

**THE GOSPEL  
OF  
MATTHEW**

**LIFE FOR TODAY  
BIBLE COMMENTARY**

**A N D R E W   W O M M A C K**

## SPECIAL NOTE

These commentary ebooks are just the footnotes from Andrew's Life for Today Study Bible And Commentary. Because these footnotes appear without change from the printed books, there are certain things that may not make sense. For example, the footnotes are numbered in a way that seems confusing in the ebooks; there are references to page numbers and marginal references, etc. These all serve a purpose in the **printed books**, but not in the ebook. Understanding that the footnotes originated in a printed book will help avoid confusion.

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# **INTRODUCTION TO THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW**

The New Testament has its roots in the Jewish laws and prophecies of the Old Testament. Therefore, it is very appropriate that the Gospel of Matthew comes first among the Gospels: it was written to portray Jesus as the promised Messiah. Jesus is referred to as the "Son of David" nine times in this Gospel (Mt 1:1; 9:27; 12:23; 15:22; 20:30-31; 21:9, 15; and 22:42). Since Matthew was writing to the Jews who were in great expectation for the kingdom promised in the Old Testament to appear (Da 7:22 and Ac 2:16-18), he used the word "kingdom" more than fifty times. Also, the phrase "kingdom of heaven" is used thirty-three times and is not found anywhere else in the New Testament. The genealogy listed in Mt 1 shows Jesus as the Son of David, which would have to be made clear for any knowledgeable Jew to accept Jesus as the Christ.

## **AUTHORSHIP**

a. Internal evidence: There is no internal evidence to suggest Matthew was the author. The call of Matthew and his subsequent banquet for Jesus are recorded in Mt 9:9-10, but there is nothing in the account to suggest that Matthew did or did not write it. However, it is clear as one studies this Gospel that the author was writing from a Jewish perspective.

b. External evidence: There is such an abundance of external evidence to prove that Matthew was the author of this Gospel that it cannot be ignored. There is no biblical reference to Matthew being martyred, and the extra-biblical references that we have about him say he ministered in Judaea for fifteen years (might be supported by Ac 1:26, 15:2; with Ga 2:1-2), then in Ethiopia and other lands. Whatever the case, we have no reason to believe that Matthew was not still alive toward the end of the first century. Certainly, his family, or converts, lived well into the second century where we have abundant references to Matthew as the author of the first Gospel. If the commonly accepted view among the early church of Matthew's

authorship had not been true, it would no doubt have been challenged by those who were closely associated with the apostle. However, no record of any such challenge exists, only references to Matthew as the author.

In A.D. 130, Papias said, "So, Matthew composed the oracles in the Hebrew language and each one interpreted them as he was able." Also, Irenaeus (A.D. 180), Origen (A.D. 230), and Eusebius (A.D. 330) all made reference to Matthew as the author of the first Gospel.

Based on seemingly universal belief among the early church of Matthew's authorship and no biblical evidence to the contrary, it can be supposed that Matthew was indeed the author. It is certainly permissible to refer to this writing as Matthew's Gospel for the purpose of distinguishing it from other Gospel accounts.

I have made a deliberate attempt to show that the evidence for this decision is based on evidence not found in the inspired Word of God, and this conclusion should be received with that in mind.

### **DATE OF WRITING**

a. Internal evidence: Again, there is no internal evidence in this Gospel to establish the date it was written. Many have thought that the prophecies in Mt 24 show that this Gospel was written before A.D. 70, when Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed by the Romans. Their reasoning is that if the destruction of Jerusalem had already taken place, it would be reflected in the writer's account. However, the Gospel writers wrote with a noticeable detachment that refrained from interpretation or application. Therefore, it is not certain from Matthew's rendering of Jesus' prophecy in Mt 24:1-2 that this account was written before the destruction of the temple in A.D. 70.

b. External evidence: The facts we have access to outside the

Bible do not conclusively establish the date of writing either. The date this Gospel was written has been traditionally accepted as being A.D. 37. However, Irenaeus, who wrote in approximately A.D. 180, says that Matthew wrote his Gospel when Peter and Paul were preaching in Rome. That would date this Gospel around A.D. 61.

There also exists a book called "The Epistle of Barnabas" that Bishop Lightfoot has placed as being written during the reign of Vespasian (A.D. 70-79), given statements made within the epistle. In this epistle, the writer quoted from Mt 22:14 and introduced the quote by the phrase "as it is written," which was and is the customary way of referring to Scripture. This would date Matthew's Gospel before this "Epistle of Barnabas" and would place a limit on that date of no later than A.D. 70.

It is important to note that the authenticity of Irenaeus' statement and the whole "Epistle of Barnabas" have been questioned by many scholars, so that there is no consensus of opinion on them. The time at which Matthew wrote this Gospel can only be placed between A.D. 37 and the end of the first century.

### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

a. Internal information: Matthew is mentioned by that name only five times in the Bible (Mt 9:9, 10:3; Mr 3:18; Lu 6:15; and Ac 1:13). He is referred to in other references to the twelve apostles, or the "eleven" as they were called in Ac 1:26. He is called Levi in Mr 2:14; Lu 5:27, and 29. He apparently changed his name from Levi to Matthew, as Saul changed to Paul.

Matthew was a publican, or tax collector, for the Roman government (Mt 9:9, Mr 2:14, and Lu 5:27), which was a position despised by Jews (Mt 9:10-11). Matthew was also a Jew, and that made his affinity with the Romans a traitorous act in the eyes of the Jews.

Mr 2:14 calls Matthew the son of Alphaeus. Lu 6:15-16 calls two other apostles (James and Judas) the sons of Alphaeus also. It is possible that the name Alphaeus was a common name and that these men were not related. It is also possible that Matthew was the brother of James and Judas just as it appears.

We can suppose that Matthew was "well off" financially, as were all publicans (usually by dishonesty), and as Lu 5:29 would suggest.

There is not recorded for us even one word that Matthew spoke. As with most of the twelve apostles, Matthew personally missed many of the actions of Jesus that he reported in his Gospel [e.g., Jesus raising Jairus' daughter from the dead (Mr 5:37-43), and Jesus being transfigured (Mt 17:1-2), etc.].

It can be guessed that Matthew, being one of the twelve apostles, stayed in Jerusalem (Ac 8:1) for at least fourteen years (Ac 15:2 with Ga 2:1-2) and was a part of the governing head over the church at Jerusalem (Ac 15:2).

b. External information: The external information about Matthew is limited. Dake stated that tradition says Matthew preached in Ethiopia, as well as other lands, and did not die a martyr's death.

# MATTHEW

## CHAPTER 1

### MATTHEW 1:5

***And Salmon begat Booz of Rachab; and Booz begat Obed of Ruth; and Obed begat Jesse;***

Note 1 at Mt 1:5: It is interesting to note that it was not customary to mention women in a genealogy (1Ch 1), yet there are four women mentioned in this genealogy: Tamar (Tamar), Rachab (Rahab), Ruth, and Bathsheba (Mt 1:6 - "of her that had been the wife of Urias"). Tamar committed incest with her father-in-law, Judah (Ge 38:25-26). Rahab was a harlot who aided the Israelite spies at Jericho (Jos 2:1). Bathsheba committed adultery with King David (2Sa 11:2-5). Only Ruth was a "virtuous woman" (Ru 3:11). Luke did not record any women in his genealogy.

### MATTHEW 1:8

***And Asa begat Josaphat; and Josaphat begat Joram; and Joram begat Ozias;***

Note 2 at Mt 1:8: Three kings are left out between Joram (or Jehoram) and Ozias (or Uzziah): Ahaziah (2Ki 8:25-26), Jehoash (2Ki 12:1), and Amaziah (2Ki 14:1-2).

### MATTHEW 1:17

***So all the generations from Abraham to David [are] fourteen generations; and from David until the carrying away into Babylon [are] fourteen generations; and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ [are] fourteen generations.***



Note 3 at Mt 1:17: The reigns of three kings (see note 2 at Mt 1:8) have been omitted to make these three equal segments of fourteen. This was done in Old Testament genealogies (1Ch 1-9).

### **MATTHEW 1:18**

***Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.***

Note 1 at Mt 1:18: The way Matthew stated that Mary was "found" with child reveals that Joseph learned of Mary's pregnancy by observation. There is no record that Mary told Joseph of Gabriel's visit and message to her before she left to visit her cousin Elizabeth (Lu 1:39-40). Therefore, it can be assumed that when Mary returned to Nazareth and was in her third month of pregnancy (Lu 1:56), Joseph became aware of the situation.

### **MATTHEW 1:19**

***Then Joseph her husband, being a just [man], and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily.***

Note 2 at Mt 1:19: Joseph was called Mary's husband although they had not consummated the marriage yet (Mt 1:18 - "before they came together"). This was because the Jews considered the betrothal, or engagement, an act of marriage. This was why Joseph was planning on divorcing Mary (Mal 2:15-16 - "putting away"). According to the Law of Moses, Joseph should have stoned Mary (De 22:23-24), but instead, he was planning on divorcing her privately.

## **MATTHEW 1:20**

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

Note 3 at Mt 1:20: There are six times God spoke by dreams in the New Testament. Joseph had four of them (Mt 1:20; 2:13, 19, and 22), the wise men one (Mt 2:12), and Pilate's wife one (Mt 27:19).

There are fifteen definite times God spoke by dreams in the Old Testament. Six of these occurred to Jews: twice to Jacob (Ge 28:12 and 31:10-13), twice to Joseph (Ge 37:5 and 9), once to Solomon (1Ki 3:5-15), and once to Daniel (Da 7:1).

God spoke by dreams to Gentile kings five times: once to Abimelech (Ge 20:3), twice to Pharaoh (Ge 41:1-8), and twice to Nebuchadnezzar (Da 2:1 and 4:5). God also spoke to Laban, Jacob's father-in-law, by a dream (Ge 31:24); to the chief butler and the chief baker of Pharaoh (Ge 40:9 and 16); and to one of the enemy soldiers in the Midianite army that was fighting against Gideon (Jdg 7:13).

