believes the riches of this world will solve all problems yet the problem of sin can never be solved with money. The end for such a one is "*unfruitfulness*." Jesus had earlier explained that a tree (the soul of man) can either represent good fruit or corrupt fruit (Matt. 12:33). Again, during the Sermon on the Mount Jesus explained that one's fruit is what he or she represents in their every day actions and teachings. The one who longs after this world's riches cannot represent truth in its purity.

- D. *“And he that was sown upon the good ground, this is he that heareth the word, and understands it; who verily beareth fruit, and brings forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty”* (13:23).
1. Lastly, the sower plants seed in *“good ground.”* Good ground represents fertile soil ready, receptive, and favorable for a healthy and fruitful tree. Such an individual hears the gospel message, understands it, receives it, obeys it, represents it in his daily life, and teaches it to others that they too may be saved.
 2. Please note that in each of these four soils we find types of people’s approach to the gospel message. Some are confused by its principles because it does not correspond to their style of life. Some are excited by the prospects of the gospel message, however, are unwilling to go through the hardships and persecutions that come with being a Christian. Still others receive the gospel message yet have dual desires. These individuals seek the glamour of the world and have smaller places in their mind for godly living. Lastly, we find the individual who receives the gospel message and lives it out in their daily lives come what may. Each of these mind sets are choices made by individuals. God does not pre-form certain people’s minds. All today must make a decision as to how well they will receive the gospel message and follow through with its instructions.
 3. The Pharisees prompted this parable. Their hard hearted disposition toward Jesus is depicted in their request to see a sign from him when they had already witnessed miracles (cf. Matt. 12:22, 38). The scribes and Pharisees had no intentions of being persuaded that Jesus was the Christ and thereby they saw the miracles but they really did not see. The scribes and Pharisees heard the gospel message yet they really did not hear (i.e., understand, receive, and obey). They did not understand, receive, nor obey because there was no true desire on their part. Jesus has thereby thoroughly answered their question as to why He spoke to them in parables.

III. **The Parable of the Tares (13:24-30):**

- A. *“Another parable set he before them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man that sowed good seed in his field: but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares also among the wheat, and went away”* (13:24-25).
1. The *“kingdom of heaven”* has been discussed in many previous verses. Jesus has already said that the *“kingdom of heaven is at hand”* (Matt. 3:2; 4:17; 10:7) and has actively preached the *“gospel of the kingdom”* (Matt. 9:35) which involved repentance (Matt. 3:2; 4:17; 9:13). We have identified the *“kingdom of heaven”* that is at hand and whose law is that of repentance as the church of Jesus Christ. We are now given further details about the Lord’s kingdom (see study # 9).
 2. The kingdom of heaven can be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field, went to sleep, and an enemy came in and planted weeds (tares) in the field so that the good seed would be choked out.
 3. If we keep the thoughts of the parable of the sower before us the seed would represent the gospel message and the tares or weeds things such as the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches that choke out the word of God in the hearts of men. Tares may also represent false teaching.
- B. *“But when the blade sprang up and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. And the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst thou not sow good seed in thy field? Whence then hath it tares? And he said unto them, An enemy hath done this. And the servants say unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he saith, Nay; lest haply while ye gather up the tares, ye root up the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather up first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them; but gather the wheat into my barn”* (13:26-30).
1. The farmer did not know that the tares were in the field until the blade sprang up. The farmer decides to leave the tares in the field lest he damage the good wheat seedlings pulling them out.

2. The farmer lets the tares and good wheat seedlings grow together until the time of harvest and then goes in and removes the weeds. The farmer then commands that all tares be bundled up and burned in the field. The full explanation of this parable is discussed at Matt. 13:36ff.

IV. The Parable of the Mustard Seed (13:31-32):

- A. *“Another parable set he before them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like unto a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field:”* (13:31).
1. The phrase, *“like unto”* is one word in the Greek; i.e., *homoios*. *Homoios* is defined as “resembling, one and the same, common, alike, much like” (LS 556). The “kingdom of heaven” is the assembly of God’s people who are united in truth and share a common love for God and hope of heaven. The kingdom of heaven is a kingdom comprised of believers who have been cleansed of sins through the waters of baptism (see study # 9).
 2. The kingdom has a law that all believers adhere to. This kingdom belonging to God ‘resembles, is one and the same, and much like’ *“a grain of mustard seed”* that has been planted in the field.
- B. *“Which indeed is less than all seeds; but when it is grown, it is greater than the herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the heaven come and lodge in the branches thereof”* (13:32).
1. “The rabbis used a ‘grain of mustard’ to characterize something very minute. The mustard plant, however, can be described as a ‘tree’ (Mt. 13:32; Lk. 13:19) and as putting out ‘great branches’ (Mk. 4:32). Of several varieties of mustard, the references seem to be to *Sinapis nigra* L., cultivated black mustard. Normally attaining a maximum height of 1.2 m. (4ft.), some species can grow to 4.6m. (15 ft.) under favorable conditions... Birds came to the trees to eat these seeds (Matt. 13:32, etc.), not to build their nest” (ISBE; v. 3, pp. 449).
 2. The primary meaning of the parable is that all of humanity may come to the kingdom of God and gain eternal sustenance as the birds feed upon the seeds of the mustard tree. Truly Jesus is the *“bread of life”* and all those who partake shall never go hungry (cf. Jn. 6:35). A secondary meaning of the parable revolves around the small and seemingly insignificant beginning of God’s kingdom which grows throughout the world as a tree would spread its branches. Daniel said that the kingdom of God would *“fill the whole earth”* (Dan. 2:35) and *“never be destroyed”* (Dan. 2:44). God’s kingdom would grow through the preaching of the gospel by faithful men and women (cf. II Tim. 2:1-2).

V. The Parable of the Leaven (13:33):

- A. *“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 it was all leavened”* (13:33).
1. *“Leaven”* (*zume*) = “to produce fermentation in... something that causes fermentation, as a yeast, bacterium, mold, or enzyme... a state of agitation or turbulence... a chemical reaction induced by living or nonliving ferments that split complex organic compounds into relatively simple substances, esp. the anaerobic conversion of sugar to carbon dioxide and alcohol by yeast” (AHD 721; 497). Leaven causes a substance to go through a chemical change through agitation and turbulence. A chemical reaction takes place when the leaven contacts a substance. Yeast in dough ferments the lot and causes the swelling of the lump.
 2. When the gospel message is preached good and evil is set forth in the human mind (Jn. 16:8). A reaction takes place within the heart of man. Those who are changed by the gospel leaven go through a transformation process of unrighteousness to righteousness (cf. Col. 1:13).
 3. Secondly, the kingdom of heaven, as a whole, goes throughout the whole earth as the leavening gospel is preached. The kingdom grows as more individuals are pricked in their heart by the chemical reaction caused by the gospel message (see study # 9).
- B. *“All these things spake Jesus in parables unto the multitudes; and without a parable spake he nothing unto them: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things hidden from the foundation of the world”* (13:35-36).

1. Jesus had already given answer regarding why He spoke to the people in parables. The simplicity of the gospel message will always remain a mystery to those who have no desire to know its truths (cf. Matt. 13:10ff).
2. This is the 13th fulfillment prophecy recorded by Matthew. The OT scriptures are quoted by Matthew (here, Psalms 78:2) and then applied to what Jesus was saying and doing. Who could truly deny that Jesus was the Christ?

VI. Jesus explains the Parable of the Tares (13:36-43):

- A. *“Then he left the multitudes, and went into the house: and his disciples came unto him, saying, Explain unto us the parable of the tares of the field”* (13:36).
 1. Matthew had recorded that Jesus was preaching from the deck of a boat in the Galilean Sea to the multitudes on the sea shore (cf. Matt. 13:1-2).
 2. The Lord now goes back into *“the house”* and His disciples ask him to explain the parable of the tares.
- B. *“And he answered and said, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; and the field is the world; and the good seed, these are the sons of the kingdom; and the tares are the sons of the evil one”* (13:37-38).
 1. Here we are given a picture of God and Satan at work in this world and an end judgment day.
 2. Tares are *“the sons of the evil one”* (Matt. 13:38) (i.e., the *“sons of disobedience”* Eph. 2:2; *“son of perdition”* II Thess. 2:3; *“children of the devil”* I Jn. 3:10) (see study # 19). Good seed equals the *“sons of the kingdom”* (i.e., the children of light / Eph. 5:8; sons of God / Gal. 3:26; Children of God / I Jn. 3:1, 10).
- C. *“and the enemy that sowed them is the devil: and the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are angels. As therefore the tares are gathered up and burned with fire; so shall it be in the end of the world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that cause stumbling, and them that do iniquity, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He that hath ears, let him hear”* (13:39-43).
 1. As Jesus sows the good seed of the gospel message to the world so the devil sows seeds of lies to the world (cf. Jn. 8:44) (see study # 19). Through the process of time some people are represented in the good seeds (those who live a life of righteousness) and others represent the tares (those who live a life of sin). One’s eternal abode is dependant upon the decisions made while among the living (II Cor. 2:16).
 2. At a time when no man knows (Matt. 24:36) God will put an end to this world as we know it (cf. II Pet. 3:10ff). Jesus will send forth his holy angles to separate the tares from the good seed (i.e., the wicked and sinful people from the righteous). Those who lived in sin and who rejected the gospel of repentance will be cast into a *“furnace of fire”* (cf. Rev. 20:10ff). While in this fire the wicked shall be *“tormented day and night for ever and ever”* (Rev. 20:10). This place of torment is called Hell and within its confines will exists *“weeping and gnashing of teeth”* due to the great *“anguish”* (Rom. 2:9) and pain (see study # 31). Jesus will then descend from the heavens with the sound of a great trumpet and gather all His saints up into glory (I Thess. 4:16-18). He that hath ears, let him hear rather than hearing but not hearing (see study # 43).

VII. The Parable of the hidden Treasure and Pearl of Great Price (13:44-46):

- A. *“The kingdom of heaven is like unto a treasure hidden in the field; which a man found, and hid; and in his joy he goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field”* (13:44).
 1. Once again the kingdom of heaven is *“likened, resembles, one and the same”* as a hidden treasure that has been found by a man (see study # 9).
 2. Treasure conjures up a multitude of thoughts within our head. To discover a chest of gold coins or old currency excites the mind. O the things we could do with a large sum of money. Jesus explains that the kingdom of heaven should have an equal (i.e., one and the same) mental response in our minds. When I view the kingdom of heaven (the Lord’s church) as valuable as

a chest of treasure then I have learned the value of eternity. I should say, “O the wonders of heaven how magnificent it shall be.”

3. I ought to be willing to sell everything I have to gain this kingdom like one would do who is trying to obtain the treasures in this parable. We learn then the great value of God’s kingdom (see study # 24). Secondly, we learn that we ought to do all possible to obtain this kingdom. Lastly, we learn that such a possession ought to bring us great joy and satisfaction in this life.
- B. *“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is a merchant seeking goodly pearls: and having found one pearl of great price, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it”* (13:45-46).
1. The kingdom of heaven resembles and is one and the same as a pearl of great price. The merchant represents an individual’s view of the value of the sought after treasure (see study # 9).
 2. When the merchant found the treasure he had sought after he sold all his possessions to purchase this valuable pearl. Man ought to view the kingdom of God with such interest and value.

VIII. The Parable of the Drag-Net (13:47-50):

- A. *“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: which, when it was filled, they drew up on the beach; and they sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but the bad they cast away”* (13:47-48).
1. I grew up on the Gulf Coast and truly enjoyed fishing. At times, I would use a casting net or seine-net and catch shrimp and mullet for live bate. When one cast a net into the ocean there are a variety of things you may catch. Some fish and shells are not desirable so as you sift through the catch you keep some things and cast others out.
 2. Jesus said that the kingdom of heaven is like (i.e., resembles and is one and the same as) a net that is thrown over humanity and gathered up by the Lord’s angels (see study # 9).
- B. *“So shall it be in the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the righteous, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth”* (13:49-50).
1. Like undesirable fish in a drag net the ungodly will be undesirable to the Lord. Just as sure as the kingdom was soon to come (cf. Matt. 3:2; 4:17; Mk. 9:1) so the “*end of the world*” will one day occur in the future.
 2. God will send forth His angels to go throughout the world and gather up all the ungodly sinners and shall “*cast them into the furnace of fire.*” Those who enter the lake of fire are doomed to an eternal existence of pain (“*weeping and gnashing of teeth*”) (see study # 31 and # 43).
- C. *“Have ye understood all these things? They say unto him, Yea. And he said unto them, Therefore every scribe who hath been made a disciple to the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is a householder, who brings forth out of his treasure things new and old”* (13:51-52).
1. After speaking the parable of the sower, tares, mustard seed, leaven, hidden treasure, pearl of great price, and drag-net Jesus asks, “*Have you understood all these things?*” The disciples answered “*yes.*” It was important that the disciples understood the deeper spiritual meanings of the Lord’s parables.
 - a. Recall that Jesus had earlier said that the problem with many was that they did not understand due to viewing the truth as grievous and burdensome and approaching it with closed eyes. Jesus calls this state of mind stupid and thick headed (cf. Matt. 13:15).
 - b. There are some people who understand truth when it is presented to them (cf. Matt. 13:23, 51) and those who do not (Matt. 13:19). Those who do understand are identified by their interest and desire for spiritual and eternal matters while those who lack understanding are burdened and disinterested in truth.
 - c. The problem with most is not that they cannot understand but rather that they will not understand (see study # 64).
 2. Jesus completes his seven parables with a statement about a scribe who would be made a disciple of Christ’s (i.e., the kingdom of heaven). Such a man (skilled in the law and able to

teach) is compared to a “*householder*” (*oikodespotes*) = “the master of the house, the good man of the house” (LS 546). Said master is responsible for the care of his home and brings out of his stored treasures those things, whether old or new, that are needful for the family. Likewise, the believing scribe will bring forth the treasures of the gospel to all who are in need.

IX. Jesus travels to Nazareth after preaching in Capernaum (13:54-58):

- A. *“And coming into his own country he taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and said, Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works?”* (13:54).
1. When Jesus came back to Nazareth from the area of Capernaum the multitudes were “*astonished*” after hearing him teach and seeing the mighty powerful acts he performed.
 2. Their inner questions were “how does Jesus do this?” “How did he gain this great wisdom?”
- B. *“Is not this the carpenter’s son? Is not his mother called Mary? And his brethren, James, and Joseph, and Simon, and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things?”* (13:55-56)
1. Many had known Jesus and His family for years and did not understand how he was now doing and teaching these things.
 2. Jesus had brothers and sisters from his mother Marry. The people of Nazareth knew them. How is it that Jesus could have all these powers and great wisdom?
 3. The people of Nazareth could not fathom the origins of Jesus due to the fact that they had always known him and his family. Jesus is supposed to be like them... not deity.
- C. *“And they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honor, save in his own country, and in his own house. And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief”* (13:57-58).
1. To be “*offended*” (*skandalizo*) = “to make to stumble, give offence to any one... to take offence” (LS 731). Why would someone be offended when seeing the signs Jesus performed and hearing His teachings? The answer lies in a common attitude that many of the scribes and Pharisees disposition toward Jesus.
 2. The Lord performed notable miracles that should have confirmed his message as divine yet many were offended by him. Their offence came in the form of anger that one as lowly as He would command that they repent of sin. Though Jesus performed the mighty works they rejected him and counted him a common man. Jesus was not what they expected of the Messiah so they rejected him. The truth Jesus preached did not meet their expectations of a savior. Jesus was thereby rejected like many today reject him. When truth is preached it is not what they expect nor desire to hear. Man wants to have the world and Jesus too yet the Lord has explained that this is impossible. When faced with the decision to give up the desires of this world for Christ the worldly say ‘no way’ (see study # 53).
 3. It is more difficult for these people to accept Jesus because they had known him all their lives as the carpenter’s son. How can he now be the Messiah? No matter what he did in their sight and what he taught they had purposed to reject him. So the Lord proclaims, “*A prophet is not without honor, save in his own country, and in his own house.*”

Chapter 14

I. The Death of John the Baptizer (14:1-12):

- A. *“At that season Herod the tetrarch heard the report concerning Jesus, and said unto his servants, This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead; and therefore do these powers work in him”* (14:1-2).
1. There are four Herod’s mentioned in the New Testament. Herod the Great had earlier died while Joseph and Mary were in Egypt (cf. Matt. 2:19). Herod had three sons that ruled in the region of Palestine from 4 BC to AD 39. The three sons names were Herod Archaelus (ruled in Samaria, Judea and Idumea), Antipas (who ruled in Galilee and Perea), and Philip (who ruled in

- Iturea, Trachonitis, Gaulanitis, Auranitis, and Batanea). The word “*tetrarch*” (*tetrarches*) = “a ruler of one of four provinces” (LS 802).
2. Herod’s guilty conscience began to bother him and he deduced that John the baptizer had been raised from the dead. Herod had John beheaded (discussed below).
- B. *“For Herod had laid hold on John, and bound him, and put him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip’s wife. For John said unto him, it is not lawful for thee to have her. And when he would have put him to death, he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet”* (14:3-5).
1. History reveals that it is Herod Antipas under consideration here (i.e., the brother of Philip). Herod had visited the province of his brother Philip and fell in love with his brother’s wife Herodias. Herodius left her husband for Antipas and together they lived in an adulterous relationship. Mark 6:17 states that Antipas actually married Herodius. When John the baptizer found this out, he pointed out the king’s error stating that, *“it is not lawful for thee to have her.”* Adultery was a crime punishable by death in the OT (Deut. 5:18; 22:24) and spiritual death in the NT (cf. Matt. 19:9) (see study # ; The Christian’s Duty to Expose Sin).
 2. Note that Herod put John in prison for Herodius’ sake. She was appalled by John’s bold preaching and developed a hatred for a man that told her words she needed to hear. Herod actually *“feared John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man, and kept him safe. And when he heard him, he was much perplexed; and he heard him gladly”* (Mark 6:20).
 3. Note that John’s exposal of Herod and Herodius’ adultery proves that God is the Lord of all flesh and not the Jews only (cf. Jer. 32:27).
- C. *“But when Herod’s birthday came, the daughter of Herodias danced in the midst, and pleased Herod. Whereupon he promised with an oath to give her whatsoever she should ask. And she, being put forward by her mother, saith, Give me here on a platter the head of John the Baptist. And the king was grieved; but for the sake of his oaths, and of them that sat at meat with him, he commanded it to be given; and he sent and beheaded John in prison. And his head was brought on a platter, and given to the damsel: and she brought it to her mother. And his disciples came, and took up the corpse, and buried him; and they went and told Jesus”* (14:6-12).
1. Though Herod feared and gladly listened to the preaching of John he was indeed a foolish man. He made a rash oath in the heat of a moment of entertainment. Herod Antipas told Herodias’ daughter, who danced before him, that he would give her whatever she desired. To Herod’s horror the young lady asked for the head of John the baptizer. The king had no choice but to give her the request and so John was beheaded.
 2. It was not long after the death of John that the king of Arabia marched upon Palestine and slaughtered many. Herod’s first wife was the daughter of Aretas, king of Arabia and the Arabians did not take lightly Herod’s abuse to the king’s daughter.
- II. **Jesus feeds 5000 men plus women and children with five loaves and two fishes (14:13-21):**
- A. *“Now when Jesus heard it, he withdrew from thence in a boat, to a desert place apart: and when the multitudes heard thereof, they followed him on foot from the cities. And he came forth, and saw a great multitude, and he had compassion on them, and healed their sick”* (Matt. 14:13-14).
1. Jesus is at the height of his popularity. There are hordes of people following his every move.
 2. Note another character trait of Jesus. The Lord looked upon the sick and diseased and he healed them out of a feeling of “*compassion.*” The word “*compassion*” (*splagchnizomai*) = “compassion and mercy (the deep feeling of sharing the suffering of another, together with the inclination to give aid or support or to show mercy) (LS 740 / AHD 300) (see study # 8).
- B. *“And when even was come the disciples came to him, saying, The place is desert, and the time is already past; send the multitudes away, that they may go into the villages, and buy themselves food. But Jesus said unto them, They have no need to go away; give ye them to eat”* (14:15-16).
1. Night time was quickly approaching. The multitudes that followed would need food and their current location, the desert, did not afford them any opportunities to eat. The disciples approach Jesus and advise that he send the people away to the villages that they may eat.

2. Jesus answers the disciples by saying no, you feed them.
- C. *“And they say unto him, We have here but five loaves, and two fishes. And he said, bring them hither to me. And he commanded the multitudes to sit down on the grass; and he took the five loaves, and two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed, and brake and gave the loaves to the disciples, and the disciples to the multitudes. And they all ate, and were filled: and they took up that which remained over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. And they that did eat were about five thousand men, besides women and children”* (14:17-21).
 1. The miracle of feeding the 5000 is the only miracle mentioned by all accounts of the life of Christ (Jn. 6:1ff, Matt. 14:13-21; Mark 6:32-44 and Luke 9:10-17).
 2. Jesus commands that the multitude of men be divided into groups of fifties and hundreds (cf. Mk. 6:39ff). Jesus takes the five loaves and two fishes, blesses it, and begins distributing the food to the multitudes. The people ate until they were *“filled.”* There were 12 baskets of food left over.
 3. When the multitudes of people saw what took place they unanimously exclaimed, *“this is of a truth the prophet that comes into the world”* (Jn. 6:14). The definite article *“the”* in front of prophet indicates that they proclaimed Jesus to be the Messiah. A multitude of OT scriptures pointed to the government and kingship of the Messiah. The people therefore were ready to crown Jesus King, however, He eludes the multitudes going into the mountains alone. The sign on this occasion served the purpose of identifying Jesus as the Christ (cf. Jn. 20:30).

III. Jesus walks upon the Sea of Galilee (14:22-33):

- A. *“And straightway he constrained the disciples to enter into the boat, and to go before him unto the other side, till he should send the multitudes away. And after he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into the mountain apart to pray: and when even was come, he was there alone”* (14:22-23).
 1. The miracle of feeding five thousand plus women and children with five loaves and two fishes occurred on the north side of the Sea of Galilee.
 2. Jesus tells his disciples to enter into the boat and begin their journey to the south of the Sea of Galilee (i.e., the land of the Gennesaret). Meanwhile, Jesus sent the crowds away and he retired to the mountains to pray unto the Father.
- B. *“But the boat was now in the midst of the sea, distressed by the waves; for the wind was contrary. And in the fourth watch of the night he came unto them, walking upon the sea”* (14:24-25).
 1. While Jesus was praying in the mountains a storm came upon the disciples who were in the Sea of Galilee. The wind and the waves were beating the boat and the disciples were fearful.
 2. The *“fourth watch of the night”* would have been approximately 3:00 AM. The Jews, at this date, divided their days into fours as did the Romans (i.e., first watch being from 6:00 PM to 9:00 PM, the second from 9:00 PM to 12:00 Midnight, the third watch from 12:00 Midnight to 3:00 AM, and the fourth watch from 3:00 AM to 6:00 AM) (The Romans counted time from morning to evening). Apparently the disciples had been struggling in the storm for about 8 hours.
 3. Any where from 3:00 AM to 6:00 AM Jesus came to the disciples in the midst of the storm walking upon the water. The Lord Jesus exercised authority over gravity and water (i.e., the physical elements of the world) (see study # 45).
- C. *“And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a ghost; and they cried out for fear. But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid”* (14:26-27).
 1. Upon seeing the shadowing figure walking toward them upon the stormy water the disciples were fearful and considered the figure a ghost.
 2. Jesus calms them by identifying himself saying, *“it is I, be not afraid.”*
 3. We have already noted that Jesus has exercised authority over the physical elements of the earth at Matthew 8:23-27. The weight of Jesus should have caused him to sink in the Sea; however, his authority over the physical elements enabled him to defy the physical laws of gravity and buoyancy and to walk upon the surface of water.

- D. *“And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee upon the waters. And he said, Come. And Peter went down from the boat, and walked upon the waters to come to Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried out, saying, Lord, save me. And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and took hold of him, and saith unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?”* (14:28-31).
1. The character of Peter is a great study in itself. Most of us see ourselves in Peter. We want so badly to do the Lord’s will yet at times we fall in disgrace. Peter later would tell the Lord that he was willing to die for him yet Jesus tells Peter that he would deny him three times in one night (cf. Jn. 13:36-38). Peter’s heart was in the right place on this occasion yet he lacked the faith to reach Jesus upon the water (see study # 66; The Apostle Peter).
 2. Peter’s fear was the reason for his sinking. The apostle Paul said, *“For God gave us not a spirit of fearfulness; but of power and love and discipline”* (II Tim. 1:7). Man’s only fear ought to be of God (cf. Matt. 10:28). Peter feared the physical elements and was concerned for his safety and thereby began to doubt whether the Lord would sustain him on the water. Jesus immediately reached out and saved Peter when he cried out for help.
 - a. We learn that when all of life is stormy we ought not to fear but rather place our trust in the care of Jesus.
 - b. Secondly, we learn that Jesus will be there for us as we cry out to him for help in times of distress.
- E. *“And when they were gone up into the boat, the wind ceased. And they that were in the boat worshipped him, saying, of a truth thou art the Son of God”* (14:32-33).
1. No doubt the wind ceased at the commandment of Jesus. The ordeal was over and its purpose served.
 2. Jesus had produced further faith in his immediate disciples that he indeed is the Christ, the Son of the living God.
 3. Such a confession would bring to mind the fact that Jesus was God, able to read their minds, know their every doing, and it may be that the disciples would say within, ‘depart from me Lord for I am a sinner... you know my sinful thoughts, you know my sinful deeds... I am ashamed to be in your company.’
 4. Both the feeding of the multitude and walking upon the water served to produce faith in the witnesses as to the Lord’s identity (i.e., deity) (see study # 3). May the knowledge of Christ’s deity drive us all to be ashamed of our sinfulness (see study # 67; Bible Shame).
- IV. **Jesus heals many at Gennesaret (14:34-36):**
- A. *“And when they had crossed over, they came to the land, unto Gennesaret”* (14:34).
1. Gennesaret was a region to the North west of the Sea of Galilee.
 2. Jesus has had most of his success teaching and preaching in this region (i.e., Capernaum).
- B. *“And when the men of that place knew him, they sent into all that region round about, and brought unto him all that were sick, and they besought him that they might only touch the border of his garment: and as many as touched were made whole”* (14:35-36).
1. Having arrived at Gennesaret the inhabitants of the land recognized him and sent word throughout all the land that Jesus was here.
 2. As word spread of Jesus’ location multitudes of sick were brought to him for healing and so the Lord did so.

Chapter 15

I. Jesus offends the scribes and Pharisees with the Truth (15:1-20):

- A. *“Then there come to Jesus from Jerusalem Pharisees and scribes, saying, Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they wash not their hands when they eat bread”* (15:1-2).

1. Let us recall that the scribes and Pharisees sought to “*accuse*” (Matt. 12:10) and “*destroy*” Jesus (Matt. 12:14). These men tried to discredit Jesus’ miracles to the multitudes so that they too would reject him (cf. Matt. 12:24) (see study # 11).
 2. “The rabbis made a distinction between written Torah and oral Torah, i.e., between the authoritative Holy Scriptures (the OT) and an orally transmitted authoritative tradition, which interprets, supplements, and sometimes corrects the written Torah” (ISBE; v. 4, pp. 884). The word “*tradition*” (*paradosis*) = “A giving over either by word of mouth or in writing; objectively, what is delivered... It is also used of the body of precepts, especially ritual, which, in the opinion of the later Jews, were orally delivered by Moses and orally transmitted in unbroken succession to subsequent generations. These precepts, both illustrating and expanding the written law, as they did, were to be obeyed with equal reverence... The Jews attached greater importance to this tradition than to the written law. They laid special stress upon the traditional precept, founded on Lev. 15:11, which required that the hands should be washed before every meal. Jesus and his disciples ignored this tradition as such, which had been handed down from the men of olden time” (Unger pp. 1299).
 3. Note that the scribes and Pharisees describe the disciple’s act of not washing their hands before they eat as a “*transgression*.” These men equated the traditions of men with divine revelation recorded and written down.
- B. *“And he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition? For God said, Honor thy father and thy mother: and, He that speaketh evil of father or mother, let him die the death. But ye say, whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, that wherewith thou mightest have been profited by me is given to God, he shall not honor his father. And ye have made void the word of God because of your tradition”* (15:3-6).
1. Jesus compares and contrasts the traditions of men and the revelation of God. While the scribes and Pharisees accuse the Lord’s disciples of transgressing the traditions of their fathers Jesus accuses the accusers of violating God’s divine revelation. Jesus gives an example. Many of the scribes and Pharisees had parents that were in great need. Though the Mosaic written law of God commanded that the sons and daughters take care of their elderly parents (cf. Ex. 20:12; Deut. 5:16) the scribes and Pharisees were claiming that that they could not do this due to the fact that they needed to give all their alms to God. Jesus said that such an act is to “*not honor one’s father*.” Apparently it was a tradition to give alms (contributions) to the priests in the name of God before taking care of any necessities of life. When one puts man’s precepts above God’s laws they have “*made void the word of God*.”
 2. Jesus illustrates the authority of man as opposed to God. God had commanded “*But ye say...*”
- C. *“Ye hypocrites, well did Isaiah prophecy of you, saying, This people honors me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain do they worship me, teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men”* (15:7-9).
1. Once again the Lord ascribes a prophecy from Isaiah to the scribes and Pharisees (see the parable of the sower). Jesus quotes from Isaiah 29:13 which indicate that some people talk a good religious life yet their actions are far from it.
 2. Those who look to the traditions of men for a blueprint of worshipping God have done so in “*vain*” (i.e., it is useless). When one elevates the “*doctrines and precepts of men*” above authoritative divine revelation said individual is in error. To wash the hands before eating is truly a good idea yet when this good idea becomes a demanded religious service to God one has truly elevated the doctrines of men above the doctrine of Christ and so their worship is vain. No where did Moses command hands to be washed before eating. Mark’s reading at 7:1ff indicates that the Jews were fearful of being contaminated by a Gentile in the marketplaces. Here was preventative washings (in case a Gentile brushed up against you).
 3. Herein is a great lesson on Bible authority. Let us be careful not to impose our religious ideas upon others and call it service to God. The two sources of authority are thereby man and God’s divine revelation (cf. Matt. 21:23-25) (see study # 29 and # 32).

4. Jesus knew the scribes and Pharisees were out to accuse and destroy him and thereby he clearly pointed out their error before the multitudes.
- D. *“And he called to him the multitude, and said unto them, Hear, and understand: Not that which enters into the mouth defileth the man; but that which proceeds out of the mouth, this defiles the man”* (15:10-11).
1. While the scribes and Pharisees considered eating with unwashed hands a defilement of the body Jesus explains that it is not the things that go into the mouth that cause one to be defiled but rather the teachings that come out of a man. The scribes and Pharisees held to the traditions of the elders above the written word of God and thereby when they spoke they exposed themselves as defiled. They were defiled because they elevated the doctrines and precepts of men above the doctrines of God. The word *“defile”* (*koinoo*) = “to make common, to defile, profane... to deem or pronounce profane (irreverence toward God or things held sacred... disrespect of a sacred name by word or deed) (LS 440 / AHD 988). When precepts of men are elevated above divine revelation man is defiled in that he has treated God’s word with irreverence and disrespect. Such a one is defiled because, *“out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks”* (Matt. 12:34b).
 2. Here is an interesting situation. Jesus rebukes the scribes and Pharisees in the public hearing. These men were highly respected by the Jews. Jesus now explains to the “multitude” why it is not a sin to not wash one’s hands before eating. The picture delivered by Matthew is one of a struggle between Jesus and the scribes and Pharisees for the following of the multitude. Jesus, of course, would never change his message to appease the multitude yet he tried diligently to present truth so that they would make the right choice in life (see study # 11).
- E. *“Then came the disciples, and said unto him, knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, when they heard this saying? But he answered and said, Every plant which my heavenly Father planted not, shall be rooted up”* (15:12-13).
1. The disciples of Jesus explain to the Lord that the scribes and Pharisees were *“offended”* by his public teaching about them. The word *“offended”* (*skandalizo*) = “to give offence to any one” (LS 731). Jesus’ teachings always caused a reaction in people. On this occasion, the scribes and Pharisees were offended and upset that Jesus would call them hypocrites and their worship vain. The disciples appear to be asking Jesus, “are you looking for trouble? These men have already made it clear that they are out to get you and do you add fuel to their fire?”
 2. Jesus answers the disciples by saying that the end of such men is that they shall be rooted up from the soil and thrown into a pit (reminds us of the parable of the tares). Those who do not represent truth in their life will be punished by God (see study # 11).
- F. *“Let them alone: they are blind guides. And if the blind guide the blind, both shall fall into a pit”* (15:14).
1. To speak words of reason and tenderness to men such as the scribes and Pharisees would be to cast one’s pearls before the swine and be devoured (cf. Matt. 7:6).
 2. Jesus commands that these offended Pharisees and scribes be left alone (do not try to comfort them in their anger and offended state). Those who love error will follow these devils directly to the pits of hell. They are blind in relation to truth and thereby shall fall.
- G. *“And Peter answered and said unto him, Declare unto us the parable. And he said, Are ye also even yet without understanding? Perceive ye not, that whatsoever goeth into the mouth passeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught? But the things which proceed out of the mouth come forth out of the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, railings: these are the things which defile the man; but to eat with unwashen hands defiles not the man”* (15:15-20).
1. Peter’s request that Jesus explain the parable causes Jesus to be disappointed. Peter should have understood the simplicity of the parable but did not. The Lord explains it to him due to the fact that he desires all his disciples to know and understand His truths.

2. The Lord explains that when one eats food it is digested and then taken out of the body as waste. When words escape the body they originate in the man's heart. When I speak I am lettering others know what is in my heart (mind, will, character, intellect) (see study # 68; Individual Character). When the heart reveals wickedness one knows that such a one is defiled and unfit for the kingdom of God in heaven.

II. The Faith of a Gentile Woman (15:21-28):

- A. *“And Jesus went out thence, and withdrew into the parts of Tyre and Sidon. And behold, a Canaanitish woman came out from those borders, and cried, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a demon”* (15:21-22).
 1. Tyre and Sidon were two cities 40 and 60 miles North West of Capernaum. These cities were in the province of Phoenicia.
 2. A Canaanitish woman (i.e., a Gentile) comes to Jesus and made an emotional request that he would cast out the demon that was in her daughter.
 3. Let us note a few things about this Gentile woman:
 - a. She exhibits faith that exceeds many of the Jews in that she confesses Jesus to be the *“son of David”* (i.e., the Messiah).
 - b. She believes that Jesus has authority over demonic spirits and can cast them out at his command.
 - c. She confessed Jesus as her master (cf. below at verses 25-28).
- B. *“But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she cries after us. But he answered and said, I was not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel”* (15:23-24).
 1. Apparently the woman pleads with Jesus yet the Lord ignores her to the point that she turns away from him and turns to His disciples.
 2. The disciples grow weary with her persistent crying and request that Jesus send her away. Jesus explains to his disciples that he has nothing to do with her because she is a Gentile. The Lord's mission was to preach to the *“lost sheep of the house of Israel”* (i.e., the Jews).
- C. *“But she came and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me. And he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs. But she said, Yea, Lord: for even the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table. Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it done unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was healed from that hour”* (15:25-28).
 1. The Lord compares the Jews with children who are deserving of the bread of the gospel message (as heirs to their father). Secondly, Jesus compares worthless dogs (in relation to inheritance) to the Gentiles. One would not take that which belongs to the children of a house and give it to the dogs (the children will go hungry).
 2. The gospel message was intended for the Jew first and later, under the NT church, the Gentiles would receive the truth. The woman goes along with Jesus' illustration saying that even the dogs eat the leftovers and crumbs that fall from the master's table. Even the doggish Gentiles deserved sustenance from their master.
 3. Here was a woman who humbly recognized her position in relationship to the Jews in the eyes of God (see study # 69; Bible Humility). To the Jews were God's truths delivered by divine revelation (cf. Rom. 3:1). The promised seed, i.e., the Christ, was to come through the Jewish nation (cf. Gen. 12:1ff; Gal. 3:8, 16). The woman humbly recognized Jesus as her master even though she be a dog in comparison to the Jews. The woman thereby humbly request that she not be left without being sustained.
 4. Jesus grants her request due to her faith.

III. Once again Jesus exhibits Compassion on the multitudes that followed Him (15:29-39):

- A. *“And Jesus departed thence, and came nigh unto the sea of Galilee; and he went up into the mountain, and sat there. And there came unto him great multitudes, having with them the lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and they cast them down at his feet; and he healed them:*

insomuch that the multitude wondered, when they saw the dumb speaking, the maimed whole, and the lame walking, and the blind seeing: and they glorified the God of Israel" (15:29-31).

1. The struggle over the souls of men continued to go in favor of Jesus. The multitude continued to follow him rather than the Pharisees (see study # 11). When Christ was crucified, where were all these multitudes of people that brought their sick, diseased, and demon possessed loved ones to Jesus and witnessed their healing? Where were all those who "*glorified the God of Israel*" after seeing Jesus perform the miracles? Where was the Canaanitish woman who exhibited such great faith? Where were others that Jesus healed? The answer can be found at Matthew 16:11-12. They were changed by the leaven teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees. Like an infectious disease their false teaching infected the minds of the multitudes and they were thereby turned against the one who exercised such compassion upon their ill and caused them to be amazed and in wonder after His works. Likewise the leavening affects of false teaching can turn Christians against others and souls are lost.
 2. The Lord travels back to Galilee near the Sea of Galilee (around Capernaum). Jesus retires to a nearby mountain and the multitudes find him. They bring their lame, blind, maimed and so forth so that the Lord would heal them. When Jesus healed them all the multitudes "*wondered*" (*thaumazo*) = "to be astonished... to look on with wonder and amazement, to wonder at, marvel at..." (LS 359) (see study # 48). The multitudes astonishment lead them to "*glorify the God of Israel.*" To "*glorify*" (*doxazo*) = "to extol (praise / to express approval and admiration toward), magnify... to adore, worship" (Moulton 105). Clearly the multitudes recognized that God was the source of Jesus' powerful miracles and thereby confessed that he was the Messiah. Again, what changed the thinking of these people (The Lord was basically alone at the cross)? No wonder Jesus spoke out so aggressively against the scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees. Their poisonous false doctrines ruined the souls of the multitudes (see study #11).
- B. "*And Jesus called unto him his disciples, and said, I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with me now three days and have nothing to eat: and I would not send them away fasting, lest haply they faint on the way. And the disciples say unto him, Whence should we have so many loaves in a desert place as to fill so great a multitude?*" (15:32-33)
1. Jesus had expressed compassion toward the sick and diseased at Matthew 14:14 and now he shows compassion over the multitudes hunger (they had fasted for three days). Evidently, as Jesus is in the desert place on the Sea of Galilee the multitudes have come to him and remained for three days without eating.
 2. Surprisingly, the disciples appear to have forgotten that Jesus had previously fed five thousand men plus women and children with two fishes and five loaves not long ago (cf. Matt. 14:17ff).
- C. "*And Jesus said unto them, How many loaves have ye? And they said, Seven, and a few small fishes. And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground; and he took the seven loaves and the fishes; and he gave thanks and brake, and gave to the disciples, and the disciples to the multitudes. And they all ate, and were filled: and they took up that which remained over of the broken pieces, seven baskets full. And they that did eat were four thousand men, besides women and children. And he sent away the multitudes, and entered into the boat, and came into the borders of Magadan*" (15:34-39).
1. Here are the multitudes that were amazed at the Lord's powerful miracles and have glorified God. Now, these same people (i.e., 4,000 men and many women and children) have gone three days without food. Jesus has compassion upon the people and miraculously feeds them as he had done previously to the 5,000 plus people. We know that the two miraculous feedings were separate due to the Lord's statements at Matthew 16:9-10.
 2. After sending the multitudes away with a full stomach, the Lord enters a boat and travels to the borders of Magadan. Magadan is thought to be a place near the North West section of the Sea of Galilee. Mark tells us that the area is known as Dalmanutha, however, his connection between Mark 7:31 and 8:10 do not appear to be chronological.

Chapter 16

I. The Pharisees and Sadducees Request a Sign from Jesus (16:1-4):

A. *“And the Pharisees and Sadducees came, and trying him asked him to show them a sign from heaven”* (16:1).

1. The Pharisees: “A prominent religious party in Judaism during the late Second Temple period (ca. 100 BC to AD 70), the party most frequently mentioned in the NT.... the name means ‘expound’ (‘the most accurate exegetes of the law’) or the ‘separate’” (ISBE v. 3, pp. 822). “A Jewish sect or party whose members voluntarily took upon themselves a strict regimen of laws pertaining to purity, Sabbath observance, prayer, and tithing” (ibid. pp. 822). The Pharisees had a great deal of influence in the communities they lived, however, they did not live as they preached; i.e., they were hypocrites (cf. Matt. 23) (see study # 11).
2. The Sadducees: “The Sadducees were essentially aristocratic (i.e., a person of noble heritage and character)... they derived their power from their class, while the Pharisees derived theirs from learning.... they denied the resurrection of the body, and did not believe in any existence after death... and consequently denied future rewards or punishments in a life to come (cf. Mk. 12:18; Acts 4:12; 23:80). The consequent emphasis on life in this world was consistent with the Sadducees’ concern with their position of power, status, and wealth, and it left no room for messianic hopes and a coming kingdom of God” (ISBE v. 4, pp. 279).
3. The Pharisees sought to “*try*” the Lord with signs because Jesus challenged their teaching. The Sadducees sought to “*try*” the Lord because Jesus’ teachings affronted their beliefs. Both Jewish parties demanded a sign from the Lord to prove that he was the Christ. It is not clear as to the timing of chapter 16; however, it is apparent from the context that it must not have been long after the Lord feed the 4000 mentioned in chapter 15.

B. *“But he answered and said unto them, When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather: for the heaven is red. And in the morning, It will be foul weather today: for the heaven is red and lowering. Ye know how to discern the face of the heaven; but ye cannot discern the signs of the times”* (16:2-3).

1. The Lord reasons with the Pharisees and Sadducees based upon an apparent well known fact regarding their ability to give a forecast of weather conditions based upon the appearance of the skies and clouds. The Pharisees and Sadducees could look to the heavens and see the signs in the sky and make a determination as to what would happen with the weather.
2. Jesus challenges them to do the same thing in relation to the spiritual nature of the miracles He has performed and preaching he has taught. If they can determine the outcome of weather by the signs they see why can they not discern that Jesus is the Lord by the signs that He has performed?
3. The Lord’s point is that these men know that obvious signs have been given, however, due to the hardness of their hearts they close their eyes to them (Matt. 12:9ff. compared to Mk. 3:5). They do not close their eyes to the signs in the heavens regarding the weather yet ignore the clear signs Jesus has performed.

C. *“An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of Jonah. And he left them, and departed”* (16:4).

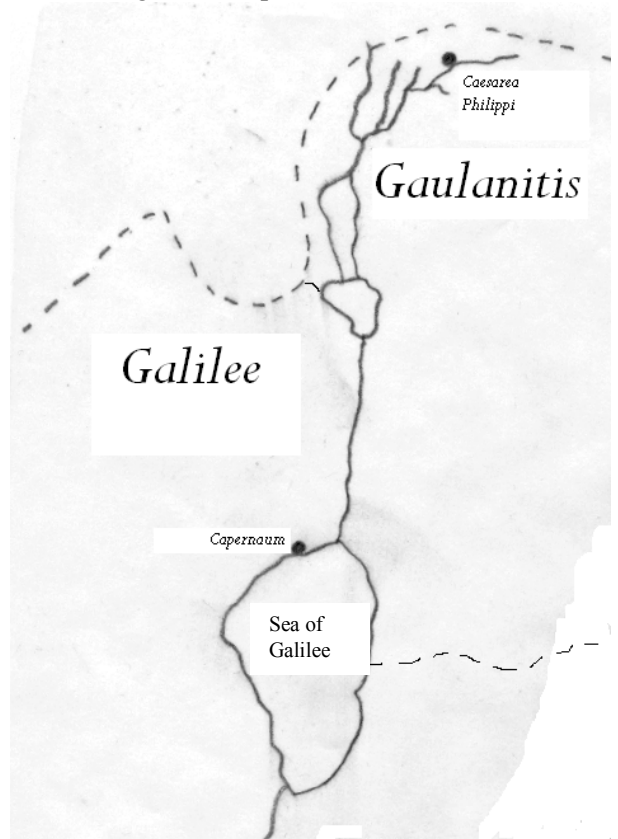
1. In what way would the Pharisees and Sadducees (and any others) be “*evil and adulterous*” by “*seeking after a sign*” that Jesus is the Christ? A mind that willfully closes to obvious truths is certainly one that has motives other than what God has revealed. A mind that is contrary to God is an adulterous mind in that it goes after ways other than the Lord’s. Throughout the Old Testament the Lord uses the word “*adultery*” to depict a people who have left off following God’s ways for some other (cf. Jer. 3:8-9).
2. Jesus said that the only sign that shall be given to this evil and adulterous generation is that of Jonah (i.e., the judgment of condemnation due to their hard and impenitent hearts) (cf. Matt. 12:39-41). As Jonah came up from the depths of the sea after being in the fish three days so

Jesus will rise from the depths of the dead in a resurrected state. Those who refuse repentance and His kingdom after this have nothing to look forward to but the judgment of the inhabitants of Nineveh.

II. Jesus warns His disciples about the Leavening effects of False Teaching (15:6-12):

- A. *“And the disciples came to the other side and forgot to take bread. And Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees”* (16:5-6).
1. After dealing with the hard hearted disposition of the Pharisees and Sadducees the Lord gives His disciples a warning saying, *“beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.”*
 2. The disciples had traveled to a remote area on the Sea of Galilee to be with Jesus and had not brought any food with them. As Jesus speaks it seems that the only thing upon their mind is the absence of food.
- B. *“And they reasoned among themselves, saying, We took no bread. And Jesus perceiving it said, O ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have no bread? Do ye not yet perceive, neither remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? Neither the seven loaves and the four thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? How is it that ye do not perceive that I spake not to you concerning bread? But beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees”* (16:7-11).
1. The wording of these verses helps us to recognize that when Jesus gave the warning about the leavening affects of the Pharisees and Sadducees teaching the disciples could only think of physical bread that sustains the body.
 2. Jesus rebukes them in a two fold fashion:
 - a. First the Lord rebukes His disciples for their little faith. They had previously witnessed the feeding of the five thousand with five loaves (cf. Matt. 14:17ff) and the feeding of four thousand with seven loaves (cf. Matt. 15:32ff). If the Lord could feed so many with little could he not provide for the disciples on this occasion? How can they so quickly forget the miracles that have been performed? When the mind forgets the important aspects of spiritual life it is a dangerous time for doctrines that oppose Jesus to find their way into the depths of the mind.
 - b. Secondly, the Lord rebukes the disciples for not understanding His simple teachings regarding the leavening affects of the Pharisees and Sadducees. Like today, Jesus expected his disciples to understand his words rather than being confused by them (see study # 64).
- C. *“Then understood they that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees”* (16:12).
1. Herein we find a very important principle revealed by the mind of God and spoken by Jesus. Why would the Lord want to warn his disciples about the false teachings of the Pharisees and Sadducees? The answer is simple, those who follow doctrines other than that revealed by Christ are doomed to be lost in sin. At Acts 4:12 Peter said of Jesus and His teachings, *“And in none other is there salvation: for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men wherein we must be saved.”* Again, the apostle John wrote, *“Whosoever goes onward and abides not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God, he that abides in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son”* (II Jn. 9). The character of Jesus thereby was more than compassion (cf. Matt. 14:14; 15:32) and righteous indignation against hard hearts (cf. Mk. 3:5ff), he was also one who did not tolerate damnable doctrines and precepts of men (see also Matt. 15:1-9).

2. Why warn about the leavening doctrines of the Pharisees and Sadducees? Jesus warned the people because these doctrines had the power of persuasion. One may ask where the 5000 and 4000 people that Jesus fed were when he was being crucified. One may ask where the multitudes that the Lord healed of their sickness, diseases, and demon possessions. Where were all these people at the cross? It is apparent that the masses were infected with the leavening teachings of the scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees. They taught that Jesus did His miracles by the power of demons (Matt. 12:24), they taught that men must obey the traditions of their fathers or be found in sin (Matt. 15:1ff), and they sought after a sign even when many had already been given (Matt. 12:38; 16:1). Why tell other disciples to “*beware*” of others (Matt. 16:11)? Why call these objects of warning “*offspring of vipers*” and “*evil*” (Matt. 12:34)? Why publicly offend these men in the hearing of multitudes of people by calling them names like “*hypocrites*” (cf. Matt. 15:7-12)? Jesus tells us that the reason for his warnings and public exposure of the wicked was due to the leavening affects of their “*doctrines and precepts of men*” (Matt. 15:9; 16:12) (see study # 11). When brethren cry foul when a false teacher is exposed they illustrate a mind that has not a true love for the souls of men. When brethren opine that we do not have to call a man a false teacher as long as we expose the false doctrines they have no true understanding of the leavening affects of such men. The Pharisees were idolized in their day much like many “big name preachers” are of our day. If these men are not exposed and identified correctly then masses of brethren will continue to be deceived by their doctrines. This is why it is important to expose the false teacher and his teachings rather than trying to protect them under the pretext of “their character is not flawed.” Brethren, if we measure character by Jesus I can certainly say with confidence that one who does not bring the whole truth of God’s word does not have a “good character” no matter the motives, mistakenness, unlearned, untaught, sincerity, honesty, and past integrity. If truth is not taught then their mouths are speaking a lie (I Jn. 2:21) and they must be stopped (Titus 1:11) (see study # 30).



III. The Identity of Jesus (16:13-21):

- A. “*Now when Jesus came into the parts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Who do men say that the Son of man is?*” (16:13).
1. Caesarea Philippi was located due north of Capernaum in the region of Gaulanitis (see map) (Northern most travels of Jesus).
 2. The term “*Son of man*” has already been examined at Matthew 8:20. The prophet Daniel was given a vision of a future kingdom (the church) and the king (i.e., the Son of man) as king of that kingdom in reference to the Messiah at Daniel 7:13. It is clear that when Jesus refers to himself as the “*Son of man*” that he intends for his hearers to understand that he is the Christ.
 3. Jesus asks his immediate disciples who men were saying that he was.
- B. “*And they said, Some say John the Baptist; some, Elijah; and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets*” (16:14).
1. Each of these related identities speaks volumes as to the methods, manners, and words the Lord spoke while on earth. When men saw and heard Jesus speak he reminded them of:

- a. John the Baptist because the Lord spoke with such bluntness as did John (compare Matt. 3:1-8 with Matt. 12:34-36).
 - b. Elijah because the Lord exposed wickedness and unlawful behavior of the scribes, Pharisees and Sadducees (cf. I Kings 18:17-18). They were the true “troubler” of Israel (Matt. 16:12).
 - c. Jeremiah because neither Jesus nor the prophet preached out of fear or favor of men. The Lord said to Jeremiah, “*Because ye speak this word, behold, I will make my words in thy mouth fire, and this people wood, and it shall devour them*” (Jer. 5:14). Jeremiah publicly condemned the sinful teaching and practices of those of his day (cf. Jer. 27:10-16) and so did Jesus (cf. Jn. 7:7).
 - d. One of the prophets because he was a man of compassion that taught the people the word of God that they might be saved (cf. II Chron. 36:15-16).
2. Each of these men that the Lord is compared to were heroes of faith that had a reputation of never backing down from error and always keeping the spiritual well being of people at the forefront of their mission.
- C. “*He saith unto them, But who say ye that I am?*” (16:15).
1. The public’s view of Jesus would have flattered anyone else. It is worthy to note that Jesus’ mission was indeed divine and the people knew this as is indicated by the comparisons.
 2. Though it would be considered a compliment Jesus was not any of the above mentioned names. He was the Son of God. The Lord now turns to His immediate disciples and asks them who they say that he is.
- D. “*And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God*” (16:16).
1. When Jesus came walking upon the tumultuous Sea of Galilee toward the boat that the disciples were in it was Peter who called out to the Lord that he may come to him (Matt. 14:28). Peter is often found as one who is first to say or do something. On this occasion, his faith is made evident in that he speaks out and professes, “*Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God*” (see study # 66).
 2. When Jesus calmed the stormy seas of Galilee at Matthew 8 the disciples proclaim, “*What manner of man is that, that even the winds and the sea obey him?*” (8:27). When Jesus walked upon the waters of the Sea of Galilee the disciples proclaim, “*Of a truth thou art the Son of God*” (Matt. 14:33). Now, Peter makes the proclamation of the deity of Christ.
- E. “*And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven*” (16:17).
1. The word “*blessed*” (*makarios*) is used in the beatitudes at Matthew 5:3-10. *Makarios* = “happiness, those with good fortune” (LS 484). The “good fortune” and source of Peter and the other apostles’ true happiness was that Jesus is the Christ the Son of the living God. Christ would die upon the cross so that man may be forgiven of their sins... what better fortune or good news could one ever expect in this life?
 2. How did Peter know that Jesus was the Christ? Peter had witnessed all the Lord’s miracles and heard his teaching and preaching. When one proclaims deity and then backs that claim up with sure miracles there is no denying it (cf. Matt. 15:21-28). No man told Peter that Jesus was the Christ and he thereby believed but rather he heard Jesus speak divine words and confirming those words with signs and wonders. Man did not thereby reveal Jesus to be the Christ but rather the power of God and so Peter and the apostles believed that he was the Christ due to divine revelation.
 - a. Once again such a verse indicates that there is a distinction between the precepts of man and the doctrine revealed through Jesus Christ (cf. Matt. 15:9). Jesus will latter say that there are two sources of authority, i.e., man and God (cf. Matt. 21:23-25). Peter received the identity of Jesus not of man but of God’s revelation (see study # 29).
 - b. The casual observer will note that there was a difference in Peter’s view of Jesus and the Pharisees (see study # 11).

- F. *“And I also say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it”* (16:18).
1. Peter had answered the Lord’s question by stating that he was the *“Christ, the Son of the living God.”* Jesus now responds to Peter’s confession by saying that *“upon this rock I will build my church.”* The message is clear. The rock or foundation that the church will be built upon will be the fact that Jesus is the Christ the Son of the living God (cf. I Cor. 3:11; Eph. 2:20). The origin of Jesus is thereby a first principle within the word of God. The individual who would come to Jesus for the remission of sins must begin with this founding principle that the church shall rest upon.
 2. Note that Jesus said, *“I will build my church...”* indicating that it had not been built or established at the point of this conversation. This is the first mention of the word *“church”* (*ekklesia*) in the NT (see study # 51). The Greek word *“ekklesia”* = “an assembly of the citizens regularly summoned... to call an assembly...” (LS 239). “To summon forth... a popular assembly... a Christian congregation” (Moulton 125). To this point of our study Jesus has spoken regularly about the kingdom of God and its nearness (cf. Matt. 4:17) as did John (Matt. 3:1-2). This kingdom was soon to come. Those recognized as citizens of God’s kingdom would be summoned or called into it (cf. II Thess. 2:13-14).
 3. When the Lord’s church was built Jesus said that *“the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.”* There is power in sin and that is death (cf. Gen. 2:17; I Cor. 15:55-56). This power, however, could not hold Jesus when he was resurrected from the dead. When Jesus arose from the grave he went on to establish his church that all others may have power over sin and death through his blood sacrifice.
- G. *“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. Then charged he the disciples that they should tell no man that he was the Christ”* (16:19-20).
1. Let us note that Peter has professed the identity of Jesus; i.e., He is the Christ, Son of the living God. Jesus tells Peter that this fact (that Jesus is the Christ) will be the foundation of the church. The called out assembly (Lord’s church) will rest upon the solid foundation of the fact that Jesus is the Christ the Son of the living God. The long awaited savior of mankind was now in the world. The one that the prophets foretold of as having the power to forgive man of sins (cf. Isa. 53; Jer. 31:31ff).
 2. In relation to Jesus being the foundation of His church (called out assembly of people) the Lord proclaims to Peter, *“I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven.”* The word *“keys”* (*kleis*) = “that which serves for closing: a bar or bolt, drawn or un-drawn by a latch or thong... a key, or rather a kind of catch or hood, by which the bar was shot or un-shot from the outside” (LS 435). That which would open and lock the gates of the kingdom of heaven would be the keys given to Peter by the Lord (and the other apostles / cf. Matt. 18:18) (see study # 1).
 - a. The word *“bind”* (*deo*) = “to bind, tie, fetter... to put in bonds... metaphorically: to bind or enchain... to let or stop one from a thing” (LS 181). The word *“loosed”* (*luo*) = “of things, to loosen, unbind, unfasten... to open a letter.... to open the mouth... to unfold the brow... to unbind one’s hair.... to loose, release from bonds or prison, from difficulty or danger... to get one loosed or set free... of prisoners, to release on receipt of ransom...” (LS 481-482). There is an association between the keys given to Peter and the apostles and the binding and loosing in heaven and earth. With the keys the apostles would enchain or stop one from a thing and with the keys the apostles would loose, release from bonds of prison upon receipt of ransom. Now we begin to see clearly what Jesus is telling Peter. The apostles would be given the gospel message of repentance and forgiveness of sins through the blood sacrifice of Jesus. Those who received this message would be loosed from the bondage of sins yet those who rejected the message and would not repent remained bound in chains to their sin and destined for an eternity of torment. The *“keys”* given to Peter and the apostles is clearly the gospel message.

- b. Consider the time when Jesus appeared to the apostles in the resurrected state and said to them, “*whose soever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them; whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained*” (Jn. 20:23). There would be some, who with a spirit of humility and contrition of heart would repent of sins and gain forgiveness, however, others would not (just like Jesus said in the parable of the sower).
3. Lastly, Jesus tells his disciples not to tell anyone at this time that he was the Christ because it was not his time to die yet. Oddly enough, we would think that the masses would want to be told this. Jesus knew the people’s hard hearts and that they were capable of murder. With much work yet to be done the Lord asks his disciples not to reveal the message that was sure to lead to his death on the cross. The time had not yet come.

IV. Jesus rebukes Peter (16:21-28):

- A. “*From that time began Jesus to show unto his disciples, that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and the third day be raised up*” (16:21).
 1. Jesus has made it clear to the disciples that His church would soon be established and that those who accept the gospel message will enter into it. The founding principle of the church is that Jesus is the Christ the Son of the living God. The function of Christ on this earth was to preach, be crucified, and then resurrected from the dead. Christ thereby would serve as a propitiatory sacrifice for man’s sins through his shed blood (cf. Rom. 3:24-26) and a mediator between man and God through His resurrection (I Tim. 2:5). These things being so, “*he MUST go unto Jerusalem...*”
 2. The elders, chief priests, and scribes would cause the Lord of Glory to “*suffer many things.*” Jesus would eventually be killed by these men.
- B. “*And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall never be unto thee. But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art a stumbling-block unto me: for thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of men*” (16:22-23).
 1. Once again Peter speaks out as he “*took*” the Lord (see study # 66). To “*take*” (*proslambano*) some one is to “to take hold of” (LS 693). It appears that Peter physically took hold of Jesus and said “*be it far from thee...*”
 2. Jesus turns and rebukes the man who had not long ago stood before the disciples and proclaimed with boldness, “*thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God*” (Matt. 16:16). This same apostle now stands up and makes another bold proclamation before the other disciples which was not what Jesus wanted to hear.
 3. Jesus recognized the work of Satan immediately. Satan was doing his reprehensible work through Peter, one beloved of Jesus. Satan had the power to cause even Jesus to stumble if the Lord would have heeded to his words.
 - a. This is a fascinating study and one that demands a closer look at the workings of Satan in our lives. No doubt through the honesty of Peter’s mind he ignorantly told Jesus that such mistreatment and death should not happen. Jesus knew that it “*must*” happen. Satan is always behind the will of man as it clashes with the will of God (cf. Gen. 2:15; 3:1ff).
 - b. We must always be on guard against the devices of the devil (cf. II Cor. 2:11). Sometimes deception and a temptation to follow unlawful ways may come from those we love. Their intentions may be good yet their words represent a poison that has the potential to eternally destroy our souls. Truth shall always be the determining factor in my acceptance or rejection of one’s advice (see study # 19 and # 30).
 4. Peter must have felt very lowly after Jesus said this to him yet it was needful. Sometimes we need to tell people what they need to hear rather than what they want to hear. Peter’s words had the power to cause Christ to stumble and thereby the Lord exposes this error and states, “*for thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of men.*”
 - a. To “*mind*” (*phroneo*) something is “to be minded in a certain way, to mean, intend, purpose” (LS 872). Jesus tells Peter that his true purpose is not the things of God when

saying that he must not suffer, die, and be resurrected. Peter was missing the entire point of the Lord's teaching. Sometimes men do not understand the truths of the gospel and thereby advise in ways that affront the purpose of God. Let us all be on sharp lookout for such precepts of men.

- b. To have one's purpose set on the "*things of men*" is to be opposed to and reject the purpose of God. God's purpose was to have His Son suffer, die, and be raised so that mankind might have the opportunity to be forgiven of sins (cf. Isa. 53).
- C. "*Then said Jesus unto his disciples, if any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me*" (16:24).
1. We may recall that Jesus had earlier said, "*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*" (Matt. 11:28-30). To "*come after*" Jesus is to recognize one's state of being heavy laden with sin and sorrow of this world. To "*come after*" Jesus is to take the "*yoke*" of the gospel message and "*learn*" of Jesus. To "*come after*" Jesus is to view one's burdens of persecution and sorrows of this life as "*our light affliction which is for the moment...*" (II Cor. 4:17).
 2. Jesus now adds to this that if a man will "*come after*" him he must "*deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.*"
 - a. It seems apparent that the 'denying one's self' must be taken into the context of Peter's minding the things of men. Peter's human side viewed Christ as one whom he loved dearly. Peter may have reasoned that Jesus had done nothing worthy of suffering and death. Jesus reveals such reasoning to be "*minding the things of men*" rather than the things of God. Suffering for righteousness sake and even death is the lot of all Christians (cf. Jn. 15:18ff; Phil. 1:29; I Thess. 3:3; II Tim. 3:12).
 - b. Those who would "*deny self*" are thereby those who set aside human reason and look to God's word for guidance in this life. Such an activity is defined by Jesus as "*taking up his cross and following me.*" Let us all take up the doctrine of the cross of Jesus and follow Him alone!
 - c. Let us recall that Jesus had also said at Matthew 10:38-39, "*And he that doth not take his cross and follow after me, is not worthy of me. He that finds his life shall lose it; and he that loses his life for my sake shall find it.*" The cross is thereby a representation of persecution (see study # 27). Those today who are unwilling to be persecuted for Christ's sake are not worthy of the Lord.
- D. "*For whosoever would save his life shall lose it: and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it*" (16:25).
1. Jesus could have very well taken Peter's advice and said, 'well, ok, I don't really want to suffer and die so why go through with all of this for such a wicked world.' Jesus had the opportunity to "*save his life*" but to do so would be to "*loose it.*"
 2. To hide from Christian duty for the sake of averting persecution and suffering is to "*loose*" one's true spiritual life. Many Galatians tried their hand at this due to fear of persecution and the apostle Paul rebuked them (cf. Gal. 6:12). Many of the Hebrew Christians were facing persecutions "*being made a gazing-stock both by reproaches and afflictions*" (Heb. 10:32-33) for their stand in truth. The author of Hebrews writes words of great encouragement advising the brethren not to give in to wicked men's vices saying, "*But we are not of them that shrink back unto perdition; but of them that have faith unto the saving of the soul*" (Heb. 10:39). Let us today take up our cross and bear the reproach and shame of men with a view of eternal heavens before our eyes!
- E. "*For what shall a man be profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and forfeit his life? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his life?*" (16:26).
1. The Galatians traded (exchanged) their freedom from sin and hope of heaven for a few years of earthly peace (the Judaizing Jews left them alone) (again / Gal. 6:12). What is the true profit of

- such a decision? Jesus would not trade his spiritual life for a season of pleasure and neither should any Christian today.
2. The author of Hebrews tells us of the great faith of Moses saying, *“By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter; choosing rather to share ill treatment with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; accounting the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: for he looked unto the recompense of reward”* (Heb. 11:24-26).
 3. What if I have the opportunity, through vice and deceit, to gain the riches of the world? Shall I exchange my soul for such a treasure? Jesus explains to his disciples that their priorities much be set on eternal things. The pleasures of this world shall pass away. The apostle John will latter say, *“the world passes away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever”* (I Jn. 2:17).
 4. Dear reader, there is nothing worth casting your eternal soul away for on this earth. Let us thereby gladly bear the reproach of the cross.
- F. *“For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then shall he render unto every man according to his deeds”* (16:27).
1. Jesus takes the minds of his disciples (and ours) well into the future and explains to them that even though he shall die he will be raised and one day return again to take home his saints to the glories of heaven.
 2. When Christ comes for his saints all may breathed a sigh of relief in that their suffering is now over and eternity lays before them for their faithfulness. Those, however, who considered this short life their eternal treasure, shall be judged by their poor decisions and deeds.
- G. *“Verily I say unto you, There are some of them that stand here, who shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom”* (16:28).
1. Having laid before their eyes the persecutions and sorrows they shall surely experience for the gospel’s sake and the eternal consequences of such decision the Lord now brings their minds back to the present time.
 2. The Lord’s church (his kingdom) was soon to be established. The gospel message would at that time be preached and the disciple’s persecutions and sufferings would begin. So close was the kingdom that Jesus said that some standing here would not see death until after the Lord’s kingdom established (see study # 51).

Chapter 17

I. Jesus is Transfigured before Peter, James, and John (17:1-13):

- A. *“And after six days Jesus taketh with him Peter, and James, and John his brother, and brings them up into a high mountain apart:”* (17:1).
1. Six days after Peter had made the great confession of the deity of Christ and at the same time rebuked by the Lord for a statement of ignorance the Lord takes him and two other disciples apart from the others. The three ascend atop a high mountain.
 2. Jesus will latter take Peter, James, and John to pray with him in the garden of Gethsemane (Matt. 26:37). Mark records the fact that it was Peter, James, and John who the Lord chose to be with Him as he raised the ruler of the synagogue’s daughter from the dead (Mark 5:35ff). There appears to be a closer relationship between Jesus and these three disciples than what existed with the other nine men.
- B. *“and he was transfigured before them; and his face did shine as the sun, and his garments became white as the light”* (17:2).
1. Once upon the mountain Jesus is *“transfigured”* before them. To be *“transfigured”* (*metamorphoo*) = “to be transformed” (LS 503). “To change the external form, transfigure... to change one’s form” (Moulton 266).

2. Before the eyes of Peter, James, and John Jesus was changed. The Lord's face shined like the sun and his clothing became as light. The true nature of Jesus as the Son of God was bright light (a representation of his deity and purity / cf. I Jn. 1:5ff). Such a manifestation of the Lord's true state produced a greater understanding in these three disciples minds as to the eternal being of Jesus.
- C. *"And behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elijah talking with him"* (17:3).
1. Luke tells us that Jesus and the three disciples went to the mountain to pray together and that the three disciples fell asleep. When they awoke, they saw Jesus in his glorified state talking to Moses and Elijah about *"his decease which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem"* (cf. Lk. 9:31).
 2. The death of these two men had remained a mystery to the Jews. Moses had been called to Mount Nebo to be taken by the Lord and Elijah was taken into the heavens by a chariot of fire. These two well respected men, who represented the law of Jehovah God and the prophets who spoke it, met together with the Lord to talk about His impending suffering and death for the sins of the world.
- D. *"And Peter answered, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, I will make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah"* (17:4).
1. Peter knew who Jesus was and he also recognized Moses and Elijah. Peter was overwhelmed by the event and once again comes to the forefront of the disciples acting as a spokesman (like he did on Pentecost in Acts 2) (see study # 66).
 2. Peter asks the Lord if it would be ok for them to construct tabernacles for the three of the men (i.e., Jesus, Moses, and Elijah). The tabernacle was a tent structure that Peter may have intended to be a place of worship.
- E. *"While he was yet speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold, a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him. And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid. And Jesus came and touched them and said, Arise, and be not afraid. And lifting up their eyes, they saw no one save Jesus only"* (17:5-8).
1. The heavenly Father appears as Peter has made his request to make a tabernacle for Jesus, Moses, and Elijah. The Father reveals that Jesus is His Son and that all are to *"hear him."* The authoritative words of Jesus Christ were to be elevated above all human reason (see study # 29).
 2. We may recall that when Jesus was baptized by John the baptizer that the Father then proclaimed, *"this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased"* (cf. Matt. 3:17). Later, the Father will speak again in the hearing of mankind on behalf of Christ (cf. Jn. 12:28-30). Jesus responds to the voice by saying, *"This voice hath not come for my sake, but for your sakes"* (Jn. 12:30). The purpose of the outspoken divine communication between the Father and Son was to produce a greater faith in those who heard.
 3. The heavenly Father's voice struck terror in the hearts of Peter, James, and John and they fall upon their face to the earth in fear. Knowing their sinful state and the consequences thereof in the presence of the God of holiness and purity they feared for their lives.
 4. The *"touch"* of Jesus, as he tells the three disciples to *"Arise, and be not afraid,"* helps us to see the mission of Jesus. Through mercy and compassion for man's soul the Lord has granted the opportunity for all to stand before the holy God of heaven in a state of moral cleanness even though we have been guilty of lawlessness. Jesus is always there for all of mankind to rid us of our fear, suffering, sorrows, and anxieties. Jesus tells us today, *"Arise, and be not afraid."* When Peter was sinking in the waters of Galilee it was Jesus that reached out his hand and grasped Peter in his moment of faithlessness (cf. Matt. 14:30-31). Likewise Jesus will always stretch forth his hand to save us through his holy words (see study # 70; Jesus is Merciful).
- F. *"And as they were coming down from the mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen from the dead"* (17:9).

1. As the four men walked down the mountain Jesus explains to His disciples that no man must know of this vision until he has been crucified and raised from the dead. The disciples had learned about the deity of Jesus, His great authoritative words, and His death, burial, and resurrection.
 2. We recall that the Lord made this same charge to the disciples at Matthew 16:20 after their discussion about His identity and the future church. It was not Christ's time to die as of yet.
- G. *"And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes that Elijah must first come? And he answered and said, Elijah indeed cometh, and shall restore all things: but I say unto you, that Elijah is come already, and they knew him not, but did unto him whatsoever they would. Even so shall the Son of man also suffer of them. Then understood the disciples that he spake unto them of John the Baptist"* (17:10-13).
1. The scribes had rightly taught that before the Messiah would come into the world Elijah was to come and prepare the way for him (cf. Isa. 40:3; Mal. 4:5). Recall that when John was in prison for exposing Herod and Herodias' adultery his disciples asked Jesus if he was indeed the Christ (cf. Matt. 11:3). The question prompted Jesus to teach a sermon on John the baptizer. Jesus clearly said regarding John, *"And if ye are willing to receive it, this is Elijah, that is to come"* (Matt. 11:14).
 2. Jesus now explains to his disciples that Elijah has already come in the man John the baptizer yet the people received him not. Jesus will also be mistreated by the people who receive him not as the Lord. The problem is identified, *"they knew him not."*
 3. Preconceived ideas of Elijah and the Messiah blinded the minds of the multitudes so that as prophecy was being fulfilled before their very eyes they rejected it. Many live in a similar deluded state today. They have preconceived ideas as to what Jesus and his church is all about and thereby reject the true Christ and the true church (see study # 52).

II. Jesus commands a demon to come out of a young Boy (17:14-23):

- A. *"And when they were come to the multitude, there came to him a man, kneeling to him, and saying, Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is epileptic, and suffers grievously; for oft-times he falleth into the fire, and oft-times into the water"* (17:14-15).
1. Further account of this event is given at Mark 9:14-29 and Luke 9:37-43. Luke tells us that Jesus and the three disciples came down from the mountain the next day and found a great multitude come out to meet them. Mark tells us that when Jesus came down from the mountain that he found the scribes questioning the disciples who were unable to cast out the demon. It appears that the scribes were reveling over the inability of the Lord's disciples to cast out the demon.
 2. An *"epileptic"* (*seleniazomai*) = "to be moonstruck (afflicted with insanity)" (LS 726). The source of the young lad's insanity was a demon (cf. verse 18 below).
 3. The father of an insane boy pleads with Jesus to heal him due to the fact that the malady has caused the young man much suffering and he was his *"only child"* (Lk. 9:38).
- B. *"And I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him. And Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? Bring him hither to me. And Jesus rebuked him; and the demon went out of him: and the boy was cured from that hour"* (17:16-18).
1. The father of the demon possessed son had originally asked the Lord's disciples to cast out the demon, however, they were unable to do so.
 2. Jesus tells us that the reason the disciples could not cast out the demon was because of their *"faithless and perverse"* state of being. The father of the demon possessed boy lacked faith as well yet prayed, *"I believe; help thou mine unbelief"* (Mk. 9:24).
 3. Seeing the multitudes round about and the scribes who had questioned his disciples the Lord publicly rebukes the demon and commands that it leave the boy and so it did. The consequences of the miracle was that the multitudes were *"astonished"* (cf. Lk. 9:43). The miracle had served its purpose (cf. Mk. 16:20).

- C. *“Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast it out? And he saith unto them, Because of your little faith: 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”* (17:19-21).
1. When the nine disciples were alone with Jesus they asked Him why they could not cast out the demon. Jesus explains that it was due to their *“little faith.”* At verse 17 Jesus responded by referring to the disciples as those who lacked faith and were perverse (see study # 8). It may be that the disciples were attempting to cast out the demon from the boy so that they could gain their own honor and glory. Rather than looking to Jesus as their source of authority they looked to themselves.
 2. Faith at the size of a mustard seed (smallest of seeds) will sustain one through life. Forgiveness of sins, perseverance through sorrow, discouragement, and persecution will all belong to the saint of God who possesses faith.
- D. *“And while they abode in Galilee, Jesus said unto them, The Son of man shall be delivered up into the hands of men; and they shall kill him, and the third day he shall be raised up. And they were exceeding sorry”* (17:22-23).
1. The exact same statement had earlier brought a rebuke by Peter. At this time, no one says a word having remembered the Lord’s rebuke of Peter (cf. Matt. 16:21ff).
 2. The more Jesus communicated this necessary event the greater their understanding would be.

III. **Jesus Voluntarily pays the Temple Tax (17:24-27):**

- A. *“And when they were come to Capernaum, they that received the half shekel came to Peter, and said, Doth not your teacher pay the half shekel? He saith, Yea. And when he came into the house, Jesus spake first to him, saying, What thinkest thou, Simon? The kings of the earth, from whom do they receive toll or tribute? From their sons, or from strangers?”* (17:24-25).
1. The Jews were in the practice of collecting a tax on all those 20 years old and up. The money was used to purchase the daily sacrifices that were to be used at the temple in service to Jehovah God (cf. Ex. 30:11ff; 38:26). Interestingly, the collectors did not come to Jesus asking for the money but to Peter.
 2. Peter replied that Jesus does pay the tax without consulting with the Lord. Peter then returns to Jesus and the Lord, being omniscient, knew of Peter’s discussion about the tax money.
 3. Jesus asks Peter whether or not the kings of the earth receive tribute money from their own families or subjects of the kingdom.
- B. *“And when he said, From strangers, Jesus said unto him, therefore the sons are free”* (17:26).
1. Peter answers the Lord’s question by saying that the king takes tribute from his subjects rather than his from his own family.
 2. The point Jesus is making is that He is the Son of God and thereby exempt from paying the tax.
- C. *“But, lest we cause them to stumble, go thou to the sea, and cast a hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a shekel: that take, and give unto them for me and thee”* (17:27).
1. Jesus knew that there was not enough information before the people to understand the established principle. Lest he cause someone to stumble and not pay the tax themselves out of a spirit of rebellion he went ahead and paid the tax for both Peter and himself.
 2. Notice that Jesus had authority over animal life too. No doubt Jesus commanded the fish with the coin in its mouth to get caught on Peter’s hook. Jesus has now illustrated his authority over animals, physical elements, people, the dead, sick, and deformed (see study #).

Chapter 18

I. Jesus teaches on Humility and its association to the Kingdom of Heaven (18:1-6):

- A. *“In that hour came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, who is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?”* (18:1).
1. Mark tells us that the disciples had reasoned among themselves while on their way to Capernaum regarding who was the greatest among them (cf. Mk. 9:33ff). When they come to Capernaum, Jesus asked them about their discussion and they seemed to be ashamed and would not answer him.
 2. Apparently the disciples continued to think that the Lord’s coming kingdom would be a physical one where there would be a king and those subject to him. Were the disciples arguing over who would be the next king after the death of Jesus? (see study # 52)
- B. *“And he called to him a little child, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven”* (18:2-3).
1. Note that Jesus tells the 12 disciples that *“except ye turn...”* they would not have a place at all in the kingdom of heaven much less be the greatest. Their arguing over who was greatest in the kingdom was vanity due first to the fact that the kingdom had not yet been established and secondly they were not even in the kingdom. Jesus thereby gives a condition upon which an individual must meet before being recognized as a citizen of the kingdom of heaven; i.e., *“turn”* or repent (see study # 71; Terms of Admission into God’s Kingdom). The apostles of Jesus Christ needed to repent of their pride and arrogance regarding their arguing over who was greatest.
 2. To help the twelve understand their need for repentance the Lord places a child before them and explains that the only way for them to even be in the kingdom in the first place is to be like a little child.
- C. *“Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven”* (18:4).
1. Let us note some associations here. Jesus explains to the disciples that they must repent of wrongdoings (namely their arguing over who was greatest in the kingdom of God) before even being considered a part of the kingdom. Secondly Jesus tells them that they must be childlike in the area of *“humility.”* There is thereby a direct association between one’s repentance and being *“humble.”* The word *“humble”* (*tapeinoo*) = *“to lower... to lessen... to humble, abase... in moral sense, to make lowly, to humble oneself”* (LS 792) (see study # 26).
 2. When the heart is filled with pride and arrogance it is difficult to see one’s faults. Conversely, when one is of a lowly abased state one easily recognizes their undone condition. The apostle Paul warned the Roman brethren, *“For I say, through the grace that was given me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more **highly** than he ought to think; but so to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to each man a measure of faith”* (Rom. 12:3). The lowly abased heart is filled with sorrow due to the sin they have committed against the holy God. Paul wrote the Corinthians saying, *“For godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation, a repentance that brings no regret.”* (II Cor. 7:10). Those who have the mind of a child in respect to humility will be citizens of the kingdom of God (i.e., their understanding of their lowly state and dependence on their parents. Parents set the parameters of the children’s being while in their house. Children are in subjection to their parent’s rules and they realize that if they violate the rules of the home they are subject to punishment. Furthermore, children go to the parents for food, shelter, and clothing in this life... there is no shame in a child asking their parents for help and neither should there be in the child of God as he or she turns to God for help when in the wrong). It is no wonder that Isaiah proclaimed, *“For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive*

the heart of the contrite” (Isa. 57:15). Again, David writes, “*The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: A broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise*” (Psalms 51:17) (see study # 26).

- D. “*And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receives me: but whoso shall cause one of these little ones that believe on me to stumble, it is profitable for him that a great millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be sunk in the depth of the sea*” (18:5-6).
1. The “*little child*,” in this context, is one who exhibits a heart of humility. When an individual exhibits a heart of humble repentance for what has been wrong in his or her life then all else in the kingdom ought to “*receive*” them. To “*receive*” (*dechomai*) one is to “accept, approve... to accept as an ally” (LS 181). If I cannot accept or approve of the one who repents with a spirit of sorrow over their sins then how could I ever expect God to “*receive*” me?
 2. Notice that Jesus now makes another association. We have examined the association between repentance and humility and now we find that these two are connected to “*belief*.” Those who truly believe in Jesus are those who hear the word of God and repent due to a lowly spirit of humility (see study # 72; Bible Faith). Their faith is made evident by their obedience and repentance (cf. Jn. 3:36; Rom. 6:16ff). One’s acceptance into the body of Christ is not sincerity of heart, so called honesty, or attitude (though all these play their respective part). One’s acceptance into the church of Christ is conditioned upon a lowly heart in relation to the sin that has been revealed in their life. When one accepts, by faith, the teachings of Jesus and changes their life to be patterned after His then they are worthy of acceptance. We cannot, thereby, accept or receive one into our fellowship who will not recognize their wrong with a spirit of humility. The fellowship of Christians in any given local setting is thereby bound together by Christ law and one’s humility!