Eliphaz, one of Job's friends, also had a dream (Job 4:12-13), but since he was rebuked by God for the counsel that he gave (Job 42:7), it is uncertain whether that dream came from God. However, by comparing Eliphaz's terminology in Job 4:13 with Ge 46:2, it is probable that Jacob's "vision of the night" was also a dream. That would bring the number of times God spoke by dreams in the Old Testament to sixteen.

The Word of God also speaks against false dreams of false prophets (Jer 23:27-32, 29:8; and Zec 10:2).

# MATTHEW

## CHAPTER 2

### MATTHEW 2:1

*Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem,*

Note 1 at Mt 2:1: Bethlehem was located approximately six miles south of Jerusalem. Bethlehem is first mentioned in Ge 35:19 as near the place that Jacob buried Rachel after she died in childbirth. Bethlehem became famous as the home of Boaz and Ruth (Ru 4:11) and also the hometown of King David (1Sa 17:12). Micah's prophecy in Mic 5:2 that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem was fulfilled at the birth of Jesus. Bethlehem means "house of bread," and it was fitting that the "living bread" (Joh 6:51) should be born there.

Note 2 at Mt 2:1: There is no mention in Scripture that these wise men were either three in number or that they were kings. The Greek word used here is "MAGOS" and comes from the Babylonian language. It originally referred to astrologers or interpreters of dreams. It was later a name applied to the Persian priests. It is unusual that they would have interpreted the appearance of this star, no matter how unique it was, as signaling the birth of the Jewish King. This suggests that there was an understanding of Jewish prophecy among them, which no doubt came from Daniel's influence (Da 1:20-21, 2:47-48, and 4:8-9). It was the fact that Daniel was promoted to be master over all the magicians (Da 4:9) and his revelation of the time Christ would be born (Da 9:25) that served as the wise men's inspiration. The star served only as a sign, not an influence. The Lord has used, and will use, signs in the heavens (Ac 2:19-20) to declare his glory (Ps 19:1-3), but the stars do not dictate nor can they predict events on the earth. Astrology is forbidden in Scripture (Le 19:26, De 18:10, 2Ki 21:6, Isa 47:12-13, and Jer 10:2).

## **MATTHEW 2:4**

***And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born.***

Note 3 at Mt 2:4: Ezra was a scribe during the Babylonian captivity of the Jews, and he was a very godly man. The office of a scribe was a worthy one, but the scribes of Jesus' day were often rebuked by Him for having gone beyond the job of copying out the Scriptures. They had a large volume of interpretations that they had added to the Scriptures based on traditions and had thus made "the word of God of none effect" (Mr 7:13). For additional notes on "scribe," see note 3 at Lu 6:7, note 1 at Mt 13:52, and note 4 at Lu 11:45.

## **MATTHEW 2:18**

***In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping [for] her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.***

Note 3 at Mt 2:18: Rachel died when Benjamin was born, and she was buried near Bethlehem (Ge 35:16-19). Later, the tribe of Benjamin settled in the same area. At least two settlements in this area were called Ramah, one in the northern portion of Benjamin near Bethel and another much closer to Bethlehem. The full name of the southern settlement was Ramathaimzophim (1Sa 1:1) and was also the home of Samuel (1Sa 7:17). Since Herod slew children not only in Bethlehem, but also "in all the coasts [surrounding area] thereof" (Mt 2:16), either city could fulfill the prophecy to some extent, but Ramathaimzophim would best fulfill it. The voice was heard in Rama because of its close proximity to both Bethlehem and Rachel's tomb.

# MATTHEW

## CHAPTER 3

### MATTHEW 3:2

***And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.***

Note 1 at Mt 3:2: "Repent" comes from the Greek word "METANOEO" and literally means to have another mind. It is used thirty-four times in the New Testament. Repentance is a necessary part of salvation (Mt 4:17 and Lu 13:3). Repentance may include godly sorrow (2Co 7:9), but sorrow does not always include repentance. Repentance is simply a change of mind accompanied by corresponding actions (Mt 3:8 and Jas 2:17).

### MATTHEW 3:7

***But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?***

Note 2 at Mt 3:7: The word "Pharisees" comes from a Hebrew word meaning "separate" (Strong's Concordance). This term was applied to this sect because of their extreme devotion to the Mosaic Law and commitment to leading separated lives. This was a reaction of the devout Jews who came back to Jerusalem from the Babylonian captivity. They could see the pagan customs and influences of the Babylonians everywhere, so that not only their religion but also their identity as a nation was threatened. The Pharisees were patriots as well as religious zealots who, in the beginning, served a very needed function in the Jewish nation, which was struggling for survival. However, over the centuries they had departed from the Mosaic Law and

had written their own interpretations of the Law: interpretations that they held to be God-inspired and equal to that of Moses (Mt 15:2-3 and Mr 7:8-9). In Jesus' day they were characterized by hypocrisy (Mt 23:13-16 and Lu 12:1) and self-righteousness (Mt 5:20 and Lu 18:9-14). They, as a whole, persecuted Jesus (Mt 12:14, 16:1, and 22:15) and His followers (Ac 7:51-58) and received the Lord's most stinging rebukes (Mt 23).

Note 3 at Mt 3:7: The Sadducees were a Jewish sect that originated with Sadok in 250 B.C., who was a president of the Sanhedrin. They denied the existence of angels or spirits (Ac 23:8) and especially the resurrection (Mt 22:23-33). The Pharisees and Sadducees were rivals, and Paul used this contention among them for his own defense in Ac 23:6-7.

### **MATTHEW 3:11**

***I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and [with] fire:***

Note 4 at Mt 3:11: John the Baptist introduced baptism as we know it in the church today. Under the Old Covenant there were many "washings" (Heb 9:10) that may have symbolized baptism, but it had not been done unto repentance (Mr 1:4), as John administered it. However, the Jews didn't question baptism and even expected it to be a practice of the Christ and of the messenger whom God would send before Him (Joh 1:25). John baptized for two reasons. The first was for the remission of sins (Mr 1:4 and Lu 3:3). The Greek word "EIS" was translated "for" in those verses and was also translated as "to the intent that" and "(so) that" (Strong's Concordance). The second reason was to make Jesus "manifest" (or known) to the nation of Israel (Joh 1:31).

## **MATTHEW 3:15**

***And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer [it to be so] now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him.***

Note 1 at Mt 3:15: Jesus had no sin (1Pe 2:22); therefore, He didn't need John's baptism of repentance for the remission of His sins, yet He was baptized. This had two purposes: (1) It publicly announced Jesus as the Lamb of God (Joh 1:29 and 31). (2) It fulfilled the prophecy of Da 9:24 as Jesus was anointed (Ac 10:38) by the Holy Ghost (Mt 3:16) and empowered to begin His ministry. If Jesus needed to be anointed, how much more do we (Lu 24:49 with Ac 1:8 and 2:1-4)?

# MATTHEW

## CHAPTER 4

### MATTHEW 4:2

*And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred.*

Note 1 at Mt 4:2: Fasting is referred to seventy-eight times in Scripture. In the Old Testament, Isa 58:3-12 gives one of the clearest teachings on fasting. Jesus taught on fasting in Mt 6:16-18. Most of the Scriptures' teachings on fasting are by precept. There are at least thirty-five people in the Bible who fasted. Of these, three fasted forty days: Jesus (this verse), Elijah (1Ki 19:8), and apparently Joshua (Ex 24:13-18). Moses fasted for forty days without food or water and then immediately (De 9:9-25 with Ex 32:30) repeated the fast, bringing his total abstinence to eighty days.

Fasting accomplishes many things. One of the greatest benefits of fasting is that through denying the lust of the flesh the spirit man gains ascendancy. Fasting is a powerful weapon to be used in the battle described in Ga 5:17. In Scripture, fasting was always used as a means of seeking God to the exclusion of all else. Fasting does not cast out demons, as Mt 17:21 might suggest at first glance, but rather it casts out unbelief (see note 4 at Mt 17:21). Therefore, fasting is beneficial to every aspect of the Christian life, not only in the casting out of devils.

Without supernatural intervention, a person cannot fast without water for more than three days before the body begins to die. The average person can only live seven days without water. However, a healthy person can fast from food for forty days before starvation begins to occur. Many of the hunger pains experienced at the beginning of a fast are just from the appetite starving and will leave after a few days. When hunger



returns at around forty days, starvation has begun; the fast should be broken unless it is a supernatural fast, as was the fast of Moses.

When ending a fast, one should use wisdom. Some people have died from eating "solid" food too soon. A general rule of thumb to be used for extended fasts (over ten days) is to allow an equal number of days after the fast until one is back to eating normally.

The real virtue of a fast is in humbling oneself through self-denial (Ps 35:13 and 69:10), and that can be accomplished through ways other than total abstinence. Partial fasts can be beneficial, as well as fasts of one's time or pleasures. However, because appetite for food is one of man's strongest drives, fasting from food seems to get the job done the quickest. Fasting should be a much more important part of seeking God.

### **MATTHEW 4:3**

***And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.***

Note 2 at Mt 4:3: Two of Satan's temptations began with "If thou be the Son of God." Jesus was God incarnate (1Ti 3:16), but He humbled Himself, took upon Himself the form of a servant, and became a man (Php 2:6-8). This human part of Jesus was capable of doubting who He was, or the tempter would not have used this approach. To think that Satan was expressing his own doubts would downgrade this whole confrontation to such a degree that these temptations would lose their validity. Heb 4:15 reveals that Jesus "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Surely one of Satan's strongest temptations, as exhibited by the fact that he used it on Jesus, is to try to cast doubt on the most basic of beliefs: who we are in Christ and what our callings are.

## **MATTHEW 4:6**

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

Note 3 at Mt 4:6: Notice that Satan quoted scriptures in his temptation of Jesus. However, to this passage from Ps 91:11-12, Satan added the phrase "at any time," and he also omitted the phrase "in all thy ways" (Ps 91:11), thereby changing the whole meaning of those scriptures. God's promise was to keep us in all our ways (in context, ways that would keep us dwelling in the secret place of the Most High). His promise was not to deliver us "at any time" and in any situation, even if we were out of God's will.