II. Jesus Preaches on Stumbling Blocks (18:7-14):

- A. “*Woe unto the world because of occasions of stumbling! For it must needs be that the occasions come; but woe to that man through whom the occasion cometh!*” (18:7).
1. To pronounce a “*woe*” (*ouai*) upon one is to announce their “calamity” (Moulton 294) or “deep sorrow; grief” (AHD 1388). Those who present an “*occasion of stumbling*” (*skandalon*) to others will themselves fall into despair, sorrow, and great grief at the hands of God. The Greek *skandalon* is defined as “a trap or snare laid for an enemy, metaph. a stumbling-block, offence, scandal” (LS 731) (see study # 73; Stumbling-blocks).
 - a. Jesus had earlier said that the man who divorces his wife for causes other than adultery “makes her commit adultery” in that he presents the opportunity or occasion for the sin. To divorce one for causes other than adultery is to have woe placed upon oneself because you created an “*occasion of stumbling*” (see study # 1).
 - b. Recall that at Matthew 13:54-58 Jesus had traveled to his home town of Nazareth and performed miracles and taught the people yet they were “offended” in him (i.e., caused to stumble / same Greek word used). They stumbled over the teachings of Jesus because he told them they needed to repent of their sinful works. Jesus was the lowly “*carpenter’s son*” in their mind and had no right to tell them what to do. The Lord’s words created anger, resentment, and annoyance (the English meaning of offend) in the hearts of the Jews in Nazareth. The people sinned due to Jesus’ words even though he told them the truth. Did the Lord himself need to repent for this event? Some of our own brethren would say that it is so. These men’s hearts are no different than Pharaoh of Egypt in that God gave the command yet it was not something he wanted to do (cf. Ex. 10:3).
 - c. Consider Matthew 15 where the Pharisees and scribes charged Jesus and his disciples with sin for eating bread without washing their hands first. Jesus turned on these Pharisees and scribes and charged them with sin because they “*made void the word of God with their traditions*” and then called them “*hypocrites*” whose worship is in “*vain*” (Matt. 15:1-9). After the ordeal was over Jesus’ disciples said to him, “*Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, (skandalon) when they heard this saying?*” (Matt. 15:12). Someone may

thereby say, ‘Jesus, you caused these men to stumble. It’s no wonder Lord, that these men eventually kill you on the cross. It is your fault that you were killed because you provoked them by putting the stumbling block of the gospel before them.’ Should the Lord repent and ask the heavenly Father to forgive him for such actions? These examples help us to realize that there are times when one may cause another to stumble through sinful activities and times with others stumble over our actions because we present the truth that demands their repentance. Rather than changing their sinful ways they harden their hearts against truth and those who represent truth. Jesus said that this is the real reason the world hated him (cf. Jn. 7:7) and will hate us (Jn. 15:16ff).

2. Apparently, when Jesus says, “*For it must needs be that the occasions come*” he intends for his listeners to understand that through the teaching of truth many hard hearted are made to stumble of their own accord and thereby the wheat and tares are separated (cf. the Lord’s remarks at Matt. 15:13-14 as compared to Matt. 13:36-43).
 3. The “*woe*” is not pronounced upon men like Jesus who preach truth and cause anger, resentment, and a hardening of the hearts of many but rather in the man who presents a true stumbling block (i.e., the one who presents an opportunity for another to sin against the laws of God) (see study # 53). Let us make the distinction between the two. Jesus never made any man stumble in sin as he presented the truth. People stumble in sin over His **words** because it reveals their sin and demands that they change. Change from their sinful ways is not what they want out of life (cf. I Pet. 2:1-11). Others cause many to stumble in sin because they present them with opportunities and or teach them erroneous principles that lead them astray.
- B. “*And if thy hand or thy foot causeth thee to stumble, cut it off, and cast it from thee: it is good for thee to enter into life maimed or halt, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into the eternal fire. And if thine eye causeth thee to stumble, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is good for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into the hell of fire*” (18:8-9).
1. Again, the idea of “*stumbling*” is to be caused to sin. Here we see that not only are those who cause me to stumble guilty but that I too am guilty if I am quick to accept the sinful proposals and snares of others. Jesus is not teaching that all who stumble ought to cut off their foot and gouge out their eyes but rather he is teaching about the seriousness of sin. If I did cut off my foot because I ran into sin or gouged out my eyes because I looked at sinful things my fleshly mind remains. The mind is where the decision to sin rest. When I sin, it is not my foot or my eye’s fault, it is my mind that I have allowed to be corrupted.
 2. Jesus tells us that the eternity of the soul is at stake. To enter into the “*eternal fire*” of “*hell*” due to my stumbling in sin is serious business. The word “*hell*” (*geenna*) = “Gehenna, pr. The valley of Hinnom, south of Jerusalem, once celebrated for the horrid worship of Moloch, and afterwards polluted with every species of filth, as well as the carcasses of animals, and dead bodies of malefactors; to consume which, in order to avert the pestilence which such a mass of corruption would occasion, constant fires were kept burning; hence, hell, the fires of Tartarus, the place of punishment in Hades” (Moulton 76). Gehenna was a physical place that was likened unto the eternal abode of the wicked. Cutting off one’s hands and feet or gouging out the eyes would certainly be painful yet the pain cannot be compared to hell because hell is eternal pain (see study # 31).
- C. “*See that ye despise not one of these little ones: for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven*” (18:10).
1. One of these “*little ones*” is the individual who has a child like approach to service in the kingdom of God. Such a disciple of Christ recognizes their subjection to the heavenly Father’s laws and with a spirit of humility follows as best he can (see Matt. 18:1-6).
 2. Jesus commands his audience to not “*despise*” (*kataphroneo*) the humble disciples of the Lord’s; i.e., “to look down upon, think or regard slightly... to be thought little of... to be disdainful, deal contemptuously... to observe with contempt” (LS 418). Here is the way in

which the world treated Jesus because he exposed their sin (cf. Jn. 7:7). Jesus is explaining to his audience that when one truly stumbles in sin it is not because of truthful preaching but because of sinful opportunities. Why should one treat a humble disciple of Christ with contempt because they are telling you the truth (i.e., you need to repent of a wrong doing)? Recall that the apostle Paul had told the erring Galatians, “*have I become your enemy because I tell you the truth?*” (cf. Gal. 4:16) The Galatians had been caused to stumble due to false doctrines (Gal. 1:6ff; 3:1ff). Rather than repenting at the preaching of Paul many were caused to stumble.

3. Jesus said that no one should “*despise*” the humble disciples because “*in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven.*” Some believe that each person has a “guardian angel” and that this is what Jesus and the author of Hebrews (at 1:14) is alluding to. The Hebrew writer said of angels, “*Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation?*” (1:14). What type of service are angels doing for the elect of God? Angels express great joy over sinners who are restored through repentance (Lk. 15:10). Angels play a part in bringing the dying saints home to the realm of the dead (cf. Lk. 16:22). Angels will accompany Jesus when He returns to judge the world (Matt. 25:31; II Thess. 1:7). Angels will separate the righteous from the wicked at the end of times (Matt. 13:39-41, 49).
 4. It seems to me that when Jesus says, “*their angels*” (i.e., the humble disciples) he intends for us to understand that the angels exist for the Christian’s service (i.e., Heb. 1:14). The angel’s position of servitude on behalf of the saints makes them “*their angels.*” There are no individual “guardian angels.” There are, however, great host of angels who have our best interest in mind and who serve us in this interest. No one should “*despise*” (i.e., view with contempt) the saints of God because the angels in heaven have a great care for such people (cf. Lk. 15:10) (see study # 74; Angels). Thereby, if I am not careful, I may find myself getting offended or being caused to stumble by one of these saints that the Lord and His angels have great love and affection for.
- D. “*How think ye? If any man have a hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and go unto the mountains, and seek that which goeth astray? And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth over it more than over the ninety and nine which have not gone astray. Even so it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish*” (18:12-14).
1. Jesus has revealed his true disciples to be those who have a humble child like approach to serving him (i.e., totally committed to following the Father’s will). Anyone who causes such a disciple to sin with occasions of stumbling (i.e., attempting to lead them astray with false doctrines or presenting them with opportunities to sin) are in a woeful state in the eyes of God. Let no man despise (treat with contempt) the humble disciples of God because of what they represent. God and the angels in heaven have a great care and love for these humble disciples. With these thoughts before us, Jesus asks those who would consider putting a stumbling block before the humble disciples or those who would despise them with contempt to reason with him.
 2. You who would cause my humble disciples to sin and treat them with contempt I want you to consider something with me. God’s will is that these little ones not stumble in sin. If you cause them to stumble in sin through your contemptible treatment there will be a loving shepherd who goes after this lost one and brings him home. While the statement reminds the faithful of their responsibility in restoring the error it seems that the thrust of the thought is a warning directed toward the one who treats the Lord’s disciples with contempt. These depraved individuals need to know that if they cause one to stumble the Lord will not allow the saint to be lost without a fight. Some caring saint will, like an elder, do all within his power to bring such a one back to the fold of fellowship. It may be that with such thoughts before our minds that it is in this realm that the angels aid the saints in some unrecorded way.

III. Duty Toward those who Sin Against Me (18:15-20):

- A. *“And if thy brother sin against thee, go, show him his fault between thee and him alone: if he hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother”* (18:15).
1. Jesus has squashed the pride of the disciples as they argued over who was greatest in the kingdom of God. He has identified the true disciple as one who is humble and willing to follow the heavenly Father’s commandments like a little child. Jesus has revealed punishment upon the one who would cause a saint of God to stumble in sin. The Lord has explained that there is personal responsibility in all sinful situations as well. Lastly, the Lord has revealed the great importance of each and every saint in the eyes of God. Now the Lord gives instructions on how to deal with another brother in Christ who sins against you personally. The Lord may have in mind one that has put a stumbling block before you that you may sin. When one *“sin against thee”* the meaning is that a brother has done something amiss to me personally rather than to others as a whole. These instructions are for a private sin. If this chapter deals with public matters how is it that the masses in the brotherhood are to go to the man *“alone?”*
 2. If my brother has cheated me, called me a nasty name, struck me, grew angry with me when I tried to help him in a fault... etc. I am instructed to go to this brother alone and try to settle the matter. If the brother *“hears me”* (*akouo*) = “to listen to, give ear to, to obey” (LS 29) then I have *“gained my brother”* (i.e., he has recognized his error, apologized, and repented of his wickedness).
- B. *“But if he hear thee not, take with thee one or two more, that at the mouth of two witnesses or three every word may be established”* (18:16).
1. When the private approach fails with the sinner then the Lord turns to the offense. Guilt must be *“established”* (*histemi*) = “to establish, to be set or placed, to stand... to stand firm” (LS 384-385). *“Every word”* (i.e., every word against the sinner) is to stand in place with eye or ear witnesses to the crime. The guilt of the sinner must be established and the individual stand condemned by the *“witnesses.”* The word *“witness”* (*martus*) = “a judicial witness, deponent (a person who testifies under oath)” (Moulton 258). “Give evidence, bear testimony... to testify that a thing is” (LS 488).
 2. There are two types of witnesses yet both would serve the same purpose; i.e., to *“establish”* guilt. Without the establishment of guilt the matter can in no way be brought before the church:
 - a. The first type of witness would be the individual who actually saw or heard what the sinning brother said or did. This would be an eye or ear witness to the sin. The three of you may say to the sinner, ‘look, we all saw you do this to this brother, we pray that you would admit it and ask the Lord to forgive you that all may be well with your soul?’ It may be that the brother did not realize that his actions were sinful and thereby after a study the sinner humbles himself (or herself) through asking forgiveness and repentance.
 - b. The second type of witness would be an individual (or two) that are brought before the guilty to hear testimony. This type of witness could in no way stand before the church simply because they believe one brother over another with no facts. This witness rather listens to the charges levied against a brother and if the accused admits to the sin then they may serve as witnesses before the church. It may be that the accused brother has sinned against someone yet personally believes that there has been no wrong in the situation. The two brethren that are listening to the testimony may help the brother see his fault and lead him to repentance and asking God and the innocent to forgive him.
 - c. We must add a third scenario here. What if the accused brother denies any and all of the accusations made against him and there are no eye or ear witnesses? What if he says, “I did not say that to you... I did not do that to you...”? The matter must then be dropped. Why? Would this not be damaging to the brother that was sinned against? Let us examine the options. If a brother denies guilt of a sin after you have approached him privately and secondly with witnesses (that did not see or hear yet are seeking to learn of the guilt) then where would you go? How can you take a matter before the church without witnesses? If

the innocent decided to go on to step three with no actual witnesses then they are expecting all the brethren to believe them over the accused one. How can such a one expect the brethren to side with one rather than the other? One must remember, no one saw or heard the incident, in said case and thereby it cannot go before the church. The matter must be dropped until proof of the sin is “*established*.”

3. Jesus takes a principle used under the Mosaic Law and makes it binding under the New Covenant. At Deut. 17:2-7 a transgressor is to be punished, however, guilt must be established by at least two witnesses. Again at Deut. 19:15-21, guilt must be established by at least two witnesses. This same principle is carried over to the NT (II Cor. 13:1ff; Heb. 10:26-31).
- C. *“And if he refuse to hear them, tell it unto the church: and if he refuse to hear the church also, let him be unto thee as the Gentile and the publican”* (18:17).
1. Here is an example of inference. Jesus infers, at verse 17, that guilt has been established. One of two things happened at this point. Either there were eye or ear witnesses to the sin or guilt was established through witnesses hearing the testimony of the sinner as he admitted the crime (see study # 75; Bible Inference).
 2. If the erring brother, who has sinned against you, refuse to hear the admonition of the witnesses then the only recourse is to turn it over to the church. The one sinned against tries to do all that he can do to keep it private, however, if the erring refuses repentance then the whole church must know about this.
 3. The guilt of the sinner is now established by the witnesses. The church (the assembly of God’s people in any given location) tries to do all that they can to restore this person to their fellowship. When all efforts of patience and longsuffering are exhausted and it becomes apparent that this man or woman is not going to repent then he or she is to be avoided like a Gentile or publican (see the comparison between I Thess. 5:12-14 and II Thess. 3:6ff / apparently a time frame of patient admonition took place before the withdrawing and avoiding). After this period of teaching the church, generally its elders, make a judgment as to when this period should end. Here we note that God is always patient and longsuffering but never is He ever suffering (cf. I Cor. 5:1ff; Rom. 16:17ff; Phil. 3:18ff; Titus 3:9-11; Rev. 2:20).
 4. The Lord’s instructions in Matthew 18:15ff are not intended for handling situations when a brother who lives 500 miles from you teaches false doctrine and you get wind of it. Such a one is not sinning against you personally. Secondly, how is this man going to be brought before the church if this is what the Lord means here? Many brethren have tried to opine “Matthew 18” when the name and doctrine of a false teacher is exposed without actually looking into the context.
 5. Note that Jesus speaks of the church as though it were already in existence. We know that it had not been established at this point (cf. Matt. 16:28). This is an example of what is often referred to as the “prophetic perfect.” So sure is Jesus that the kingdom will be established that he speaks of it as though it were already here. The kingdom of God would not be established till the day of Pentecost as recorded in Acts 2.
- D. *“Verily I say unto you, What things soever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and what things soever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven”* (18:18).
1. Jesus said “*unto you*,” i.e., the apostles that were listening to His admonition. The disciples or apostles of Jesus Christ were to be given laws through the work of the Holy Spirit and thereby bind and loose things in heaven and earth (cf. Matt. 16:19).
 2. When the sinner repented he would be loosed from the bondage of sin by the teaching of the apostles. When the sinner remained hardened in sin and refused to repent he or she would be bound in that sin and due discipline. The Lord is simply telling the disciples that when they taught this principle it is to be recognized as divine instructions on how to handle the situation of a brother sinning against another brother (see Matthew 16:19).
- E. *“Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father who is in heaven”* (18:19).

1. When two witnesses agree to the sin of the accused then their word shall certainly stand on earth and in heaven. The standard that each man is measured by is gospel of the kingdom. The church is to uphold all the apostles' doctrine (cf. Acts 2:42). When sin occurs it is not to be overlooked but dealt with as Jesus has instructed.
 2. Jesus now introduces another important part of the unity of the church. While one sinner can disrupt much, a church united in doctrine and prayer can certainly overcome all obstacles. Two is the smallest number that can obtain unity together and when the both are joined in doctrine and prayer the Lord certainly hears.
- F. *"For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them"* (18:20).
1. Unity at its lowest numerical level is two and three. When two or three brethren are joined together in doctrine and prayer *"there am I in the midst of them"* as far as their *"gathering together"* is considered. It seems apparent that the purpose of these two or three brethren's *"gathering together"* is not for a church meeting (i.e., the generally first day of the week assembly) but rather a gathering of witnesses to bear testimony and establish guilt in the sinner of the context. While I believe this to be the teaching it seems apparent that another general principle is established by the Lord. When two brethren assemble there is an assembly and God is there with them as they are in fellowship with Him.
 2. These unified brethren may pray fervently for the repentance of the one mentioned above and God will certainly hear and exercise patience and mercy upon such a one. When things are done *"in my name"* (by his authority) the Lord hears and is certainly a part of. This verse excludes the testimony of false witnesses due to their words not being *"in my name."*

IV. Peter's Question on Forgiveness and the Parable of Forgiveness (18:21-35):

- A. *"Then came Peter and said to him, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Until seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times; but, until seventy times seven"* (18:21-22).
1. With the subject of restoring a brother who has sinned against you in the context of the discussion Peter asks the Lord how many times we should forgive such a one. Does there come a point when we should say, "Hey, enough is enough?"
 2. Jesus tells Peter that we ought to forgive the one who sins against us as often as he humbly seeks our forgiveness. There is no limit of times such as Peter suggests in his question. This reminds me of baseball. A kid may stand at the plate to bat and foul 99 balls off yet he is not out. The parents generally yell out at the kid saying, "Hang in there... good job..." Likewise, one who has sinned against us a multitude of times yet humbly asks our forgiveness should not be out. We ought to say, "Hang in there... I appreciate your good attitude in asking for forgiveness..."
- B. *"Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, who would make a reckoning with his servants. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, that owed him ten thousand talents"* (18:23-24).
1. To help Peter, and others listening, understand the principle of forgiveness Jesus teaches a parable regarding the kingdom of heaven.
 2. The kingdom of heaven is to be compared to a king who decided to resolve the debts owed to him by his servants on a designated day (see study # 9). The first subject brought before the king owed him *"ten thousand talents."* The ASV footnotes states that a talent was worth about \$ 1000.00 so that 10,000 talents would equal about \$ 10,000,000.00. The point is clear... the debt of the king's subject was beyond his ability to pay much like our sin today.
- C. *"But forasmuch as he had not wherewith to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. The servant therefore fell down and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And the lord of that servant, being moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt"* (18:25-27).

1. The servant could in no way make the immediate payment of his debt so the king decided to sell the man and his whole family to settle the matter. When the servant heard these words he begged for mercy and patience. When the Lord heard the plea of the man he was moved with compassion and decided to completely drop all charges against the man.
 2. The Lord certainly releases us from the bondage of sin when we, with a spirit of humility, plead for his mercy, patience, and forgiveness. The king, in this parable, noted the man's full intention to make right his debt. With such an attitude the king mercifully released the man of his great debt. The Lord simply desires to see our willingness to make things right too.
- D. *"But that servant went out, and found one of his fellow-servants, who owed him a hundred shillings: and he laid hold on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay what thou owest. So his fellow servant fell down and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee. And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay that which was due"* (18:28-30).
1. How quickly the servant of the king forgot the good mercy, patience, and forgiveness for his enormous debt. The servant sought out another who owed him but a minute fraction of the amount he owed the king (i.e., 100 shillings = ~ \$ 15.00) (for a good estimate of a shilling's worth look to Matthew 20:2; i.e., one shilling was given for a day of labor). When the one in debt pleaded with the servant for mercy and patience it was not granted. The servant whom the king forgave his debt took his debtor and had him thrown in prison.
 2. How quickly you and I sometimes forget that we fully expect God to grant us mercy, patience, and forgiveness when we sin against him yet when someone else sins against us we are so aggravated that we reject their pleas of sorrow.
- E. *"So when his fellow-servants saw what was done, they were exceeding sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. Then his lord called him unto him, and saith to him, Thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou besoughtest me: shouldst not thou also have had mercy on thy fellow-servant, even as I had mercy on thee? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due. So shall also my heavenly Father do unto you, if ye forgive not every one his brother from your hearts"* (18:31-35).
1. The wicked servant was found out. When the king gained knowledge that the servant that he had forgave had demanded a much smaller portion to be paid by his debtor he was angry. The wicked servant is called in for questioning. The king explains to the servant that he should have exercised mercy and forgiven the man who owed him the 100 shillings since he had been forgiven of his debt of 10,000 talents (an enormous sum of money). The consequence of the wicked servant's lack of mercy, patience, and forgiveness of others cost him his freedom and torment.
 2. The Lord now brings the lesson to us. Any who will not exercise mercy, patience, and forgiveness toward others yet expect the same from God when they sin has seriously missed the mark. We cannot possibly expect God to forgive us our debts yet reject the pleas of others who ask our forgiveness when they have wronged us. The parable of the wicked servant reveals a responsibility, on the part of God's people, to exercise the same mercy, patience, and forgiveness with those who sin against us.

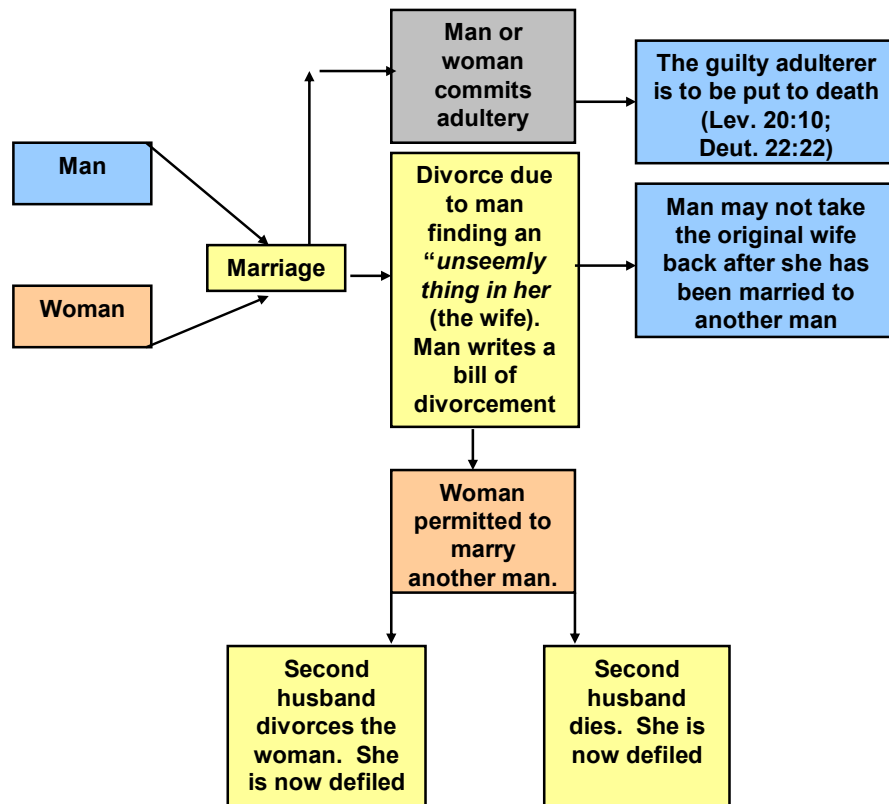
Matthew 19

I. Jesus is Questioned on Marriage Laws by the Pharisees (19:1-12):

- A. *"And it came to pass when Jesus had finished these words, he departed from Galilee, and came into the borders of Judea beyond the Jordan; and great multitudes followed him; and he healed them there"* (19:1-2).
1. At the border of Galilee and Judea there is the Valley of Jezreel to the extreme south of Galilee and North of Judea. To the west is the Kishon River. We are not told exactly where Jesus is but it was somewhere on the border.

2. The Lord's fame continues to thrive and provide an audience to preach the gospel of the kingdom. While the multitudes followed Jesus he healed their sick and no doubt preached sermons to them.
- B. *“And there came unto him Pharisees, trying him, and saying, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?”* (19:3)
1. Jesus was no stranger to the Pharisees (see study # 11). There was not exactly what one would call a good rapport between the Lord and the Pharisees. Numerous previous occasions proved only to be clashes. The Pharisees had tried (Matt. 16:1), falsely accused (Matt. 12:23-24), and attempted to do Jesus harm (Matt. 12:13-14). The two often clashed (cf. Matt. 9:14-15, 34; 12:1-2, 38; 15:1-2) as the Lord publicly exposed their error (cf. Matt. 5:20; 12:34; 16:5-12).
 2. Here again, Matthew 19, the Pharisees “*try*” (*peirazo*) Jesus. The Greek word *peirazo* = “let trial be made... to try or tempt a person, put him to the test” (LS 616). “To make proof or trial of, put to the proof, whether with good or mischievous intent” (Moulton 314). The Jews were apparently divided over the subject of divorce and so the Pharisees seek to ask a question that will cause Jesus to offend someone's beliefs. This is precisely the way the spirit of faction works today. Disgruntled brethren find common gripes with other disgruntled brethren and together they form a faction that has the power to exercise mutiny over an eldership.
 3. The calculated troublesome question in the hearing of the multitude was, “*Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause.*” Note that the question has to do with divorce (i.e., put away). Jesus has already taught on this subject at Matthew 5:31-32. Jesus explained that divorce for causes other than adultery will “*make*” the put away woman an adulterous due to the fact that an occasion or environment for such a sin is now provided (see study # 1).
 - a. The words “*put away*” (*apoluo*) mean “to loose from; to set free from, release or relieve from... to be set free from. Generally, to dismiss; to divorce a wife” (LS 102).
 - b. The “*every cause*” (*pas aitia*) means “all, the whole, anything, everything, by any means {LS 611-612}, “a charge, accusation... to hold one guilty... for the sake of; a cause, an occasion, opportunity” {LS 24}).
 - c. Deuteronomy 24 is the source of authority to which the Pharisees appealed. Moses allowed divorce for the grounds of an “*unseemly thing*” (Deut. 24:1). The “*unseemly thing*” (*ervah*) was a word used figuratively meaning “disgrace or blemish.” We know that the “*unseemly thing*” could not include adultery because the Mosaic Law condemned such a one to death (cf. Lev. 20:10; Deut. 22:22). Apparently the “*every cause*” of Matthew 19:3 and “*unseemly thing*” of Deuteronomy 24:1 are terms that indicate that divorce occurred, under the Law of Moses, for reasons other than adultery.
 - d. One fact that must be acknowledged is that even though God did not authorize divorce for any cause from the beginning the people nonetheless loosed what God joined. Just because God does not authorize an action does not mean that it cannot occur by men of hard hearts.

Paradigm of the Mosaic Law on Marriage
(Deut. 24:1-4; Lev. 20:10; Deut. 22:22)



And he answered and said, Have ye not read, that he who made them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh?" (19:4-5).

1. The Pharisees' question was can a man put away his wife for reasons other than adultery. Jesus answers by saying, "*Have ye not read*" (Gr. *anegnote*) = "to gather exact knowledge of, recognize, discern; especially, to read (see Acts 13:15). The Lord then answers the Pharisees saying have you not gathered exact knowledge or read about this subject in the Word of God? The Pharisees were doctors of the law and had at their disposal all inspired writings. Jesus reminds them that Genesis 1:27 states, "*And God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.*" Jesus then quotes from Genesis 2:24. After God had made woman from one of Adam's ribs the Word of God states, "*Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh*" (Gen. 2:24). Jesus' "*for this cause*" and Moses' recording "*therefore*" at Genesis 2:24 indicates the fact that God created male and a female for the man so that they may be joined together as one (enchained). This was God's will from the beginning; i.e., man and woman becoming one.
2. From the beginning, God made man and woman as a pair that were to be joined together so closely that they would be considered "*one flesh.*" Two halves of a whole, as a homogenous mixture the man and wife are now joined together. The word "*cleave*" (*proskollao*) helps us understand the oneness of the marriage. The word *proskollao* means "to glue on or to: to stick or cleave to" (LS 693). Paul terms this relationship a "*bond*" at I Corinthians 7:39 and Romans 7:2.

- D. *“So that they are no more two, but one flesh, what therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder”* (19:6).
1. Jesus has now thoroughly answered the Pharisees’ question. Shall a married couple lawfully get a divorce for reasons other than adultery? Jesus says no. Male and female were created and designed for each other. When a marriage takes place they become *“one flesh.”* To divide a man of single flesh would be to kill him. Likewise, to divide a man and wife who are one flesh would be to destroy them spiritually.
 2. God’s purpose is for man and woman to be one in marriage. God joins a man and woman together in the bond of marriage. To *“join”* (*suzeugnumi*) = “to yoke together; to conjoin, join together, unite” (Moulton 380-381)... “to yoke together, couple or pair together esp. in marriage... to be yoked or coupled with” (LS 757). A divine conjoining of man and woman takes place at marriage so that the two are now viewed by God as one flesh. Man is commanded not to *“put asunder”* this one flesh relationship. The term *“put asunder”* (*chorizo*) = “in a local sense, to separate, part, sever, divide one thing from another... to be separated, severed, divided” (LS 899).
 3. Note the words of association: The Pharisees had asked about *“putting away”* (*apoluo*) [i.e., release or set free] a wife. Jesus responds by stating that a man and woman are one flesh when joined in marriage by God and are to *“cleave”* (*proskollao*) [i.e., be glued or stuck together]. God does the *“joining”* (*suzeugnumi*) [i.e., to be conjoined or united together as one]. Jesus then commands, *“What God hath joined together let not man put asunder”* (*chorizo*) [i.e., separate, sever, divide one thing from another]. What the Pharisees termed ‘releasing or setting free’ Jesus termed, ‘severing and dividing one thing from another’ that was never designed to be severed or divided. One flesh indicates a life dependency upon one another.
- E. *“They say unto him, Why then did Moses command to give a bill of divorcement, and to put her away?”* (19:7).
1. Let us remember, the Pharisees are putting Jesus to the test. They are seeking to accuse (cf. Matt. 12:10) and destroy him (cf. Matt. 12:14). If they can pit Jesus against Moses then surely the people will reject him as the Messiah. The Pharisees have made a calculated chess moved designed to draw the Lord into a no win discussion in the hearing of the people (see study # 11). They have succeeded in getting Jesus to answer their first question in the hearing of the people. They supposedly now have him where they want him.
 2. Jesus, you are telling us that God never authorized a divorce apart from adultery, however, Moses said otherwise. Who are we to believe? You or Moses?
 3. Apparently, during the days of Moses, a written document stating the cause and requesting divorce would be written out that the dissolution would be complete (cf. Deut. 24:1ff). *“The bill of divorcement”* (Heb. *seper kritut*) was a legal document certifying a divorce on the grounds specified with no reflection on the wife’s marital faithfulness.” (ISBE; Vol. 1, pp. 975). “The custom of giving letters of divorce was probably adopted by the Israelites in Egypt, where the practice of writing had already found its way into all the relations of life... Moses could not entirely abolish the traditional custom, if only ‘because of the hardness of the people’s hearts’ (Matt. 19:8).”²
- F. *“He saith unto them, Moses for your hardness of heart suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it hath not been so”* (19:8).
1. If we follow the discussion between the Pharisees and Jesus carefully we will clearly see that Jesus is condemning the people during Moses’ day for the direction they took in relation to divorce. One who is *“hard hearted”* is one who disobeys God’s commands. A classic example of this is the Pharaoh of Exodus (cf. Ex. 7:16 compared to Ex. 10:1-3). God hardens mankind with His commandments (cf. Rom. 9:17-18; 11:7). Jesus is thereby saying that God’s commands, regarding the permanency or dissolution of a marriage, have ever been clear; i.e.,

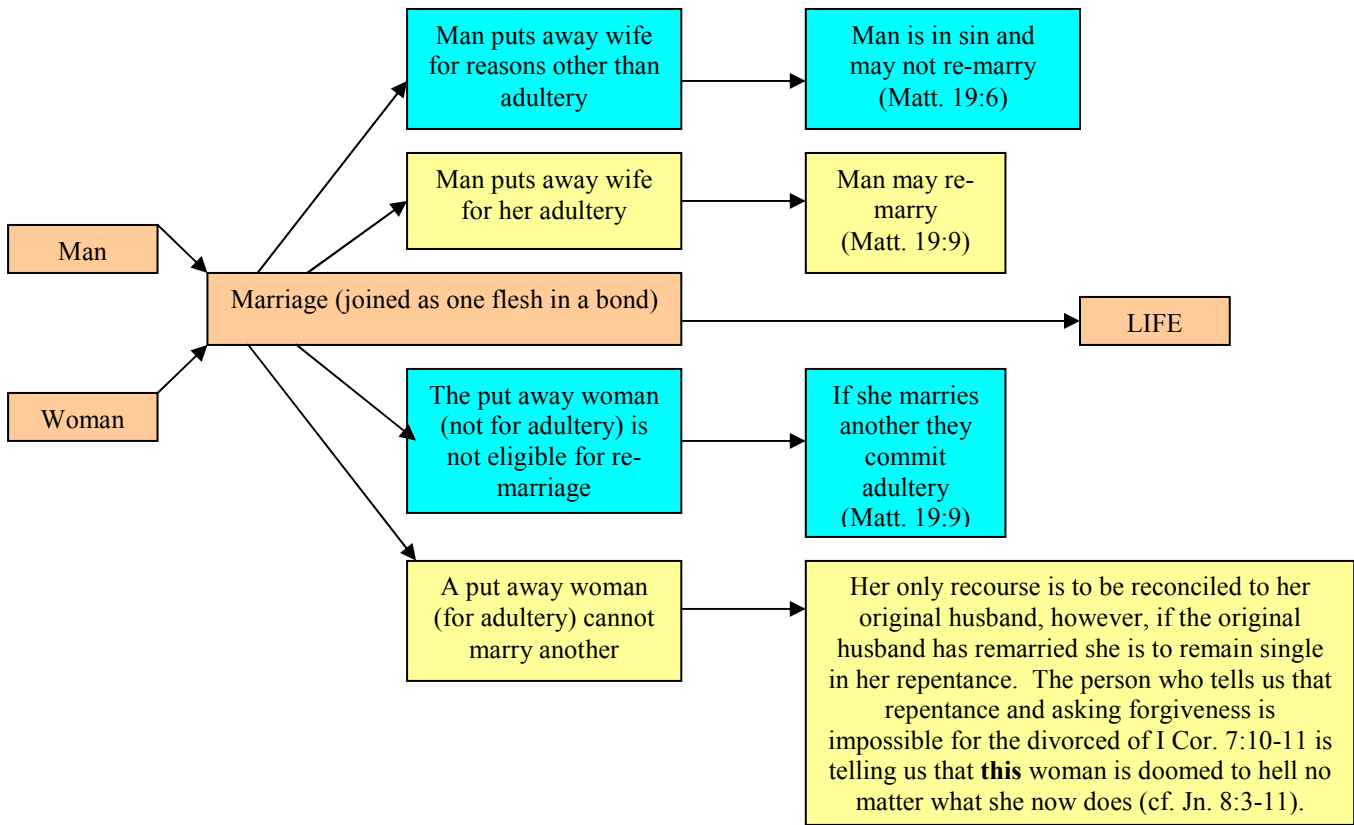
² Keil and Delitzsch; Commentary on the Old Testament; Vol. 1, pp. 950-951

- “So that they are no more two, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.”* Those not willing to follow such laws find ways around it. The people during the days of Moses found some unseemly thing in their wife and wanted desperately to get rid of her. They wanted the divorce so badly that they blinded themselves to God’s original teaching on the matter. Many today are doing the same thing. We are hearing of men teach that people can get a divorce for the kingdom of God’s sake (i.e., if your spouse is hindering your spiritual service to God then you may divorce them with no consequences from the Lord). These brethren are telling us that divorce may take place for reasons other than adultery; however, remarriage is not an option. My prayer is that these false teachers would re-examine the simple teaching of Jesus in these verses.
2. Note that the discussion between Jesus and the Pharisees continues to revolve around the subject of divorcing a wife (not remarriage). Jesus explains Moses’ teaching on divorce by saying that he *“suffered you to put away your wives.”* To *“suffer”* (*epitrepo*) is to “refer the matter to a person, leave it to his judgment... to give up, yield, to permit, suffer” (LS 305). This word helps us form a picture in our minds of the happenings during the days of Moses. The people had taken the custom of divorce for any cause possibly from Egypt. We may infer that Moses taught the people truth on the matter of marriage, divorce, and remarriage; however, they rejected his teaching and so Moses *“suffered”* them (left the matter to the people... i.e., he yielded to their disobedient ways because there was apparently no hope of changing their hearts on the matter... they were determined to put away their wives as they had done so in the years leading up to Deuteronomy 24).
 3. Jesus states that even though Moses *“suffered”* the people to put away their wives for causes other than adultery *“from the beginning it was not so.”* When the law of marriage was established early on in the inspired word, Moses and the hard hearted people’s misdirection did not change the original statute. The law remained... i.e., divorce for causes other than adultery were never in God’s design for marriage. Though people’s will may change God’s never does. Truth stands firm through time (see study # 76; The Nature of Truth).
 4. Interestingly, Jesus now uses the Greek *apohuo* as did the Pharisees at Matthew 19:3. Though Jesus used the term *chorizo* (*“put asunder”*) at verse 6 it is now apparent that the same thing; i.e., divorce, is under consideration.
- G. *“And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and he that marrieth her when she is put away committeth adultery”* (19:9).
1. Some would tell us today that the above verse warns not against the divorce but against divorcing and remarrying. Again, such a statement ignores the context of this chapter. Jesus has proved that God, from the beginning, taught that when a marriage was formed two people became one flesh. These two, now one, cannot be separated for reasons other than adultery (i.e., what God hath joined together let not man put asunder). When one puts away a wife for causes other than adultery then they *“make”* her an adulterous by giving occasion to the sin (cf. Matt. 5:31-32).
 2. Jesus represents deity (cf. Jn. 1:1, 14). The words that Jesus spoke came from the heavenly Father (cf. Jn. 8:28, 38; 10:18, 32; 12:49-50; 14:24; 15:15). Jesus, in complete unity with the Godhead, authoritatively states, *“And I say unto you...”* Though remarriage was not in the original question posed by the Pharisees, Jesus now gives the whole picture of marital responsibility for *“whosoever”* (God is the God of all flesh and thereby all are subject to His laws / Jer. 32:27). What part of *“whosoever”* do brethren today not understand? Some say, but my spouse will not allow me to go to church or my spouse is beating me. Again, Jesus said, *“whosoever!”* Said law ought to teach us the seriousness of choosing a mate for life.
 3. One who *“puts away”* a wife for reasons other than (*“except”*) *“fornication”* and then marries another has *“committed adultery.”* The era of Moses’ *“suffering”* had now ended due to the fact that God had always had marital laws in place. The word *“except”* is literally translated

from the Greek “*me epi*” (i.e., “not for”) (cf. NM 82). Those who divorce for reasons other than “*fornication*” (*porneia*) i.e., “adultery” (Moulton 337), and then marry another, commit adultery themselves. The verse clearly teaches that the only legal divorce is due to one’s spouse committing fornication.

4. Jesus teaches that if one divorces his wife for a cause other than fornication and marries another, that person “*committeth adultery*” (*moichao*) (VIPN—ZS) (Friberg 64). The present tense verb indicates the ongoing action of adultery. This alone teaches that as long as I am in violation of God’s laws I remain in that sin (even if I am not repeatedly doing it). *Moichao* is defined as “to commit adultery” (LS 517). “To have unlawful intercourse with another’s wife, to commit adultery with” (Thayer 417). “Be caused to commit adultery, be an adulterer or adulteress, commit adultery” (AG 526). “To defile a married woman, to commit or be guilty of adultery” (Moulton 272). “Denotes one who has unlawful intercourse with the spouse of another” (Vines 25). “Voluntary sexual intercourse between a married person and a partner other than the lawful spouse” (AHD 81).
5. “*And he that marrieth her when she is put away committeth adultery.*” Here is the scenario. A man puts away his wife for reasons other than fornication. He goes and marries another woman and is living in adultery. The put-away wife now marries another, and Jesus said that she commits adultery along with the new partner in this unlawful union.
 - a. Comments: Jesus had exposed the Lord’s oneness intentions in marriage. One who gets married is bonded to the other as one. The only loosening of this bond is if one commits the sex act of adultery. Otherwise, the bond continues.
 - b. Question: Does God recognize a divorce when no adultery has taken place? Yes. Paul said in I Corinthians 7:10-11, “*But unto the married I give charge, yea not I, but the Lord, that the wife depart not from her husband but should she depart, let her remain unmarried, or else be reconciled to her husband; and that the husband leave not his wife.*” Therefore, even though a close bond is formed in the marriage, man does have the ability to dissolve it for reasons other than adultery and said action is clearly sinful. If this occurs, the divorced have two options. Either continue living single or be reconciled to each other. Such a divorce is sinful because Jesus said, “*What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder*” (Matt. 19:6). This helps us to see not only the seriousness and permanency of marriage, but the fact that choosing a mate is a life long choice! The author of Hebrews said, “*Let marriage be had in honor among all, and let the bed be undefiled: for fornicators and adulterers God will judge*” (13:4). Still yet others say that if I Corinthians 7 has under consideration a divorce that I may participate in and remain in good standing with God then surely God does not condemn all divorces apart from the cause of fornication. When an opposing party states that the text suggests repentance and forgiveness for the act of divorce the others opine, ‘how can repentance occur?’ First, we must not forget that Jesus has already said, “*what God hath joined together let not man put asunder.*” Secondly, let us not forget that Paul states, by the authority of God, “*let not the wife (or husband) depart from the husband (wife).*” Repentance and forgiveness comes from a change of heart regarding the sin under consideration. I can repent and ask God to forgive me for divorcing a spouse and remain in the state that I am (or be reconciled to the original mate) because the Lord tells me I can at I Cor. 7:10-11. Once a divorce takes place there are many cases where the two individuals can in no way be reconciled to each other. Please consider the fact that if it is so that the woman (or man) who divorces for causes other than adultery cannot repent of their sin without getting remarried to their original partner then how is it that the adulterous one of Matthew 19:9 could ever be saved once she has committed adultery and her original husband remarries? Such a conclusion would put the adulterous woman in a hopeless state no matter if she comes to her senses and desires forgiveness later in life or not (see chart below).

A Paradigm for Matthew 19:3-9



- c. Some believe that once the divorce has taken place other divorces may later ensue. Example: If one puts away a spouse for reasons other than adultery and then later commits adultery himself the innocent mate may now put their original mate away and be eligible for re-marriage. The fact of the matter is, however, that Jesus said once the divorce takes place the innocent may not remarry without committing adultery (see this study of Matthew 19:1-9). The man who has put away his wife for reasons other than adultery and then later commits adultery cannot, by his two wrongs, make her right for remarriage.

H. *“The disciples say unto him, If the case of the man is so with his wife, it is not expedient to marry”* (19:10).

1. The word “*expedient*” (*sumphero*) = “to confer a benefit, be useful or profitable... it is of use, is profitable, expedient... advantage, expediency, profit” (LS 764). The word “*expedient*” in English is defined as “serving to promote one’s interest... something that is a means to an end... Appropriateness to the purpose at hand” (AHD 477).
2. The disciples conclude that if it is the case that a man would sin by divorcing a wife for causes other than adultery then it would not be profitable or beneficial to marry. Said statement appears to be a defeatism attitude before going into marriage. The disciples may have looked to their own generation and took note of the wide spread divorce rate and thereby conclude that marriage will, in most cases, end in divorce for causes other than adultery. There were no doubt cases where women were being abused by men and men that were unable to bear with the foolishness of their wives and so the scenarios were boundless. Many today have the same view of marriage. They conclude that too many things that can go wrong in a marriage. To say that one may not get a divorce, except for the cause of adultery, is too hard of a saying to accept.

- I. *“But he said unto them, Not all men can receive this saying, but they to whom it is given. For there are eunuchs, that were so born from their mother’s womb: and there are eunuchs, that were made eunuchs by men: and there are eunuchs, that made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven’s sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it”* (19:11-12).
1. Jesus replied to the disciples’ concerns about marriage by saying that not all men can “*receive*” (*choreo*) the teaching that divorce for causes other than adultery are sinful. The Greek word *choreo* = “to go forward, move on or along... to go to one’s heart... take into one’s heart” (LS 898-899). “To give mental admittance to, to yield accordance” (Moulton 440). Not all men can thereby take into their heart such teaching and yield to it. Many will marry and divorce their wives for causes other than adultery even though it is not permitted by God.
 2. To further explain the matter Jesus speaks of eunuchs (i.e., one who has been castrated / unable to have sexual intercourse).
 - a. Some men are born eunuchs and thereby have no opportunity for sexual intercourse.
 - b. Some men are made eunuchs (castrated) by other men.
 - c. Some men castrate themselves and are thereby eunuchs “*for the kingdom of heaven’s sake.*” The idea is that such a convicted man wants to eliminate all chances that he should fall in sin through fornication or adultery (even though the thought of such things can be just as condemning / cf. Matt. 5:27-28).
 3. Here is the Lord’s point. The only one’s not subject to God’s marital law of divorce for reasons other than adultery being sinful is eunuchs. Eunuchs cannot have sexual intercourse and thereby cannot commit the actual act of adultery with another. Everyone else who enters the bond of marriage must “*receive*” the saying. Jesus is thereby binding the law of divorce for causes other than adultery as being sinful upon “*they to whom it is given*” i.e., every male and female capable of having sexual intercourse (which is most everyone) (see study # 1). Jesus does not give way to divorces for other causes (i.e., the kingdom’s sake, wife beating, child molestation, etc.). No doubt these scenarios are difficult for the ones involved. Out of self preservation the innocent must do what is necessary for the survival of self and others involved such as children. Said individuals ought to flee for safety.
 4. Incidentally, this illustrates that adultery is the actual sex act and not the thought. Some have concluded from Matthew 5:27-28 that even the thought of adultery is grounds for a lawful divorce but not so according to Jesus’ definition of adultery here. This brings us back to the Matthew 5:32 passage. To bring about or give occasion for adultery is sinful and binding on every capable male and female.
- II. **Children represent the inhabitants of the church and the eternal abode of the faithful (19:13-15):**
- A. *“Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should lay his hands on them, and pray: and the disciples rebuked them”* (19:13).
1. Apparently after the discussion on marriage, divorce, and remarriage some of the multitudes brought their children to Jesus that He might “*lay his hands on them, and pray.*” The purpose of the laying on of his hands is not stated. It may be that they wished to be healed of various sicknesses or maladies.
 2. When the children came with their parents the disciples rebuked (*epitimaō*) them; i.e., “reprimand” (Moulton 162).
- B. *“But Jesus said, Suffer the little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for to such belongeth the kingdom of heaven. And he laid his hands on them, and departed thence”* (19:14-15).
1. Jesus, however, took notice of the children and so commanded the disciples not to reprimand the multitudes with their children but rather “*suffer*” (*aphiemi*) them to come to him; i.e., “to leave alone, give up, let pass, permit” (LS 138).
 2. Why did Jesus request that the disciples permit the children to come to him? Jesus said that they were to come to him “*for to such belong the kingdom of heaven.*” Children were important to Jesus. He had already used them as an example of the humble and obedient mindset that was to be a part of every adult disciple who would come to the kingdom of God at Matthew 18:3.

The humble, submissive, and obedient dispositions of children represent the inhabitants of the kingdom of heaven (i.e., the church and the eternal home of saints) (see study # 71).

III. Jesus Teaches on the Priorities of Life in Relation to Eternity (19:16-30):

- A. *“And behold, one came to him and said, Teacher, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? And he said unto him, Why askest thou me concerning that which is good? One there is who is good: but if thou wouldest enter into life, keep the commandments”* (19:16-17).
1. The parallel accounts of this teaching is found at Mark 10 and Luke 18. While Matthew tells us of the man’s age; i.e., “*young*” (Matt. 19:22), Luke tells us that he is rich and a ruler (Lk. 18:18, 23) thus, the “Rich Young Ruler.”
 2. We must take note of the fact that it is “*eternal life*” that is under consideration throughout the life and teaching of Jesus. The purpose of the teaching on marriage, divorce, and remarriage earlier was because eternal life was at stake. The purpose for attempting to cause a brother who has sinned against you personally was so that their souls may be eternally saved. The purpose of having a humble, submissive, and obedient child like disposition is so that one may obtain eternal life. The purpose for Jesus confirming His teachings with miracles was so that people would obtain eternal life. There are “*good things*” that one must do to obtain eternal life and so Jesus expounds to the man who has asked the question.
 3. Entering into life (eternal life) involves “*keeping the commandments*” of God. Those who believe they can practice religion by modes of pluralism and fleshly wisdom shall be sorely disappointed when they are cast in the fires of hell for eternity. Jesus states unequivocally that one’s eternal abode is conditioned upon keeping God’s commandments rather than man’s ideas (see study # 15).
- B. *“He saith unto him, Which? And Jesus said, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honor thy father and thy mother; and, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself”* (19:18-19).
1. Desiring to know what commandments were of utmost importance that he may obtain eternity the young man asks, “*which?*”
 2. Jesus simply quoted to the young man five of the Ten Commandments as recorded in Exodus 20 along with a summation; i.e., love thy neighbor as thyself.
- C. *“The young man saith unto him, All these things have I observed: what lack I yet? Jesus said unto him, if thou wouldest be perfect, go, sell that which thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me. But when the young man heard the saying, he went away sorrowful; for he was one that had great possessions”* (19:20-22).
1. The young man agreed with Jesus’ instructions and explained that he has done these things. He wanted; however, to be sure that eternal life would be his when he died. The young man thereby asks, “*What lack I yet?*” What is it that I can further do to assure my eternity? Jesus instructs the rich young man to sell all that he had and give to the poor. Apparently the young man had great riches and esteemed them highly. The one thing standing between his aspirations of eternal life with God was his wealth. The young man had the opportunity at this point to obey Jesus and do so that his hope of eternal life would be real yet he refused this instruction.
 2. The apostle Paul discusses the “*perfect*” mind with the Philippian brethren saying, “*Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, be thus minded: and if in anything ye are otherwise minded, this also shall God reveal unto you.*” (Phil. 3:15). The same Greek word *teleios* is used by Jesus and Paul in these compared verses. The perfect mind is the mind that has set as its goal the prize of heaven (cf. Phil. 3:13-14). The perfect mind is not going to let things such as riches misdirect my goals.
 3. Should we all sell our homes and automobiles today? Should we empty our bank accounts and give everything to those who are poor for the sake of our eternity? You should if your goal is investments in this world rather than investments in heaven (cf. Matt. 6:19-20) (see study # 23).

- D. *“And Jesus said unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, it is hard for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again I say unto you, 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”* (19:23-24).
1. Mark tells us that the rich man under consideration is the one who *“trust in riches”* (Mk. 10:24). To *“trust”* (*peitho*) = *“to trust, rely on, have confidence in a person or thing”* (LS 615). God had pronounced woe upon Israel and Judah because they had put their trust in things other than God (cf. II Kings 16:5-9; 17:4 / sought help from Gentile nations rather than God... sought the favor of Baal and the Asherah rather than God / II Kings 17:16).
 2. What ever way one desires to examine the proverb, *“A camel going through the eye of a needle,”* one will conclude that the task is impossible. Those who put their trust or confidence in riches (or anything else) rather than God will not enter into heaven.
 3. Riches are an easy one to relate to for all of us. When one has all he desires and needs it is not hard to come to a mind that you have no need for anything that God has to offer. The world becomes the home and place of comfort. All goals of life come to be met here on this earth. Eternity is forgotten because things are so good in the here and now (see study # 77; Riches).
- E. *“And when the disciples heard it, they were astonished exceedingly, saying, Who then can be saved?”* (19:25).
1. The things Jesus was teaching caused astonishment within the minds of the disciples. They could not see how that if one were to seek out riches in this life they would not have an opportunity to obtain eternal life with Christ. The natural bent of the mind is that of hard work and riches that follow that give comfort and peace of mind to man and his family. Again, Jesus is explaining that true comfort and peace shall only be realized when one obtains eternity. The comfort and peace obtained through wealth in this life will not last for eternity.
 2. The only one’s *“saved”* from the consequences of their sins are those who’s minds are set on eternity rather than the things of this world.
- F. *“And Jesus looking upon them said to them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible”* (19:26).
1. Man may naturally look to the suffering that comes with poverty all about him and determine not to go through such. He may endeavor to do all that he can to obtain wealth for his family that they may enjoy the world they live in. Such goals are fine, however, when one’s natural bent of mind is on riches alone; i.e., they have no concerns for eternal comfort and peace, then they have greatly erred.
 2. To the mind of the fleshly they may see the pursuit of wealth as a must in this life yet from the standpoint of God wealth is only temporary comfort and peace.
 3. This reminds us of the disciples thoughts at Matthew 19:10 regarding divorce only being allowed for the cause of adultery. They said, *“If the case of the man is so with his wife, it is not expedient to marry.”* The things that seemed so engrained in society; i.e., gaining riches and divorcing a wife for unseemly things, were wholly opposed to Jesus’ teachings (see study # 1).
- G. *“Then answered Peter and said unto him, Lo, we have left all, and followed thee; what then shall we have? And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, that ye who have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel”* (19:27-28).
1. Upon hearing of the selfless sacrifices that man must make to ensure his heavenly eternal life Peter reasons that the immediate twelve have left all that they had (i.e., families and jobs and pursuit of worldly comfort through riches). Peter thereby asks, *“what then shall we have?”* Peter’s question is, ‘what is our reward for doing as you have commanded Lord?’
 2. It seems that the time of *“regeneration”* is a time when men would have the opportunity to be reborn as new creatures in Christ Jesus (i.e., baptism for the remission of sins / cf. Titus 3:5). The apostles, as messengers of the gospel of Jesus Christ, would deliver and judge the peoples. In this manner, they would sit upon thrones of law and judgment.

- H. *“And every one that hath left houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or children, or lands, for my name’s sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and shall inherit eternal life”* (19:29).
1. The parallel account of this is given at Luke 18:29. Luke adds *“wife”* to the list. The reason the rich man of Matthew 19:22 went away sorrowful was because he *“was one who had great possessions.”* The man was not willing to *“leave”* his riches to follow Christ. All who put a greater value on things of this world than Christ can in no way *“inherit eternal life.”* Apparently the *“leaving”* here indicates a mind that is willing to put all things of this world (including houses, lands, wives, children, parents, brothers, and sisters) behind one’s will to serve God and obtain eternity. The perfect mind of Philippians 3 (i.e., one who sets their goals on obtaining the true prize of heaven) is under consideration.
 2. We must note that Jesus is not giving exceptions to the Matthew 19:6-9 rule of divorce for the cause of adultery alone. I believe Mike Willis has incorrectly argued that Jesus is permitting divorces for causes such as wife beating and anything a mate may do to hinder my worship to God. Mike Willis writes, *“I agree with brethren Reneau and Barnett. There is but one cause for divorce (fornication) that allows an innocent party the right to remarriage. However, there are situations in which a person may have to leave a marriage in order to serve the Lord (see Lk. 14:26; 18:29)”* (Truth Magazine; Vol. LI, # 1; January 2007). The problem is that Jesus is not teaching reasons for leaving a marriage but rather teaching the *“perfect”* mind (cf. Matt. 19:21). The perfect mind keeps God’s commands (a goal of the prize of heaven) even when other things have the capacity to lure me away (riches, comfort of home, wife, kids, family etc.). If I am more concerned about my riches, home, and or family’s well being then I am not worthy of heaven. The reasoning of some is that if there is a hindrance to your goal then get rid of it (i.e., riches, home, family, etc.). My question is, where will such an approach end? Will I get rid of any and all hindrances in my life over the years to find myself all alone in a government shelter or dwelling in the wilderness somewhere? Would the Lord instruct fathers and mothers to rid themselves of children who are taking up so much of their time for the kingdom of God’s sake? Brethren, such an approach is selfish at best. Such an approach does not take into consideration that an unruly husband or child can be dealt with in patience. There is no doubt difficulties involved in marriages where abuse is taking place yet to misuse Jesus’ instructions to justify divorce for causes other than adultery is to set one’s self up as God (i.e., a law giver) (cf. II Thess. 2:4). Jesus has firmly established that divorce for causes other than adultery are against the will of God (cf. Matt. 5:34 and 19:6) (see study # 1).
 3. Incidentally the word *“left”* (*aphiemi*) = *“to send away, let go, loose, set free... to dissolve, disband, break up... to put away, divorce... of things, to get rid of... to leave alone, give up, let pass... middle voice, to send forth from oneself, send forth”* (LS 138). No where does Matthew used the Greek *aphiemi* in the context of marriage. Matthew uses *aphiemi* several times in the context of permitting something to happen, leaving things behind, and sending things (i.e., sins and the multitudes) away. Paul does; however, use the Greek *aphiemi* to indicate a divorce at I Corinthians 7:11-13. Note that just because the word is used in relation to a divorce at I Corinthians does not mean that it has to mean a divorce at Matthew 19:27 and Luke 18:29. The Greek Oinos is translated wine in the English and is intended to be intoxicating in some context and non-intoxicating (i.e., grape juice) in other context. Question: In what way did Peter *“aphiemi”* his wife, house, brethren, sisters, father, mother, children, and or land *“for my name’s sake... or for the kingdom of God’s sake?”* In what way should every true disciple *aphiemi* these things? Let us look to the context. Those things that would take precedence in our minds over the kingdom of God are to be put behind Christ (i.e., riches, homes, wife, children, parents, etc.). Paul said that this was one of the dangers of getting married (I Cor. 7:32-35). Some may be more infatuated with their wives than serving God. This cannot be. Jesus said, *“seek first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you”* (Matt. 6:33). What things? Food, drink, clothing, and the things necessary for this life. There is absolutely nothing wrong with having a house, riches, wife, children, parents, and

friends; however, the moment any one of these things take precedence in one's mind over Christ is the moment of trouble (see Col. 3:1-3). It seems to me that an individual seeking to rightly divide God's word must take into consideration the fact that Jesus and His apostles clearly make divorce for causes other than adultery unlawful (cf. Matt. 5:34; 19:6; I Cor. 7:10). All other matters must take this fact into consideration when interpreting other passages (see study # 1).

- I. *"But many shall be last that are first; and first that are last"* (19:30).
 1. Let us recall that *"eternal life"* is under consideration in this text (cf. Matt. 19:16, 20, 23ff).
 2. Here, Jesus makes a statement that puts this study into perspective. Those who are selfish and desire the things of this world (i.e., riches, houses, land, wives, children, brothers, sisters, etc.) over the things of God will find themselves last. Though the world may view the one who has such possessions as successful the Lord condemns the man or woman who would place these things before Him.

Chapter 20

I. The Kingdom of Heaven is Compared to a Householder who Hired Laborers (20:1-16):

- A. *"For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that was a householder, who went out early in the morning to hire laborers into his vineyard. And when he had agreed with the laborers for a shilling a day, he sent them into his vineyard"* (20:1-2).
 1. To further illustrate how that the last are first and the first are last in the kingdom of God (cf. Matthew 19:30) the Lord teaches the principle in the form of a parable. At this point, we understand the principle to mean that those of this world who put earthly things before God in their minds may be first in the view of the world yet are they last in the spiritual eyes of God because their priorities are confused.
 2. At Matthew 13:31 Jesus told the parable of the mustard seed in which he compared the kingdom of heaven to a mustard seed. The phrase *"like unto"* was used at 13:31 and here too. The phrase, *"like unto"* is one word in the Greek; i.e., *homoios*. *Homoios* is defined as "resembling, one and the same, common, alike, much like" (LS 556). The *"kingdom of heaven"* is the assembly of God's people who are united in truth and share a common love for God and hope of heaven. The kingdom of heaven is a kingdom comprised of believers who have been cleansed of sins through the waters of baptism. The kingdom has a law that all believers adhere to. God's kingdom had been foretold of coming in the OT scriptures and is now at the verge of being fulfilled. Christ would be king over this kingdom of believers. The kingdom is not organized on a world basis but only on local terms. Though there is no universal organization there is, nonetheless, universal unity and fellowship in truth among baptized believers (see study # 9). This kingdom belonging to God 'resembles, is one and the same, and much like' *"a man that was a householder."* A *"householder"* (*oikodespotes*) = "the master of the house" (LS 546)... "the master or head of a house or family... to occupy one's self in the management of a household" (Moulton 283).
 3. God's kingdom of believers whose head is Christ is compared to a man who is head of a household that goes into the city to find laborers to harvest his grapes. The employer agrees with the employees on the wages for the day; i.e., a shilling would not even be worth a dollar of our money today (see notes at Matthew 18:28).
- B. *"And he went out about the third hour, and saw others standing in the marketplace idle; and to them he said, Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you. And they went their way"* (20:3-4).
 1. The Jews divided the day into four parts. The householder went out in the morning (i.e., sunrise) and found the first laborers. He now goes out at the *"third hour"* (9:00 AM) and finds other laborers to work.

2. Once again, the laborers agree to a “*whatsoever is right*” sum of money for their labors in the field.
- C. “*Again he went out about the sixth and the ninth hour, and did likewise. And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing; and he saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle? They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard*” (20:5-7).
1. Throughout the day the householder went to the marketplace looking for laborers. Early in the morning, then 9:00 AM, noon, 3:00 PM, and finally 5:00 PM he hired laborers to go into the field and work.
 2. The workers who began early in the morning had been out in the field all day working as opposed to the late comers who could only work a few hours.
- D. “*And when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the laborers, and pay them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first. And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a shilling. And when the first came, they supposed that they would receive more; and they likewise received every man a shilling*” (20:8-10).
1. Pay time had arrived. The householder tells his steward to call in the laborers and pay them the wages that they had agreed to work for.
 2. The householder instructs the steward to begin with the workers who came into the field last and pay them. Apparently the workers were paid in the presence of others so that all knew what each other received for their labors.
 3. When the workers that came into the fields of labor received a shilling for their few hours of work the men who had been out in the field all day supposed that they would receive more than a shilling even though they had agreed from the beginning to work for a shilling.
 4. The key word is “*supposed*” (*nomizo*) = “to deem, hold, believe... to expect that...” (LS 534). These men believed and expected to get more than what they originally agreed to due to the fact that the late comers received a full shilling.
 5. When the steward came to the early morning laborers he likewise gave them a shilling.
- E. “*And when they received it, they murmured against the householder, saying, These last have spent but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat. But he answered and said to one of them, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a shilling? Take up that which is thine, and go thy way; it is my will to give unto this last, even as unto thee. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Or is thine eye evil, because I am good? So the last shall be first, and the first last*” (20:11-16).
1. The early workers had lost sight of the agreement that they had made with the householder. Their problem lay in their “*supposing*” (i.e., expectations based upon their personal belief and reason) (see study # 52). We find here the workings of law and standards. When a standard has been established; i.e., a shilling for a day of labor, and agreed to then one must adhere to his terms. While we may reason within that it is not fair that the late laborers receive the same amount as those of us who have labored in the hot sun all day we must nonetheless remember our original agreement.
 2. God has provided rewards for the faithful (a shilling / heaven). Some may labor in the vineyards most all of their lives while others may have entered the kingdom of God late in life. God’s mercy is given on an equal basis nonetheless. There is one reward for all and if any loose sight of this precious reward through supposition then they may lose their reward. Again, the thought is on priorities. Peter had asked what the disciples who had “*left all*” would receive for their labors at Matthew 19:27. Though their reward is great Jesus had warned them saying, “*But many shall be last that are first; and first that are last*” at Matthew 19:30. The principle taught is that the world’s view of what is fair and God’s view is different. The world may view the wealthy, handsome, healthy, and smart as those whose lives are right yet God views the sickly, poor, ugly, and retarded people who obey Him as those truly rich in faith and due a great reward (for a further study of this principle see Matthew 20:24-28 and 21:32).

3. Never forget that God is a Lord of mercy. It may not be too hard for some to think that they deserve greater rewards based upon their sacrifices and services to God, however, let us all remember that God's mercy is salvation from the consequences of sin. Let us ever keep this thought before our minds.

II. Jesus foretells of his Death, Burial, and Resurrection (20:17-19):

- A. *“And Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took the twelve disciples apart, and on the way he said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests and scribes; and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him unto the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify: and the third day he shall be raise up”* (20:17-19).
 1. Parallel accounts of this statement by Jesus are found in Mark 10:32-34 and Luke 18:31-33. Mark tells us that when Jesus began to lead the disciples toward Jerusalem that they were amazed and afraid. No doubt that by this time the feelings of animosity toward Jesus by some had elevated to a level of danger. The disciples could not believe that Jesus would be so bold as to go to Jerusalem where he would certainly face great dangers.
 2. Due to their fears Jesus pulls the twelve aside and explains to them that there will indeed be dangers and death in Jerusalem. Death; however, was a part of the Lord's mission. Mankind would never receive the remission of their sins lest he go to the cross and be crucified. Jesus explains (foretells) that he will be delivered up, condemned to death, mocked, scourged, and finally crucified. His death, however, would not be the end of things but rather the beginning! Jesus tells his disciples that he will be resurrected from the dead.
 3. The Gentiles would place the body of Jesus upon the cross and make the sacrifice for the sins of the world. These Gentiles, however, had no idea of the great significance while performing the sacrificial act.

III. The Mother of the sons of Zebedee (Salome) makes a Request (20:20-28):

- A. *“Then came to him the mother of the sons of Zebedee with her sons, worshipping him, and asking a certain thing of him. And he said unto her, What wouldest thou? She saith unto him, Command that these my two sons may sit, one on thy right hand, and one on thy left hand, in thy kingdom”* (20:20-21).
 1. Mark tells us that James and John joined in with their mother making this request (cf. Mk. 10:35ff). The three ask Jesus if he would command that James and John sit at important positions to Jesus in his kingdom (i.e., on the right and left hand).
 2. The request indicates that the disciples and others continued to be confused as to the real spiritual nature of the kingdom of God. There would be no physical ruling on the part of Jesus and neither would there be on the part of any of the disciples.
- B. *“But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink the cup that I am about to drink? They say unto him, We are able”* (20:22).
 1. Jesus proclaims the disciples ignorance. What they depicted as a scene of glory and honor in the great kingdom of God Jesus now reveals its position of suffering and anguish.
 2. To *“drink the cup”* or additionally as Mark puts it, *“to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with”* (Mk. 10:38) illustrates the great tribulation and anguish that Jesus would undergo at the hands of sinful men.
 3. James and John then pronounce their willingness.
- C. *“He saith unto them, My cup indeed ye shall drink: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left hand, is not mine to give; but it is for them for whom it hath been prepared of my Father”* (20:23).
 1. Jesus makes a prophetic statement by saying that James and John would certainly drink of the cup and be baptized in the waters of suffering and tribulation (this baptism would not be a sprinkling of suffering but a wave of deep water that covered them in sorrows and tribulation).
 2. Jesus explains that only the Father may promote individuals in His kingdom.
- D. *“And when the ten heard it, they were moved with indignation concerning the two brethren. But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. Not so shall it be among you: but whosoever would*

become great among you shall be your minister; and whosoever would be first among you shall be your servant: even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many” (20:24-28).

1. The other ten disciples felt that James and John were acting selfishly to the exclusion of the rest who had made all the same sacrifices in life to follow Jesus. Why would the Lord elevate one of them rather than the other ten?
2. Jesus continues to reveal the spiritual nature of the kingdom of God. God’s kingdom was unlike the kingdoms of the world (see study # 9). God’s kingdom would have the great ones ministering (serving) the lesser whereas the kingdoms of the world have servants to minister to the great ones.
3. Jesus was not excluded from such standards in God’s kingdom. Jesus came to serve man even to the point of giving his life up as a “ransom” for many. A “ransom” (*lutron*) = “a price paid... ransom money... a recompense” (LS 481)... “price paid; a ransom... to release for a ransom... redeem, deliver, liberate” (Moulton 255). The price that was to be paid for the deliverance or liberation of man from the bondage of sin was the life of Christ. Christ was the ransom money for the world that was held as slaves to sin (see study # 78; Bible Redemption).

IV. Jesus Heals two Blind men out of Compassion (20:29-34):

- A. *“And as they went out from Jericho, a great multitude followed him. And behold, two blind men sitting by the way side, when they heard that Jesus was passing by, cried out, saying, Lord, have mercy on us, thou son of David” (20:29-30).*
 1. Jesus had traveled to the region of Perea (the region “*beyond the Jordan*” cf. Matt. 19:1). The disciples and multitudes come to Jericho (~ 10 miles North of the Dead Sea) and pass through.
 2. Just outside of Jericho Jesus passes by two blind men who cry out to him saying, “*Lord, have mercy on us, thou son of David.*” Their acknowledgement of Jesus being the “*son of David*” admits their faith that he is the son of God (cf. the similar incident at Matt. 9:27-28 where Jesus raised the ruler’s daughter from the dead that Matthew records two blind men following Jesus proclaiming Him to be the “*son of David*”). Matthew’s genealogy of Jesus also indicates that He was the “*son of David*” (cf. Matt. 1:1 compared with II Sam. 7:12-16). The NT reveals Jesus to be “*of the seed of David*” (cf. Jn. 7:42; Rom. 1:3; II Tim. 2:8) (see study # 8).
- B. *“And the multitude rebuked them, that they should hold their peace: but they cried out the more, saying, Lord, have mercy on us, thou son of David. And Jesus stood still, and called them, and said, What will ye that I should do unto you? They say unto him, Lord, that our eyes may be opened. And Jesus, being moved with compassion, touched their eyes; and straightway they received their sight, and followed him” (20:31-34).*
 1. The multitudes of followers were vying not only to see Jesus but that his attention might be on them. They thereby rebuke the two blind men who are persistently calling out to Jesus and proclaiming him to be the Messiah of the scriptures.
 2. Jesus recognizes their persistent faith, asks them what their request is, and then fulfills their request of miraculously opening their eyes that they may see. Once again we see that one of the reasons Jesus performed miracles was due to his “*compassion*” on the ailing people (see study # 48).

Chapter 21

I. Jesus makes his Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem (21:1-11):

- A. *“And when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and came unto Bethphage, unto the mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, saying, unto them, Go into the village that is over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose them, and bring them unto me. And if any one say aught unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them; and straightway he will send them. Now this is come to pass, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through the*

prophet, saying, Tell ye the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy King comes unto thee, Meek, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass” (21:1-5).

1. The disciples have left the region of Perea, crossed the Jordan River, gone through Jericho and are now upon Jerusalem (cf. Matt. 19:1; 20:29). Luke tells us of Jesus coming through Bethany (Lk. 19:41-44). John tells us that Jesus spent Saturday at Bethany in Lazarus’ house (Jn. 12:9). While the Lord and the disciples traveled there were multitudes that followed him (cf. Matt. 19:2; 20:29). Jesus now enters Jerusalem on the first day of the week (Sunday). This is the final week of Jesus’ life.
 2. Again we note that Matthew is the writer of fulfilled prophecy. Matthew makes sure his readers understand that the Lord’s request to ride into Jerusalem on a donkey was a fulfillment of the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament prophets (cf. Isa. 62:11; Zech. 9:9).
 3. Jesus instructs the disciples to obtain the ass that he may ride it into town. Note two things about Jesus revealed by the OT prophecy (see study # 8):
 - a. First, Jesus is to be the King of the kingdom of God.
 - b. Secondly, note that the tone of the Lord’s reign as king would be in “*meekness*.” Jesus did not enter into Jerusalem upon a quarter horse or chariot to draw attention to his might but rather He meekly entered the city on a donkey. The word “*meek*” (*praus*) = “mild, soft, gentle, meek (“showing patience and humility; gentle... Easily imposed upon; submissive” – AHD 782) (LS 666).
- B.** *“And the disciples went, and did even as Jesus appointed them, and brought the ass, and the colt, and put on them their garments; and he sat thereon. And the most part of the multitude spread their garments in the way; and others cut branches from the trees, and spread them in the way. And the multitudes that went before him, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna the son of David: Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest” (21:6-9).*
1. The Lord’s disciples follow Jesus’ instructions and bring the animal to him. Secondly, the disciples placed their garments upon the ass so that Jesus may sit upon them. This is an interesting act in that it symbolized their belief that he was the king of Israel. When the multitudes saw this they understood the symbol because the kings of old were done the same way (cf. Jehu at II Kgs. 9:13). Jesus had made such an impression with his miraculous acts of compassion (raising Lazarus from the dead for example at Jn. 11 and causing many to believe (Jn. 11:45)) and authoritative teaching that the multitudes were now ripe to pronounce him the Messianic King that the prophets foretold of.
 2. Jesus had come to Jerusalem during the time of the feast of Passover (cf. Jn. 12:1). This was one of the annual feasts that required all Jewish males to be present (Jn. 12:12-13).
 3. When the multitudes saw Jesus coming they laid palm branches and their own clothing upon the path he was taking. Their minds were filled with excitement. They exclaim, “*Hosanna*” (i.e., “save, we pray thee” / Psalms 118:25). “The palm was a symbol of triumph (Lev. 23:40; Rev. 7:9); these, the people spread along the way in recognition of the Savior’s triumphal entrance into the city.”³ “The palm appears as a victory symbol in periods of nationalist agitation, at the time of the Maccabees and later during the revolts of 66-70 and 135 AD. (Josephus, Antiquities 3.245; 13.372; 2 Macc. 10:7; 14:4; and Acts 7:9). When Judas Maccabeus rededicated the temple altar in 164 B.C. after the desecration by the Syrians, the Jews came bringing palms to the temple. Later when his brother Simon conquered Jerusalem’s citadel in 142 B.C., the Jews took possession of the city carrying palm fronds. The Jews who greeted Jesus thus in this chapter clearly viewed him as a conquering national hero. Little wonder that the leadership was greatly concerned that the Romans might react violently! It is significant that the Lord did not choose to ride into Jerusalem on a horse, the symbol of war;

³ Ibid. Pg. 259

but on one of the most humble of beasts, the symbol of peace. It was foretold that he would thus do by the prophet Zechariah (9:9).⁴

4. Indeed the entrance into Jerusalem must have been a magnificent scene and it was a sign of Jesus' triumph. A triumph; however, not over the Roman authorities, but over sin and death. Verse 16 indicates that not even the disciples of Jesus' understood this at this point.
 5. The multitude's chant of "*Hosanna to the son of David*" again indicates their belief that Jesus is the King (cf. Matt. 20:31; Jn. 7:42; Rom. 1:3; II Tim. 2:8).
- C. "*And when he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was stirred, saying, Who is this? And the multitudes said, This is the prophet, Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee*" (21:10-11).
1. There was so much of a commotion over the Lord's entrance that many of the people in the city that did not know what was going on were asking others. There was a frenzy in the city like none before. Excitement was in the air. The longed for Messiah was here!
 2. When asked who Jesus was, the multitude unanimously state, "*this is the prophet, Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee.*" The term "*the prophet*" indicates one none other than the Messiah. It would only be a few short days before these same throngs of people are shouting crucify him.

II. **Jesus cleanses the temple, heals the sick, and experiences the anger of the chief priests and scribes (21:12-17):**

- A. "*And Jesus entered into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money changers, and the seats of them that sold the doves; and he saith unto them, It is written, My house shall be called a house of prayer: but ye make it a den of robbers*" (21:12-13).
1. The first recorded event that Jesus does once in Jerusalem and named King of God's people is to have a confrontation with the people in the temple of God.
 2. Though the scriptures reveal Jesus as meek and lowly of spirit it never portrays him as one who tolerates sin. Christians today can be meek while taking a firm stand in truth (see study # 8). The temple of God was not to be used as a place for extortionist (cf. Isa. 56:7). Some of the Jews had traveled great distances to come to Jerusalem for the Passover Feast. They brought their money to buy the prescribed sacrifices. Like our society today, people take advantage of others by charging unfair amounts of money to those who need a certain service (opportunists).
- B. "*And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple; and he healed them. But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children that were crying in the temple and saying, Hosanna to the son of David; they were moved with indignation, and said unto him, Hearest thou what these are saying? And Jesus saith unto them, Yea: did ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise? And he left them, and went forth out of the city to Bethany, and lodged there*" (21:14-17).
1. While many were robbing their fellow man for items of sacrifice in the temple Jesus is performing "*wonderful things*" by healing the blind and lame. Apparently the shouts of "*Hosanna to the son of David*" continued after Jesus had entered into the city. This time it was the children who were chanting the statement. When the scribes and chief priests heard these praises they were "*moved with indignation.*" The Pharisees were not the only ones who had feelings of animosity toward Jesus (cf. Matt. 12:10, 14, 24). The scribes and chief priests too had feelings of anger toward Jesus. We have discussed the identity of the "*chief priests*" at Matthew 2:4 as those who were appointed head of one of the 24 classes of priests that David had divided up recorded at I Chron. 24:6 and II Chron. 36:14.
 2. Jesus calmly quotes to the chief priests and scribes from Psalms 8:2 to indicate to them that he was the Messiah and as such he shall receive praise from babes and sucklings as well as adults. Jesus thereby replies, 'yes, I hear these praises and you are unfortunately ignorant of scriptures such as Psalms 8:2 else you would not be filled with indignation at the hearing of these little ones.'

⁴ Ibid. Pg. 259

3. Jesus leaves Jerusalem and travels to Bethany to spend the night.

III. The Lesson from the Barren Fig Tree (21:18-22):

- A. *“Now in the morning as he returned to the city, he hungered. And seeing a fig tree by the way side, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only; and he saith unto it, Let there be no fruit from thee henceforward for ever. And immediately the fig tree withered away”* (21:18-19).
1. The day was now Monday. Jesus had taught in the temple and had confrontations with the money – changers, chief priests, and scribes. The Lord now approaches Jerusalem again and caused a fig tree to wither away because it did not have fruit on it.
 2. We note that Jesus *“hungered”* just like you and I. He was a man with like needs as us while in the flesh (see study # 18).
 3. The lesson the disciples were to learn is that just as the unfruitful fig tree is destroyed for its worthlessness even so the unfruitful people of God would be caused to wither away.
- B. *“And when the disciples saw it, they marveled, saying, How did the fig tree immediately wither away?”* (21:20).
1. This incident reminds us of the disciples’ astonishment when Jesus caused the winds and waves of the Sea of Galilee to be calm (Matt. 8:27).
 2. Jesus exercised authority over all nature (here, the plant kingdom).
- C. *“And Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, if ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do what is done to the fig tree, but even if ye shall say unto this mountain, be thou taken up and cast into the sea, it shall be done. And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive”* (21:21-22).
1. No doubt the Lord intended a figurative meaning here. There would be no need to throw a mountain into the sea; however, it would take a great deal of power to do so. God is the source of such power.
 2. Jesus knew that he only had a few more days with the disciples. They would need the power of God through prayer to make it through the coming ordeals they would face. Through prayer they would gain great courage and strength. Through prayer they would receive the gospel message to preach to others. Through prayer they would be afforded souls to preach to. The power of prayer cannot be underestimated. The great acts, such as moving mountains, were acts of faith. Those who would exclaim that God would give us *“all things whatsoever ye shall ask”* in relation to the riches of this world have truly missed the mark.

IV. The Authority of Jesus is called into Question (21:23-27):

- A. *“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? And Jesus answered and said unto them, I also will ask you one question, which if ye tell me, I likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things”* (21:23-24).
1. Mark and Luke tell us that the scribes were in on this question as well. These men, who in all probability represent the Sanhedrin Council, want to know by what authority Jesus is performing his miracles, teaching, and casting out of the money – changers from the temple. They were well aware of Jesus’ claims yet desired to here him say it aloud.
 2. Jesus sets a question before these men and, in all fairness, asks them to answer his question. When they have given him answer he would give answer to their question.
- B. *“The baptism of John, whence was it? From heaven or from men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say unto us, Why then did ye not believe him? But if we shall say, From men; we fear the multitude; for all hold John as a prophet. And they answered Jesus, and said, We know not. He also said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things”* (21:25-27).
1. The master teacher poses the question of John’s baptism (i.e., a baptism of repentance). Was John doing this by the direction of God or was he doing it by the will of man? These scribes, chief priests, and elders had rejected John’s baptism. They are now put on the spot before the people because most did believe that John was a prophet sent by God. To confess John’s divine

mission would be to convict themselves in error. To deny John's divine mission would be to aggravate the masses who did believe. The chief priests, scribes, and elders confer over this and conclude to answer Jesus by saying, "*We know not.*" They chose the safe route yet in the process must have looked very silly. Could these wise men not answer a simple question? They could, but doing so would convict them of their own error. Thus Jesus had them in confrontational checkmate.

2. Though Jesus did not give them a direct answer he did teach a valuable lesson on authority. There are truly only two sources of authorized religious practices and teaching. One may say and do things by the authority of heaven (i.e., God) or the will of fleshly man (see study # 29).

V. Jesus exposes the spirit of error within the chief priests and elders of the people (Parable of the two sons) (21:28-32):

A. "*But what think ye? A man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work today in the vineyard. And he answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented himself, and went*" (21:28-29).

1. When the chief priests and elders of the people could not (or would not) give Jesus an answer to his question the Lord had somewhat more to say about the subject of authority.
2. Jesus says in effect, If you don't have an answer to my question then please think about something with me. Jesus proceeds to tell a parable about a father who had approached a son and requested that his son work in the vineyard. At first, the son refused the idea of work but later felt bad about his treatment of his father, repented, and went to the field and worked as his father had requested.

B. "*And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir: and went not. Which of the two did the will of his father? They say, 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*" (21:30-31).

1. The father in Jesus' parable had a second son. Neither, it appears, desired to work in the vineyard. The first flat out said that he didn't want to but then did it out of his duty to his father. The second said that he would go yet when the father wasn't looking he never went. Jesus asks a simple question, "Which of the two did the will of the father?" The answer is simple, it was the first son even though he showed insubordination at the first. Jesus then draws his conclusion: The publicans and harlots enter into the kingdom of God before the chief priests and elders of the people.
2. There is a comparison between the first son who at first disobeyed his father but later repented and the publicans and harlots. Their sinfulness was in their disobedience; however, they now are repenting and entering into the kingdom of God. The second son is likened unto the chief priests and elders of the people. They, like the second son, lay claims to obedience to God's will yet do not do it.

C. "*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 saw it, did not even repent yourselves afterward, that ye might believe him*" (21:32).

1. Jesus brings the chief priests and elders of the people back to the original question about John's baptism being from heaven or men. The publicans and harlots heard and believed the simple preaching of John and thereby repented of their sinful deeds.
2. When the chief priests and elders heard the preaching of John it did not move them to repentance. No one could deny the righteous message of John. Why would these men not thereby repent? They would not repent because they operated by the authority of men rather than God. Jesus has masterfully exposed the spirit of error in these chief priests and elders of the people. They gave the Lord "lip service" yet never followed through with his commandments. They had rend the garments but not the heart (cf. Joel 2:12-13).