Satan may appear as an angel of light and even use Scripture to tempt us. He will, however, always twist the Scripture. We can detect this, as Jesus did, by comparing scripture with scripture. There is no substitute for having a thorough understanding of the Word of God. Knowing only a few scriptures can be dangerous.

## **MATTHEW 4:9**

***And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.***

Note 4 at Mt 4:9: Pride was what caused Satan's original sin, according to Isa 14:12-14. He wanted to be like the Most High. One thing reserved for God alone is worship, and the devil has always sought that. If he can't be the one to receive worship, then he seeks to turn others away from giving true worship to the Most High God. He does this through things like covetousness, which is idolatry (Col 3:5). This is the reason why

praise and worship to the Lord is such a powerful tool against Satan. He can't stand to see God worshiped (see note 1 at Mt 8:2).

### **MATTHEW 4:18**

***And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers.***

Note 1 at Mt 4:18: The Sea of Galilee is the most common name for the freshwater lake in Galilee. It has also been called the sea of Chinnereth (Nu 34:11), the lake of Gennesaret (Lu 5:1), and the sea of Tiberias (Joh 21:1, see note 1 at Lu 3:1).

The sea is surrounded by hills, some of them 1,000 feet above the level of the sea. The Jordan River enters the sea from the north and exits at the south of the sea 12.75 miles away. The widest point is 7.5 miles across. The surface of the lake is 685.7 feet below sea level and covers 64 square miles in area (approximately three times the size of Manhattan Island in New York). Because of the low level of the sea, the climate is semi-tropical. This, combined with the fact that the always snow-covered Mount Hermon is approximately 30 miles away, produces very sudden and violent storms sweeping down on the lake, as in Mt 8:23-24 and Mr 4:35-37. Many varieties of fish abound in the lake.

Jesus walked on this sea (Mt 14:25), rebuked it (Mt 8:26), cast out the demons into the swine that drowned in it (Mt 8:32), and taught and performed many miracles around the Sea of Galilee.

Note 2 at Mt 4:18: Andrew (meaning "manly" in the Greek) was mentioned twelve times in Scripture. He was the brother of Simon Peter (this verse); was one of John the Baptist's disciples who followed Jesus (Joh 1:40); brought his brother, Peter, to

Jesus (Joh 1:41); apparently lived in the same house with Peter and his wife in Capernaum (Mr 1:29); was originally from Bethsaida (Joh 1:44); became one of Jesus' twelve apostles (Mt 10:2); joined with Peter, James, and John in asking Jesus about the signs of His coming (Mr 13:3-4); with Philip, presented to Jesus the Greeks' request to see Jesus (Joh 12:20-22); tarried in the upper room for the Holy Ghost (Ac 1:13); and received Him on the Day of Pentecost (Ac 1:13 with 2:1-4).

Tradition says that the Apostle Andrew preached in Scythia and is today Russia's patron saint. He was supposedly crucified on a cross shaped like the letter "X," which is commonly called St. Andrew's Cross. Andrew also became the patron saint of Scotland when mariners, wrecked on the shores of Scotland, had in their possession supposed relics of St. Andrew, and they shared the Gospel with the region. All this is tradition and cannot be verified.

#### **MATTHEW 4:25**

***And there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and [from] Decapolis, and [from] Jerusalem, and [from] Judaea, and [from] beyond Jordan.***

Note 1 at Mt 4:25: The Decapolis ("ten cities") was a district so named because of the ten dominant cities in the area and was mostly located on the east side of the Jordan River from Damascus to near the Dead Sea. The ten cities originally included Beth-Shean (Scythopolis), Hippos, Damascus, Gadara, Raphana, Canatha, Pella, Dion, Gerasa, and Philadelphia (Pliny, His. nat. v. 16). Other towns were later included.

# MATTHEW

## CHAPTER 5

### MATTHEW 5:1

*And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him:*

Note 1 at Mt 5:1: This sermon was delivered by Jesus on a mountain. Compare it with the sermon Jesus preached on the plain in Lu 6:17-49. The content of these two messages is the same, but to maintain the harmony of these messages, it must be understood that this sermon was delivered on two different occasions that we have recorded in two different places.

Note 2 at Mt 5:1: Jesus had not yet ordained the twelve special disciples whom He called apostles (Lu 6:13). So this is in reference to His many followers (Mt 5:1 - "multitudes"), which included the Twelve but was not limited to them. The Greek word for "disciple" is "MATHETES," and it literally means "a learner" (Strong's Concordance) and indicates "learning by endeavor" or what we would call "on-the-job training." Jesus said in Joh 8:31, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed." Anyone who meets this criterion is Jesus' disciple.

### MATTHEW 5:2

*And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying,*

Note 3 at Mt 5:2: The four Gospels refer to Jesus teaching forty-three times and preaching nineteen times, and four verses refer to Him preaching and teaching in the same verse. This would

indicate that Jesus spent twice as much time teaching as He did preaching. Teaching is the basic building block of making disciples. Jesus was making disciples, not just converts

### **MATTHEW 5:3**

***Blessed [are] the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.***

Note 4 at Mt 5:3: The Greek word "PTOCHOS" was translated "poor" here, as well as thirty other times in the New Testament. In twenty-eight of those times, it is clearly referring to financially poor people. This verse, Lu 6:20, and Re 3:17 use the word metaphorically. When used this way, it is speaking of being inferior, inadequate, or lacking, such as when we speak of poor attendance or poor health. Jesus was telling those who recognized their spiritual inadequacies to be happy because help had come. They could receive new spirits (2Co 5:17) by letting the kingdom of God come within them (Lu 17:21 and Ro 14:17).

### **MATTHEW 5:4**

***Blessed [are] they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.***

Note 5 at Mt 5:4: Jesus could have been referring to those who mourn because of their problems. Isa 61:1-3 definitely states that the Christ would comfort those who mourn (2Co 1:3-4). He could have also been identifying the repentant person, as in 2Co 7:9-11 and Jas 4:9. Or He could have been speaking to "all that mourn" (Isa 61:2), which would include both of these groups.

## **MATTHEW 5:5**

***Blessed [are] the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.***

Note 6 at Mt 5:5: The archaic meaning of "meek," which was dominant during the time of the King James translation, was "kind or gentle." It was not a term of weakness, as we can see in Mt 11:29 where Jesus said He was meek. Jesus had all power, but He would not use that power to promote Himself. So meekness includes humility, submission, kindness, and gentleness. Other scriptures on meekness are Nu 12:3; Ps 22:26, 25:9, 37:11, 147:6, 149:4; Isa 29:19, 61:1; Mt 21:5; Ga 5:22-23; and 1Pe 3:4.

## **MATTHEW 5:10**

***Blessed [are] they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.***

Note 7 at Mt 5:10: Persecution is an inevitable part of the Christian life (Joh 15:18-20 and Php 1:29-30). The only Christians who don't suffer persecution are those who aren't living godly lives (2Ti 3:12). Persecution is from Satan and is designed to uproot God's Word in our lives (Mr 4:16-17) by taking our eyes off of Jesus (Heb 12:1-3) and, therefore, making us fall into strife or despondency (Jas 3:16).

There are many forms of persecution. Having our lives threatened because of our faith in Jesus is one way we can be persecuted, but it is not the most damaging. History shows that the church has always flourished under persecution with increased numbers and zeal. During intense, life-threatening persecution, people's priorities get straightened out, and the Lord assumes His rightful place. This always works for our good, regardless of what our outward circumstances might be.

A far deadlier form of persecution is simply people speaking

evil of us or separating us from their company, as Jesus mentioned in Mt 5:11-12. It's deadlier because it's more subtle. Many who would never directly deny the Lord will fall into self-pity or strife because of someone's criticism. This will render us just as ineffective as would a negative reaction to our lives being threatened.

It helps to recognize that it is not us whom they are persecuting, but rather Christ in us (Ac 9:4). We are actually becoming partakers of His sufferings (Php 3:10) and will share His rewards (Ro 8:17-18, 2Ti 2:11-12, and Heb 11:26). With this in mind, we can actually shout and leap for joy in persecution (Lu 6:22-23 and Ac 5:41).

### **MATTHEW 5:13**

***Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.***

Note 8 at Mt 5:13: Salt is a preservative and flavoring. Jesus was using salt to illustrate how His disciples are a preserving and purifying influence upon the people of this world. Without the church's influence, this world would be completely useless. The whole tone of this similitude emphasizes our responsibility to others. We must get the salt out of the shaker and into the world.

The "it" referred to in this verse could be interpreted two ways. "It" could be the salt (speaking of the saints of God and their preserving influence) that becomes good for nothing and is cast on the ground and trampled underfoot. This would be similar to Jesus' teaching on the branch that didn't bring forth fruit in Joh 15:6.



"It" could also be referring to the earth that the salt is supposed to be preserving. If we (Christians), as the salt of the earth, don't do our job, then the Lord doesn't have any other method of preserving the earth. It (the earth) will rot as people trample it underfoot without the preserving influence that God's people are intended to give.

This latter interpretation would seem to be more consistent with the context of this verse and stresses the importance of us letting our light shine for Jesus.

#### **MATTHEW 5:14**

***Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.***

Note 9 at Mt 5:14: Light enables us to see. The world, which is in darkness, has to have Christians to release the light of the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ so that their blinded eyes may be opened (2Co 4:4). Jesus was the light of the world (Isa 49:6; Mt 4:16; Lu 2:32; Joh 1:4-9, 8:12, 9:5, and 12:35-36). His disciples are also called the light of the world (Mt 5:14, Eph 5:8, Php 2:15, and 1Th 5:5). Joh 9:5 shows that as long as Jesus was in the world in His physical body, He was lighting the way to the Father. He now shines through our lives. Again, our responsibility to be witnesses to the world is being stressed. The purpose of a light is to dispel the darkness and allow us to see. Therefore, "let your light so shine before men" (Mt 5:16).