VI. Parable of the Wicked Husbandmen (21:33-46):

A. "*Hear another parable: There was a man that was a householder, who planted a vineyard, and set a hedge about it, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and*

went into another country. And when the season of the fruits drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, to receive his fruits. And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another” (21:33-35).

1. Jesus continues his discussion with the chief priests and elders of the people. The Lord tells another parable about a man who worked hard to establish a vineyard. The vineyard was planted, a protective barrier of hedge was planted all around the vineyard, a winepress for harvest was dugged out of the earth, and a tower was built so that watchers could keep the areas safe from predators.
 2. Much time and effort went into making this vineyard successful. When the work was complete, the householder rented the land out to a husbandmen and he left the country. When the time of harvest came, the owner of the vineyard sent his servants to collect the rent that he was due for leasing out the vineyard. The current husbandmen “*beat one, killed another, and stoned another*” when they came to collect the lease agreement.
- B. *“Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them in like manner. But afterward he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. But the husbandmen, when they saw the son, said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and take his inheritance. And they took him, and cast him forth out of the vineyard, and killed him” (21:36-39).*
1. When the owner of the vineyard found that his servants had been killed he sent more to attempt to collect what was rightfully his. Sadly, however, these servants were killed as well.
 2. The owner of the vineyard finally decided to send his own son to collect what was rightfully his. He reasoned that the leasers of the land would surely “*reverence my son.*” When the son came, the husbandmen saw him as a threat and killed him too because he was the heir of the land.
- C. *“When therefore the lord of the vineyard shall come, what will he do unto those husbandmen? They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those miserable men, and will let out the vineyard unto other husbandmen, who shall render him the fruits in their seasons” (21:40-41).*
1. Again, Jesus continues to make these statements before the chief priests and elders of the people. Jesus asks them what the lord of the vineyard would do when he comes to the wicked husbandmen.
 2. The chief priests and elders state immediately that the lord of the vineyard would destroy these miserable men for these wicked deeds they had done and lease out the land to others who would keep the covenant agreement made with the lord of the vineyard. Jesus now has these wicked men where he wants them so that they may learn the lesson.
- D. *“Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, the stone which the builders rejected, the same was made the head of the corner; this was from the Lord, and it is marvelous in our eyes?” (21:42).*
1. Jesus quotes from Psalms 118:22f. The chief point of the Lord’s discussion, which stemmed from the chief priests and elders’ question on authority, is who will truly be in the kingdom of heaven (see study # 9). The kingdom of heaven has as its “*head of the corner*” a stone which is Christ Jesus. Paul refers to Jesus as the “*chief corner stone*” at Ephesians 2:19-22. At Acts 4:10-11 Peter said, “*Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even in him doth this man stand here before you whole. He is the stone which was set at nought of you the builders, which was made the head of the corner...*”
 2. The “*head of the corner*” and “*chief cornerstone*” are architectural terms that describe the foundation of a building’s structure. The kingdom of God was to be constructed upon the foundation of the teachings of Jesus Christ (the stone in which all others are patterned after). The prophets had foretold that men would “*stumble*” over this stone because he did not meet their expectations as a king and neither did his message meet their expectation of the Messiah that was to come (cf. Isa. 8:14). Jesus came preaching repentance from wicked works... a message the scribes, Pharisees, chief priests, and elders of the people were too pride stricken to

- adhere to. Jesus had earlier said, *“And blessed is he, whosoever shall find no occasion of stumbling in me”* (Matt. 11:6).
3. The point is now weighing down upon the chief priests, elders, and Pharisees. Jesus represents the cornerstone of the kingdom of God’s foundation and they represent the builders who have rejected his words.
- E. *“Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken away from you, and shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And he that falleth on this stone shall be broken to pieces: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will scatter him as dust”* (21:43-44).
1. The Lord now pointedly applies the parable to the chief priests, elders, and Pharisees. God is the Lord of the vineyard of humanity. He has sent his servants the prophets so that man would repent of their sins yet they were sorely mistreated and even killed them (cf. I Kg. 19:10; II Chron. 36:15-16; Hos. 11:2). Lastly, the Lord of the vineyard sent his only Son, Jesus, yet they killed him too.
 2. Those who reject Christ will be rejected themselves (Hos. 4:6). Though God’s kingdom was meant for all peoples it will belong only to those who humbly submit to His will and bring forth fruit (cf. Jn. 15:5-12). The Jews rejected Christ and many of the Gentiles received him through repentance and faithfulness.
 3. Jesus has come full circle and has actually answered the original question that the chief priests and elders of the people ask regarding the authority that he works by. Jesus represents the son of God and teaches by His authority. Those who receive his teachings shall be saved.
- F. *“And when the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them. And when they sought to lay hold on him, they feared the multitudes, because they took him for a prophet”* (21:45-46).
1. The sting of Jesus’ words was more than the wicked husbandmen could take. Their desire was to do the Lord harm yet the multitudes remained in their way. This problem would soon be solved.
 2. Again, we asks, where were these believing multitudes when Jesus was on trial with Pilate? At this point they stand in the way of the Pharisees yet later they proclaim, *“crucify him, crucify him”* (cf. Matt. 27:22-25). Jesus had warned his disciples and the multitudes about the leavening effects of the false teachings of the Pharisees at Matthew 16:11-12. The fruits of their error filled teaching is about to ripen.

Chapter 22

- I. **Jesus teaches that Conditions must be met to enter into the kingdom of Heaven (22:1-14):**
- A. *“And Jesus answered and spake again in parables unto them, saying,”* (22:1).
1. Jesus has made his triumphal entry into Jerusalem (Matt. 21:1ff). He has cast out the money changers who perverted the temple of the Lord (Matt. 21:12ff) and caused a fig tree to wither away because it was unfruitful (Matt. 21:18ff). The Lord has entered into a discussion with the scribes, chief priests, elders, and Pharisees regarding His authority (Matt. 21:23ff). Jesus has pointedly convicted these men of their rejection of the Messiah and the response is retaliation. The Pharisees sought to do him harm yet feared the multitudes (Matt. 21:45-46).
 2. Apparently Jesus continues his conversation with the unbelieving scribes, chief priests, elders, and Pharisees.
- B. *“The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a certain king, who made a marriage feast for his son, and sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the marriage feast: and they would not come”* (22:2-3).
1. Once again a comparison is made between the kingdom of heaven and this time a marriage feast that people are invited to (see study # 9). Let us consider for a moment all the things that Matthew has had to record about the future kingdom of heaven:

- a. John the baptizer (Matt. 3:2), Jesus (Matt. 4:17), and the apostles (Matt. 10:7) preached that the kingdom of heaven was at hand.
 - b. The kingdom of heaven is the church of Christ (Heb. 12:23, 28; Col. 1:13-14; I Thess. 2:12).
 - c. The kingdom is comprised of those of a poor spirit in that they acknowledge, confess, and humbly beg God to forgiveness them of their sins (Matt. 5:3).
 - d. The kingdom of heaven is comprised of those who are persecuted for righteousness sake (Matt. 5:10ff.).
 - e. Comprised of those who keep God's commandments (Matt. 5:19-20; 7:21).
 - f. The kingdom of heaven belongs to those who are interested in spiritual matters (Matt. 13:11-12).
 - g. Comprised of those who hold to the gospel message rather than letting the cares of this world sway one away from truth (Matt. 13:24-30, 36-43).
 - h. Compared to a mustard seed tree that provides sustenance to all who seek it out (Matt. 13:31ff).
 - i. Kingdom of God is like leaven in that the gospel grows within the mind of the disciple and the kingdom grows in the world through the work of the disciples (Matt. 13:33).
 - j. The kingdom of heaven is comprised of those who view it as a treasure worth selling everything that one has to obtain it (Matt. 13:44).
 - k. The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a pearl of great price (Matt. 13:45-46). Those who would enter into the kingdom will be those who view it for the great worth it has. Said individuals will do all possible to obtain it.
 - l. The kingdom of heaven will be comprised of those who humbly submit to the commands of Jehovah God. Such determination is made by a "*drag net*" (Matt. 13:47ff).
 - m. Identified as the church (Matt. 16:18-19).
 - n. Those who shall enter the kingdom of heaven will be child like in their submission to God's commandments (Matt. 18:1-4; 19:14-15) and willing to repent (Matt. 18:2).
 - o. The kingdom of heaven is comprised of individuals who exercise mercy and patience toward others as God exercises toward us (Matt. 18:23-35).
 - p. Those who put their "*trust in riches*" (Mk. 10:24) will in no way enter into the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 19:23ff).
 - q. Comprised of forgiven sinners no matter what station of life they may be in (Matt. 20:1ff).
 - r. We shall learn in this chapter that the kingdom of God is a prepared place (see parable of the wicked husbandman at Matt. 21:33ff) where all are called by invitation to come into (cf. Matt. 22:2-14) and is spiritual in nature (cf. Matt. 22:15-22).
2. We now come to Jesus' final parable as recorded by Matthew. Once again the Lord is comparing the kingdom of God to something to help his audience understand its nature. Jesus said that the kingdom of heaven is like a marriage feast that all are invited to; however, not everyone accepts the invitation. Again, a lack of interest and personal desires stand in the way of men entering into the kingdom of heaven today.
- C. "*And he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them that are bidden, Behold, I have made ready my dinner; my oxen and my fatlings are killed. And all things are ready: come to the marriage feast*" (22:4).
1. We often sing the song, "All things are ready, come to the feast." The invitations to enter into the kingdom of heaven are delivered through the gospel message (cf. II Thess. 2:13-14 / I Thess. 2:12). Through the blood of Christ man can be forgiven of sins... surely God has made all preparations and those who come will experience a great feast of truth and salvation.
 2. This verse illustrates God's patience and desire for people to come into His kingdom. The first servants (preachers and teachers) who bid all to come failed and so he sends out servants once again to plead with the people to come to the feast.

- D. *“But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his own farm, another to his merchandise; and the rest laid hold on his servants, and treated them shamefully, and killed them”* (22:5-6).
1. Those who received the invitation to come to the kingdom of God (marriage feast) *“made light of it”* (*ameleo*) = “not to care for, to neglect, disregard” (Moulton 18)... “to have no care for, be neglectful” (LS 42). Here were people who simply did not care about the wedding feast (see study # 24). They had other things to do rather than go to the feast. Some had work to do around their farm and others had merchandise that they desired to work with. The kingdom of God is not even on the radar of interest in the lives of many today. Many people today have no spiritual interest and are as Esau of old (cf. Gen. 25:33ff; Heb. 12:16). Sometimes you and I act as one of these individuals. The child of God may find one’s self in the same boat if not careful. We may find that we would rather tend to our hobbies and worldly interest rather than spend time feasting on God’s word.
 2. Some see the change that the gospel calls for and are angered because their sin is exposed (cf. Jn. 7:7). Said angry people resort to retaliation against the messenger when their lives are depicted as unacceptable to God. Paul said that *“all those who live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution”* (II Tim. 3:12).
- E. *“But the king was wroth; and he sent his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned their city. Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they that were bidden were not worthy. Go ye therefore unto the partings of the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage feast. And those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was filled with guests”* (22:7-10).
1. When men or women reject the gospel’s invitation to be forgiven of sins God is angered. Said individuals can look forward to nothing but the wrath of God in the end of times (cf. Matt. 13:39-43; Rom. 2:3-9).
 2. The Lord sends his preachers and teachers forth to fill the kingdom of God. All corners of the earth should be covered and all races of people taught (cf. Gal. 3:27-28).
- F. *“But when the king came in to behold the guests, he saw there a man who had not on a wedding-garment: and he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding-garment? And he was speechless. Then the king said to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and cast him out into the outer darkness; there shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few chosen”* (22:11-14).
1. Apparently the *“wedding-garment”* was a symbol of the guest acceptance at the feasts. Those bidden to come accepted and were given this garment. We must remember that this parable is comparing the kingdom of heaven with a wedding feast. The attire of the *“wedding-garment”* thereby differentiated the invited guest from all others. Here was an individual who came into the feast without hearing and heeding to the invitation. He just simply wandered in. Many attempt to do this today. Luke tells us that some try to *“violently enter”* the kingdom of God (Lk. 16:16). Here are people who do God’s commands to enter into his kingdom yet have the wrong expectations of its benefits. One entering the kingdom of God ought to look to receiving the forgiveness of sins and a hope of an eternal spiritual life with God. The gospel of Jesus Christ has specific conditions that must be met before one may be supplied an entrance therein (hearing, believing, repenting, confessing, baptized, and remaining faithful) (see study # 71). Some do not meet the conditions yet lay claims of being in the kingdom of heaven. The *“wedding-garment”* was thereby a distinctive garment that distinguished the faithful Christian from the individual who does not follow God’s instructions. When people lay claims to being in the kingdom of God today we may examine their wedding garment (i.e., have they adhered to the gospel message or some other man concocted plan?).
 2. Though many today would opine *“unity in diversity of beliefs”* we find here that the individual who was different than the others at the wedding feast was not tolerated but rather cast out into utter darkness to experience the pain of gnashing of the teeth (see study # 54).

3. The idea of “few” comes to the forefront of our minds as it causes us to see the serious nature of God’s kingdom. The gospel message is for all nations yet not all hear, receive, and faithfully follow. In fact, the Lord tells us that there are but a few who do so (cf. Matt. 7:14).

II. **Jesus answers a question in such a way that revealed the spiritual nature of the Kingdom of God (22:15-22):**

- A. *“Then went the Pharisees, and took counsel how they might ensnare him in his talk”* (22:15).
 1. To this point the Pharisees had a reputation of abhorring Jesus. They have accused Jesus and his disciples of committing sin (cf. Matt. 9:11-14; 12:2; 15:1ff) and working through the power of demonic influences (Matt. 9:34; 12:24). They sought to harm and destroy Jesus (Matt. 12:14; 21:45-46). Furthermore, the Pharisees sought to ensnare Jesus in the hearing of the people that he might be showed inconsistent and false (Matt. 12:10; 16:1; 19:3; 22:15) (see study # 11).
 2. Here, the Pharisees have a group meeting among themselves to determine the best way to trap Jesus in conversation that they may accuse him before the people.
- B. *“And they send to him their disciples, with the Herodians, saying, Teacher, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, and carest not for any one: for thou regardest not the person of men”* (22:16).
 1. Representatives (disciples) of the Pharisees are sent to Jesus along with the Herodians. Identifying the Herodians is somewhat of a difficult task. The term Herodians is likely a term appended to some Sadducees that were sympathetic and supportive of the Roman government. We recall that at Matthew 16:6 Jesus had told his disciples to beware of the leaven (teaching) of the Pharisees and Sadducees. At Mark 8:15 the same context is under consideration and instead of using the term Sadducees, Mark uses the term *“leaven of Herod.”* History reveals the Sadducees’ connection with Herod in that Herod Antipas married Herodias (a Hasmonean / Sadducee). A pro-Roman law people such as the Sadducees would certainly reject Jesus, a man who represented and taught of a new kingdom aside from Rome. The Pharisees certainly rejected Jesus as one who misinterpreted the Mosaic Law and in a spirit of blasphemy claimed to be the Messiah. The occasion of Jesus lead to both political and religious parties (i.e., the Pharisees and Herodians / Sadducees) coming together as allies to frustrate the plans of Jesus to establish another kingdom.
 2. The entourage of the Pharisees and Herodians begin the conversation with Jesus by flattery. They say four things to Jesus in hopes of inflating his ego and thereby letting his guard down against them.
 - a. First, the men exclaim that Jesus was true to his convictions of preaching on repentance and the establishment of another kingdom.
 - b. Secondly, they admit that Jesus’ words were truth although they actually rejected them (if they would have believed his truths why did they not follow him?).
 - c. Thirdly, they had taken note how that Jesus preached without fear of man. All knew that such bold words and actions would certainly lead one to serious trouble with the Roman government and some Jews. The Lord’s words and actions were thereby courageous.
 - d. Fourthly, Jesus preached without favor of man’s skin color, economic, or political standing.
- C. *“Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not?”* (Matt. 22:17).
 1. I find it interesting that men can be so conniving in such callous ways. After making the statements intended to be taken as complements these same men were trying to set him up for public abuse.
 2. The calculated question, *“Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not?”* If Jesus answers in the negative; i.e., no it is not lawful to give Caesar tribute or tax money then the Roman Government would certainly remove Jesus as an insurgent against Rome. If Jesus answers in the affirmative, most of the Jews would be upset with him due to their belief that God’s prophesied kingdom was the only one the Jew should give answer to (cf. Deut. 17:14-15).

3. Within the minds of these wicked men they thought they had put Jesus in a dilemma that he could not escape. The answer should be either or.
- D. *“But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why make ye trial of me, ye hypocrites? Show me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a denarius. And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? They say unto him, Caesar’s. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s; and unto God the things that are God’s”* (22:18-21).
1. First, Jesus answers the men in a way that would leave them with no doubts as to his knowledge of their wicked plans. Their flattering words meant absolutely nothing to Jesus so long as their intentions were harm. Jesus thereby refers to them as *“hypocrites.”*
 2. Secondly, Jesus goes along with their game to convict them of their wickedness. Jesus asks that the tribute money, a denarius, be brought to him. The Lord now asks them a question, *“Whose image and superscription”* is on the denarius? The disciples of the Pharisees and the Herodians uniformly answer, *“Caesar’s.”* The very currency that they used illustrated their voluntary subjection to this form of government. If they use the denarius and depend upon the Roman government for protection and against crime and foes then why would they not want to follow its regulations and pay the tribute?
 3. Jesus thereby states, *“Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s.”* The word *“render”* (*apodidomi*) = “to give up or back, restore, return.... to render what is due, to pay, as debts, penalties, submission” (LS 97). To be under the Roman government was to be in submission to them and they thereby had no choice but to pay the tribute.
 4. These men failed to see the spiritual nature of the kingdom of God (His church). They failed to see that the answer to the question did not have to be yes or no. Jesus’ answer illustrated the difference between the physical kingdoms of this earth and the spiritual kingdom of God. Man can actually *“render”* (i.e., submit self) to a physical government and the spiritual kingdom of God at the same time (see study # 9).
- E. *“And when they heard it, they marveled, and left him, and went away”* (22:22).
1. The disciples of the Pharisees and Herodians marveled at the fact that Jesus was not shaken by their flattery or questions. He stood true to their original assessment of him.
 2. What more could be said after such an authoritative answer? To debate the answer Jesus gave would be to pit oneself not only against God but against the Roman government. Once again, the master teacher has turned the argument back upon the men who pose the questions with the intention of ensnaring him and doing him harm.

III. **Jesus Answers the Sadducees’ Question on the Resurrection (22:23-33):**

- A. *“On that day there came to him Sadducees, they that say that there is no resurrection: and they asked him, saying, Teacher, Moses said, If a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. Now there were with us seven brethren: and the first married and deceased, and having no seed left his wife unto his brother; in like manner his second also, and the third, unto the seventh. And after them all, the woman died. In the resurrection therefore whose wife shall she be of the seven? For they all had her”* (22:23-28).
1. The Sadducees were briefly discussed above and identified as those who were upper class and often sympathetic and supportive of the Roman government. “The Sadducees’ strict policies of law and order, described as ‘heartless’ or ‘savage’ (Ant. Xx.9.1 [199]), in contrast to the ‘leniency’ of the Pharisees (xiii.10.6 [294]), appeased the Romans and kept the Sadducees in power... The consequent emphasis on life in this world was consistent with the Sadducees’ concern with their position of power, status, and wealth, and it left no room for messianic hopes and a coming kingdom of God” (ISBE, vol. 4, pp. 279). When Paul was on trial by the Sanhedrin council at Acts 23:1ff Luke records information about the Sadducees religious beliefs by saying, *“the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit; but the Pharisees confess both”* (Acts 23:8) (see study # 12).

2. The Sadducees approach Jesus, “*on that day*” and quote from Deuteronomy 25:5. The Mosaic Law and strictly placed duty upon family members to perpetuate the family’s name in the case of the death of one of the men. There was certainly something amiss in the Sadducees question due to the fact that the scriptures bear out their unbelief in the resurrection. The Sadducees felt that they had a question that would certainly discredit the idea of a resurrection. If seven brothers had one wife they could not possibly all share her in a resurrected state. There must, thereby, be no such thing as a resurrection (see study # 79; Bible Resurrection).
- B. “*But Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as angels in heaven*” (22:29-30).
1. Once again Jesus illustrated a spirit that had no fear or favor of men (cf. Matt. 16:13ff; 22:16ff; 22:29-30). The Sadducees question revealed a three fold “*error*” on their part and the Lord exposes them.
 2. The first error of the Sadducees is that they did not “*know the scriptures.*” To ask such a question about marriage and heaven was to reveal their ignorance of God’s word. Secondly, to ask such a question is to have no knowledge of the “*power of God*” (i.e., the resurrection / cf. Rom. 1:2-4, the forgiveness of sins / cf. Rom. 1:16, and His everlasting divinity and power / cf. Rom. 1:20). Thirdly, their error was that they compared the life of this earth to life in heaven. When people go to heaven there will be no marriage but rather the saved will be “*as angels*” (see study # 80; What shall we be like in Heaven?).
- C. “*But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. And when the multitudes heard it, they were astonished at his teaching*” (22:31-33).
1. The scripture quoting Sadducees had seriously missed a great point in the word of God. They were ignorant of the scriptures in that they did not read that God was the God of the living not the dead. Abraham and Isaac had long been dead when Exodus 3:6 was stated yet God said that He remained their God. If God was the God of Abraham and Isaac in the physically dead state it must mean that they remained alive and well somewhere. The Sadducees thereby were ignorant of God’s word, His power, and the spiritual nature of people in heaven.
 2. This plain and simple, yet powerful thought, amazed the multitudes. They possibly said, “We never thought of the resurrection that way” (see study # 79).

IV. The Pharisaic Lawyer asks Jesus a Question (22:34-40):

- A. “*But the Pharisees, when they heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, gathered themselves together*” (22:34).
1. Let us recall that Matthew recorded, “*Then went the Pharisees, and took counsel how they might ensnare him in his talk*” at Matthew 22:15. There appeared to be a secret meeting where these men assembled to collaborate over the destruction of Jesus.
 2. Once again, the failing Pharisees try their hand at ensnaring and destroying Jesus. They earnestly desire Jesus to speak words that would contradict their beloved Moses. What they failed to see was that Jesus never tried to erase the Mosaic Law but rather the Lord kept it. Jesus exercised his deity; however, by amending and adding to the Mosaic Law in what he referred to as the “*gospel of the kingdom*” (cf. Matt. 4:23).
- B. “*And one of them, a lawyer asked him a question, trying him: Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?*” (22:35-36).
1. We had noted that both Pharisees and Sadducees “*tried*” Jesus at Matthew 16:1 and then at Matthew 19:3 and 22:15 the Pharisees again tried Jesus. The word “*try*” (*peirazo*) = “let trial be made... to try or tempt a person, put him to the test” (LS 616). “To make proof or trial of, put to the proof, whether with good or mischievous intent” (Moulton 314) (see study # 11).
 2. A “*lawyer*” (*nomikos*) = “one learned in the law, a lawyer” (LS 534). The learned man of God’s law had a question for Jesus. “*Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?*”

Should there be one law elevated over other laws? Is there one law that we cannot afford to violate but others that we can? The lawyer's question was designed to be a polemic discussion over the Mosaic Law. If Jesus gave an answer to the lawyer's question then he would prove himself to show partiality over certain laws. The question then was designed to bate Jesus into pronouncing one command that could be followed at the exclusion of all others. The people would then see that Jesus did not truly care for God's ways (cf. Deut. 27:26; Gal. 3:10).

- C. *“And he said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the great and first commandment”* (22:37-38).
1. God had commanded Israel to have no other gods besides Jehovah, not to make graven images of other gods, not to take the name of God in vain (i.e., speak in a manner that illustrates one's irreverence toward God), and to remember the Sabbath day as a day of rest. Each of these first four commandments found in Exodus 20:1-11 illustrate a heart, mind, and soul that is dependant exclusively upon Jehovah God for help and sustenance in this life. Herein is one of the greatest lessons revealed in the word of God that comes up again and again in Bible study. God wants man to serve Him because it is what one desires more than any other thing in this life (see study # 24). God desires man's heart to be submissive, fearful, respectful, act in reverence toward Him rather than doing religious things for outward show. Joel wrote, *“Yet even now, saith Jehovah, turn ye unto me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: and rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto Jehovah your God; for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abundant in lovingkindness, and repenteth him of the evil. Who knoweth whether he will not turn and repent, and leave a blessing behind him, even a meal-offering and a drink-offering unto Jehovah your God?”* (2:12-14). God thereby desires that the man or woman that would serve Him should be torn at heart over their violations of His will. Samuel had instructed Saul to have such a heart at I Samuel 15:22-23. David expressed such true sorrow as recorded in Psalms 51. The prophet Isaiah prescribed such a heart at Isaiah 57:15 and 66:1-2. The apostle Paul spoke of such a humble hearted disposition at II Corinthians 7:10.
 2. Jesus thereby summarizes the first four commandments with this one statement. It is greatly important to serve God with all of one's being. My earnest desire ought to be to do so.
- D. *“And a second like unto it is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself”* (22:39).
1. To summarize the next six commandments that Moses had delivered to Israel on Mount Sinai Jesus tells the lawyer that *“a second like unto it is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.”*
 2. If I love my neighbor I will not kill, commit adultery with his wife, steal from him, tell a lie about him, nor covet his belongings. Said conduct toward my neighbor is to love him as I love myself.
- E. *“On these two commandments the whole law hangeth, and the prophets”* (22:40).
1. To *“hangeth”* (*kremannumi*) = “to hang, hang up... to hang one up by a thing” (LS 449). “To hang upon, to be referable to as an ultimate principle” (Moulton 240). The *“Whole law”* would be the Mosaic Law in its entirety with all of its ordinances. The entire Mosaic Law was supported by the idea of one giving themselves over whole heartedly to God and treating others with the greatest respect.
 2. Not only the law but the prophets so hung as well. The prophets hang upon these two summarizing divine principles because their message was that of the law.

V. **Jesus now has a Question for the Pharisees (22:41-46):**

- A. *“Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question, saying, What think ye of the Christ? Whose son is he? They say unto him, The son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in the Spirit call him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Till I put thine enemies underneath thy feet? If David then calleth him Lord, how is he his son?”* (22:41-45).
1. Jesus now has a question for the Pharisees. The Lord's question has to do with the identity of *“the Christ.”* Jesus asks, *“Whose son is he?”* The Pharisees respond by saying, *“The son of*

- David.*” Interestingly, two days prior to this question Jesus made his triumphal entry into the city of Jerusalem and the people cried saying, “*Hosanna to the son of David*” in relation the Jesus’ presence (Matt. 21:9). The Pharisees, being men of law, knew that the scriptures had foretold that the messiah would come through the lineage of David (cf. II Sam. 7:12ff; Ps. 132:11). Their apparent attempts to ensnare Jesus are thereby actions that prove their unbelief in Jesus being the Messiah (the son of David) (see study # 11).
2. Secondly, Jesus asks how David, by divine inspiration, “*call him Lord... If David then calls him Lord, how is he his son?*” Jesus quotes David from Psalms 110:1 saying, “*Jehovah saith unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, Until I make thine enemies thy footstool.*” The point Jesus makes is that as David’s son (of his seed) the Messiah was to be of flesh and bone. Secondly, as the son of God he was of a divine nature. The messiah would thereby come in the flesh yet be of a divine nature. These were thoughts that utterly amazed the Pharisees. The teaching was plain and simple (see study # 8).
- B. “*And no one was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions*” (22:46).
1. Jesus had put to silence the scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees. The Lord’s question revealed knowledge that no doubt the law loving Pharisees had overlooked. Jesus reveals his very being through use of the scriptures and the Pharisees cannot deny or agree but rather they are left speechless.
 2. No more questions would proceed from the Pharisees or Sadducees. Jesus was too wise and knowledgeable for them.

Chapter 23

I. Jesus exposes the hypocrisy of the Scribes and Pharisees (23:1-12):

- A. “*Then spake Jesus to the multitudes and to his disciples, saying, The scribes and Pharisees sit on Moses’ seat: all things therefore whatsoever they bid you, these do and observe: but do not ye after their works; for they say, and do not*” (23:1-3).
1. Luke tells us that the Lord’s discourse was, “*in the hearing of all the people*” (Lk. 20:45). A battle for the souls of men was being waged between Jesus and the scribes and Pharisees (see study # 61). The warnings that the Lord delivers against the teachings of the scribes and Pharisees is reminiscent of the Lord’s warning statements recorded at Matthew 16:11-12. Their teachings and works were poisonous to those who would join their ranks.
 2. The Lord reveals the attitude of the scribes and Pharisees when he states that they “*sit on Moses’ seat*” as though they were his successor as law giver.
 3. Note that in areas of lawful truths the Lord commands all to follow their teachings yet no man was to follow the scribes and Pharisees works, “*for they say and do not.*” The scribes and Pharisees did not practice what they preached. They were saying one thing and doing another.
- B. “*Yea, they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men’s shoulders; but they themselves will not move with them with their finger*” (23:4).
1. The “*grievous burdens*” placed upon the people is likely one of two things. Either the scribes and Pharisees were binding the traditions of the fathers upon the people or Jesus is speaking of the perfect keeping of the Mosaic Law.
 2. Whatever the case may be the Pharisees were demanding things that they were not doing themselves. Many today see the same type of disposition toward preachers and the church in general. They may be found saying, “I don’t want to go to church because they are all hypocrites.” While this may be a true statement it none-the-less does not excuse anyone from neglecting the duties God has ordained for all to do.

- C. *“But all their works they do to be seen of men: for they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments, and love the chief place at feasts, and chief seats in the synagogues, and the salutations in the marketplaces, and to be called of men, Rabbi”* (23:5-7).
1. Jesus had said on the Sermon on the Mount that, *“except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven”* (Matt. 5:20). Jesus had addressed the idea of doing right things only when others are looking so that others may think that you are good at Matthew 6:1. Again, speaking of the scribes and Pharisees, Jesus exposes their works of righteousness to be done only that they may be *“seen of men.”* The Pharisees were not serving God because they humbly called upon Him for salvation in their time of need (the need to be forgiven) (cf. Joel 2:32; Acts 22:16). The scribes were not motivated to teach God’s holy laws because they truly desired to serve the Lord with their mind, heart, and soul. These men served God on an outward bases yet inwardly they were rotten.
 2. Jesus said that the scribes and Pharisees, *“make broad their phylacteries.”* The word *“phylacteries”* (*phulakterion*) = “the station of a guard or watch; a preservative, safeguard; hence, a phylactery or amulet, worn about the person; from which circumstance the word is used in the N.T. as a term for the Jewish Tephillin or prayer-fillets, which took their rise from the injunction in Deut. 6:8; 11:18; Matt. 23:5” (Moulton 431). A *“phylactery”* is defined as “Either of two small leather boxes, each containing strips of parchment inscribed with quotations from the Hebrew Scriptures, of which is strapped to the forehead and the other to the left arm by observant Jewish men during morning worship, except on Sabbath and holidays. An amulet (“an object worn, esp. around the neck, as a charm against evil or injury””) (AHD 935; 105).
 3. The idea of a man wearing a band around the head with not one but many scriptures written thereon and the wearing of *“enlarged borders of their garments”* (i.e., sewing additional fabric {some say blue fabric cf. Numb. 15:37-41} to the borders of their garments) distinguished these men from the every day Jew and heathen alike. Such vivid word pictures give us a glimpse of what the scribes and Pharisees must have looked like as they walked about the streets of Palestine. The objective was to have the stares of respect among the people.
 4. Said attire provided the best seats in the synagogue, chief place at set feasts, brought them respectful salutations from the common people, and distinguished them as *“Rabbi.”* The *“Rabbi”* (*rhabbi*) = “o my master” (LS 714)... “Rabbi, my master, teacher, doctor” (Moulton 358). The scribes and Pharisees loved the attention and respectful treatment that they received from the people. It is no wonder that Jesus annoyed them so much. The Lord interrupted and shook up their world.
- D. *“But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your teacher, and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father on the earth: for one is your Father, even he who is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your master, even the Christ”* (23:8-10).
1. Jesus defines a *“Rabbi”* for us by referring to them as *“teachers, a father, and master.”* The danger of using these titles rests in the fact that men gave submission to what these *“Rabbi’s”* taught and said. The Jews considered the scribes and Pharisees their teachers, fathers in the faith, and masters in relation to service to God.
 2. Jesus tells his disciples and thereby the multitudes that the only one who deserves these titles is the heavenly Father and the Christ.
- E. *“But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be humbled; and whosoever shall humble himself shall be exalted”* (23:11-12).
1. Servitude is the measure of greatness in the eyes of God. Those who exalt themselves in this life to appear great and intelligent are truly poor in wisdom and devoid of a place with God.
 2. The humble man of God that calls out unto God that he may invoke and appeal to the Lord for strength to stand in times of adversity and temptation. The humble call unto God during times of great despair and sorrow and in times of happiness. The humble call unto God that He may

forgive them of their trespasses. Said individual looks to God for help in this life above all others and will be exalted in heaven.

II. Jesus Pronounces Seven Woes upon the scribes and Pharisees (23:13-36):

A. *“But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because ye shut the kingdom of Heaven against men: for ye enter not in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering in to enter”* (23:13).

1. The word “*woe*” (*ouai*) = “woe to thee” (LS 575)... “calamity” (Moulton 294). The Greek *ouai* is used at Revelation 9:12 and 11:14 to signify judgment for misdeeds. The hypocrisy of the scribes and Pharisees (i.e., their righteous works and teachings done for the sake of being seen of men, having the labels of Rabbi, and gaining favor with the people rather than doing their good works because the heavenly Father desires this of them) is the cause of their woe.
2. Jesus holds nothing back as all the activities of sinful men are now verbally poured out upon the heads of the scribes and Pharisees. The doctrines and works of the scribes and Pharisees were diametrically opposed to the teaching and obedience Christ taught.
3. The first reason for the scribes and Pharisees impending calamity is their “*shutting the kingdom of Heaven against men*” in that not only do they not enter in but they do not permit others to enter.
 - a. Entrance into the kingdom of heaven will only occur through one’s repentance of sins committed against the commandments of God (3:1-2; 4:17).
 - b. Repentance will truly occur when one humbles themselves under the teachings of Jesus (cf. Matt. 5:5; 6:9-13; 11:28-30; 18:4; 19:14-15; 23:11-12).
 - c. Humility was not a part of the scribes and Pharisees make up. To lay down their phylacteries and enlarged robes was beyond their thinking. The scribes and Pharisees were not willing to hear the message of Jesus and allow it to penetrate their hardened hearts. They would not repent of their doings (cf. Matt. 6:22-23; 11:20-21; 12:41; 21:32) (see study # 16).
4. The scribes and Pharisees ambitions in life involved the people’s attitude toward them and their teachings (cf. Matt. 23:1-12 above). They did not want the people believing and confessing Jesus as the Messiah because that would mean that they too must humble themselves to his teachings. The Pharisees were offended by Jesus’ scathing rebukes (cf. Matt. 15:12). To justify their error in their minds they erroneously taught and persuaded the multitudes against Jesus (Matt. 12:24; 19:3; 22:15, 35; 27:20). Jesus thereby warned his disciples of their teaching (Matt. 16:11-12) (see study # 11).

B. Verse 14 is not in the ASV Bible and neither is its Greek interpretation found in the Nestle / Marshall Interlinear Greek-English New Testament. The verse is called into question as to its authenticity. It reads, “*Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye devour widows houses, even while for a pretence ye make long prayers: therefore ye shall receive greater condemnation*” (Matt. 23:14). The meaning may have been intended to say that the Pharisees swindled the homes and property of widows with their supposed piety displayed in their lengthy prayers.

C. *“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he is become so, ye make him twofold more a son of hell than yourselves”* (23:15).

1. A “*proselyte*” (*proselutos*) = “one that has arrived at a place, a sojourner: one who has come over to Judaism, a convert, proselyte (“a new convert to a religion or doctrine” [AHD 994]) (LS 691). This verse reveals the fact that the scribes and Pharisees were teaching a doctrine that required their hearers to drop their current beliefs and take on their teachings. Again, let us remember that Jesus warned the disciples of these men’s teachings (Matt. 16:11-12). The doctrine of the Pharisees did not represent truth and thereby must have been their personal opinions (i.e., things such as the traditions of the fathers) (see study # 11).

2. When one is converted to the teachings of Jesus Christ he or she is added to the kingdom of God and has a true hope of heaven. Said endeavor will include, as mentioned above, repentance and a spirit of humility toward the teachings of Jesus Christ. Jesus tells us that all the convert to Pharisee(ism) has to look forward to is to be a “*son of hell*” along with their teachers. Peter, speaking of Jesus, once said, “*And in none other is there salvation: for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved*” (Acts 4:12). Those who “convert” to Catholicism, Methodist, Baptists, and any other name than the name of Christ have no true eternal hope.
 3. Such condemning and pointed language would surely be the Lord’s demise and he knew this. His time had now come and there was nothing to hold back. Those with honest minds and hearts would look back to his teachings, many after he died, and conclude that he was correct. Without the scathing rebuke and identification of these false teachers the people would continue to embrace them and be tolerant of their teachings (see Matt. 23:5-7). Jesus would not have it so. It continues to amaze us today that some will not call particular individuals a false teacher unless their characters are flawed in some way. The error of the scribes and Pharisees was found in their teaching and actions. While I cannot read a man’s heart and say why he is teaching and doing what he is doing (i.e., is he being malicious, naive, sincerely wrong? etc.) I can differentiate his doctrines from the word of God. While a man’s character may remain under question among all of us who do not have the power of reading minds, the man’s doctrine does not. When one publicly teaches, preaches, and writes he or she make their stand known (see study # 30).
- D. “*Woe unto you, ye blind guides, that say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor. Ye fools and blind: for which is greater, the gold, or the temple that hath sanctified the gold?*” (23:16-17).
1. The scribes and Pharisees were recognized as teachers of the law. They “guided” the general populous with their doctrines that were supposedly derived from God’s word. Recall that at Matthew 15:1-14 the Pharisees had accused Jesus and his disciples of not keeping the “*tradition of the elders*” as though these teachings were on par with God’s word. Jesus exposed their “*doctrines*” and “*precepts*” as not being derived from God but man (cf. Matt. 15:9). Jesus exposed such erroneous views as being “*blind guides*” who lead people into a pit of error (Matt. 15:14). The point is that the scribes and Pharisees were teaching erroneous doctrines.
 2. Here is another example of erroneous doctrine (see study # 11, # 30). The scribes and Pharisees were teaching the people that if one were to swear by the temple of God they were not bound to keep the oath. The scribes and Pharisees taught; however, that an oath made by the temple of the gold was binding.
 3. Jesus refers to such teaching as foolish and being blind to truth. To expose this foolishness the Lord asks a simple question. Jesus asks, “is the gold greater than the temple that sanctifies it?” Of course not. How then can an oath by the lesser have greater importance? The fact of the matter is that all oaths are binding (cf. Matt. 5:33-37).
- E. “*And, whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gift that is upon it, he is a debtor. Ye blind: for which is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift? He therefore that sweareth by the altar, swears by it, and by all things thereon. And he that swears by the temple, swears by it, and by him that dwells therein. And he that swears by the heaven, swears by the throne of God, and by him that sits thereon*” (23:18-22).
1. Another area of teaching, regarding oaths, was that the scribes and Pharisees were saying that to swear by the altar was non-binding; however, it was binding two swear by the gift (animal sacrifice) that was upon the altar. These scribes and Pharisees were blind in that their teachings were backward when laid alongside the word of God.
 2. Jesus, once again, asks these teachers if they thought that the gift upon the altar was greater than the altar itself.

3. Jesus summarily states that if one swears by the temple, the gold in the temple, the altar of burnt offering, or the animal upon the altar really matters not as far as the binding force behind it. Why? Because all of these things are of God.
- F. *“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye tithe mint and anise and cummin, and have left undone the weightier matters of the law, justice, and mercy, and faith: but these ye ought to have done, and not to have left the other undone. Ye blind guides, that strain out the gnat, and swallow the camel!”* (23:23-24).
1. We must note that Jesus is not condemning the practice of tithing (the work of giving ten percent of one’s yearly product by law / cf. Numb. 18) but rather the mind behind the deed. The Pharisees were very scrupulous when it came to tithing even the smallest of herbs (mint, anise, and cummin) yet when it came to performing other weightier matters of the law they fell on their face in disobedience. Why scrupulously obey some aspects of the law but treat other parts with a somewhat flippant attitude? Ritualistically speaking the scribes and Pharisees seemed sound; however, when it came to moral conduct such as acting just, merciful, and faithfully they were found lacking. Judgments of men must be made not on perceived perception but rather the facts at hand (i.e., does he teach truth, if he is in error is he willing to study and admit that he is wrong??) (see study # 30).
 2. Performance of the moral requirements of the law would certainly evidence their true faith in Jehovah God. Performing sacrifices can be done ritualistically to signify their faith to self and others. The problem was their self imposed delusion. The Lord has always desired obedience over ritualistic sacrifices (cf. I Sam. 15:22-23; Joel 2:12-13; Matt. 22:37-40). When one is not doing spiritual service out of fear, reverence, and respect for the laws of God then it is rejected of the Lord. Such service looks more to please self than God (cf. Amos 4:4-5).
 3. Jesus thereby refers to the scribes and Pharisees as blind guides (again, a reference to their teaching) and then accuses them of *“straining the gnat and swallowing the camel.”* Interestingly, they were very conscientious to avoid being unclean by the tiny gnat that had fallen in their wines yet they had no problem swallowing down the unclean giant camel. Again, these statements indicate a heart whose priorities had been confused. We asks, why did the scribes and Pharisees pick and choose commands to follow and reject? The answer is simple, they sought to please themselves rather than God. The same holds true today. Many denominational bodies will do many things that God has commanded yet set very weighty matters aside. Why have they done this? They do it because it is their perception of religion and they are seeking to please themselves rather than God. So we hear of worship services that entertain by drama, instrumental music, and hand clapping.
- G. *“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye cleanse the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full from extortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first the inside of the cup and the platter, that the outside thereof may become clean also”* (23:25-26).
1. What governs a man’s actions? Shall he perform spiritual service out of ritualistic habit? Will he perform a show to the world by performing certain duties to appear good and righteous toward others yet within the heart of said one is filthy with sin? Shall he perform acts of service to God because he sees God’s requests and lovingly complies with fear and humility?
 2. Jesus said that the scribes and Pharisees inner man was like a filthy cup and plate on the inside yet outwardly they looked shiny and clean. Though the scribes and Pharisees performed public prayers, walked about with their phylacteries, and extended robes they were wicked on the inside. They were guilty of *“extortion”* (i.e., “the illegal use of one’s official position or powers to obtain property, funds, or patronage”) and *“excess”* (i.e., desiring and pursuing excessive amounts of the things of this world). A character sketch of the Pharisees would include a since of worldliness (see study # 11).
 3. Jesus admonishes the Pharisees to cleanse their insides (i.e., their hearts) and the outside would naturally be clean as well. Again, said activity will be an indicator of one’s true desire to serve God faithfully because this is the important matter in one’s life rather than doing things

religiously to only appear certain ways to some people. Sometimes people may fool us with their outward spiritual actions and words. We cannot possibly know what is going on with their inner mind and ascribe motives to their actions. Time; however, will reveal their inner being.

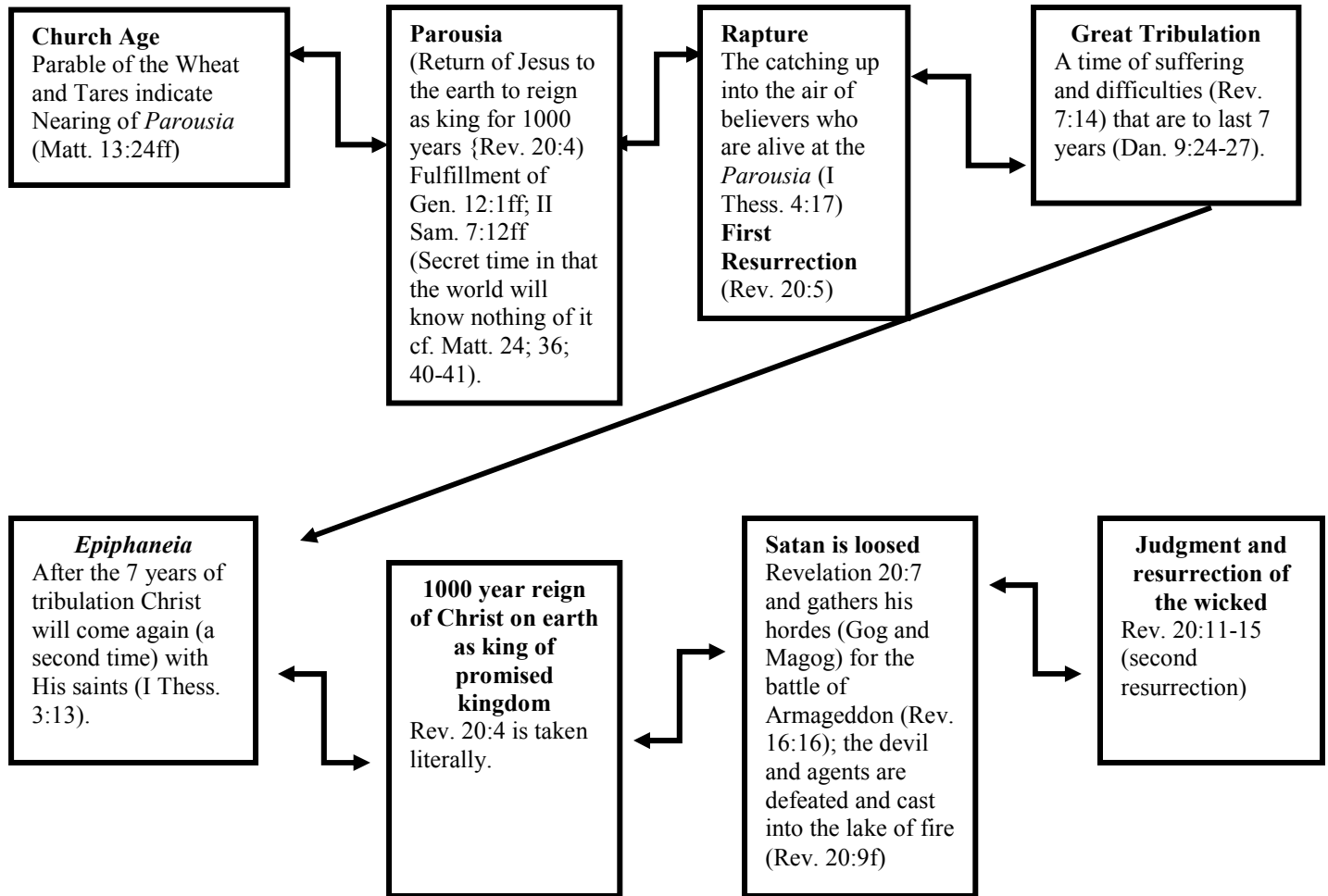
- H. *“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye are like unto whited sepulchers, which outwardly appear beautiful, but inwardly are full of dead men’s bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but inwardly ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity”* (23:27-28).
1. This sixth woe is no different than the preceding five in that it is very pointed. Jesus refers to the scribes and Pharisees as *“whited”* (*koniao*) = “to be whitened” (LS 444)... “to whitewash (a mixture of lime and water, often with whiting, size, or glue added, that is used to whiten structures, as exterior walls or fences, made of wood, stone, or concrete... application for concealing or glossing over of flaws or failures” [AHD 1379])” (Moulton 237). Though a sepulcher may be whited and made to look very beautiful the fact remains that there are dead man’s bones within.
 2. Jesus compares the scribes and Pharisees to a sepulcher that is beautiful to look upon; however, within they are unclean and filled with iniquity. God looks and cares for the inner man not the outward (Rom. 2:29).
- I. *“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye build the sepulchers of the prophets, and garnish the tombs of the righteous, and say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we should not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. Wherefore ye witness to yourselves, that ye are sons of them that slew the prophets. Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers”* (23:29-32).
1. The scribes and Pharisees would go through the labor and toil of building beautiful sepulchers for the graves of the prophets yet did not actually follow their teachings and character. The scribes and Pharisees denounced the inhumane acts of their fore fathers in that they had killed the prophets of old who called upon the sinful people to repent of sin. Again, the scribes and Pharisees did these deeds outwardly that all may think that they are good and holy men.
 2. As Amos called upon the unrighteous of Israel to assemble at Bethel and Gilgal to multiply their transgressions (cf. Amos 4:4) even so Jesus calls the scribes and Pharisees to prove and do their ungodly deed of murdering Him on the cross. When they do this they will have *“filled up the measure of their fathers.”*
- J. *“Ye serpents, ye offspring of vipers, how shall ye escape the judgment of hell?”* (23:33).
1. The scribes and Pharisees were likened unto a hellish snake that sinks its fangs into the innocent taking not only their worldly possessions but with their teachings they take men’s souls.
 2. Note that Jesus’ question, regarding escaping judgment, indicates that they shall all rot in hell.
- K. *“Therefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: some of them shall ye kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute from city to city: that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of Abel the righteous unto the blood of Zachariah son of Barachiah, whom ye slew between the sanctuary and the altar. Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation”* (23:34-36).
1. Jesus not only knew that they would crucify him but that they would shamefully treat all the apostles, prophets, preachers, and teachers that were to come in his name.
 2. When one turns to the book of Acts we find accounts of men like Stephen and all the apostles being persecuted and pursued from city to city because they exposed sin and divinely demanded repentance and obedience.
 3. Jesus said that as the scribes and Pharisees did these things they would be held responsible for the righteous blood of the prophets that was shed because they came to reveal the mind of God. We have no other record of Zachariah the son of Barachiah; however, Jesus reveals that this prophet was killed between the temple of God and the altar of burnt offering outside the temple.

The place where they should have had the greatest respect for God was used as a murdering ground against the man who was revealing the mind of God.

4. Jesus has thoroughly exposed the scribes and Pharisees as being sons of hell and subject to an eternity in hell.
- L. *“O Jeruslaem, Jerusalem, that kills the prophets, and stones them that are sent unto her! How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord”* (23:37-39).
 1. The city of Jerusalem stands in metonymy for the people of God throughout their history. They had killed and stoned God’s prophets that had come for their benefit. Though they performed these acts of wickedness God continued to be mercifully and patient with them. Hundreds of years would pass until finally God brought the condemning judgment upon Israel and Judah.
 2. Through the years of patience and mercy it was God’s desire to gather up His people under His wings and protect them from all harm. We recall that Moses wrote of God’s mercy to Israel saying, *“Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles’ wings, and brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be mine own possession from among all peoples:”* (Ex. 19:4-5). Yet the people did not keep His commandments. God would send judges and prophets to deliver and teach them out of their error yet they rejected and even commanded that these men not prophesy to them (cf. Amos 2:12). As the prophets continued their God ordained work of revealing the mind of God the people killed them.
 3. All such actions of rebellion against God has brought them to this day. The Messiah was here for their benefit yet he too would be killed. God has now left the temple and Jesus says that *“your house is now desolate.”* God was no longer with them. There will come a day when all of humanity will bow their knee to God and say, *“Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord”* (cf. Phil. 2:9-11); however, until that day Jesus would not be seen of them.

Chapter 24

- I. **Jesus answers the disciple’s question regarding the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple (24:1-34):**
 - A. *“And Jesus went out from the temple, and was going on his way; and his disciples came to him to show him the buildings of the temple. But he answered and 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”* (24:1-2).
 1. The same incident is recorded at Mark 13:1-37. Mark’s record indicates that the disciples of Jesus were showing the Lord the grandeur of the temple with its magnificent stones and buildings. Herod’s temple in Jerusalem was indeed a great architectural feat of this day. Though the area was impressive, Jesus predicts its dissolution. Jesus said that not one of these magnificent stones would be left standing in the near future. History reveals that approximately 40 years after Jesus made this prediction (i.e., 70 AD) Vespasian and his son Titus besieged Jerusalem for three years and then destroyed the city and its temple.
 2. Many Premillennialist believe that passages like Matthew 24, Revelation 20, and Daniel 9 reveal two comings of Jesus, two resurrections, a rapture, tribulation, and 1000 year reign of Christ on earth before the great Day of Judgment. Consider the chart on the next page of the Premillennialist beliefs (see study # 81; Premillennialism).



- B. *“And as he sat on 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?”* (24:3)
1. Jesus and his disciples have left the temple and come to the Mount of Olives (the slope located due west of the temple and city of Jerusalem and separated from the city and temple by the Kidron Valley).
 2. The Lord’s proclamation regarding the destruction of the temple struck a chord of terror within the hearts of His disciples. Such an event may signal even greater events. They thereby ask Jesus **three questions** that would certainly come to everyone’s mind. The first question, *“when shall these things be”* is in reference to the destruction of the temple. The disciples also want to know if this is a sign of Jesus’ coming again (i.e., after His resurrection) and the end of the world. Let us take care to study the Lord’s answer to these questions that we not get confused and assign meanings to things the Lord never taught.
- C. *“And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man lead you astray. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am the Christ; and shall lead many astray”* (24:4-5).
1. Jesus warns his disciples of being lead *“astray”* by false Christ. Jesus knew that there would be false prophets and Christ(s) whose damnable teachings would lead people astray from the one true doctrine he had delivered to the apostles and the apostles to the world (cf. Matt. 24:4-5, 11, 24). The apostle John would later echo the same warnings (cf. I Jn. 2:26; 3:7) (see study # 25).

2. When Jesus departed from this world the disciples were left with His words. He knew that some would seek to add and others to take from it yet the Lord's instructions were that they were to guard and earnestly contend for its purity (II Tim. 1:12-13; Jude 3).
- D. *“And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars; see that ye be not troubled: for these things must needs come to pass; but the end is not yet”* (24:6).
1. Is Jesus speaking of the end of the world or the end of the city of Jerusalem? The disciples had asked questions regarding the end of both these things. The answer is simple. Jesus is speaking of the end of Jerusalem and its temple due to the fact that he says, *“verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all these things be accomplished”* (Matt. 24:34). Jesus is answering the disciple's three questions in order. The temple would actually be destroyed while many of the current generation still lived.
 2. What wars would the disciples hear of? The Roman Empire was the existing power yet it was an empire of immense inner turmoil. Daniel had referred to Rome as a kingdom of iron mixed with clay that would be broke in pieces (cf. Dan. 2:43). Rome was often at war with itself. The incorporation of a multitude of cultures (i.e., *Pax Romana*) and peoples was destined to fail in the long run.
- E. *“For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be famines and earthquakes in divers places”* (24:7).
1. The brittle nature of the Roman Empire was predicted by Daniel as he interpreted Nebuchadnezzar's dream (cf. Dan. 2:44ff).
 2. During days of God's past judgments there had existed earthquakes (cf. Amos 1:1-2) and famine (cf. Jer. 38:2). It is apparent that Jesus, like the prophets of old, was foretelling future calamity upon a city due to her sinful state (cf. Matt. 23:37-39).
- F. *“But all these things are the beginning of travail. Then shall they deliver you up unto tribulation, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all the nations for my name's sake. And then shall many stumble, and shall deliver up one another, and shall hate one another”* (24:8-10).
1. The dissolution of Rome's inner government gave rise to hatred toward Christianity. It seems that everyone wanted to point a finger of blame for the troubles of Rome and an easy target was the Christian. The tolerant slash unity in diversity policy of *pax romana* was not something that Christian's accepted. Christian's were viewed as uncompromising in faith and thereby a threat to the Roman way. They were thereby put on close watch. When Nero came to be Emperor of Rome (i.e., 54 to 68 AD) Christian persecution was born. During these days, “those who confessed to being Christians were arrested and charged with hatred for the human race. They died by methods of mockery; some were covered with the skins of wild beasts and then torn by dogs, some were crucified, some were burned as torches to light at night...” (ISBE, v. 3, pp. 522).
 2. These persecutions would be more than some Christians could bear and so they denounced their faith in Christ to avert persecution (cf. Gal. 6:12). Still others went as far as turning completely on Christians due to the intense persecution (cf. II Tim. 4:10ff).
- G. *“And many false prophets shall arise, and shall lead many astray. And because iniquity shall be multiplied, the love of the many shall wax cold”* (24:11-12).
1. During these days of persecution for one's faith trouble shall be added to the faithful by false prophets. Their false ways would *“lead many astray.”* What would the many be led astray from? Clearly Jesus is saying that these false prophets, by their teaching, would lead many Christians astray from the standard of truth he taught. Christian's today ought not be so naive as to think that these type of teachers do not exist today (cf. II Pet. 2:1ff).
 2. The love that many shared in truth and the excitement of having their sins forgiven took a backseat to their persecutions and the increase in sin throughout the societies they lived in. The easy road to take for present day comfort was denunciation of faith and sinful living. Their love of truth and Jesus would thereby *“wax cold.”* Some today have allowed their faith to wax

cold due to life's bumps. When things do not go as expected man often gives up rather than trenching in for the long battle.



- H. *“But he that endures to the end, the same shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a testimony unto all the nations; and then shall the end come”* (24:13-14).
1. As turmoil and war govern Rome Christians would be heavily persecuted. Many would denounce their faith and some would turn on other Christians out of frustration. The remaining faithful would be assaulted with false doctrines originating from the mind of men. The faithful; however, will not be swayed by these events. They will faithfully continue the great commission of teaching and preaching the “gospel of the kingdom” to the world. Those who make it through the tribulation and onslaught of false teachings “*shall be saved.*” Though the ordeal would be discomfoting and in some cases cause death the true saint of God would not be disappointed.
 2. Jesus states that after a time of persecution, false teaching, and the gospel of the kingdom being spread throughout the whole world “*then shall the end come.*”
 - a. Before the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 the gospel of Jesus Christ had been preached throughout the entire world (cf. Acts 8:1-4; Rom. 1:8 etc.).
 - b. With the end of the Jerusalem temple came the end of the physical kingdom of the Jews. The spiritual Kingdom of God would now be ruling power among the saints of God (cf. Jn. 18:36). This “*end*” is what Daniel’s vision considered (i.e., the end of the Mosaic Law [first covenant] and beginning of the kingdom of God with Christ as king [second covenant now binding]) (cf. Dan. 12:5-13) (cf. Daniel chart below).
- I. *“When therefore ye see the abomination of desolation, which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let him that reads understand), then let them that are in Judea flee unto the mountains: let him that is on the housetop not go down to take out the things that are in his house: and let him that is in the field not return back to take his cloak. But woe unto them that are with child and to them that give suck in those days! And pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on a Sabbath: for then shall be great tribulation, such as hath not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, nor ever shall be”* (24:15-21).
1. The days of Roman persecution leading up to the destruction of the temple of God will be intense. People will be scrambling for their lives with no time to stop and gather any belongings. Never has the world seen such atrocities and never shall she again. These were the worst of all times. When one considers Jeremiah’s lamentations over Judah due to the Babylonian siege and grotesque events that took place we are left to shiver in anguish for these people (cf. Lam. 1:15-16; 4:10-11).
 2. Consider the following notes on Daniel 9:20-27

Daniel 9:20-27

Gabriel tells Daniel what shall come to pass in the latter days (9:20-27):

- A. *“And while I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before Jehovah my God for the holy mountain of my God; yea, while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation. And he instructed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee wisdom and understanding. At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment went forth, and I am come to tell thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore consider the matter, and understand the vision”* (9:20-23).
1. Once again Daniel sees the angel Gabriel. Gabriel had been responsible for causing Daniel to understand his vision in chapter 8:15-16.
 2. Gabriel pronounces to Daniel that his purpose for coming was to *“give thee wisdom and understanding.”*
- B. *“Seventy weeks are decreed upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy. Know therefore and discern, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the anointed one, the prince, shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: it shall be built again, with street and moat, even in troublous times”* (9:24-25).
1. Gabriel proclaims that 70 weeks are decreed for six things to be accomplished:
 - a. Transgressions are to be finished; i.e., the Mosaic Law that was transgressed by Judah and Israel was to end giving way to a system by which man can be forgiven of sins (cf. Col. 2:14-17). The Law of Moses and sin stood together because there were no provisions for forgiveness under the law (cf. Gal. 3:10).
 - b. Sins were to end: sin would have an end only when forgiven under the better law of Christ (cf. Heb. 8:6ff).
 - c. Reconciliation for iniquity: Through Christ’s sacrifice man has the opportunity to regain fellowship with the Heavenly Father (cf. Col. 1:20-22).
 - d. Bring in everlasting righteousness: Righteousness and justification are synonymous with the apostle Paul (cf. Rom. 4:5).
 - e. To seal up vision and prophecy: God’s proclamation about the coming of His kingdom and the anointed holy one (i.e., Jesus, the king of His kingdom) is true and nothing shall change it.
 - f. The anointing of the most holy one: The author of Hebrews proclaims this of Jesus at Hebrews 1:9 (see also Jn. 1:32-34).
 2. The above six things were to transpire in a period known as *“seventy weeks.”* The *“seventy weeks”* will begin with the decree given by Cyrus to restore and rebuild Jerusalem and end with the coming of the anointed one who is known as the *“prince.”*
 3. Furthermore, this time frame of seventy weeks is to be divided into two parts of time i.e., 7 weeks and 62 weeks (i.e., 69 total weeks [one shy of the complete 70]).
- C. *“And after the threescore and two weeks shall the anointed one be cut off, and shall have nothing: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and even unto the end shall be war; desolations are determined”* (9:26).
1. After the 62 week period (the larger portion of an unspecified time table) the *“anointed one”* (i.e., Jesus) was to be *“cut off.”* The *“cutting off”* of Jesus indicates His death by crucifixion for the sins of man (cf. Isa. 53:8-10).
 2. By the authority of Christ (like God gave to the Assyrians [Isa. 10:5ff] and Babylonians [Jer. 25:8-9]) the Romans would march on Jerusalem and destroy the city and sanctuary (i.e., the flood of desolation [cf. Isa. 8:5-8]). Jesus foretold of these events at Matthew 24:15 and Luke 21:20-22. History reveals that in the year 70 AD, Titus marched on Jerusalem and destroyed it. Jerusalem was burned to the ground. Jesus confirms this in Matt. 24:15-28 in which He quotes from Daniel regarding the *“abomination of desolation”* statement of Dan. 9:26. The descriptions of historians such as Josephus explain graphically the horrors experienced during the four-year siege of Jerusalem and its final fall in AD 70. The destruction of Jerusalem was a flood of desolation in which God ended the Mosaic Law and its sanctuary once and for all.
- D. *“And he shall make a firm covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease; and upon the wing of abominations shall come one that maketh desolate; and even unto the full end, and that determined, shall wrath be poured out upon the desolate”* (9:27).
1. The *“firm covenant”* made by Christ for one week indicates the time when the perfect law of liberty (the new covenant) would be delivered by the apostles and prophets (Eph. 3:1ff) and confirmed by signs, wonders, and miracles (Mk. 16:20; Heb. 2:3-4).
 2. Sacrifices and oblations that were part of the written ordinances that were against us because it could not remove sins were to end with Christ’s propitiatory sacrifice (cf. Col. 2:14; Heb. 9:11 – 10:3; I Jn. 2:1ff) (see study # 12).
 3. God’s wrath would be poured out upon Jerusalem and its temple and the Mosaic Dispensation will come to a complete end. No more animal sacrifices and no more law of bondage would be effective. God’s kingdom, His church, will be established and man will have the opportunity to receive the forgiveness of sins through the one time propitiatory sacrifice of Christ.

The following Chart from a study of Daniel may be helpful here:

Daniel is Given a Timetable to answer the Question: When will the “<i>time of the end</i>” occur (i.e., The Establishment of the Kingdom of God) Daniel 12:11-12				
Continual burnt-offering taken away Antiochus IV Epiphanes pollutes temple of God and causes the burnt offerings to cease (Dan. 8:11; 11:31).	The “<i>abomination that maketh desolate set up</i>” (Roman persecution) (Church is established during these days) (Dan. 9:26-27; 12:11; Matt. 24:15).	45 Day gap between the Roman persecution and the destruction of Jerusalem (a period of conflict for the people of God)	Saints now possess the kingdom of God in peace and are “blessed” (Dan. 7:18, 22, 27; Rev. 19:20-20:6)	
Time Frame: 1290 days 				
Time Frame 1335 days (Dan. 12:12) 				

- J. *“And except those days had been shortened, no flesh would have been saved: but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened” (24:22).*
 1. The siege and destruction of Jerusalem would have caused all flesh within to die if it were not for the providential help of Jehovah God.
 2. Titus may have sieged the city of Jerusalem for a lengthy amount of time that all may suffer and die. Yet for the *“elect’s sake”* (i.e., those who purposed to serve God with all their heart come what may / cf. II Tim. 2:10) God was merciful and the ordeal was over quickly. Many of the elect survived and were able to take the gospel message to the world.
- K. *“Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is the Christ, or, Here; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect” (24:23-24).*
 1. Jesus warns the disciples that during these trying times false Christs and prophets would abound. These were men who *“loved the glory that is of men more than the glory that is of God”* (Jn. 12:43). To receive said glory men must proclaim to be something they are not and or teach a doctrine that will cause the masses to follow them. Simon of Acts 8 was just one such individual. The people of Samaria *“gave heed to him, because that of long time he had amazed them with his sorceries”* (Acts 8:11).
 2. Note that Titus did not march and siege Jerusalem until 70 AD. The church had been established some thirty years earlier. Christians were now in existence with their sins forgiven. Peter referred to such as the elect of God that had been called out of a world of sin (I Pet. 2:9) by the gospel message (II Thess. 2:14-14) and into the kingdom of God (II Thess. 2:12 / Col. 1:13) which is His church (Rev. 5:9-10). The point here is that Jesus is predicting that even the

- elect of God (i.e., members of the body of Christ / church / kingdom of God) will be led astray from the faith. The apostle Paul told the Galatians essentially the same thing. Paul said, “*Ye are severed from Christ, ye who would be justified by the law; ye are fallen away from grace*” (Gal. 5:4) (see study # 82; Calvinism). How some people today can say that it is impossible for the Christian to lose their salvation is truly befuddling. Apparently once one is saved they do not always remain that way. False teachers have the ability to “*lead astray*” even the elect of God. The word elect does not, thereby, mean that one is unconditionally elected from youth to serve God (see study # 30).
- L. “*Behold, I have told you beforehand. If therefore they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the wilderness; go not forth: Behold, he is in the inner chambers; believe it not. For as the lightning cometh forth from the east, and is seen even unto the west; so shall be the coming of the Son of man*” (24:26-27).
1. Jesus warned the disciples of Judas’ betrayal before it took place so that they may not lose faith over the incident (cf. Jn. 13:18-19). Again, the Lord told his disciples of his departure from them by death before it took place so that they would not lose their faith when it occurred (Jn. 14:28-29). Here, Jesus tells his disciples about the works of false Christs and teachers before they come that they would not be led astray by their claims and teachings. Knowing these things the disciples are told “*believe it not*” when these erring men speak (see I Jn. 4:1ff) (see study # 30). Likewise we have divine revelation before us. When a false teacher tries to persuade us of things God has not commanded we should “*believe it not.*” Those who claim to have secret knowledge of the location of Christ are lying because when Jesus comes again it will be made manifest to every soul like as lightning that flashes in the sky is visible by all.
 2. Note that when Jesus comes again it will not be a secret thing. As the lightning flashes across the expanse of the sky and all see it so shall the coming of Jesus be (cf. I Thess. 4:13ff) (see study # 83; Second Coming of Jesus).
- M. “*Wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together*” (24:28).
1. Some have observed that eagles do not feed on dead animals. The word “*eagle*” here is likely an interpolation of some form of vulture. Whatever bird is intended it is a bird that feeds upon the lifeless bodies of dead animals.
 2. The illustration is clear. The carcass is the doctrine of death and the eagles (vultures) are those who feed upon it. The vultures of humanity are lowlifes that feed upon the erring doctrines of men.
- N. “*But immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun shall 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: and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send forth his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other*” (24:29-31).
1. Jesus said that “*immediately after the tribulation*” (of the destruction of Jerusalem and the suffering that accompanies these horrid times / cf. 24:2) the sun and moon will be darkened and the stars shall fall from heaven while the powers of heaven are shaken. These are terms of judgment times for the ungodly (cf. Isa. 13:10; Jer. 13:16; Joel 2:2, 10; Amos 5:18-20).
 2. Jesus states that said events will occur at his second coming. All would certainly know that the sun and moon had been darkened and take note of the shooting stars through the dark sky. Paul tells of this same event at I Thessalonians 4:13-5:5. The Lord would descend from the heavens with a great noise and both the dead and live saints will be gathered up to heaven. Many of the Thessalonians were of the persuasion that Christ was going to come again at any moment due to the teaching of false prophets (cf. II Thess. 2:1-3). Paul explains that this is simply not so. Jesus will go on to say that, “*But of that day and hour knoweth no one...*” (Matt. 24:36) (see study # 83).

3. We must reconcile the second coming of Christ with the statement “*immediately after the tribulation... this generation shall not pass away, till all these things be accomplished*” (Matt. 24:34) and the fact that no one knows when this will be (Matt. 24:36).
 4. That which you and I must see is that Jesus is giving a panoramic picture and answer to the three questions that the disciples asked at Matthew 24:3. He has gone into detail regarding the first question; i.e., when will Jerusalem be destroyed. He has given them a picture of what will take place at his second coming and the end of all time (i.e., the sun and moon darkened with shooting stars and so forth). Knowing that Paul spoke by divine revelation (cf. Gal. 1:11-12) and did not contradict Jesus at I Thessalonians 4:13ff and II Thessalonians 2:1ff we must thereby conclude that the destruction of Jerusalem was under consideration when Jesus said, “*This generation shall not pass away, till all these things be accomplished*” (Matt. 24:34) and that Jesus was speaking of his second coming and end of the world when he said, “*But of that day and hour knows no one...*” (Matt. 24:36).
- O. “*Now from the fig tree learn her parable: when her branch is now become tender, and puts forth its leaves, ye know that the summer is nigh; even so ye also, when ye see all these things, know ye that he is nigh, even at the doors. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all these things be accomplished*” (24:32-34).
1. “*All these things*” has to be the destruction of Jerusalem which history reveals did happen during “*this generation’s*” days (i.e., 70 AD). What things does Jesus speak of? The answer is found in the text. There will be false Christs and teachers who shall seek to lead the elect astray. There will be wars and rumors of war. There shall be famines and earthquakes. Many of the saints would be tortured and killed. The current day of Christ was dated at about 30 AD. Forty years after Christ made this prophecy it was fulfilled. During this forty year period all these things came to pass and the gospel was spread throughout the world. Just as certain as the fig tree’s buds begin to swell and break out of dormancy at summer time even so these things that Jesus has given as signs will point to the end of Jerusalem.
 2. Truly the generation of Jesus’ audience lived to see this day come.
- P. “*Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away*” (24:35)
1. Jesus’ words contain an eternal view of the beginning and end of all things. Jerusalem would be destroyed, Jesus would come again, the world would end yet there remains one eternal constant; i.e., The Word of God (see study # 84; God’s Comforting Promise).
 2. No greater words of comfort could have been spoken to the disciples as their fears and anxieties over all the things that were soon to take place had captivated their minds. God has promised salvation to the faithful and not one person who puts their faith in the words of Jesus shall be disappointed. The Lord’s word will forever stand with His eternal kingdom!
 3. People today look for things that they can put their trust in. Many look for something that will not change on them (Heb. 13:8). No greater hope can be found than that which is revealed in the word of God. Let us all put our faith in the eternal and constant God, His eternal law, and His eternal Kingdom.

II. The End of the World and Final Judgment (24:36-51):

- A. “*But of that day and hour knows no one, not even the angels of heaven, neither the Son, but the Father only*” (24:36).
1. The disciples had asked Jesus not only about the timing of the destruction of Jerusalem but also the time at which he would come again and the end of the world (cf. Matt. 24:3).
 2. The “*day and hour*” of the “*Lord’s coming*” (Matt. 24:42) or when “*the Son of man comes*” (Matt. 24:37, 39, 42, 44) is now under consideration. This future event is not given a time table as the destruction of Jerusalem was (cf. Matt. 24:34). Jesus explains that his coming will be at a future date that no man, angel, and even his own self knew. The only one who knows this day is the heavenly Father. We see in this statement by the Lord that though the Father and Son were one with the Holy Spirit in the Godhead they were indeed separate persons (see study # 85; The Godhead; # 83).

- B. *“And as were the days of Noah, so shall be the coming of the Son of man. For as in those days which were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and they knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall be the coming of the Son of man”* (24:37-39).
1. The apostle Peter tells us that Noah was a preacher of righteousness (II Pet. 2:5). God did not spare the world in Noah’s day because they did not give heed to the warnings of the consequences of their sin. Moses records, *“And Jehovah saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually”* (Gen. 6:5). Though Noah apparently told the wicked people of God’s plans to destroy the world with a flood they went about their day to day activities as though it were all a joke. The people went about their daily business *“until the day that Noah entered into the ark.”* On that dreadful day all unprepared flesh was removed from the earth.
 2. Jesus said that his coming will be in the same manner. Preachers of righteousness have been preaching the forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ for some 2,000 years now. Many have said and are saying, *“Where is the promise of his coming? For, from the day that the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation”* (II Pet. 3:4). Peter continues saying, *“For this they willfully forget, that there were heavens from of old, and an earth compacted out of water and amidst water, by the word of God; by which means the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: but the heavens that now are, and the earth, by the same word have been stored up for fire, being reserved against the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men”* (II Pet. 3:5-7).
 3. Like the days of Noah so shall the day of the Lord’s coming be. People will be doing their every day thing. The sinful will be sinful on that day. The righteous will be found righteous on that day. Those who are not mindful of the Lord’s coming will be living a life that evidences their lack of faith. Those who watch and look forward to the coming of Jesus will be living a life that evidences their faith (see study # 83).
- C. *“Then shall two men be in the field; one is taken, and one is left: two women shall be grinding at the mill; one is taken, and one is left. Watch therefore: for ye know not on what day your Lord comes”* (24:40-42).
1. Jesus gives a picture of people going about their daily business when he comes yet something separates some from others. Two men *“in the field”* will be working and suddenly and miraculously separated. Two women working *“at the mill”* and suddenly they are miraculously separated. The one taken by the Lord is the one whose heart was set on serving God. This individual regularly called upon the name of Jehovah God in prayer and worship. This person carefully looked forward to day of the Lord’s coming. The other; however, lived a life that evidence their lack of faith (i.e., they did not fully obey the Lord’s commandments).
 2. The Lord’s conclusion is that all would *“watch”* (*gregoreuo*) = “to be awake” (LS 169)... “to be watchful, attentive, to be awake” (Moulton 82). Let us not be spiritual sloughs found spiritually asleep when the Lord comes. Let us be spiritually awake, attentive, and watchful at all times. Why? Because *“ye know not on what day your Lord comes.”* The Christian ought to live a godly life that evidences their faith in Jesus on a daily basis. The point of these verses is that since no one knows when the day of the Lord shall be it will only be those who always live as God would have them live that are found faithful on that great day. The Christian should thereby view the Lord’s coming as motivation to live every day in accordance to His divine and authorized pattern.
- D. *“But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what watch the thief was coming, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken through. Therefore be ye also ready; for in an hour that ye think not the Son of man comes”* (24:43-44).
1. Home owners know that there is a possibility that their homes will be broken in to by thieves. When this will happen is anyone’s guess. If I know exactly the time that a thief will break into my home I can have myself prepared. Again, the point seems to be that I should always be

- prepared. We just simply do not know when a thief may come and we certainly do not know when the Lord shall come again. I may prepare for the day of the thief by always making sure the doors and windows are locked, have a guard dog, and even an alarm system. I may prepare in these ways for an unknown time that thieves may break in.
2. Likewise, I can prepare myself now for the coming of the Lord. I do not know when he shall come but my actions of preparedness illustrate my faith in his coming. I can gain much knowledge in God's Word, develop my character to conform to the image of His beloved son, purpose to do just and right things at all times, meditate on kindness, patience, and long suffering etc.
- E. *“Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath set over his household, to give them their food in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he comes shall find so doing. Verily I say unto you, that he will set him over all that he hath”* (24:45-47).
1. Jesus gives another illustration that indicates one's daily lifestyle. A man who owns a home may at times need to take a journey. The day to day responsibilities of feeding the servants and taking care of the daily chores ought to be left with a trustworthy person. When the homeowner comes back home he expects to see everything running as smoothly as the day he left.
 2. Jesus states that the servant whom the owner entrust his belongings with and does well is indeed a blessed man. The servant did not neglect any duties thinking that the master would not be back for a long period of time. The servant rather recognized his duties and did them as he always had before.
- F. *“But if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord tarrieth; and shall begin to beat his fellow-servants, and shall eat and drink with the drunken; the lord of that servant shall come in a day when he expects not, and in an hour when he knows not, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth”* (24:48-51).
1. Jesus now looks at the picture from another angle. What if the servant that the lord left his other servants and belongings in charge of did not take care of the property? What if this wicked servant beat the other servants and went out drinking and getting drunk when he should have been tending to the responsibilities of the lord's house? This individual did not consider the fact that the lord would soon return home and saw his absence as an opportunity to beat others whom he was displeased with and to drink it up with his buddies.
 2. Again, the point is simple. Said person was not concerned about when his lord should return. This wicked servant was more concerned about the things of this world. Likewise, many today do not concern them selves with the coming of Jesus. They are too wrapped up in the affairs of this world to consider such spiritual ideas.

Chapter 25

I. Parable of the Ten Virgins (25:1-13):

- A. *“Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, who took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom”* (25:1).
1. As we look into chapter 25 let us remember that the context continues to address the second coming of Jesus. Matthew writes, *“then...”* and thereby connects this parable of the ten virgins and talents with the Lord's coming at a time when no one but the heavenly Father knows. Note that Jesus said, *“Watch therefore, for ye know not the day nor the hour”* (Matt. 25:13). Again, Jesus said, *“But when the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the angels with him, then shall he sit on the thorne of his glory:...”* (Matt. 24:31).
 2. Jesus *“likened”* (i.e., compared / cf. notes at chapter 13) the kingdom of heaven unto ten virgins that were participating in a marriage ritual (see study # 9). Jewish marriages would begin with the transferal of the bride to the bridegroom's home in a joyous procession (Jer. 7:34; 16:9;

25:10) (see study # 1). After the consummation of the marriage there would be a wedding feast that same evening. The feast would begin when the bridegroom came from his home to the feast. People would be awaiting his arrival. Jesus compares his second coming to the bridegroom who has been given his bride, consummated the marriage, and is now to come at an unknown time to the feast (see comments on marriage rituals in the ISBE, v. 4, pp. 264).

- B. *“And five of them were foolish, and five were wise. For the foolish, when they took their lamps, took no oil with them: but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. Now while the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. But at midnight there is a cry, Behold, the bridegroom! Come ye forth to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps”* (25:2-7).
1. An exciting point of the marriage ritual was to wait for the bridegroom and accompany him to the marriage feast. The ten virgins waited patiently for the bridegroom and he finally comes at the midnight hour.
 2. Jesus makes an even distinction between the five waiting virgins. Five were foolish and five wise. That which determined one’s status was their state of preparedness. The foolish went out to wait for the bridegroom with no oil for their torch (i.e., fuel). The wise considered the fact that there would be a wait and thereby took extra oil with them to fuel their torches.
 3. The bridegroom was spotted by a watcher and the virgins excitedly take their torches and trim their lamps (i.e., readied them for burning with oil / fuel).
- C. *“And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are going out. But the wise answered, saying, Peradventure there will not be enough for us and you: go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. And while they went away to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage feast: and the door was shut”* (25:8-10).
1. When the time came for the ten virgins to meet the bridegroom and participate in the marriage feast the five foolish virgins lacked oil. The five wise went out to meet the bridegroom; however, the five foolish had to take a quick run to the local seller and buy more oil.
 2. The wise were *“ready”* for the coming of the bridegroom and the foolish were not ready. The ready ones went into the feast with the bridegroom and the *“door was shut.”*
- D. *“Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. Watch therefore, for ye know not the day nor the hour”* (25:11-13).
1. By the time the five foolish virgins got their act together and came to the feast it was too late. The door had been shut and no more guests were allowed entrance. The bridegroom said, *“I know you not.”* The bridegroom did not open the door to them because they were not with the original guests that went in with him. These latecomers are obviously not a part of the feasts and so were not allowed to enter.
 2. Jesus now makes his point; *“Watch therefore, for ye know not the day nor the hour.”* Those who are now watching and doing all that they can to be prepared for the coming of Jesus Christ are like the five wise virgins. To wait until Jesus comes to beg forgiveness of sins will be too late. Let us all spend time preparing now by study and prayer. The day of the Lord surely comes.
 3. The kingdom of God is thereby a place for people who are spiritually prepared and ready. Their current state, at any given moment, is prepared for the Lord’s appearing. Said people make mistakes but quickly repair them by the grace and mercy of God. The prepared Christian is interested and his or her mind thinks on Godly things daily (see study # 9).

II. Parable of the Talents (25:14-30):

- A. *“For it is as when a man, going into another country, called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one; to each according to his several ability; and he went on his journey”* (25:14-15).
1. Once again this parable takes into consideration the second coming of the Lord and the Kingdom of God (cf. Matt. 25:19).