#### **MATTHEW 5:20**

***For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed [the righteousness] of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.***

Note 10 at Mt 5:20: Jesus' parable of the Pharisee and the publican in Lu 18:9-14 gives us an idea of the outward standard of holiness that the Pharisees observed. That Pharisee did not cheat, steal, or commit adultery. He gave tithes of everything that he possessed and fasted twice each week.

In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus was not saying that we have to fast more than twice each week to enter into the kingdom of heaven. Rather, He was exposing the religious leaders' superficial self-righteousness, and He began to explain, in this verse through Mt 6:18, that God looks on the heart (1Sa 16:7). The scribes and Pharisees had put all of the emphasis on physical acts of compliance with many laws and traditions, but in their hearts, they were still of their father, the devil (Joh 8:44). They had made the outside clean, but within, they were full of all uncleanness, hypocrisy, and iniquity (Mt 23:25-28).

The Pharisees, like many people today, were ignorant of achieving right standing (righteousness) with God through simply receiving His forgiveness by faith and were trying to earn salvation by their acts. No one can fulfill God's commands (Ro 3:23) but Jesus (Heb 4:15). Therefore, to be righteous, we must put our faith in what He has done for us (Ro 9:31-10:4; 2Co 5:17; Ga 3:11-12, and 5:4-6).

## **MATTHEW 5:22**

***But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.***

Note 11 at Mt 5:22: The Jewish council was called the Sanhedrin and apparently originated during the years after the Babylonian exile. The Maccabees wrote of this governing body,

which was then called the senate (1 Maccabees 12:6, Catholic and Orthodox Bibles). The well-known historian, Josephus, also mentioned it in his writings (The Antiquities of the Jews, Book 12, Chapter 3, Section 3). It was composed of seventy-one members of which the high priest was the official president of the group. The number on the council may have corresponded to Moses and the seventy men who were chosen to assist him in governing the Jewish nation (Nu 11:16-17 and 24-25).

The Roman government allowed the Sanhedrin extensive powers, but apparently the Sanhedrin did not have the authority to put someone to death (Joh 18:31). It had officers at its command and authority to make arrests on its own (Joh 7:32 and 45-48). Jesus (Mt 26:59 and Lu 22:66), Peter and John (Ac 4:5 and 13), Stephen (Ac 6:12), and Paul (Ac 22:30, 23:15, and 24:20) were all tried before this council.

Note 12 at Mt 5:22: In this verse, Jesus was showing that the New Covenant He was beginning deals with the heart and the motives, whereas the Old Mosaic Covenant dealt with outward acts. 1Jo 3:15 clearly states that "whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer." This is exactly what Jesus was saying here and compares with Mt 5:27-28.

Note 13 at Mt 5:22: The Greek word used here for "hell" is "GEENA" (equals "GE-HENNA") (Strong's Concordance), and it represents the Hebrew word "GE-HINNOM," which means "the valley of Tophet" (Vine's Expository Dictionary) (Isa 30:33; Jer 7:31, and 19:6-14). This is a valley just outside Jerusalem where fires burned refuse continually. Israelite kings also reared up altars in this valley and burned their children to the pagan god Molech. This received harsh rebukes and prophecies of judgment (Jer 7:31-33 and 19:6-14), and therefore the valley of Hinnom began to symbolize eternal judgment and damnation, or hell. GEENA is used twelve times in the New Testament (Mt 5:22, 29-30; 10:28; 18:9; 23:15, 33; Mr 9:43, 45, 47; Lu 12:5; and Jas 3:6). Jesus used the term eleven times, and ten of those times were in reference to eternal punishment of the wicked. Jesus referred to it being a place of fire (Mt 18:9, Mr 9:43-48, and Lu

16:24), and where the worm would not die (Mr 9:44, 46, and 48), and a place of torment (Lu 16:24-25). Jesus also taught in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus that there is no escape from hell once a person has been placed there (Lu 16:26). The Greek word used for "hell" in that parable, as well as nine other times in the New Testament (Mt 11:23, 16:18; Lu 10:15, 16:23; Ac 2:27, 31; Re 1:18, 6:8, and 20:13-14), is "HADES," and it means "the region of departed spirits of the lost" (Vine's Expository Dictionary). It corresponds directly with the Old Testament Hebrew word "SH@'OWL" (or Sheol) (Vine's Expository Dictionary) that has been translated "hell" (Ps 9:17), "the grave" (Ge 37:35), and "the pit" (Nu 16:30 and 33).

### **MATTHEW 5:23**

***Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee;***

Note 14 at Mt 5:23: The word "therefore" makes Jesus' instructions in this verse and Mt 5:24 a direct result of what He said in Mt 5:21-22. He was saying, "Because the consequences of having strife in your heart are so severe, don't offer a sacrifice to God if your brother is upset with you. Make reconciliation first, and then come and offer your gift."

Notice also that Jesus said, "if your brother has ought against you." It should be clear that we are not supposed to have strife in our hearts toward our brother (Mt 6:14-15; Mr 11:25-26; Jas 3:14-16; 1Jo 2:9-10, and 4:20). But Jesus revealed our responsibility to our brother even when he has hard feelings toward us. We are supposed to take the initiative in reconciliation (Eph 4:32), even as God did with us (Job 42:10 and Ro 5:8).

## **MATTHEW 5:25**

***Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison.***

Note 15 at Mt 5:25: Hard feelings have destroyed many friendships. However, it goes against human nature to humble ourselves and seek reconciliation. But the Lord gives us two important reasons to do so: (1) Hatred in the heart (either theirs or ours) is just like the act of murder and puts a person in danger of hell fire (Mt 5:22). (2) If we don't choose the way of peace, even if that means personal loss, as in turning the other cheek (Mt 5:39) or going the extra mile (Mt 5:41), then we run the danger of having the judge decide against us and having to suffer the consequences. If we choose the way of strife instead of peace, the Lord will not defend us. We will have to live with the results (Mt 5:25-26 and Lu 12:58-59).

It's important to realize that not everyone is going to reconcile with us, regardless of what we do. This was true of Jesus, Peter, Paul, etc. However, Jesus was stressing the need to do all we can to end the strife. "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men" (Ro 12:18).

Note 16 at Mt 5:25: There is a spiritual application of this verse. If we repent and put our faith in Jesus, our Savior, it's like settling out of court with God. We don't have to appear before Him at the great white throne judgment (Re 20:11-15).

## **MATTHEW 5:28**

***But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.***

Note 17 at Mt 5:28: Sin doesn't just happen any more than children just happen. As stated in Jas 1:14-15, sin has to be conceived. First comes the thought and then the desire. Next comes the lust (inordinate or excessive desire). The act of sin follows. As long as we are in the world, we will be exposed to evil thoughts. However, 2Co 10:4-5 clearly states that the Lord has given each one of us spiritual weapons that can subdue and take every thought captive to obey Christ. We can limit our contact with sinful thoughts much more than most Christians have ever imagined. We do not have to let thoughts become lusts.

If evil thoughts are entertained, they become lusts, and, as Jesus was teaching here, we are, in the eyes of God, guilty of committing the acts. Just having a thought is not sin. Enjoying, entertaining, and dwelling on that thought (which is lust) is sin.

#### **MATTHEW 5:29**

***And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast [it] from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not [that] thy whole body should be cast into hell.***

Note 18 at Mt 5:29: This is to be taken in a comparative sense just as Jesus' statements in Lu 14:26 can be clearly seen to be comparative when contrasted with Mt 10:37. Jesus was not advocating dismembering our bodies. He was simply saying that resisting temptation should be more important to us than preserving the parts of our bodies.

#### **MATTHEW 5:32**

***But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit***

***adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.***

Note 19 at Mt 5:32: Just as with murder (Mt 5:21-22) and adultery (Mt 5:27-28), Jesus was taking divorce one step further than the Mosaic Law did. Under Moses' Law, the people were allowed to get a divorce for any reason (Mt 19:3 and Mr 10:2-4), much as we see today. Divorce was permitted under the Old Testament (as was polygamy) because of the hardness of people's hearts, but Jesus revealed that this was not God's original plan (Mr 10:5-9). Jesus permitted divorce under the New Testament for the sole reason of fornication simply because the fornicator has already broken the union.

#### **MATTHEW 5:41**

***And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.***

Note 21 at Mt 5:41: This is making reference to the Roman military's practice of forced labor. The Roman law gave the military the authority to compel anyone to carry their loads for the distance of one Roman mile (a thousand paces). This is no doubt what we see in Mt 27:32 and Mr 15:21.

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### **MATTHEW 5:46**

***For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?***

Note 23 at Mt 5:46: Publicans were Jews who were employed by the Roman government as tax collectors (Mt 9:9 with 10:3). Any Jew who collaborated with the Romans was an outcast among his people, but because of their thievery, the publicans were especially despised. The Romans allowed these tax collectors to receive their wages by overtaxing the people. These publicans were rich at the people's expense (Lu 19:2) and thus were hated and shunned by Jewish society (Mt 9:11 and Lu 15:1-2). Jesus extended His love and forgiveness to the publicans just as He would to anyone else, and some received it (Lu 7:29, 18:10-14, and 19:2-10). Matthew, the publican, even became one of Jesus' twelve apostles (Mt 10:3). Jesus stunned the very religious chief priests and elders of the Jews by telling them that the publicans and harlots would enter into the kingdom of God before them (Mt 21:31).

### **MATTHEW 5:48**

***Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.***

Note 24 at Mt 5:48: Our goal and standard of conduct should always be perfection, even as God is perfect (Ge 17:1, Le 19:2, and 1Pe 1:15-16). It's always a mistake to use anyone or



anything else as our standard (2Co 10:12). However, we cannot obtain sinless perfection through our efforts. Even the Apostle Paul had not obtained perfection (Php 3:12) but was still pressing toward the mark. We must trust the righteousness of God applied to us by faith and not our own righteousness (Php 3:9).

# MATTHEW

## CHAPTER 6

### MATTHEW 6:1

***Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven.***

Note 25 at Mt 6:1: Jesus' teaching on the giving of alms refers directly to money or goods given to the poor. However, the point He was making applies to all of our acts of righteousness. Our acts of love and charity should be done with the pure motive of blessing others. If our hidden motive is to gain self-recognition, God will not reward us (this verse). The pat on the back that we gain from people will be all the reward that we get (Mt 6:2), thus making the promise of Pr 19:17 of no effect.

### MATTHEW 6:3

***But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth:***

Note 26 at Mt 6:3: "Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth" is simply a metaphor used by Jesus to stress secrecy (Mt 6:4). Of course, it is not possible to have one member of the body function independently of another (1Co 12:26), and so it is not always possible to conceal our alms. As stated in Mt 6:1, it is not the fact that we do alms before men that is wrong, but rather that the motive is to be seen by men.

## **MATTHEW 6:6**

***But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.***

Note 27 at Mt 6:6: Jesus was certainly not speaking against public prayer, as can be seen by His example (Lu 23:34; Joh 11:41-42, 12:26-30, and 17) and the examples of many other great men of God (David - 1Ch 29:10-19; Solomon - 2Ch 6:12-7:1; Jehoshaphat - 2Ch 20:5-13; Ezra - Ezr 9:4-10:1; Daniel - Da 6:10; the disciples - Ac 1:24, 4:23-30, 12:12, and 13:3; and Paul and Silas - Ac 16:25). He was simply stressing that our motivation behind prayer should not be to gain recognition from people (compare with note 26 at Mt 6:3).

## **MATTHEW 6:9**

***After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.***

Note 28 at Mt 6:9: The word "manner" is translated from the Greek adverb "HOUTO," and it means "in this way" (Strong's Concordance). It is different from the Greek noun "ETHOS" that is also translated "manner," and it means "habit" or "custom" (Vine's Expository Dictionary). Some have adopted the reciting of this prayer and made it nothing more than custom or a "vain repetition," which Jesus was teaching against. This prayer, commonly called the Lord's Prayer, is more accurately called the model prayer. It was given as a model of what prayer should consist of.

First, "Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name" admonishes us to recognize our relationship with God and praise Him for it. Second, Mt 6:10 shows us to intercede for the furtherance of God's kingdom in the hearts of people (Lu 17:21) and their affairs. Third, Mt 6:11 tells us to ask for our daily

needs (Joh 16:24). Fourth, Mt 6:12 shows us to confess our sins (1Jo 1:9) for the purpose of forgiveness and that we should also forgive others (Mr 11:25-26). Fifth, Mt 6:13 says to resist the devil (Jas 4:7) by receiving God's protection (Ps 91). And finally, the prayer should be ended with praise once again (Mt 6:13), because if we ask, we receive (Mt 7:7-8).

Note 29 at Mt 6:9: Although God is referred to as Father twelve times in the Old Testament (De 32:6; 2 Sa 7:14; 1 Ch 17:13, 22:10, 28:6; Ps 68:5, 89:26; Isa 9:6, 63:16, 64:8; Jer 31:9; and Mal 2:10), Jesus' frequent use of this title brought in a whole new understanding of our relationship with God. Jesus referred to God as His Father over 150 times, and He spoke of God as being our Father 30 times. This infuriated the religious Jews of Jesus' day who considered it blasphemy to call God their Father, because they understood that to mean they were equal with God (Joh 5:17-18).

This title has become so common in the church today that many times, we don't perceive its real significance. The revelation that we are instructed to call God our Father reveals the kind, gentle, loving nature of our God (1 Joh 4:8). Paul amplified on this by using the term "Abba Father" (Ro 8:15 and Ga 4:6), which is an affectionate term that young children would use for their fathers, corresponding to our term "daddy." "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God" (1 Jo 3:1).

## **MATTHEW 6:10**

***Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as [it is] in heaven.***

Note 30 at Mt 6:10: The word "kingdom" means "a political or territorial unit ruled by a sovereign." When applied to God, it could refer to all creation, since "his kingdom ruleth over all" (Ps 103:19), but "kingdom" more often applies to His rule in and

through those who are submitted to Him. The parables of the kingdom in Mt 13 are clearly referring to the church. Compared with Lu 17:21, we see that "the kingdom of God" more specifically refers to Christ living and ruling in our hearts. So, praying "thy kingdom come" is praying for the expansion and influence of God's rule in the hearts of people everywhere and ultimately, the establishment of His physical kingdom here on earth at His second coming (Re 11:15 and 20:4).

The term "kingdom of heaven" is a term found thirty-three times in Matthew's Gospel. By comparing Mt 13:31 with Mr 4:30-31, it can be seen that the "kingdom of God" and the "kingdom of heaven" are identifying the same thing.

Note 31 at Mt 6:10: God's Word reveals (or is) His will (examples: 2Pe 3:9 and 3Jo 2). Praying for God's will means praying in agreement with His Word (compare with Ps 103:20 and 1Jo 5:14-15).

Note 32 at Mt 6:10: We do not have to live beggarly existences here on this earth and just wait till we all get to heaven to begin experiencing the benefits of our salvation. Jesus told us to pray "thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." In heaven, He will wipe away all tears from our eyes (Re 21:4), so here on earth we can pray and believe to receive "joy unspeakable and full of glory" (1Pe 1:8). Healing, prosperity, and all the other benefits of heaven are ours here on earth to the degree that we can believe and receive them.

## **MATTHEW 6:11**

***Give us this day our daily bread.***

Note 33 at Mt 6:11: Notice that Jesus didn't instruct us to pray for a year's supply of bread. The Jews, whom God miraculously

sustained for forty years in the wilderness by giving them angels' food (Ps 78:24-25) to eat, had to gather the manna every day. They could not gather more than one day's supply at a time (except before the Sabbath) or it would rot (Ex 16:19-21). Ex 16:4 says that the Lord gave them their bread daily to "prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or no." The Lord desires for the just to live by faith (Ga 3:11); that is, to make it a lifestyle, not just a once-in-a-while occurrence.

### **MATTHEW 6:13**

***And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.***

Note 34 at Mt 6:13: God is not the source of our temptation (Jas 1:13). Satan is called the tempter (Mt 4:3 and 1Th 3:5). So why did Jesus instruct us to pray that the Father would not lead us into temptation? This is simply a request for guidance so that we can be delivered from evil. The Father would no more lead us into temptation than He would withhold our daily bread. But, as stated in Jas 4:2, "ye have not, because ye ask not." Both "give us...our daily bread" and "lead us not into temptation" are simply requests for what has already been provided for us. This part of prayer serves as a reminder to us of God's promised protection (Ps 91) and gives us an opportunity to release our faith and appropriate what has already been provided.

### **MATTHEW 6:17**

***But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face;***

Note 35 at Mt 6:17: It was a Jewish custom to anoint oneself with olive oil (De 28:40, Ru 3:3, 2Sa 12:20, and 2Ch 28:15), and in

Jesus' day, it was apparently customary to anoint the heads of your guests also (Lu 7:46). Sometimes ointment or perfumes were used in this personal anointing (Am 6:6, Lu 7:38, and Joh 12:3). A lack of having one's head anointed was associated with mourning or sorrow (2Sa 14:2 and Da 10:3). Therefore, in this verse, Jesus was saying that there should be no external sign of fasting or sorrow, but it should be done secretly to the Lord to receive a full reward.

Paul stated in 1Co 7:5 that abstinence from the physical relationship in marriage for the purpose of fasting should not be done without the consent of your mate. Therefore, it can be concluded that a fast does not always have to be totally secretive to be productive. Rather, Jesus was once again dealing with the motives behind the actions. The fast must be directed toward God and not man. Compare with the motives spoken of in note 25 at Mt 6:1 and note 26 at Mt 6:3.

## **MATTHEW 6:19**

***Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:***

Note 36 at Mt 6:19: If isolated from the rest of God's Word, there are some scriptures that could be interpreted to say that having money or wealth is wrong (Ps 37:16; Pr 10:2, 11:4, 28, 13:7, 15:16-17, 16:8, 23:4-5, 28:8, 20, 22, 30:8-9; Ec 5:10-15; Jer 9:23; Mt 6:19-34, 13:22, 19:23-24; Lu 12:15-21; 1Ti 6:4-11, and 17-19).

However, there are other scriptures that speak of riches as a blessing (Ge 13:2, 6, 24:35; De 8:18, 28:1-14; 1Ki 3:11-13, 10:21-23; 2Ki 20:13; 1Ch 29:11-12; Job 1:3; Ps 112:3; Pr 3:13-16, 8:1, 18, 21, 21:20; Mt 6:33; Mr 10:28-30; 2Co 8:9; and 3Jo 2).

The harmony between these two apparently opposite positions is that money is neither good nor bad. It is the love of money that is the root of all evil (1Ti 6:10), and many have committed

that sin who don't have a dime. The love of things (covetousness) is idolatry and that is what Jesus was addressing.

Jesus gave this same teaching another time, recorded in Lu 12:22-32. His teaching in Luke (which is nearly word for word the same as here in Mt 6) was in response to a man who asked Jesus to arbitrate the dividing of his family's inheritance. Jesus warned the man concerning covetousness, taught a parable about the rich fool, and then spoke of seeking first the kingdom of God. Through this, it is easy to see that Jesus was not speaking against riches but rather covetousness.

Because it is so easy to lust after money and the things it can provide, the Lord established a system whereby prosperity is a byproduct of putting God first. As Mt 6:33 states, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." We should no more reject the blessing of prosperity than we should covet it, which would be idolatry.

#### **MATTHEW 6:20**

***But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:***

Note 37 at Mt 6:20: We can't take it (money) with us (to heaven), but we can send it on before us. Mt 19:21 says that through giving to the poor, we are laying up treasure in heaven. Compare with Pr 19:17.