2. Jesus states that the coming of the Son of man will be like a landowner who goes into another country for a visit. He will return. Meanwhile, he leaves his goods of talents to three servants that they may look after them.
 3. The “*talent*” (*talanton*) = “a balance... a pair of scales... any thing weighed, a definite weight, a talent, in Hom. Of gold; but the weight of the Homeric talent is unknown. In later times the *talanton* was both a weight and a sum of money represented by that weight of silver: the Attic talent weighted about 57.75 lbs. For purposes of coinage, a talent of silver was coined into 6,000 drachmae” (LS 790). Apparently the man gave his three servants “*a sum of money*.” That which determined who got the greater sum of money to care for was their “*abilities*.” The word “*ability*” (*dunamis*) = “power, might, strength... ability to do a thing... as far as lies in one... faculty, capacity” (LS 213). The owner of the talents made a judgment as to which of the three servants was to receive one, two, and three talents. The three men’s “*ability*” (i.e., capacity or ability to do a thing) determined the amount of talents received.
- B. *“Straightway he that received the five talents went and traded with them, and made other five talents. In like manner he also that received the two gained other two. But he that received the one went away and digged in the earth, and hid his lord’s money”* (25:16-18).
1. The five talent man immediately took the talents allotted to his care and traded so that he could gain more for his master. There is a sense of loyalty, duty, and work ethic displayed by this servant.
 2. The two talent man did likewise. The one talent man; however, showed no loyalty, duty, or work ethic when he took the money and hid it in the earth.
 3. The inference seems to be that the owner expected these men to invest and trade with the money while he was gone that more might be made.
- C. *“Now after a long time the lord of those servants comes, and makes a reckoning with them. And he that received the five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: lo, I have gained other five talents. His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy lord”* (25:19-21).
1. The lord of the servants now returns, as he said he would, and makes a reckoning with his servants regarding the talents he had given them to invest and trade.
 2. The industrious five talent man was praised by the lord because he was “*faithful*” with the talents he was entrusted with. The idea of faithfulness carries with it loyalty and obedience. It is now clear that the lord had told his servants to invest and trade that more may be gained. The five talent man’s obedience led to him being entrusted with greater things than five talents.
- D. *“And he also that received the two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: lo, I have gained other two talents. His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy lord”* (24:22-23).
1. The lord of the servants made a reckoning with the two talent man. The results were exactly as the five talent man. The lord was pleased with his efforts and thereby blessed him by setting him over many things too.
 2. Note that the lord did not expect the five or two talent man to do above their abilities. He did; however, expect them to measure up to their abilities as is evidenced below.
- E. *“And he also that had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art a hard man, reaping where thou didst not sow, and gathering where thou didst not scatter; and I was afraid, and went away and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, thou has thine own. But 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 did not scatter; thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the bankers, and at my coming I should have received back mine own with interest”* (24:24-27).

1. The lord now makes a reckoning with the one talent servant. The one talent man hid his lord's money in a field rather than investing it in a bank that it might draw interest. He returns the one talent to the lord saying that he feared him because of his reputation of being harsh with others.
 2. Here is an individual who determined that it would be better to opt out of work, loyalty, and faithfulness to the lord due to his reputation. The one talent man was afraid to lose what the lord had given him.
 3. Foolishness, sloth, and unfaithfulness (wickedness) never settles well with God. The one talent man was all three. When the Lord gives us commands to follow we must do so or be found in sin (cf. I Jn. 3:4). The one talent man took it upon himself to disregard the request of the lord and thereby is subject to punishment.
- F. *“Take ye away therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him that hath the ten talents. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not, even that which he hath shall be taken away. And cast ye out the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness: there shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth”* (25:28-30).
1. The lord had entrusted the one talent man with the talent of money. The servant did nothing with it. The lord is angered at his disobedience and lack of loyalty and thereby commands that he be cast out of the lord's care.
 2. The idea of such people having God's favor taken away and given to another is a principle established at the parable of the sower (cf. Matt. 13:10ff). A reproduction of the notes from that text will help here:
 - a. Consider Jesus' statement at John 6 in relation to such gifts to some. Jesus had taught a lesson on the bread of life and demanded that all partake of him to obtain eternal life (cf. Jn. 6:52-59). The multitudes were appalled at Jesus' teaching and thereby turn away from him. Jesus then explains to his disciples, *“For this cause have I said unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it be given unto him of the Father”* (Jn. 6:65). Earlier in the chapter, Jesus had explained how men *“come unto”* him saying, *“No man can come to me, except the Father that sent me draw him: and I will raise him up in the last day. It is written in the prophets, and they shall all be taught of God. Every one that hath heard from the Father, and hath learned, cometh unto me”* (Jn. 6:44-45).
 - b. The thought is thereby simple. God the Father gives the gospel to those who are interested in hearing about the eternity of their soul. Many just do not care and thereby the gospel is not for them. God is not at fault in such hearts (cf. II Pet. 3:9) but rather many do not care about their own soul's eternal abode. The eternity of the soul is just not a topic that they are interested in.
 - c. The gospel message is given and received by those who desire it. Those who truly desire truth and an eternity with God will receive truth *“abundantly,”* however, those that do not have truth are in such a state voluntarily and so they receive nothing from God. Some have initial interest yet over time they allow the love of the world to choke out the cares of an eternal abode. That truth that he had is snatched away by the cares of the world.
- G. The thought is clear. God gives talents to all mankind. The man or woman who takes their talent and exercises a spirit of loyalty, obedience, duty, and work ethic will be a part of the kingdom of God. Those who *“opt out of spiritual life”* through sloth and a lack of faith will have no part in the kingdom of God. The kingdom illustration seems to point out the type of people that will be with God in eternity based upon their actions while spending time on earth. The faithful in the kingdom of God will be the eternally faithful in heaven (kingdom of God) (see study # 9).

III. **The Day of Judgment (25:31-46):**

- A. *“But when the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all the nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats;”* (25:31-32).

1. The disciples had asked Jesus about his second coming and the end of the world at Matthew 24:3. Jesus continues to give answer to these questions. The Lord now explains what will take place on the Day of Judgment (see I Thess. 4:13-18).
 2. Jesus had told the disciples that no one (not even Jesus) knows when he shall come again to judge the world (cf. Matt. 24:36). Jesus did; however, know what was to take place on that day. Jesus will come to the earth with his angels. He will sit upon “*the throne of his glory*” and separate the sheep from the goats. These sheep and goats represent “*all the nations*” of all the history of mankind. Millions of people will be directed to go in one of two directions for eternity. Though from a logistics point of view our human minds picture a daunting task that would seem impossible to accomplish yet with God all things are possible and indeed will take place (see study # 43).
- B.** “*And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:*” (25:33-34).
1. Though the book of Genesis records the physical creation of the universe we see that there were other things being prepared even “*before*” the foundation of the world (cf. Eph. 1:4ff). God chose a peculiar people to be eternally His and he prepared a place for them to spend their eternity with Him. These eternal heavenly people are depicted as the sheep on the right hand of God that have been separated from the goats.
 2. Jesus is named the “**King**.” The heavenly Father has delegated this judgment to the Son (Jesus) (cf. Jn. 5:26-27). The standard whereby men are judged sheep or goats is the word of God (cf. Jn. 12:48). This standard determines whether one is “*good*” or “*evil*” (Jn. 5:28-29). Someone has aptly said, “heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people.” Again, note the association between the heavenly kingdom with its king and the kingdom of God on this earth with its king (i.e., the church) (see study # 9).
- C.** “*for I was hungry, and ye gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee hungry, and fed thee? Or athirst, and gave thee drink? And when saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? And when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me*” (25:35-40).
1. Bible love takes into consideration the well being of others (cf. I Jn. 3:17). Christians are commanded to love as does God (cf. I Jn. 4:7, 17). The scriptures are jam-packed with passages that reveal the love, compassion, mercy, kindness, patience, and grace of God. The prophet Jonah knew these character traits of God and thereby did not want to preach to the heathen in Nineveh (cf. Jonah 4:1-3). The central part of the Christian’s being ought to be these traits. When I find people in need I ought to be willing to provide the necessities of life and visit them (cf. James 1:27) (see study # 34).
 2. Jesus explains that when a Christian visits and meets the needs of others through a spirit of compassion, mercy, and kindness then they are in all reality doing it to Him. Why? Because said conduct is required by the standard that man will be judged by. When I comply with God’s laws I evidence my love for the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Jn. 3:36; Heb. 11:1ff).
- D.** “*Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was hungry, and ye did not give me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; 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. Then shall they also answer, saying, Lord, when saw we thee hungry, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of these least, ye did it not unto me*” (25:41-44).

1. The great Day of Judgment will be a day for the unfaithful (unjust) too (cf. Acts 24:15). Those of the left hand side have been placed there because of their deeds while among the living (cf. Rev. 20:11-15). They have been given a life and talent yet have buried it in a field through sloth, disinterest and unfaithfulness.
 2. Jesus will find their lives to be in contrast with His word. These goats shall depart “*into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels.*” The Revelation 20:10ff passage discusses this eternal painful abode for the devil, his angels, and all those who loved his unlawful ways. Though the wicked will clamor and argue with the King regarding His judgment it will nonetheless stand (cf. Matt. 7:21ff).
 3. Compassion, mercy, kindness, faithfulness, and grace were not a part of their lives and neither shall it be a part of their eternal existence.
- E. “*And these shall go away into eternal punishment: but the righteous into eternal life*” (25:45).
1. All nations of all times shall spend eternity in one of two places (i.e., heaven or hell). Heaven will be a place of “*eternal life.*” The apostle John describes the eternal bliss of heaven in Revelation chapters 20-21.
 2. Note that the wicked goats shall have an eternal existence as well. Rather than eternal life with God the goats shall have an “*eternal punishment*” in fire with the devil and his angels. No greater horrific words could man ever hear than to listen to the Lord say, “depart from me ye worker of iniquity for ever into the punishing fires of hell.”

Chapter 26

I. A Plan to Kill Jesus (26:1-5):

- A. “*And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these words, he said unto his disciples, Ye know that after two days the Passover comes, and the Son of man is delivered up to be crucified*” (26:1-2).
1. All the words that Jesus had completed were the answer to the threefold question asked by the disciples back at Matthew 24:3. Jesus and the disciples were leaving Jerusalem and had come to the Mount of Olives. When the Lord completed His answer to the disciple’s question he then revealed, “*The Son of man is delivered up to be crucified.*”
 2. The Passover was the first feast that God set aside for Israel to keep (cf. Ex. 12). The feast was to be celebrated upon the 14th day of the first month of the Hebrew calendar (i.e., Nisan). The next seven days would be the feast of unleavened bread. Jesus predicts that he will be delivered up for crucifixion on the day of Passover.
- B. “*Then were gathered together the chief priests, and the elders of the people, unto the court of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas; and they took counsel together that they might take Jesus by subtlety, and kill him. But they said, Not during the feast, lest a tumult arise among the people*” (26:3-5).
1. Caiaphas, the son-in-law of Annas who was demoted by the Romans as high priest, met together with the chief priests and elders of the people. The purpose of their gathering was to take “*counsel together that they might take Jesus by subtlety and kill him.*” The word “*subtlety*” (*dolos*) = “a bait for fish, then, any cunning contrivance for deceiving or catching, as the Trojan horse, the robe of Penelope... any trick or stratagem... guile, craft, cunning, treachery” (LS 208). The purpose of the Jewish leaders was to formulate a plan whereby they may cause the Lord to appear worthy of death.
 2. The spiritual leaders of Israel knew that Jesus had the favor of the people and thereby decided to hatch their wicked plan after the Pentecost feast. Most of the Jews would have already left and would pose no danger, in their absence, of protecting or defending Jesus.
 3. There are factors that lead up to this evil plot to kill Jesus. The Lord had just completed a public and scathing rebuke of the scribes and Pharisees no doubt to their embarrassment (Matt.

23). Matthew does not record the raising of Lazarus yet this miracle played a great part in their desiring to kill Jesus (cf. Jn. 12:9-11). Furthermore, when Jesus made His triumphal entry into Jerusalem the people shouted, “*Hosanna: Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel*” (Jn. 12:13) and “*Son of David*” (Matt. 21:15). Such words, on the part of the people, incited the Pharisees (Jn. 12:19), the chief priests, and scribes to indignation (Matt. 21:15). They want to see Jesus dead (see study # 6; # 11).

II. **Mary Anoints the Head and Feet of Jesus in Bethany (26:6-13):**

- A. “*Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, there came unto him a woman having an alabaster cruse of exceeding precious ointment, and she poured it upon his head, as he sat at meat*” (26:6-7).
1. John records that the Lord’s visit to Bethany, where Mary anointed his feet, was six days before the Passover (i.e., before making his triumphal entry into Jerusalem (Jn. 12:1-8). Matthew 26:2 records Jesus’ announcement that it will be two day until the Passover and his crucifixion. Apparently Matthew has gone back a few days to record this event so that we may gain a better understanding of Judas’ betrayal of Jesus.
 2. The “*woman*,” according to John 12, was Mary the sister of Lazarus and Martha. Simon was a man previously stricken with leprosy. He must have been cured else the Lord would not have been able to lawfully accompany him in the house (cf. Lev. 13:45-46).
 3. Mary pours expensive ointment upon the head and feet of Jesus as he sits to eat. She had no regard for the expense. Mary’s concern was that she express a deep appreciation for all that he had done (raised her brother from the dead) and would do (make a sacrifice for the forgiveness of man’s sins).
- B. “*But when the disciples saw it, they had indignation, saying, To what purpose is this waste? For this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor*” (26:8-9).
1. The Lord’s teaching regarding caring for the poor and needy of society is evidenced here and latter when giving the answer to the disciples question about his coming and end of the world (cf. Matt. 25:35ff). John tells us that it was Judas made this statement in a spirit of indignation (cf. Jn. 12:4). Matthew’s record indicates that all the disciples were of one mind with Judas’ statement. As treasurer, Judas came to the forefront with the charge.
 2. The disciples felt that the costly ointment could have served a better purpose (i.e., taking care of the poor). Their view: “*To what purpose is this waste?*”
- C. “*But Jesus perceiving it said unto them, Why trouble ye the woman? For she hath wrought a good work upon me. For ye have the poor always with you; but me ye have not always. For in that she poured this ointment upon my body, she did it to prepare me for burial. Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, that also which this woman hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her*” (26:10-13).
1. What the disciples thought regarding selling the ointment to give to the poor Jesus calls “*troubling the woman and a good work.*” A judgment was made by Mary as to what she could do with the expensive ointment she had. Yes, it would be good to sell it and give the proceeds to those less fortunate (Mark 14:7); however, a better work was to use the ointment to anoint Jesus. She believed the Lord’s words regarding his crucifixion. He was not going to be around much longer. The immediate need was thereby Jesus rather than the poor. Jesus said, “*the poor you have with you always; but me ye have not always.*” The coming days would present many opportunities to care for the poor. The pressing need at this time was to comfort and support Jesus in the ordeal that he was about to go through.
 2. Sometimes you and I must make a judgment regarding how to use our resources. It may be that there are two good directions I can go yet I cannot always achieve both good works with one measure of help. There will be times that we must assess our gifts and direct them to the area of greatest need.
 3. Mary was likely preparing the Lord for his death (a custom at this time was to embalm the dead bodies with costly balm agents). Such an act of love and devotion toward Jesus was to be

a part of the gospel preached from that time on. Love of the Lord will lend itself well to the day to day decisions to overcome sin and live godly in this world.

III. The Day of Pentecost and Judas' betrayal of Jesus (26:14-19):

- A. *"Then one of the twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests, and said, What are ye willing to give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they weighed unto him thirty pieces of silver. And from that time he sought opportunity to deliver him unto them"* (26:14-16).
1. Judas was a *"thief"* who regularly stole money from the common purse of Jesus and the other disciples (cf. Jn. 12:6). Luke tells us that Satan entered into his heart and tempted him to betray the Lord for money.
 2. The day of Pentecost *"drew nigh"* (Lk. 22:1). When all else were preparing to remove leaven and remember the holy day of the Lord Judas was plotting and evil deed.
- B. *"Now on the first day of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying, Where wilt thou that we make ready for thee to eat the Passover?"* (26:17).
1. The first day of unleavened bread would be the 14th of Nisan (Thursday evening).
 2. The disciples begin their preparations for finding a place for Jesus to partake of the Passover meal (the unblemished lamb).
- C. *"And he said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Teacher saith, My time is at hand; I keep the passover at thy house with my disciples. And the disciples did as Jesus appointed them; and they made ready the Passover"* (26:18-19).
1. Thursday morning and throughout the day Peter and John (cf. Lk. 22:8) made ready the Passover feast that was to be eaten that evening (Thursday evening).
 2. Peter and John go into the city of Jerusalem and find the man Jesus spoke of. The disciples tell the man that the time of Jesus' crucifixion has come and that he is to partake of the Passover feast in his house. The man agrees and together they prepare the upper room.

IV. Jesus partakes of the Passover Meal with his Disciples (26:20-30):

- A. *"Now when even was come, he was sitting at meat with the twelve disciples; and as they were eating, he said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me. And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began to say unto him every one, Is it I, Lord?"* (26:20-22).
1. John tells us that before the conversation about the Lord's betrayal that Jesus washed all the disciples' feet and taught them a lesson on servitude.
 2. John also tells us that the Lord was *"troubled in the spirit"* when talking about the betrayal (cf. Jn. 14:21).
- B. *"And he answered and said, He that dipped his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me. The Son of man goes, even as it is written of him: but woe unto that man through whom the Son of man is betrayed! Good were it for that man if he had not been born. And Judas, who betrayed him, answered and said, Is it I, Rabbi? He saith unto him, Thou hast said"* (26:23-25).
1. Judas too asked the Lord, *"Is it I, Rabbi?"* The delinquent knew full well that he was the one. Was he testing the Lord? Jesus also lets Peter and John know that it was Judas (cf. Jn. 14:24-26). Note that Jesus said that it would have been better for Judas never to have been born. Why? Now that Judas exists he is subject to an eternity of punishment for this most wicked deed.
 2. The dastardly character of Judas is seen in that he immediately and without conscience goes out that night to do his dirty deed of betraying the Lord of glory.
- C. *"And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it; and he gave to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took a cup, and gave thanks, and gave them, saying Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many unto remission of sins"* (26:26-28).
1. Thursday evening the disciples are in the upper room partaking of the Passover feast. They have had their feet washed and had a conversation about the Lord's betrayal. Jesus now institutes the Lord's Supper. The Lord takes some unleavened bread (cf. Matt. 26:17), breaks it, and commands that the disciples eat it as a representative of his *"body."* Likewise, the Lord

took a cup and gave thanks for it and distributed it to the disciples that they may drink a representative of his blood that would soon be spilled. The Lord's blood would be the "*blood of the covenant*." Without blood shed there is no covenant enacted (cf. Heb. 9:16-20). Without the shedding of blood there could be no redemption of man (cf. Col. 1:20).

2. A known fact among the ancients was that the Messiah was to suffer and die for the stroke that was actually due all of humanity for their sins (cf. Isa. 53:7-8). The moment that all God's people of old had longed for had come (cf. I Pet. 1:10-11). Jesus would be offered up for the forgiveness of man's sins (cf. Matt. 1:21).
3. Note that Jesus said that his blood would be shed "*unto*" the forgiveness of sins. This statement is very similar to what is found at Acts 2:38 (i.e., Peter said, "*repent and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins*"). Some of our Baptists friends have concluded that baptism is not done to be forgiven of sins but rather done "*because*" man is in sin and it is thereby not necessary for salvation (i.e., to receive the forgiveness of sins). Those who would come to such a conclusion must reconcile Jesus' use of the Greek preposition "*eis*" (i.e., unto) here and Peter's use of the same word at Acts 2:38 in relation to receiving the remission of sins. The point is clear. Man is to be baptized so that he can be forgiven of sins and be a partaker of God's rich grace.

D. "*But I say unto you, I shall not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom*" (26:29).

1. The "*Father's kingdom*" is the church of Christ (see study # 9). After this day the Passover feast would no longer be binding. The disciples thereby took of this "*new*" unleavened bread and fruit of the vine. This supper was "*new*" in that it would have a different significance.
2. When the disciples would come together every first day of the week (Acts 20:7ff) to partake of the Lord's Supper (I Cor. 11:20ff) they would do so in the fellowship of Christ's teachings.

E. "*And when they had sung a hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives*" (26:30).

1. The upper room events are concluded with a hymn sung by Jesus and the disciples. A "*hymn*" (*humneo*) is to sing a song of praise (cf. LS 829).
2. The upper room events include Jesus washing the disciple's feet (Jn. 13:1-15), exposing Judas as a betrayer (Matt. 26:20-25), instituting the Lord's Supper (Matt. 26:26-29), and giving his 'farewell address' (Jn. 14 – 16 all).
3. After all this teaching the Lord and His disciples travel to the Mount of Olives (located ~ 400 meters due East of the temple in Jerusalem).

V. Conversation between Jesus and the disciples on the way to the Mount of Olives (26:31-35):

A. "*Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended in me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad. But after I am raised up, I will go before you into Galilee*" (26:31-32).

1. Jesus quotes from Zechariah 13:7 in relation to his death and the disciple's response. The prophet of old had divinely foretold of this night of nights. When Christ was captured, tried, and crucified "*all*" of the disciples would be "*offended*" (*skandalizo*) = "to make to stumble, give offence to any one... to take offence" (LS 731). Peter defines Jesus' use of *skandalizo* by saying, "*Even if I must die with thee, yet will I not deny thee*" (Matt. 26:35). The offence was thereby on the part of the disciples. Jesus predicted that they would display an attitude toward the world that showed that they were disassociated with Jesus (i.e., wanted nothing to do with him). Jesus said that they would all be so minded. We think of the beloved John (cf. Jn. 13:23), in addition to Peter, and ask, "how could he have been offended?" There was much for the disciples to learn and as of yet they were not the men now that they would be in the future. Most all died for the cause of Jesus Christ; however, in this infant stage of faith they were offended in Christ.
2. Though they will show signs of weakness in denying the Lord, Jesus was not to be through with them. He would be resurrected from the dead and "*go before you into Galilee*." The Lord seeks to comfort them by revealing the resurrection and future appearance to them in Galilee

(cf. Matt. 28:16). At Galilee the Lord would instruct them to await the power of the Holy Spirit which would bring them to a perfect remembrance and understanding of all that Jesus taught.

- B. *“But Peter answered and said unto him, If all shall be offended in thee, I will never be offended. Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, that this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. Peter saith unto him, Even if I must die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples”* (26:33-35).
1. It was Peter that responded to Jesus saying, *“Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God”* (Matt. 16:16). Peter had also previously said, *“Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life”* (Jn. 6:68). Again, it was Peter that said, *“Lord, I will lay down my life for thee”* (Jn. 13:37). Peter tells Jesus that it doesn’t matter what the whole world does he would never deny him (see study # 66).
 2. Jesus displays his deity and omniscience by telling Peter that before the night is over he will not only deny him once but three times. All the disciples agreed with Peter and said that they would never do such a thing. We like to think that we are strong in our faith; however, when the scenarios of life are played out we are often left in shame due to our conduct.

VI. Jesus and the Disciples at the Garden of Gethsemane (26:36-46):

- A. *“Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto his disciples, Sit ye here, while I go yonder and pray. And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebadee, and began to be sorrowful and sore troubled”* (26:36-37).
1. Gethsemane is found by walking down the hill due east of the temple in Jerusalem (through the Kidron Valley). While walking up the Mount of Olives one comes to the Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus goes into Gethsemane with Peter, James, and John to pray.
 2. The humanity of Jesus is depicted in that at this hour of great intensity he is sore troubled within (see study # 86). One can scarcely imagine what it would be like to have an omniscient mind understanding that in a matter of hours you would be savagely beaten and nailed to a cross to die. At this moment of death Jesus desires to spend time in prayer with the three disciples whom he was very close to.
- B. *“Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: abide ye here, and watch with me”* (26:38).
1. The great sorrow of Christ was *“even unto death.”* He was broken of heart and felt the enormous weight of sin and its consequences upon his shoulders. He alone would bear this great load for the world of humanity.
 2. Isaiah said, *“Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows... the chastisement of our peace was upon him... Jehovah hath laid on him the iniquity of us all...”* (Isa. 53:4-6).
- C. *“And he went forward a little, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass away from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt”* (26:39).
1. Jesus now goes further into the Garden of Gethsemane alone (eight disciples are at the entrance of the garden, three further in, and then Christ goes in further alone).
 2. I have always thought of the *“cup”* as being the agony associated with the idea that Jesus would soon die. Therefore his prayer would be that if it is possible would Jehovah somehow allow him to avoid this event. Luke said, *“And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became as it were great drops of blood falling down upon the ground”* (Lk. 22:44). It seems also likely; however, that this *“cup”* that Jesus prayed would pass from him is likely an illustration regarding the full measure of his sorrow. It saddened Jesus deeply to be associated with the sins of the world. To have knowledge of the murdered and molested children, anger that leads to violence, cheating and robbing from the poor, adultery and sexual immorality, idolatry, and one can scarce to think of the world’s sins as Christ had knowledge. The sorrow and pain involved in God’s knowledge of man’s sins was almost too much for the Lord to bear. It hurts us today to know we have sinned and disappointed the Lord. Furthermore it hurts to hear of a brother or sister who has committed an act of sin. It too hurts us to read of the death

of an innocent child due to someone's neglect. Jesus was about to suffer for the sins of all history.

3. The Lord's memorable statement should forever give us a greater incite to Christianity. Though the pain of having the knowledge of man's sins were nearly overwhelming Jesus states, "*nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.*" Here is the spirit of humility defined. Life is filled with choices. I can choose directions that will make me feel good and benefit me in this life no matter how sinful those acts may be. I can too choose a life of being humbly directed by God's laws and ways. One direction represents my own personal will and the other the will of another (i.e., God). Paul had said, "*Know ye not, that to whom ye present yourselves as servants unto obedience, his servants ye are whom ye obey: whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?*" (Rom. 6:16). The prophet Micah said, "*He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doeth Jehovah require of thee, but to do justly, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with thy God*" (Micah 6:8). The spirit of Jesus was to do the will of God and so it should be ours (see study # 68)!
- D. "*And he cometh unto the disciples, and finding them sleeping, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak*" (26:40-41).
 1. The sorrow associated with the sins of mankind deeply moved Jesus to pray. He too appears to be concerned about His immediate disciples. They were told to wait for him watching and praying that they would not enter temptation; however, they were asleep. Jesus is somewhat amazed that his devoted friend Peter could not stay away for one hour to watch and pray.
 2. The importance of watchful and prayerful dispositions is depicted here. Jesus said, "*the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.*" When the tempting vices of discouragement and lust hit the mind that is governed by "*the law of sin and death*" one is left wallowing in sin. When one is led by the spirit of faith through the "*law of the Spirit of life*" then victory over sin is achieved (see Rom. 8:1-11). The spirit of man governed by God is willing to serve faithfully; however, the fleshly side of man is always there to battle the will of God. Herein we see the importance of watching and praying that the spirit of righteousness may prevail over our fleshly ways (see study # 87; Temptation).
- E. "*Again a second time he went away, and prayed, saying, My Father, if this cannot pass away, except I drink it, thy will be done*" (26:42).
 1. After the short discussion with the sleepy disciples Jesus goes again into the garden to pray.
 2. The only way the great sorrow of sin may be relieved was through the Lord's dying and initiation of a new covenant whereby man may be forgiven.
- F. "*And he came again and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. And he left them again, and went away, and prayed a third time, saying against the same words*" (26:43-44).
 1. Jesus comes a second time to the disciples and finds them sleeping and apparently lets them rest. At this hour of his greatest need he was alone with the Father.
 2. The Lord returns for a third time into the garden to pray again about the cup of sorrow regarding man's sins and his part in relieving that sorrow.
- G. "*Then cometh he to the 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. Arise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that betrays me*" (26:45-46).
 1. Jesus comes to his disciples for a third time now finding them asleep.
 2. The highly anticipated moment had now arrived. The anxiety over his impending death and his great sorrow over man's sins had now come to a head.

VII. The Betrayal and Arrest of Jesus (26:47-56):

- A. "*And while he yet spake, lo, Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with sword and staves, from the chief priests and elders of the people*" (26:47).
 1. Recall that it was the purpose of the chief priests and elders of the people to kill Jesus but not during the Passover Feast, "*lest a tumult arise among the people*" (Matt. 26:1-2). The majority

- of the people believed that Jesus was the longed for Messiah (cf. Matt. 21:8ff). The current day was Thursday evening and the first day of the Passover Feast.
2. What changed the minds of the elders and chief priests? Apparently they were successful in turning the multitude away from the Lord. There was obviously persuasive false teaching and rumors being spread that met its goal of dethroning Jesus in the minds of the people (cf. Matt. 27:20).
- B. *“Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that is he: take him. And straightway he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, Rabbi; and kissed him. And Jesus said unto him, Friend, do that for which thou art come. Then they came and laid hands on Jesus, and took him”* (26:48-50).
1. The Lord’s prediction regarding Judas’ betrayal has now taken place. No doubt all the disciples see Judas doing this deed. Judas had made an agreement with the elders and chief priest regarding the identity of Jesus. The one he kissed would be the man Jesus.
 2. Notice that Jesus does not run or hide but rather stands up to Judas and tells him to go through with his wicked plan.
- C. *“And behold, one of them that were with Jesus stretched out his hand, and drew his sword, and smote the servant of the high priest, and struck off his ear. Then saith Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into its place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword”* (26:51-52).
1. John tells us that it was Peter who struck off the servant’s ear (cf. Jn. 18:10) (see study # 66). The servant’s name was Malchus (Jn. 18:10). Peter was true to his word spoke earlier to Jesus when he said, *“Even if I must die with thee...”* (Matt. 26:35). Malchus must have been the first to lunge at Jesus to arrest him. Peter viewed this as an attack and thereby lashed out in a manner that displayed his willingness to fight to the death for the Christ.
 2. Jesus rebukes the deed of Peter. The sword is for kingdoms that perish. The sword is a physical weapon for physical kingdoms. Jesus’ kingdom is spiritual (cf. Jn. 18:36) and thereby its weapons are spiritual (cf. Eph. 6:10ff).
- D. *“Or thinkest thou that I cannot beseech my Father, and he shall even now send me more than twelve legions of angels? How then should the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?”* (26:53-54)
1. In order for a new covenant to be established blood must be shed (cf. Heb. 9:16-18). The blood that was predetermined before the foundation of the world was created was Christ’s blood (cf. Eph. 1:3ff). Jesus thereby said, *“It must be.”*
 2. The purpose of the heavenly Father was thereby to have His son’s blood shed for the remission of man’s sins. Jesus was to be the sacrificial lamb to bear the sins of the world. If they now fought against this divine and loving purpose of God how would the prophetic scriptures, such as Isaiah 53, ever be fulfilled? How would man ever have the opportunity to be forgiven?
 3. Once again we see the spiritual nature of the kingdom of God (i.e., the church). If God’s kingdom were a physical kingdom with physical purposes then certainly Jesus had at his disposal legions of angels. A *“legion”* (Gr. *legion*) = “used indefinitely for a great number” (Moulton 248). Twelve legions of angels would thereby be a great army (see study # 9).
- E. *“In that hour said Jesus to the multitudes, Are ye come out as against a robber with swords and staves to seize me? I sat daily in the temple teaching, and ye took me not. But all this is come to pass, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then all the disciples left him, and fled”* (26:55-56).
1. The dullness of the minds of men is depicted. Once they made up their minds to capture and kill Jesus there was no turning back. The previous miracles such as raising Lazarus from the dead and the current miracle of healing Malchus’ ear on the spot would not detour their purpose (see study # 88; Sin in Man’s Life).
 2. The mob equipped with swords and staves have approached Jesus as though he were a dangerous criminal who has robbed the people. Jesus puts before the people the real reason they are now apprehending him. He has taught them the truth and they are fulfilling prophecy.

Many disciples in the coming centuries of time shall be persecuted for the same reason; i.e., preaching truth in love.

3. Jesus now tells them the big picture; however, the dullness of their minds could not conceive the heinousness of the act that they were about to take part in. Jesus said that all these things currently taking place must be done so that the scriptures might be fulfilled. Did the mob consider these words at all? Certainly not. Their purpose was driven by anger and rage. Unknowingly thereby they were fulfilling God's divine purpose. The sovereignty of God is now depicted. God used the wickedness of this mob, the Jews, and the Romans to achieve His ultimate purpose of providing the forgiveness of sins for the world.
4. Lastly, note that at these sayings, "*all the disciples left him and fled.*" Confusion and fear settled in and they were not willing to be arrested with the Lord. Jesus had predicted this moment (cf. Matt. 26:31).

VIII. The Trial before the Sanhedrin Council (26:57-68):

- A. "*And they that had taken Jesus led him away to the house of Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were gathered together. But Peter followed him afar off, unto the court of the high priest, and entered in, and sat with the officers to see the end*" (26:57-58).
 1. John tells us that the Jews first took Jesus to Annas probably because in their mind he was the rightful high priest (Jn. 18:12). Annas then sends Jesus to Caiaphas where he is examined by the Sanhedrin Council.
 2. The mob brings Jesus to the house of Caiaphas that a judgment may be made regarding him (Apparently the council had assembled for this occasion). The Sanhedrin Council was "the supreme Jewish court of justice... it was comprised of the high priests, elders, scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees. According to the Mishna the number of members was seventy. The jurisdiction of the Sanhedrin was restricted in the time of Christ to the eleven districts of Judea proper; hence it had no judicial authority over Jesus, so long as he remained in Galilee, but only when he entered Judea" (Unger's Bible Dictionary pp. 1126-1127).
 3. Peter was able to enter into the court area of Caiaphas' house to watch the proceedings of the trial along with John (cf. Jn. 18:15).
- B. "*Now the chief priests and the whole council sought false witness against Jesus, that they might put him to death; and they found it not, though many false witnesses came. But afterward came two, and said, This man said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days. And the high priest stood up, and said unto him, Answerest thou nothing? What is it which these witness against thee?*" (26:59-62).
 1. The first order of business was to find an accusation against Jesus that would be the cause for his death. There were no shortage of witnesses that had derogatory things to say about Jesus; however, nothing of yet was a crime worthy of death.
 2. Then two witnesses come before the council and state that Jesus told them that he had the power to destroy the temple and then rebuild it in three days. No doubt this was a reference to the Lord's previous incite to the Jews destroying his temple body and his divine ability to raise it from the dead (cf. Jn. 2:19). To destroy the temple was to destroy what Jehovah God stood for. To make a claim or threat of destroying the temple would be a blasphemous statement to the Jews. The council now believes they are on to something. They ask Jesus what he has to say about such an accusation yet the Lord remains silent.
- C. "*But Jesus held his peace. And the high priest said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou art the Christ, the Son of God*" (26:63).
 1. The silence of Jesus only annoyed Caiaphas. The high priests then forces Jesus to speak in an attempt to incite the crowd to his level of anger. Here is the true matter as to their arrest and gathering against Jesus this night. His claims to be the Christ prophesied of in the OT was unacceptable to the high priest, elders, and chief priests. The Lord's miracles and good standing with the people displeased them (cf. Matt. 21:15). His stern rebukes against their

- wayward lives affronted them (Matt. 21:45-46). They were altogether offended by Jesus (cf. Matt. 15:12).
2. The pride of the high priests and Sanhedrin council is depicted here. Those who disagree with their manner of life, even if sinful, will not be tolerated. Like the prophets of old who exposed the people's sins were killed even so would it be with the Christ (cf. I Kings 19:10; Amos 2:12; Isa. 30:10; Matt. 23:31; Acts 7:52; Rev. 18:24).
 3. The "*Christ*" (Gr. *Christos*) = "anointed, the Christ, the Anointed One, the Messiah" (Moulton 439). The idea of the "*anointed*" one is depicted in Isaiah 45:1 where we find Cyrus as the "*anointed*" (Heb. *mashiyach* / Messiah) of God. Here the word simply means one consecrated (i.e., "to dedicate to a given goal or service... to have a sacred purpose" [AHD 312]). The divine service or sacred purpose given to Cyrus by God was to have them return to Jerusalem to rebuild the city, temple, and its walls. The divine service or sacred purpose given to Jesus, the Messiah prophesied of in the OT, was to set men free from the bondage of sin (cf. Jer. 31:31ff). God thereby "*anointed*" Christ with the Holy Spirit and power to accomplish this goal (cf. Acts 10:38). The question of the high priest is whether Jesus thinks that he is this anointed one (i.e., the Son of God come into the world to set men free from sin). The term "*Son of God*" and "*Christ*" (i.e., anointed or Messiah) were equivalent terms (cf. Matt. 16:16).
- D. "*Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Henceforth ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven*" (26:64).
1. The phrase, "*thou hast said*" is to answer yes to the high priests question; i.e. are you the Christ?
 2. Furthermore, Jesus' answer reminds them of the eternal purpose of the Messiah; i.e., to bring salvation to sinners. The Son of man shall at a future date that no man knows descend from the heavens to condemn the world of sinners and save the humble servants of God.
 3. Jesus affirms that he is the Messiah that shall one day judge the world.
- E. "*Then the high priest rent his garments, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy: what further need have we of witnesses? Behold, now ye have heard the blasphemy: what think ye? They answered and said, He is worthy of death*" (26:65-66).
1. Upon hearing Jesus accept the title of Messiah and laying claims to coming in the clouds to judge the dead and living as God the high priest, Caiaphas, rents his clothes in disbelief. Caiaphas charges Jesus with speaking words of blasphemy. The punishment for blasphemy was death (cf. the incident in Leviticus 24:10ff where it was determined by Moses that the half Egyptian half Israelite was to be stoned for his blasphemy).
 2. The Sanhedrin Court ruler (i.e., Caiaphas) did not pause to consider with his fellow council members the great miracles and teachings that Jesus performed and taught. Neither did any pause to examine the life and actions of Christ to see whether his claims were true. Where was the spirit of wisdom with these men? The rash condemning reaction, on the part of Caiaphas, prejudiced the judgment of the other council members before they had a chance to consider the matter. Caiaphas, after outwardly condemning Jesus, turns to the other council members and asks, "*what think ye?*" Having already been incited to anger by Caiaphas and their previous experiences with Jesus they uniformly answer, "*He is worthy of death.*"
- F. "*Then did they spit in his face and buffet him: and some smote him with the palms of their hands, saying, Prophecy unto us, thou Christ: who is he that struck thee?*" (26:67-68).
1. This was Jesus God (Jn. 1:1; I Jn. 5:20). Jesus was the creator of all things of the universe (cf. Col. 1:16; Rev. 4:11; 10:6). All things are thereby subject to him. The Lord has authority over the physical elements of the world (Matt. 8:25-27; 14:26-27), demons (Matt. 8:30-32), sickness, diseases, and physical deformities (9:20-21, 29-31; 12:13-14), and life itself (9:18-19). The Lord also commanded animals (Matt. 17:27; Jonah 2:10) and they obey his voice. Not only does all of nature and humanity obey the voice of God (cf. Nahum 1:4-7) but the kingdoms of men are subject to the sovereign will of God (cf. Isa. 10:5-6, 24ff; Jer. 51:7, 20). Knowing these things the high priests, elders, chief priest, Pharisees, scribes, Sadducees, and all else

ought to have been terrified at their involvement in this shameful treatment of the Lord of glory. They were spitting and striking Jehovah God... a God of fierce anger and wrath (cf. Nahum 1:6). Yet on this occasion we see the love and mercy of God. Indeed He is “*slow to anger*” (Nahum 1:3).

2. All these events would take place that the scriptures might be fulfilled. Isaiah said, “*He was oppressed, yet when he was afflicted he opened not his mouth; as a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and as a sheep that before its shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth*” (Isa. 53:7).