#### **MATTHEW 6:21**

***For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.***



Note 38 at Mt 6:21: The reason for not laying up treasures on this earth is so that we will not have our hearts drawn away from the things of God (Mr 4:19). A key to success in the kingdom of God is singleness of purpose (Pr 23:7; Php 3:13, and 4:8). We don't have the capacity to do our best in two areas at the same time (Mt 6:24 and Jas 3:1-2). Therefore, if we will simply put God and His kingdom first in every area of our lives, He will add unto us all the wealth that we need (Mt 6:33). "The blessing of the LORD, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it" (Pr 10:22). It's when we covet after money that we pierce ourselves through with many sorrows (1Ti 6:10).

### **MATTHEW 6:22**

***The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.***

Note 39 at Mt 6:22: Jesus was speaking of spiritual vision. If we keep our attention (eye) single upon Jesus, the Word (Joh 1:1 and 14), then all that we will be filled with is the light of His Word (Ps 119:105). The key to victory is this singleness of purpose (Php 3:13). The strength of the laser lies in the fact that all of the light is concentrated on one single point. Likewise, the strength of Christians lies in how single our vision is upon Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith (Heb 12:1-3).

### **MATTHEW 6:23**

***But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great [is] that darkness!***

Note 40 at Mt 6:23: Jesus was contrasting an evil eye with the single eye just mentioned (Mt 6:22). An evil eye is simply when we allow our thoughts to be anything less than single upon

Jesus (Jas 1:8).

Note 41 at Mt 6:23: As light is symbolic of God and His kingdom (Isa 9:2; Joh 1:4-9, 8:12; and 1Jo 1:5), so darkness symbolizes Satan and his kingdom (Joh 1:5, 3:19; Ro 13:12; 2Co 6:14; 1Jo 1:6, and 2:11). Not having our minds stayed on Jesus gives Satan an inroad into our lives (Ro 8:6). If we are setting our affections on things of this earth (Col 3:1-4), then Satan and the unfruitful works of darkness (Eph 5:11) will dominate us.

### **MATTHEW 6:24**

***No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.***

Note 42 at Mt 6:24: You can have God and riches, but you must only serve one of them.

### **MATTHEW 6:25**

***Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?***

Note 43 at Mt 6:25: The Greek word used here for "thought" is "MERIMNAO" and denotes "to be anxious about" (Strong's Concordance) (example: 1Sa 9:5). In this account (Mt 6:25-34), as well as the same account found in Lu 12:22-32, Jesus was commanding us not to worry or be anxious about our material needs being met. It would not be possible to have no thought whatsoever about our physical needs. Even Jesus thought about His need for money to pay taxes (Mt 17:24-27). We are simply not to be occupied with thinking about riches or spend time worrying about our necessities. They will be added unto us as we seek first the kingdom of God.

## **MATTHEW 6:31**

***Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?***

Note 44 at Mt 6:31: The way we take or receive anxious thoughts is by speaking them. Doubtful thoughts will come, but it is not sin until we entertain them (see note 17 at Mt 5:28). According to this verse, speaking forth these thoughts is one way of entertaining them. Therefore, don't speak forth these negative thoughts (compare with Pr 6:2, 13:3, 18:20-21; and Mt 12:36-37).

## **MATTHEW 6:32**

***(For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.***

Note 45 at Mt 6:32: Technically, a Gentile is anyone who is not a Jew. The term came to be synonymous with "heathen" or "pagan" since all Gentiles were "strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world" (Eph 2:12), and it is used in that sense here.

# MATTHEW

## CHAPTER 7

### MATTHEW 7:1

**Judge not, that ye be not judged.**

Note 46 at Mt 7:1: On other occasions, Jesus told people to judge (Lu 12:57 and Joh 7:24). The disciples told people to judge (Ac 4:19; Ro 14:13; 1Co 5:12, 6:2, 10:15, 11:13, and 14:29). Paul judged (1Co 5:3 and 2Co 5:14). There are many examples of people judging. Paul prayed that our love would abound more and more in all judgment (Php 1:9). In the light of these scriptures, it is evident that there must be a right and wrong type of judging.

In Lu 12:56-57, Jesus used the words "discern" and "judge" interchangeably. As defined by the American Heritage Dictionary, "judge" can mean many things from "condemn" to "to form an opinion or evaluation." There certainly is nothing wrong with discerning or appraising a situation or person. Quite the contrary, we need to try the spirits (1Jo 4:1). Judging, when done as discernment, is good.

It is the condemning type of judgment that is wrong. This is denounced in other scriptures (Ro 14:4, 10, 13; and Jas 4:11) because of the reasons stated in Mt 5:22. We can defer to God passing sentence on people and know that He will have perfect judgment (Ro 2:2 and Re 20:12-13).

Also notice that in these scriptures, Jesus was not forbidding judgment; He was warning us to be careful with our judgments because we will be judged accordingly. This same principle is stated in Ro 2:1-3 and Jas 2:12-13. There are certain cases where we have to pass a condemning sentence, as Paul did (1Co 5:3-5

and 1Ti 1:20), or as a judge would today. Pastors and elders are charged with rebuking and even disciplining church members (1Ti 5:20; Re 2:12-16, and 18-20), but it is not something to be done lightly. This warning constrains us to be certain that we have heard from God and are not simply venting our own frustrations.

### **MATTHEW 7:5**

***Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.***

Note 47 at Mt 7:5: The symbolism in Mt 7:3-5 is very clear: don't be hypocritical in your judgment; straighten yourself out first. However, it does need to be emphasized that this is further comment on judging, which Jesus mentioned in Mt 7:1-2. Although there are many applications of this truth, it was not given as an unrelated statement.

In Luke's account of this illustration (Lu 6:41-42), notice that Lu 6:43-44 is tied to it with the conjunction "For." That amplifies this point by saying that if you are corrupt yourself, you can't produce good fruit. Your reputation is built upon who you are, not who you correct (Lu 6:44).

### **MATTHEW 7:6**

***Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.***

Note 48 at Mt 7:6: Not everybody will receive instruction (Pr 1:7; 15:5, and 32). We need godly wisdom to judge who is receptive and who is not. When we perceive people who are scorning our

witness, we should heed the advice of this scripture and Pr 9:7-8 lest they mock the things of God and then turn on us.

### **MATTHEW 7:7**

***Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:***

Note 49 at Mt 7:7: Asking and receiving must be qualified by these other scriptures: (1) We must ask in faith (Mt 21:22 and Mr 11:24) without wavering (Jas 1:5-7). (2) We must ask according to God's will (1Jo 5:14-15, see note 31 at Mt 6:10) and not to consume it upon our own lusts (Jas 4:2-3). Seeking and finding must also be qualified by Mt 6:33. If we are seeking something more than we are seeking God, we are hindering our own supply.

### **MATTHEW 7:8**

***For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.***

Note 50 at Mt 7:8: Prayer that meets the requirements outlined in God's Word (see note 49 at Mt 7:7) is always answered. Many times we don't perceive the answer because it always comes in the spiritual realm first before it is manifested in the physical realm. If we waver (Jas 1:6-7) from our confident (Heb 10:35) faith, then we abort the manifestation of that answer. But God did answer. Everyone who asks receives, etc. Compare with Daniel's answers to prayer in Da 9 and 10.

### **MATTHEW 7:11**

***If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?***

Note 51 at Mt 7:11: God is love (1Jo 4:8)! And His love for us is infinitely greater than any physical relationship we can compare Him with here on earth. We can apply this principle to any command or example we find in God's Word where His standards for relationship are revealed (Mt 7:9-11, 18:21-22; Eph 5:22-23; and 1Ti 5:8), and we can be assured that He will much more than meet those standards Himself.

### **MATTHEW 7:12**

***Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.***

Note 52 at Mt 7:12: The word "Therefore" ties this verse in with the first eleven verses. Upon examination, it can be seen that this verse is actually a summary of the preceding verses and the entire Law and the Prophets (O.T.).

### **MATTHEW 7:14**

***Because strait [is] the gate, and narrow [is] the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.***

Note 53 at Mt 7:14: This narrow way that leads to life [Greek - "ZOE"--"life as God has it" (Vine's Expository Dictionary)] is not hidden. The reason that few find it is that people are looking in the wrong place. True Christianity is not popular (Mt 7:13, Lu 6:26, and 2Ti 3:12). It includes self-denial (Mt 7:12 and 16:24-26), and it takes effort (Lu 13:24).

## **MATTHEW 7:15**

***Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.***

Note 54 at Mt 7:15: Here are five ways to recognize false prophets. (1) Their prophecies don't come to pass (De 18:22); (2) by their fruit (Mt 7:16-20, 12:33-37; and Lu 6:43-45); (3) they fail to act in agreement with what they profess (Mt 7:21-27; Jas 2:17, 20, and 26); (4) by their doctrine (Mt 16:12; Ga 1:8-9; 1Ti 1:3-9, 4:1-6; 1Jo 4:1-3; and 2Jo 7-11); and (5) their motivation is covetousness (1Ti 6:10; 2Pe 2:1-3, and 15). A false prophet may not exhibit all five of these characteristics, and not everyone who exhibits one or two of these characteristics is a false prophet. However, these traits are associated with the false prophets who were identified in the Bible and should be questioned.

## **MATTHEW 7:21**

***Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.***

Note 55 at Mt 7:21: Jesus made it very clear in these statements that the doers of God's will, not just the professors, enter into the kingdom of heaven. This same principle is stated in many other scriptures, and all of Jas 2 is devoted to this subject.

However, there is an apparently opposite teaching in the Word that is just as well documented (Ge 15:6; De 9:4-6; Mt 9:11-13; Joh 8:4-11; Ro 3:22-24, 4:4-5, 16, 5:2, 8, 17, 9:10-12, 10:3-13, 11:6; 1Co 15:10; Ga 3:1-3, 7, 9-12, 21-26; Eph 1:5-12, 2:8-9; and Tit 3:4-7) that states we are justified by faith in what Jesus has done and not according to our goodness. None of us are good enough (Ro 3:23). God's standard is perfection (Jas 2:10). Therefore, we need a Savior (Ro 8:3-4 and Tit 3:4-7).



Both of these doctrines are true, and, instead of contradicting, they complement each other. We are saved by grace through faith alone (Eph 2:8-9 and Tit 3:4-7), but saving faith is never alone (Jas 2:26). Just as gold can be distinguished from other look-alike metals by examining its physical properties, so true faith can be distinguished from mere profession by examining fruit (Mt 7:16-20).

It is very dangerous to make a final judgment of people's spiritual conditions (Mt 7:1), because we look on the outside, while God looks on the heart (1Sa 16:7). But for the purpose of discerning so that we might be used, we can use people's actions as an indication of their spiritual conditions (see note 46 at Mt 7:1).

## **MATTHEW 7:22**

***Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?***

Note 56 at Mt 7:22: These people will say that they did the things spoken of in this verse, but by comparing this sermon with a similar sermon of Jesus' recorded in Lu 6:46, we can see that they never did prophesy or cast out demons or do these wonderful works. They were deceived.

Many people today think that signing a card, joining a church, being baptized, and many other "wonderful" works will produce salvation, but they are deceived too. Religious doctrines of man have perverted people's understanding of the supernatural gifts of God to the point that many will think that they have been used of God to minister to others and perform miracles when they were actually ministering from their own abilities.

These people whom Jesus was speaking of were not "born-again" believers (see note 2 at Joh 3:3) who operated in true spiritual gifts and then fell away and became reprobate. Mt 7:23 makes it very clear that Jesus never knew them.

#### **MATTHEW 7:24**

***Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:***

Note 57 at Mt 7:24: Doing the sayings of Jesus is the sure safeguard against self-deception (Mt 7:24-27; Ga 6:3; 2Ti 3:5 with 13; Tit 3:3; Jas 1:22, 26; and 1Jo 3:7).

#### **MATTHEW 7:25**

***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 a rock.***

Note 58 at Mt 7:25: The rains, floods, and the winds came against both houses exactly the same. The difference was not the storms but rather the foundations. Everyone, even Christians, will have problems come their way (Ac 14:22 and 2Ti 3:12), but those who are rooted and grounded in doing the Word of God will stand.

#### **MATTHEW 7:26**

***And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:***

Note 59 at Mt 7:26: It's much harder to put a foundation in rock than in sand. This is further explanation of Mt 7:14 as to why few find the narrow way that leads to life. Most people are taking the path that demands the least effort, with no thought of the future.

# MATTHEW

## CHAPTER 8

### MATTHEW 8:2

***And, behold, there came a leper and worshipped him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.***

Note 1 at Mt 8:2: Worship is reserved for God alone (Mt 4:10). Angels refused worship (Re 19:10 and 22:8-9), and men refused worship (Ac 10:25-26 and 14:11-18). There are eleven instances where Jesus was worshiped (Mt 2:2, this verse, 9:18, 14:33, 15:25, 20:20, 28:9, 17; Mr 5:6; Lu 24:52; and Joh 9:38). The fact that Jesus received this man's worship further attests to the fact that He was God in the flesh (1Ti 3:16).

### MATTHEW 8:8

***The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.***

Note 1 at Mt 8:8: A centurion was a captain of 100 soldiers, which was one-sixtieth of a Roman legion of 6,000. Although under the command of the Roman army, this centurion was evidently a godly man, judging by the Jews' evaluation of him. Another example of a godly centurion is found in Ac 10. Cornelius, a centurion of the Italian band, was "a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway" (Ac 10:2).

A centurion was present at the crucifixion of Jesus (Mt 27:54, Mr 15:39, and Lu 23:47). And judging from the reaction of the centurion and those with him, there may well have been some conversions among the Roman army who were watching Jesus.

The fact that centurions had servants (Lu 7:2 and Ac 10:7), built synagogues for the Jews (Lu 7:5), and gave "much alms" (Ac 10:2) would indicate that a centurion received an excellent income compared to others of his day.

### **MATTHEW 8:10**

***When Jesus heard [it], he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.***

Note 2 at Mt 8:10: Only twice in all of Scripture did Jesus marvel, once at the centurion's faith and once at the Jews' unbelief (Mr 6:6). A faith that made Jesus (who is the Author and Finisher of our faith [Heb 12:2]) marvel is worth examining. This centurion believed that the spoken word of Jesus was sufficient to produce his miracle. He didn't need Jesus to come to his house. He had faith in Jesus' word. Therefore, we can see that the person who simply believes the written Word of God is operating in a much higher form of faith than the person who requires additional proof. Compare this centurion's faith with the "little" faith of Thomas in Joh 20:24-29.

### **MATTHEW 8:15**

***And he touched her hand, and the fever left her: and she arose, and ministered unto them.***

Note 1 at Mt 8:15: Jesus often healed people by touching them (Mt 8:3, 9:29, 20:34; Mr 7:33; Lu 7:14, and 22:51), and others received their healing as they touched Jesus (Mt 14:36; Mr 3:10, 5:28-30, 6:56, and 8:22). Lu 6:19 reveals that the reason this happened was that virtue (or power) went out of him and

healed them all. We can transmit the power or the anointing of God through the laying on of hands (Mr 16:18 and Heb 6:2). The virtue of God can even be transmitted to objects and then taken to the person who needs healing or deliverance (Ac 19:11-12).

Note 2 at Mt 8:15: Many people today have the mistaken idea that to minister, they have to preach or teach. However, it is evident that Peter's mother-in-law didn't preach to Jesus and His disciples. This shows that ministry is to supply the needs of others, whether physically or spiritually. Peter's mother-in-law's ministry to Jesus was probably fixing Him food, washing His feet, etc. (see note 3 at Joh 13:5).

## **MATTHEW 8:16**

***When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with [his] word, and healed all that were sick:***

Note 1 at Mt 8:16: There are seventeen times in the Gospels where Jesus healed all of the sick who were present (Mt 4:23-24, 8:16-17, 9:35, 12:15, 14:14, 34-36, 15:30-31, 19:2, 21:14; Mr 1:32-34, 39, 6:56; Lu 4:40, 6:17-19, 7:21, 9:11; and 17:12-17). There are forty-seven other times where He healed one or two people at a time (Mt 8:1-4, 5-13, 14-15, 28-34, 9:1-8, 20-33, 12:10-13, 22-23, 15:21-28, 17:14-18, 20:30-34; Mr 1:21-31, 40-45, 2:1-12, 3:1-5, 5:1-20, 25-43, 7:24-37, 8:22-26, 9:14-29, 10:46-52; Lu 4:33-39, 5:12-15, 17-26, 6:6-10, 7:1-17, 8:27-39, 43-56, 9:37-42, 11:14, 13:11-17, 14:1-5, 18:35-43, 22:51; Joh 4:46-54, 5:2-15, 9:6-7, and 11:43-44). Nowhere do we find Jesus refusing to heal anyone. In light of Jesus' statement that He could do nothing of Himself but only what He saw the Father do (Joh 5:19 and 8:28-29), His actions are proof enough that it is always God's will to heal.

## **MATTHEW 8:17**

***That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare [our] sicknesses.***

Note 2 at Mt 8:17: The fact that this verse substitutes "infirmities" and "sicknesses" for the words "sorrows" and "griefs" in Isa 53:4 makes it clear that when Isaiah said "with his stripes we are healed" (Isa 53:5), he was speaking of the physical healing of our bodies. Jesus provided for physical healing as well as forgiveness of sins. The very word "save" (Greek - "SOZO") is translated "made whole" in reference to physical healing in Mt 9:22, Mr 5:34, and Lu 8:48. Jas 5:15 says the prayer of faith shall save (Greek - "SOZO") the sick. Many scriptures mention the healing of our bodies in conjunction with the forgiveness of our sins (Ps 103:3, Isa 53:4-6, and 1Pe 2:24). Healing is a part of our salvation, just as much as the forgiveness of our sins.

## **MATTHEW 8:20**

***And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air [have] nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay [his] head.***

Note 1 at Mt 8:20: The animals that Jesus created (Col 1:16-17) were also provided with some form of shelter, but the Creator Himself had no place to call His own. His Father did provide for His needs (see note 1 at Lu 9:58), but it certainly wasn't in the style that we would have expected. Jesus made Himself of no reputation and humbled Himself (Php 2:7-8) so that (1) He could be a merciful and faithful High Priest (Heb 2:17) who was touched with the feeling of our infirmities (Heb 4:15) and (2) people would have to accept Him by faith based on His life and not His looks or possessions.

## **MATTHEW 8:28**

***And when he was come to the other side into the country of the Gergesenes, there met him two possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way.***

Note 1 at Mt 8:28: Some of these cavities, cut out of limestone, were as large as twenty feet square and provided a haven for criminals, the insane, and the poor (compare with Isa 65:4)



# MATTHEW

## CHAPTER 9

### MATTHEW 9:2

*And, behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy; Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee.*

Note 1 at Mt 9:2: It was not only the faith of the paralytic that Jesus saw but also that of his four friends (Mr 2:3). Jesus saw their faith. This demonstrates the effect our intercession in faith can have upon others. However, although our faith released on behalf of others is powerful, it is not a substitute for their faith; it's simply a help. Those who are to receive the miracle must have some degree of faith also. Even Jesus could not produce healing in those who would not believe (Mr 6:5-6). In this instance, it is evident that the paralytic himself also had faith because he was not resistant to the four who brought him, and he got up and obeyed Jesus' command (Mt 9:7) without having to be helped.

Note 2 at Mt 9:2: Why did Jesus minister forgiveness of sins to this man instead of ministering to his obvious need for healing? Probable reasons for this would include the following: (1) God is more concerned with the spiritual health of people than their physical health (1Sa 16:7 and Mt 5:29-30). (2) Jesus, through a word of knowledge (1Co 12:8), may have perceived that the real heart-cry of this man was to be reconciled to God. (3) In some instances (not all - Joh 9:2-3), sickness is a direct result of sin (Joh 5:8-9 and 14). Therefore, Jesus would have been dealing with the very root of the paralysis, and just as with the fig tree in Mr 11:13-14 and 20, the physical manifestation would have followed. (4) Whether or not this man's paralysis was a direct result of sin, sin in his life that had not been forgiven would allow Satan to keep him in his bondage (Ro 6:16). Through Jesus

forgiving this man's sins, he was free to receive all the blessings of God, which certainly included healing (De 7:15 and Ps 103:3).