IX. Peter’s Denies Association with Jesus on Three Occasions (26:69-75):

- A. “*Now Peter was sitting without in the court: and a maid came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus the Galilean. But he denied before them all, saying, I know not what thou sayest*” (26:69-70).
 1. Luke records that this event took place when the mob had taken Jesus to Annas. Peter replied to the woman’s identifying him as a disciple of Jesus by saying, “*Woman, I know him not*” (Lk. 22:57) (see study # 66).
 2. John’s account is very revealing (read Jn. 18:15-17).
- B. “*And when he was gone out into the porch, another maid saw him, and saith unto them that were there, This man also was with Jesus of Nazareth. And again he denied with an oath, I know not the man*” (26:71-72).
 1. A second occasion confronts Peter with the opportunity to deny Jesus (i.e., was offended by Jesus cf. Matt. 26:31).
 2. Peter retreats to the porch after the woman who was to let Peter in to witness the trial of Jesus accuses him of being a disciple of Jesus. John 18:25 states that Peter was warming himself by a fire with others present. Matthew tells us that when Peter was accused of being a disciple of Jesus that he swore an oath that he was not who they thought that he was. Where has all of Peter’s zeal and conviction gone? Like many of us today, this great zealous disciple of Christ was offended by the Lord because it meant persecution. None of us actually relish the idea of being singled out as some sort of religious quack or holy roller. We often fold under the pressure of human preconceived ideas of religion (see study # 89). We are aware of the world’s ideology of theology and thereby cave in to defeat when asked to stand up and speak out. Said actions will reveal that we are different than the majority and popular opinion about spirituality. We stand to loose friendships, jobs, homes, and even families in some cases.
- C. “*And after a little while they that stood by came and said to Peter, of a truth thou also art one of them; for thy speech makes thee known. Then began he to curse and to swear, I know not the man. And straightway the cock crew. And Peter remembered the word which Jesus had said, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly*” (26:73-75).
 1. Had Peter thought upon his sin of denying the Christ? John uses the same Greek word to depict Peter’s “*denial*” of Jesus at I John 2:22 and John 18:25-27. John writes, “*Who is the liar but he that denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, even he that denies the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: he that confesseth the Son hath the Father also*” (I Jn. 2:22-23). Peter had displayed a spirit of a liar and antichrist. Many believe that John speaks of a simple denying that Jesus is who he claimed to be; i.e., the Son of God. This denial; however, goes much deeper than this. Peter was not denying that Jesus was the Christ he was denying any associations with him. Note that to “*not have the Father*” of I John 2:22-23 is equivalent to not holding to the teachings of Jesus (II Jn. 9ff).
 2. Was Peter’s Galilean dialect detected? Peter’s Christian speech as opposed to the worldliness he was around may have been a distinguishing characteristic that was noted. What ever the case a kinsmen of Malchus did identify Peter. Peter’s reply was designed to further disassociate himself with Jesus. Peter began to curse and swear that he did not know Jesus at all. At that very moment (as the cock crew), “*the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And*

Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how that he said unto him, Before the cock crow this day thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly” (Lk. 22:61-62).

3. Why did Peter go away and weep bitterly? Knowing Peter’s life to this point and the rest of his life as an apostle of Jesus Christ it is apparent that the world of guilt crashed hard upon his mind. To sin and have Jesus look upon you is more than the human mind can take. Peter’s love for Christ was much stronger than he had now acted. He knew that his faith was greater than what he had publicly displayed and it bothered him greatly. Peter’s tears were those of anguish over his failing the Lord. How many similar tears have you and I shed when faced with our sin? (see study # 88).

Chapter 27

I. Jesus Condemned and Judas Hangs Himself (27:1-10):

A. *“Now when morning was come, all the chief priests and the elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death: and they bound him, and led him away, and delivered him up to Pilate the governor” (27:1-2).*

1. Early Friday morning (between 3:00 and 6:00 AM / the first watch) the chief priests and elders have another meeting to discuss how they might have Jesus put to death. The Sanhedrin knew that this would be no easy tasks due to the fact that Pilate, being a Roman heathen, cared nothing about blasphemy against Jehovah God. Their plan would have to be calculated to achieve its purpose in a Roman court. Luke tells us the outcome of the Council’s plan. When the Jewish council brought Jesus to Pilate they said, *“We found this man perverting our nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, and saying that he himself is Christ a king” (Lk. 23:1-2).*
2. Pontius Pilate was the Roman governor of Judea for ten years (i.e., 26 to 36 AD). During Pilate’s last year as governor, he was guilty of slaughtering many Samaritans who had tried to excavate holy vessels of Moses off of Mount Gerizim. Pilate was sent to Rome and there, probably after being pronounced guilty and thereby condemned, he killed himself.

B. *“Then Judas, who betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, I have sinned in that I betrayed innocent blood. But they said, What is that to us? See thou to it” (27:3-4).*

1. Judah repented (i.e., changed his mind regarding betraying Jesus) *“when he saw that he was condemned.”* The condemnation of Jesus spoken of here is likely the final sentence against the Lord made by Pilate. Matthew is not discussing chronology here but rather telling his readers what became of Judas. The sight of the condemnation of Jesus was more than he could bear knowing the Lord and all that he had done. Judas admits his sin and returns the thirty pieces of silver (the money he was paid to identify Jesus).
2. Judas is revealed to be a devil (Jn. 6:70), thief (Jn. 12:6), and betrayer of Jesus (Matt. 27:3). He certainly went to his own place (Acts 1:25).
3. Note the attitude of the chief priests and elders when Judas comes to them feeling guilty. They said, *“What is that to us?”* So what! We really don’t care. We paid you to do a deed and it is done not be gone (see study # 90; The Chief priests and Elders).

C. *“And he cast down the pieces of silver into the sanctuary, and departed; and he went away and hanged himself” (27:5).*

1. When the chief priest and elders replied in such a manner that showed their lack of concern for Judas’ sin he threw the money onto the floor of the sanctuary (see study # 91; Judas). The guilt and anguish of Judas appears to be similar to what Peter experienced after denying the Lord. The difference is that Peter determined to do better while Judas, being overwhelmed with the guilt, hung himself and died. When the anguish of guilt due to our sin strikes it is because the word of God has revealed our actions as wrong. Rather than ending our lives due to our guilt let us humbly asks God to forgive us of our trespasses (cf. I Jn. 1:8-10).

2. Luke records in the book of Acts that Judas *“fell headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out”* (Acts 1:18). There is no contradiction here. It is most probable that Judas hurriedly hanged himself and the rope either broke or came undone sending Judas falling to his death on the rocks.
- D. *“And the chief priests took the pieces of silver, and said, It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, since it is the price of blood. And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter’s field, to bury strangers in. Wherefore that field was called, the field of blood, unto this day”* (27:6-8).
 1. Money gained by criminal means was not to be offered to Jehovah God (cf. Deut. 23:18).
 2. The admission on the part of the chief priests and elders that the money was *“the price of blood”* and not fit for the treasury indicts them of their error. Yet in a deluded state of mind they no doubt considered this Judas’ conviction and not theirs. Nonetheless, if Judas felt this way then the money should not be given to Jehovah seeing that it was his.
 3. The chief priests thereby took the money and bought a field to bury strangers in.
- E. *“Then was fulfilled that which was spoken through Jeremiah the prophet, saying, and they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was priced, whom certain of the children of Israel did price; and they gave them for the potter’s field, as the Lord appointed me”* (27:9-10).
 1. Let us recall that Matthew is the writer of fulfilled prophecy. Jesus meets every OT prophecy and fulfills it.
 2. This passage; however, poses difficulties due to the fact that Jeremiah nowhere writes anything close to this statement.
 3. There are two real possibilities. First, it is probable that this was an unrecorded statement of Jeremiah’s. Secondly, it may be that the scribes copying the manuscripts mistook the Greek Jeremiah (i.e., Iriou) for the Greek Zechariah (Zriou). Zechariah has a similar statement at 11:12-13.

II. Jesus stands before Pontius Pilate and Herod (27:11-14):

- A. *“Now 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”* (27:11).
 1. Luke tells us that the chief priests and elders accused Jesus of perverting the Jewish nation, not paying taxes to Caesar, and setting himself forth as a king (cf. Lk. 23:1). John tells us that they brought Jesus to the Praetorium but that the Jews would not enter in that they be not defiled by Gentiles during the time of Passover (Jn. 18:28-35). The Jews thereby made their accusations from outside the Praetorium and Pilate would go inside to question Jesus. The Praetorium was the “official residence of the Roman governors in various cities in the provinces... Jn. 19:13 states that outside the praetorium proper was an area known as The Pavement (Aramaic *Gabbatha*). In this area was located the Judgment Seat (Greek / *bema*) where Pilate was seated when he conversed with the Jews” (ISBE v. 3, pp. 929).
 2. John also records the conversation between Jesus and Pilate. When Pilate asked Jesus if he were the king of the Jews the Lord answered in the affirmative. Jesus assures Pilate; however, that his kingdom *“is not of this world...”* (Jn. 18:36). Jesus was king of a spiritual kingdom and it would in no way try to overtake the Roman Empire (see study # 9).
- B. *“And when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing. Then saith Pilate unto him, Hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee? And he gave him no answer, not even to one word: insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly”* (27:12-14).
 1. As the Jews hurled false charges against Jesus to Pilate the Lord remained silent. The Lord’s silence caused the Roman governor to marvel greatly. It may be that Jesus’ overall demeanor, considering the grave situation, was the cause of Pilate’s marveling. Jesus did not show anger, impatience, desperateness, or even fear.
 2. Isaiah had written, *“He was oppressed, yet when he was afflicted he opened not his mouth; as a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and as a sheep that before its shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth”* (Isa. 53:7).

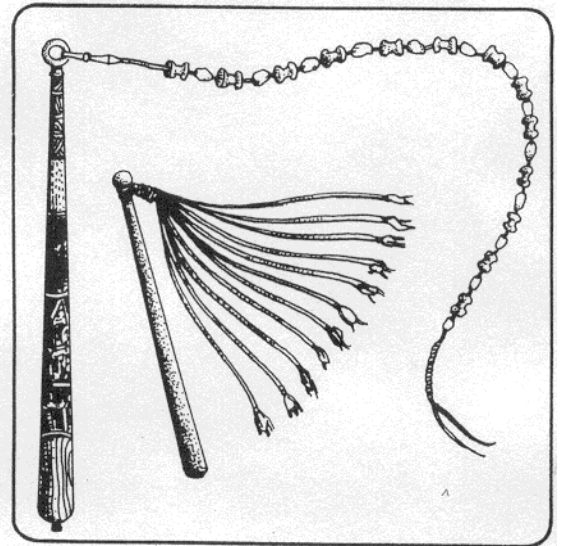
3. Luke tells us that it is at this time that Pilate finds out that Jesus was a Galilean and thereby subject to the jurisdiction of Herod. Herod just happened to be visiting Jerusalem at the time. Pilate thereby sends Jesus to Herod to be questioned of him; however, the Lord answered him nothing (cf. Lk. 23:5-12).
4. Herod sends Jesus back to Pilate.

III. Pilate attempts to release Jesus (27:15-26):

- A. *“Now at the feast the governor was wont to release unto the multitude one prisoner, whom they would. And they had then a notable prisoner, called Barabbas”* (27:15-16).
 1. To secure popularity among the Jews the Roman governor made it a custom to release one Jewish prisoner during the Passover Feast time.
 2. Barabbas was one who had earlier been jailed for insurrection in the city and was guilty of murder (cf. Lk. 23:19).
 3. Herein was Pilate’s mistake. The governor places the fate of Jesus in the hands of the people and thereby the trial is really out of his control from this point on.
- B. *“When therefore they were gathered together, Pilate said unto them, Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ? For he knew that for envy they had delivered him up”* (27:17-18).
 1. Pilate brings before the people both Barabbas and Jesus and gives them a choice as to who should be released. The reason for this action was that Pilate *“knew that for envy they had delivered him up.”* The word *“envy”* (*phthonos*) = “envy, jealousy, spite” (Moulton 425)... “ill will” toward another (LS 861).
 2. Why did Pilate give the people a choice between a murderer and one that he knew the people had ill-will, spite, and jealousy toward? Surely he knew that such a mindset would choose the insurrectionist and murderer over the one they had such hateful feelings toward. The answer to this question seems to be found in the character of Pilate. He was so worried about appeasing the popular consent that he was willing to forgo his own judgment and conscience over the matter. His Roman post meant more to him than a man’s life.
- C. *“And while he was sitting on the judgment-seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that righteous man; for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him”* (27:19).
 1. The Lord had in times past visited His prophets through dreams (cf. Dan. 7:1ff). Divine revelation was thereby so revealed. Pilate’s wife was apparently visited by the Lord in some way and He gave her a dream about the current trial.
 2. Pilate’s wife saw that Jesus was a righteous man and not deserving of death. Pilate had already set Jesus’ fate; however, by placing the decision into the hands of the people rather than standing firm as a political leader and making the decision himself.
- D. *“Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the multitudes that they should ask for Barabbas, and destroy Jesus. But the governor answered and said unto them, Which of the two will ye that I release unto you? And they said, Barabbas”* (27:20-21).
 1. Time and persuasive teaching have the power to change things at a rapid pace. The chief priests and elders had determined to kill Jesus yet feared the people at Matthew 26:4-5. Now, through persuasive coercion, the multitudes have turned against Jesus (compare John 18:28 with Matt. 26:5). To ask for a murderer and thief over the Lord of glory is to truly be persuaded in a wrong direction.
 2. Jesus was no stranger to quick shifts in his popularity. At John 6 the multitudes left off following him due to his hard sayings. Jesus turns to the immediate disciples and gives them a chance to turn away from him too yet they remained with him (cf. Jn. 6:63-68).
- E. *“Pilate saith unto them, What then shall I do unto Jesus who is called Christ? They all say, Let him be crucified. And he said, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out exceedingly, saying, Let him be crucified”* (27:22-23).

1. Crucifixion was the Roman punishment for slaves, foreigners, and robbers. Josephus records that crucifixion was “the most wretched of deaths.” The one crucified was generally tortured to some extent by flogging before actually being put upon the cross (this would hasten death and reduce the extreme agony associated with the cross). The victim was to carry the cross beam of the cross to the location of his crucifixion. The victim would be placed upon the already erected and upright beam. A small wooden block or peg protruded out of the beam so that the victim’s body may rest upon it. This was important so that the weight of the body did not tear nails out of the hands. Once placed upon the cross the victim remained there exposed to elements, flies, insects, birds, and human mockery. The average time of death on the cross was 36 hours. The victim would generally die of gradual suffocation brought on by fatigue (for more info read the ISBE v. 1, pp. 825-830).
 2. The Jews are now completely agreed upon the fate of Jesus. They “*all say, Let him be crucified.*” Pilate answers, “*Why, what evil hath he done?*” To this point Pilate has found nothing in Jesus worthy of death. Pilate views Jesus as an innocent man that has no evil. His weak and perverted character is found in that he condemned an innocent man to death. Yes he tried but the ultimate decision belonged to him and he allowed fear of the multitudes to be his final guide.
 3. The people’s hatred seems to grow as they again shout out, “*Let him be crucified.*”
- F. “*So when Pilate saw that he prevailed nothing, but rather that a tumult was arising, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this righteous man; see ye to it. And all the people answered and said, His blood be on us, and on our children. Then released he unto them Barabbas; but Jesus he scourged and delivered to be crucified*” (27:24-26).

1. It seems that this event took place after Pilate had attempted to appease the people by scourging and another brief conversation with Jesus (cf. Jn. 19:1-16). When Pilate heard the accusations that he sets himself against Caesar he gave in and washed his hands of the innocent blood of Jesus. Pilate certainly tried to do many things to have Christ released; however, they were all done in a spineless manner. As governor of the Roman province he had the power to say no yet his fear of the multitudes drove him to give them the final say.
2. The people, without conscience, tell Pilate that they will bear the responsibility of the blood of Jesus. Jesus had predicted that this generation would be responsible for the spilling of much righteous blood (cf. Matt. 23:33-36).
3. Jesus was thereby “*scourged.*” The scourge was a “beating with leather straps or rods as a form of punishment... Particularly cruel was the use of a special whip, probably with bone or rock on the ends of the thongs, called the ‘scorpion’ due to its potential to inflict a painful sting” (ISBE v. 4, pp. 358 / see picture above).



IV. Jesus is prepared for Crucifixion (27:27-32):

- A. “*Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the Praetorium, and gathered unto him the whole band. And they stripped him and put on him a scarlet robe. And they platted a crown of thorns and put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand; and they kneeled down before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews!*” (27:27-29).
1. Once the condemning sentence had been passed Jesus went to the Praetorium for more torturous treatment. The Roman soldiers take Jesus back into the Praetorium and there they

strip him of his clothing and put a royal garment on him to ridicule and mock him. A crown of thorns is pressed into his head and they placed a reed in his right hand. The soldiers actually enjoy their mockery and inhumane treatment of Jesus. They bow down to him and decry, "Hail, King of the Jews!" (see comparison to John 19:1ff).

2. No doubt they all laughed together at this occasion with a spirit of callous and cold heartedness. The soldiers were not bothered by the fact that Jesus was about to die a gruesome death upon the cross.
- B. *"And they spat upon him, and took the reed and smote him on the head. And when they had mocked him, they took off from him the robe, and put on him his garments, and led him away to crucify him. And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name: him they compelled to go with them, that he might bear his cross"* (27:30-32).
1. The soldiers continue to enjoy themselves in these acts of debauchery against a human being. The soldiers spit upon the Lord out of disgust and bitter hatred for him. They are not even familiar with him yet they care nothing for the apparent weak and beggarly. When they complete their fun they put the Lord's clothes back on him and send him out to be crucified.
 2. Jesus has been up all night. John tells us that it is now about the sixth hour (Jn. 19:14). While it was the Roman practice for the victim to carry his own cross it appears that Jesus was so weakened by the scourging and mocking of the soldiers that he had no more strength left him to carry the cross. The soldiers randomly pick out Simon to carry the Lord's cross.

V. **The Crucifixion of Jesus (27:33-50):**

- A. *"And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, The place of a skull, they gave him wine to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted it, he would not drink"* (27:33-34).
1. Just outside of the Damascus Gate (North side of Jerusalem) is a hill that resembles a skull. The hill is called Calvary (Latin), Kranion (Greek), and Golgotha (Hebrew). Matthew does not record the conversation between Jesus and the mourning multitudes (cf. Lk. 23:27-31). Secondly the two other malefactors that were crucified with Jesus had also taken the trek from their imprisonments to Golgotha with Jesus (cf. Lk. 23:32).
 2. Matthew tells us that wine mingled with gall was offered to Jesus. Mark tells us that the other part of the mixture was myrrh (Mk. 15:23). Gall is defined as "bitterness... a bitter ingredient in the analgesic (something that numbs pain) potion... (given to Christ)" (ISBE v. 2; pp. 392). Myrrh is "drugged wine... or a perfumed resinous substance" (ISBE v. 3, pp. 450). Apparently, just before the Lord was to be crucified, he was offered a mercy drink to dull his senses to the pain he was about to suffer. Jesus taste the gall and then rejected it.
- B. *"And when they had crucified him, they parted his garments among them, casting lots"* (27:35).
1. Matthew does not record the statement of Jesus on the cross; i.e., *"Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do"* (Lk. 23:34). Neither does Matthew record the conversation between Jesus and his mother Mary (cf. Jn. 19:25-27).
 2. The parting of the Lord's garments fulfilled an OT prophecy found in Psalms 22:18 (cf. Jn. 18:23-24).
 3. Mark tells us that it was the third hour of the day that Jesus was crucified (cf. Mk. 15:25). John; however, tells us that it was the sixth hour (cf. Jn. 19:14). This discrepancy may be explained in that the Jews divided their days into four sections; i.e., 6 to 9, 9 to 12, 12 to 3, and 3 to 6. Mark's "third hour of the day" was likely the third section of the day which would begin at 12:00 noon. Another explanation is that as both John and Mark used the same Roman method of keeping time (i.e., the third hour would be 6:00 AM and the sixth 9:00 AM). There was about a three hour time frame existing from the sentence of crucifixion and the actual death.
- C. *"and they sat and watched him there"* (27:36).
1. The Roman soldiers sat and watched over Jesus after casting lots for his garments.

2. The public's contrasting views of Jesus gave way to a situation that could get out of control. The guards were under the practice of staying with the prisoner till death to see to it that no one relieved the prisoner's agony.
- D. *"And they set up over his head his accusation written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS"* (27:37).
1. John tells us that Pilate wrote this "*accusation*" over the head of Jesus (Jn. 19:19). The crime of Jesus was that he was the "*KING OF THE JEWS*."
 2. When the chief priests saw this, they request that Pilate remove it however Pilate refused their request saying, "*What I have written I have written*" (Jn. 19:22).
- E. *"Then are there crucified with him two robbers, one on the right hand and one on the left"* (27:38).
1. John also tells us that Jesus was in the middle of the two malefactors upon their crosses on Calvary (cf. Jn. 19:18).
 2. This illustrates the fact that Jesus was treated and died as a common criminal. Isaiah wrote, "*He poured out his soul unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors*" (Isa. 53:12).
- F. *"And they that passed by railed on him, wagging their heads, and saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself: if thou art the Son of God, come down from the cross"* (27:39-40).
1. To "*rail*" (*blasphemeo*) is to speak ill of another. Many passed by and "*wagged their heads*" in disapproval of Jesus' claims, teachings, and actions. The dying Jesus was proof to many that he was an imposter Christ.
 2. With a spirit of antagonism and disbelief some say that if you are the Christ then show us your power and come off the cross. Others remembered that the Lord had predicted that the temple in Jerusalem would be destroyed and rebuilt in three days (cf. Jn. 2:19) (Jesus was of course talking about his death and resurrection; however, the people thought that he spoke of Herod's temple).
- G. *"In like manner also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said, He saved others; himself he cannot save. He is the King of Israel; let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe on him"* (27:41-42).
1. Not only have they railed at Jesus but they mock him. To "*mock*" (*empaizo*) = "to mock (to treat with ridicule or contempt; deride)" (LS 254).
 2. The chief priests, elders, and scribes stand by looking up at the dying Jesus and say with a spirit of ridicule "*He saved others; himself he cannot save.*" The ridiculing and contemptuous remarks while Jesus hangs upon the cross were designed to comfort their own minds. They were responsible for murdering an innocent man. Yet in the minds of the chief priests, elders, and scribes Jesus was worthy of death because he was an imposter. If he cannot save himself then he must have never saved anyone else as was so widely reported. If Jesus were truly the Messiah (Anointed King of Israel foretold of in the Old Testament) (see study # 8) then "*let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe on him.*" What a poor attitude!
- H. *"He trusted on God; let him deliver him now, if he desires him: for he said, I am the Son of God. And the robbers also that were crucified with him cast upon him the same reproach"* (27:43-44).
1. The foolishness continues from the mouth of many who stood by watching Jesus die. We are reminded of the repeated foolish complaining and murmuring statements of the Israelites when God led them out of Egypt, to Sinai, and on into Canaan. The Lord performed many mighty miracles in their site yet they continued in their complaining (see Exodus). Though Jesus performed many magnificent miracles some continue to call upon him to perform one more that they might believe. Their faithlessness in the face of notable miracles is astonishing to us.
 2. Apparently the two robbers begin by joining in with the ridicule as they hung upon the cross; however, through time one of them begins to see his error (see Luke 23:39-43).
- I. *"Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour"* (27:45).
1. Matthew apparently uses the Jewish method of keeping time (i.e., from evening to evening). The sixth hour would have been 12:00 noon. Recall that Mark had said that it was the 3rd hour

- that Christ was crucified (i.e., 9:00 AM) (cf. Mk. 15:25). John used the Roman method of keeping time saying that it was the 6th hour (i.e., 6:00 AM) (the time for Pilate's trial and the scourging lasted 3 hours i.e., Jesus was on the cross by 9:00 AM Friday morning) (see Jn. 19:14).
2. The sixth hour (i.e., 12:00 noon) to the ninth hour (i.e., 3:00 PM) was a three hour period of darkness. Why darkness? God miraculously caused darkness to cover Jerusalem (much like the days of the plagues over Egypt). The word of God does not tell us why this took place yet fear surely settled in to the hearts of all who witnessed the days events.
- J. *“And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, Lama sabachthani? That is, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”* (27:46).
1. Though the hour was 3:00 in the afternoon the miraculous darkness continued. Jesus then cried out into the darkness asking God why He had “*forsaken*” him. To “*forsake*” (*egkatalaipo*) = “to leave behind... to leave in the lurch” (LS 221). In what way did God **forsake** Jesus in this hour of great anguish? David wrote, “*My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*” at Psalms 22:1 in relation to his pain and God's seemingly being far from helping him. Jesus too was experiencing pain and it seemed that Jehovah was far away from helping. Some believe that Jesus was repenting of sins at this time. This; however, could not possibly be because Jesus never one time sinned (see Heb. 4:14-16). Jesus was perfect in every way as deity on this earth. This being the case, what was Jesus saying then?
 2. Suffice it to say that Jesus bore the sins of the world upon the cross (Heb. 9:28). He was dying for those to whom the stroke was due (Isa. 53:8). The price of man's redemption was the perfect blood of the Son of God. Sin, death, and Satan were being defeated at this moment. Jesus' expression of God “*forsaking*” him (i.e., leaving him behind) had to do with the event itself. The crucifixion of Jesus meant the redemption of mankind. Redemption is the central theme of the entire Bible. The moment of God's saving grace had come to the world. As Jesus hung on the cross God would in no way help him. To help Jesus in the form of aiding him from his persecutors would be to go against all that God had promised in relation to man's redemption. The suffering of being beaten and nailed to a cross and left to die a slow and agonizing death was the PRICE THAT HAD TO BE PAID FOR SIN. The picture is one of a father sitting back doing nothing as his own son is being beat and killed. The father has the ability to wipe out every one of the evil men who are doing this to his son but he does nothing. Why did God do nothing to save Jesus? God did nothing to save Jesus because he wanted to save all of us by His son's death. There was a high price paid for man to have the opportunity to be forgiven of sins. Thanks be to God for his love (see the classic verse at John 3:16).
 3. To ask such a question, on the part of Jesus, was to give another illustration of his humanity. Jesus was human all the way to death. Jesus had earlier asked God the Father, “*O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.*” (Matt. 26:39-42). Though Jesus was deity, and knew of his great mission, he experienced the human emotion of anxiety over the matter. Here was a son who was being shamefully treated by wicked men as his father stood nearby and watched. The son naturally calls out for help from the father. On this occasion; however, the father does not give help but rather turns away. What was being done was necessary for the eternal good of humanity. When Jesus cried out, “*My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me*” he illustrated the distinct person that he represents in the Godhead and he showed the world how great God's love is toward us as His created beings. Consider the words of the apostle John: “*Herein was the love of God manifested in us, that God hath sent his only begotten Son into the world that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another*” (I Jn. 4:9-10).
- K. *“And some of them that stood there, when they heard it, said, This man calls Elijah. 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. And the rest said, Let be; let us see whether Elijah comes to save him” (27:47-49).

1. Jesus’ call to the heavenly Father was mistaken by many who believed that Jesus was calling out for Elijah to save him. Jesus then said, “*I thirst*” (cf. Jn. 19:28-29). One in the crowd runs to get vinegar for the Lord as if to prolong his life to see if Elijah would come to save him (cf. Mk. 15:36).
2. The “*vinegar*” (*oxos*) = “probably the Roman posca, a mixture of water, egg, and vinegar that was effective in quenching thirst and popular among soldiers and the poor” (ISBE, vol. 4, pp. 987).
- L. “*And Jesus cried again with a loud voice, and yielded up his spirit*” (27:50).
 1. Jesus first cried with a loud voice, “*It is finished*” (Jn. 19:30) and then, “*Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit*” (Lk. 23:46).
 2. All things that lead to this moment; i.e., man’s sin, God’s promise to save man through the seed of Abraham, and all the prophecy regarding the Christ had now been completed. The death of Jesus meant the fulfillment of God’s promise to redeem man from their sins. Indeed it was finished (see study # 92; The Promise of God).
 3. Jesus voluntarily died upon the cross and thus yielding his spirit unto the Father.
 4. Consider sequence of events:
 - a. Thursday evening the disciples participate in the Passover meal with the Lord.
 - b. Early Friday morning Jesus goes to the garden of Gethsemane with his disciples to pray.
 - c. The Lord is apprehended by the mob led by Judas.
 - d. Jesus was crucified at 6:00 AM Friday morning (Mk. 15:25).
 - e. A miraculous darkness shadowed the land while Jesus was on the cross from 12:00 noon till 3:00 PM (Matt. 27:45-50).
 - f. Jesus died at 3:00 PM and immediately there was a tearing of the temple’s veil, quaking of the earth, rocks torn in half, and tombs opened (Matt. 27:51ff; Lk. 23:48).

II. **Events that transpired immediately after Jesus’ Death (27:51-56):**

- A. “*And behold, the veil of the temple was rent in two from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake; and the rocks were rent;*” (27:51).
 1. Immediately after Jesus died “*the veil of the temple rent in two from the top to the bottom.*” There is thereby an obvious connection between the tearing of the veil and the crucifixion of Jesus. The veil of the temple was the curtain that separated the holy place from the most holy place (i.e., divided it into two compartments / cf. Ex. 26:31-33). The high priest alone was allotted entrance into the most holy place once per year on the Day of Atonement. The tearing of the veil likely symbolized Jesus new position of high priest and our newly acquired access unto the holy of holies (i.e., the presence of Jehovah God) through the forgiveness of our sins (see Hebrews 10:19-22). Another meaning of the tearing of the veil is that the temple system of worship (i.e., the Mosaic Law) was now ending (cf. Col. 2:14-15).
 2. Secondly, not only did the veil of the temple miraculously tear but the earth quaked and rocks were torn apart. Such an event would have been noticed and felt by all. A literal shaking of the earth by God occurred as His Son died upon the cross for the sins of the world. Haggai foretold of Zerubbabel being in the lineage of Jesus and God and in relation to his coming God would, “*shake the heavens and the earth*” (Hag. 2:20). Again, all present must have been filled with terror.
- B. “*and the tombs were opened; and many bodies of the saints that had fallen asleep were raised; and coming forth out of the tombs after his resurrection they entered into the holy city and appeared unto many*” (27:52-53).
 1. Matthew now records what happens after Jesus was raised from the dead. He perhaps inserts this information here for the sake of mentioning all the miracles associated with Christ’s death.

2. These resurrected bodies entered into the city of Jerusalem and appeared unto many. Did these men and women remain alive as did Lazarus? How many were there? Who were they? Matthew does not give us the answer to these questions.
- C. *“Now the centurion, and they that were with him watching Jesus, when they saw the earthquake, and the things that were done, feared exceedingly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God” (27:54).*
1. The centurion was the captain of 100 soldiers. The centurion’s job would be to stay with Jesus until he died. When this man and the others that were with him watching Jesus, saw the three hours of darkness, the quaking of the earth, and the tearing of the veil in the temple became exceedingly fearful.
 2. The purpose of miracles is to confirm truth and produce faith (cf. Mk. 16:20). God performed these miraculous deeds and a heathen proclaims, *“Truly this was the Son of God.”*
- D. *“And many women were there beholding from afar, who had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto him: among whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee” (27:55-56).*
1. Not only Jesus’ close disciples such as John but also many faithful women who grew to love Jesus stayed with him until the end.

III. The Burial of Jesus (27:57-61):

- A. *“And when even was come, there came a rich man from Arimathaea, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus’ disciple: this man went to Pilate, and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded it to be given up” (27:57-58).*
1. Jesus died at about the 9th hour of the day (i.e., 3:00 PM). His dead body hung upon the cross for a few more hours (when even was come). It was the custom of the Romans to leave the dead body upon the cross to rot; however, Pilate grants Joseph’s request to bury Jesus.
 2. Joseph was rich, from Arimathaea (the same birthplace as Samuel / I Sam. 1:19), and one who sought after the kingdom of God. Mark writes of Joseph that he was *“a councilor of honorable estate, who also himself was looking for the kingdom of God; and he boldly went in unto Pilate, and asked for the body of Jesus”* (Mk. 15:43). Luke states that Joseph was a *“good and righteous man (he had not consented to their counsel and deed)”* (Lk. 23:50-51). John tells us that he was a disciple of Jesus’ (Jn. 19:38).
- B. *“And Joseph took the body, and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, 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 tomb, and departed. And Mary Magdalene was there, and the other Mary, sitting over against the sepulcher” (27:59-61).*
1. John tells us that Nicodemus helped Joseph embalm the body of Jesus with *“a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds”* (Jn. 19:39). This mixture would serve two purposes in the embalming process. First, the myrrh and aloes served to prevent decay of the body. Secondly, the mixture was designed to be a fragrance so that the body would not stink during decay that would naturally occur.
 2. After Joseph and Nicodemus complete the process of embalming the body of Jesus they close him up in the tomb and seal it with a great stone. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary remain behind to pay their respects toward their departed Lord.

IV. The Chief priests and Pharisees request a guard be placed over the body of Jesus (27:62-66):

- A. *“Now on the morrow, which is the day after the Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees were gathered together unto Pilate, saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said while he was yet alive, After three days I rise again” (27:62-63).*
1. The chief priests and Pharisees were witnesses of the three hour darkness, the earth quaking, the rocks being torn in half, and the temple’s veil being torn at the death of Jesus. Could it be that they were now fearful that the Lord’s predictions of his resurrection might come to pass? Jesus had said that he would die and raise from the dead (cf. Matt. 12:40; Jn. 10:15-18).

2. Fearing Christ's resurrection and the great faith that this would produce in the people they asks Pilate for a Roman guard over the tomb of Jesus. Their remarks to Pilate were that they believed some devout Jews would steal the body of Jesus and claim that it had been resurrected.
- B. *“Command therefore that the sepulcher be made sure until the third day, lest haply his disciples come and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: and the last error will be worse than the first. Pilate said unto the, Ye have a guard: go, make it as sure as ye can. So they went, and made the sepulcher sure, sealing the stone, the guard being with them”* (27:64-66).
1. The Lord's tomb was made “*sure*” and the stone that would be rolled in front of the tomb was “*sealed*.” To be made *sure* is to “make safe and sure” (LS 127).
 2. The tomb was made safe and sure by “*sealing*” (*sphragizo*) the tomb. To “*seal*” is to “seal (An adhesive agent, as wax or putty, used to close or secure something or to prevent seepage of moisture or air)” (LS 786).

Here are a few events that Matthew did not record:

- The Lord's conversation with the crowd on the way to Golgotha (Lk. 23:27-31).
- Jesus being accompanied by two other prisoners (Lk. 23:32).
- Jesus' statement on the cross; i.e., “*Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do...*” (Lk. 23:34).
- The conversation between Jesus and his mother Mary (Jn. 19:25-27).

Chapter 28

I. The Resurrection of Jesus (28:1-10):

- A. *“Now late on the Sabbath day, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulcher”* (28:1).
1. Mary Magdalene is mentioned at Luke 8:2 as one whom Jesus cast out seven demons. She, along with other women who had demons cast out, followed Jesus and the disciples from city to city supporting them with their substance (cf. Lk. 8:3).
 2. Late on the Sabbath day Mary Magdalene (along with Mary the mother of James and Salome / see Mark 16:1) began to gather spices to anoint the body of Jesus.
 3. When the three women arrive at the sepulcher it is the early part of the “*first day of the week*” while it was still dark outside (cf. Mk. 16:2; Jn. 20:1). They come to the tomb and see the great stone that sealed the entrance. Their concern is that they have no one to remove the stone. Just then an angel from heaven descends and the stone is rolled away (cf. Mk. 16:3ff).
- B. *“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. His appearance was as lightning, and his raiment white as snow: and for fear of him the watchers did quake, and became as dead men”* (28:2-4).
1. The resurrection of Jesus was preceded by a great earthquake. When the angel of the Lord descended from heaven the guards that the chief priests and Pharisees had asked Pilate of were terrified and could not move.
 2. The angel within the tomb tells the women that Jesus is raised from the dead (Mk. 16:6). Luke tells us that the angel tells the women that Jesus has fulfilled his own prophecy in that he has arose from the dead three days after being crucified (cf. Lk. 24:6-8). Though three full days were not occupied by Christ's death there were three days that had his death a part of them.
- C. *“And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye; for I know that ye seek Jesus, who hath been crucified. He is not here; for he is risen, even as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly, and tell his disciples, He is risen from the dead; and lo, he goes before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you”* (28:5-7).

1. The first to the tomb of Jesus and the first to see and hear the angel explain that Jesus was resurrected from the dead were the three women (Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome).
 2. The apostle Paul tells us that Christ's resurrection is the first of all who die and the very hope of all Christians (I Cor. 15:20-24). Interestingly, the disciples really didn't even understand what raising from the dead was all about (cf. Mk. 9:9-10).
 3. Jesus had promised the disciples that after he was raised from the dead that he would meet them in Galilee (cf. Matt. 26:32). The angel of the Lord now confirms this promise to comfort them.
 4. The angel then instructs the women to go tell the disciples (especially the grieving Peter / cf. Mark 16:7).
- D. *"And they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to bring his disciples word. And behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and took hold of his feet, and worshipped him. Then saith Jesus unto them, Fear not: go tell my brethren that they depart into Galilee, and there shall they see me"* (28:8-10).
1. According to an examination of all accounts of Christ's resurrection the women must have all ran back to the disciples and told them of the events they experienced.
 2. Peter and John run to the tomb and Mary Magdalene follows. Peter and John find the empty tomb and apparently return to the disciples. Mary is left alone and it is then that she sees the two angels in the tomb and then Jesus (cf. Jn. 20:1-18). Mary supposes that Jesus is the gardener but then understands that it is the Lord in the resurrected state. Jesus tells Mary to go and tell the other disciples all that she has heard and saw.
 3. The other women also see Jesus in his resurrected state as they were returning from the tomb to the disciples. Somewhere Mary Magdalene was separated from the other women in that they all see Jesus on these two occasions. Jesus instructs the women to tell the disciples to meet him in Galilee.

II. ASV Titles this section: The Sanhedrin's Falsehood (28:11-15):

- A. *"Now while they were going, behold, some of the guard came into the city, and told unto the chief priests all the things that were come to pass. And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave much money unto the soldiers, saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept"* (28:11-13).
1. Roman guards were bound by life or death when on duty. If prisoners escaped they would pay with their own lives (cf. Acts 16:27). The chief priests and Pharisees had requested such a Roman guard over the body of Jesus (cf. Matt. 27:62-64). Though all caution had been exercised Jesus arose from the grave and the soldiers knew it. They saw the angel descending from the heavens. They saw the stone miraculously rolled away. They experienced the earthquake. They were so terrified that they froze in fear.
 2. While the women go to tell the disciples of these events the soldiers hurry back to Jerusalem to tell the chief priests about the events. The chief priests call a meeting of the Sanhedrin Council to take council over the matter. They decide to offer the soldiers great sums of money to not tell anyone of the event. They were to rather lie and say that Jesus' disciples came to them in the night while they slept.
- B. *"And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and rid you of care. So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying was spread abroad among the Jews, and continues until this day"* (28:14-15).
1. It seems that the Sanhedrin is concerned primarily with the Jews finding out these things. They offer the soldiers a great deal of money and assure them that if Pilate finds out about these things that they would take care of the matter (i.e., no harm would come to them).
 2. The agreement on the part of the soldiers indicates that they knew first of all that Pilate would likely not even asks them about their work of guarding Jesus and secondly they really had no choice in this matter. If they did not accept the money then the truth was out there for all to know and thereby they would pay with their lives for not keeping Jesus in the tomb. The

soldiers then tell all they know that the disciples of Jesus stole his body and such a lie continues until this day.

III. Jesus appears to the disciples in Galilee and delivers the Great Commission (28:16-20):

- A. *“But the eleven disciples went into Galilee, unto the mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted”* (28:16-17).
1. The Sunday of Jesus’ resurrection the Lord appears to Peter alone (Lk. 24:34). That Sunday afternoon Jesus appears to two disciples who were going to Emmaus (Lk. 24:13ff). Then Sunday evening Jesus appears to all the apostles except for Thomas (Jn. 20:19-25). The next Sunday, evening time, Jesus appears to all the apostles including Thomas. Matthew records this appearing of Jesus on an unknown day at an unknown mountain in the region of Galilee. Even to this point some of the disciples continued to doubt the things that were taking place. Through time they would gain a greater understanding.
 2. Note that just as the women worshipped Jesus (cf. Matt. 28:9) even so the disciples do. Jesus did not refuse this worship due to the fact that he was deity.
- B. *“And Jesus came to them and spake unto them, saying, All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world”* (28:18-20).
1. All the authority to forgive sins, act as a mediator between man and God as a prophet, priest, and king now belonged to Jesus. This being the case his disciples were now to go preach this message.
 2. We know that Jesus appeared to above 500 brethren at once in Galilee as is recorded in I Corinthians 15:6 and then to James alone at I Corinthians 15:7. Furthermore Jesus appeared to all the apostles just before he ascended into the heavens at the Mount of Olives (cf. Lk. 24:50-51 and Acts 1:6-12). These appearances and conversations have removed all doubt in the minds of the apostles and they are now ready to go forth and proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ. The Lord has arisen from the dead to reign as king of his kingdom the church. All those who come into this kingdom shall be forgiven of their sins and have a hope of eternal life.
 3. Jesus commands the apostles to *“make disciples of all nations”* (not just the Jews). The promise of God had ever been salvation for every human being upon the face of the earth (cf. Gen. 12:1ff). To become a disciple of Jesus Christ and member of His kingdom one must be taught the truth and baptized into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Furthermore one must continue in this faith.
 4. When Jesus said, *“I am with you unto the end of the world”* we understand that this commission is not only meant for his apostles but for Christians today. The apostle Paul told Timothy, *“And the things which thou hast heard from me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also”* (II Tim. 2:2). Christians today are commanded to “go” and preach. Again, Paul said, *“Knowing therefore the fear (or terror) of the Lord, we persuade men...”* (II Cor. 5:11) (see study # 93; Personal Work).
 5. Forty days pass with Jesus remaining on the earth in the resurrected state teaching and preaching about the kingdom of God (i.e., His church) (cf. Acts 1:3). Ten days before Pentecost He ascended into the heavens after instructing his disciples to tarry in Jerusalem until they are clothed with power from on high (cf. Lk. 24:45-49).