### **MATTHEW 9:6**

***But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith he to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house.***

Note 3 at Mt 9:6: "Son of Man" in the Greek is "HUIOS ANTHROPOS" (Strong's Concordance). This title occurs thirty-two times in @@Matthew, fifteen times in Mark, twenty-six times in Luke, and twelve~~ times in John. "Son of Man" is the title Christ used to identify Himself with humanity, just as the "Son of David" is distinctly His Jewish name and the "Son of God" His divine name. This term "Son of Man" transcends purely Jewish limitations and has application to the salvation of the entire human race (Lu 19:10). Without being the Son of Man, Jesus would never have been able to shed His blood for our sins or stand in judgment of this world (Joh 5:27). Because of His humanity, He is also able to be a compassionate and faithful High Priest (Heb 2:17 and 4:15).

### **MATTHEW 9:13**

***But go ye and learn what [that] meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.***

Note 1 at Mt 9:13: Jesus made these statements in defense of His eating and drinking with these publicans and sinners. Just as a doctor spends time with those who are sick, Jesus came to minister to sinners. Of course, all have sinned (Ro 3:23), and there are none righteous apart from what Jesus has imparted unto people (Ro 3:10), but not everyone understands this. These religious scribes and Pharisees (Lu 5:30) were making the terrible mistake of trusting in their own efforts to produce their right standing (righteousness) with God. Jesus did not come to

accept people's sacrificial acts but to make Himself a sacrifice for their sins. Jesus could only minister to those who knew they were sick spiritually and were looking to God for mercy (Mic 6:6-8 and 1Pe 5:5).

## **MATTHEW 9:18**

***While he spake these things unto them, behold, there came a certain ruler, and worshipped him, saying, My daughter is even now dead: but come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live.***

Note 1 at Mt 9:18: From Mr 5:22 and Lu 8:41, it is clear that the "certain ruler" mentioned here was a ruler of the synagogue. These rulers had several duties including (1) presiding at assemblies; (2) appointing or permitting members of the synagogue or qualified visitors to pray, read the Scriptures, and exhort the people (Ac 13:14-15); and (3) making sure the proper procedures and laws were observed at assemblies (Lu 13:14). Some synagogues may have had more than one ruler (Mr 5:22 and Ac 13:15), one of whom was chief (Ac 18:8).

Several rulers (not necessarily rulers of the synagogue) believed on Jesus, including Nicodemus (Joh 3:1 and 7:50-51 with 19:39), Jairus (Mt 9:18, Mr 5:22-23, and Lu 8:41), and Crispus (Ac 18:8), but not all rulers who believed on Jesus confessed Him (Joh 12:42-43) for fear of losing their positions in the synagogue.

Note 2 at Mt 9:18: By comparing Matthew's account with those of Mark and Luke (Mr 5:23 and Lu 8:42), it is clearly seen that Jairus' daughter was not yet dead. However, Jairus' daughter was "as good as dead," and Matthew simply reflected the finality Jairus must have felt in the way he recorded Jairus' statement.

## **MATTHEW 9:20**

***And, behold, a woman, which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind [him], and touched the hem of his garment:***

Note 1 at Mt 9:20: It is interesting to note that this woman touched the hem of Jesus' garment. Considering the disciples' comment in Mr 5:31 that the people were thronging Him [i.e., "to compress, i.e. crowd on all sides" (Strong's Concordance)] and the fact that the garments of Jesus' day were long, reaching nearly to the ground, it is hard to imagine how this woman could have been in any other position than on her hands and knees when she touched the hem. This reflects a determination and humility, important elements of faith, that many people desiring healing are not committed enough to give (compare with Mr 2:4 and 10:46-52).

## **MATTHEW 9:21**

***For she said within herself, If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole.***

Note 2 at Mt 9:21: Confession of our faith is an important part of our receiving from God (Mt 10:32, Ro 10:9-10, and see note 4 at Mr 1:42). However, Matthew gave additional detail beyond Mark's account (Mr 5:28) showing that this woman's confession was within herself, not audible, yet her faith made her whole (Mt 9:22).

## **MATTHEW 9:27**

***And when Jesus departed thence, two blind men followed him, crying, and saying, [Thou] Son of David, have mercy on us.***

Note 1 at Mt 9:27: This instance of Jesus healing two blind men is nearly identical to another instance recorded in Mt 20:30-34. Since one author recorded them both, it is easy to see that these were similar but separate events. It is certain that Jesus preached the same message many different times (see note 1 at Mt 5:1) and often healed the same types of infirmities under similar circumstances. This makes very careful, comparative study of the events in Jesus' ministry a must if we are to keep them in their proper order.

This healing in Mt 9 took place as Jesus was departing from Jairus' house after resurrecting his daughter. Mt 20:29, as well as Mr 10:46 and Lu 18:35, shows that this second instance took place at Jericho. All three Gospels record the crowds rebuking the blind men in the second instance, while Mt 9 does not. Mt 9 records the blind men as coming into the house where Jesus was, while in the second miracle of healing, the incident with the blind men happened as Jesus was walking down the road. Jesus called for the blind men in the second healing. In Mt 9, the blind men simply came to Him. The question Jesus asked the blind men was different also. This first healing of the blind men actually took place during Jesus' second year of ministry and over a full year before the second healing recorded in Mt 20:30-34, Mr 10:46-52, and Lu 18:35-43 took place.

## **MATTHEW 9:29**

***Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you.***

Note 2 at Mt 9:29: These blind men had faith. Jesus did not do their believing for them. The word "according" means "in keeping with." The faith of these blind men was sufficient to produce their healing; however, they had never been healed. The reason was that they had never had a Savior in whom to put their faith before this time. We have to look unto Jesus, the

Author and Finisher of our faith (Heb 12:2).

### **MATTHEW 9:38**

***Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.***

Note 1 at Mt 9:38: People are born again through the power of the Word of God (Ro 10:14-17 and 1Pe 1:23), not through prayer. Prayer is very important, but it is not a substitute for the Gospel (Ro 1:16-17). Many of us petition God for others to be saved and can't understand why it hasn't happened yet. We don't have to ask the Lord to save people. He isn't willing that anyone should perish (2Pe 3:9). He has already made provision for everyone's salvation (Joh 3:16 and 1Jo 2:2).

So, what do we pray concerning others coming to the Lord? Jesus said to pray that the Lord would send laborers across their paths (this verse). They need to hear the Word (Ro 10:14-17). Also, we should bind the influence of the god of this world (Satan) who tries to blind them to spiritual truth (2Co 4:4).

God is more motivated to save our loved ones than we are. We don't need to plead with Him, but rather we need to become a channel for Him to flow through to reach those people. We do that by sharing the good news (Gospel) with them and/or praying that other Christians will come across their paths who will do the same.

# MATTHEW

## CHAPTER 10

### MATTHEW 10:8

*Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.*

Note 1 at Mt 10:8: Here, Jesus included healing the sick, cleansing the lepers, raising the dead, and casting out devils as part of preaching the Gospel. Compare this verse with Lu 9:2 and Ac 4:29-30.

### MATTHEW 10:9

*Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses,*

Note 2 at Mt 10:9: In this verse and Mt 10:10, Jesus was simply stating that those who go to preach the Gospel should not have to provide their own support but should "live of the gospel" (1Co 9:14). Likewise, Jesus said in Mt 10:11, His ministers should not feel they have to move from house to house so that they won't be a burden on any one household. They should find a suitable place to stay and remain there until they leave town.

### MATTHEW 10:33

*But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.*

Note 3 at Mt 10:33: This word "deny" can mean a variety of things from as little as to "contradict" to "to disavow." For example, one can see that it must have been the lesser type of

denial that was committed by Peter (Mt 26:69-75; Mr 14:66-72; Lu 22:54-62; Joh 18:15-17, and 25-27) because God certainly forgave Peter's sin and continued using him, not rejecting him. In Heb 6:4-6, the Lord stated that there is no repentance from total denial of the Lord (Heb 10:29). Therefore, even though Peter denied (asserted he did not know) the Lord, he did not disown or disavow the Lord.

Many people have been tormented by fear in thinking that they have denied the Lord because of some type of sin in their lives. However, God looks on the heart (1Sa 16:7), and regardless of how offensive people's actions or words might be, if there is still a place in their hearts where they honor Him, He will not deny them (2Ti 2:12-13).

#### **MATTHEW 10:34**

***Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.***

Note 4 at Mt 10:34: This statement seems like a contradiction to some prophecies concerning Jesus (Ps 72:7, 85:10; Isa 9:6-7; and Lu 2:14), some of His own statements concerning peace (Joh 14:27 and 16:33), and what was written of Him in the New Testament epistles (Ro 5:1, 14:17-19; Eph 2:14-17, 4:3; Php 4:7; Col 3:15; and Heb 12:14). However, the peace that Jesus purchased was peace between God and man. We have peace with God (Ro 5:1). We are exhorted to take this peace and extend it to all people (Ro 12:18 and Heb 12:14), but it is also made very clear that not all people will receive it (Joh 16:33 and 2Ti 3:12). Therefore, as Jesus was explaining here, the Gospel will always produce opposition from those who don't receive it.

This "sword of division," even among family members, is not God's will nor is it God who causes it, but it will inevitably come. Jesus was simply preparing His disciples. As much as we would like to see everyone receive the good news, we must not



think it's strange when even our loved ones don't receive it. Jesus was rejected by His own (Joh 1:11), and we will be also (Mt 10:24-25). We must remain faithful to keep preaching the Gospel, for there are others who will receive.

### **MATTHEW 10:37**

***He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.***

Note 5 at Mt 10:37: Jesus' instruction here is also found in Lu 14:26, which, if taken by itself, might leave the impression that we are supposed to hate our fathers and mothers, wives and children, and even ourselves. However, Matthew made it very clear in this verse by the use of the words "more than" that this was not what Jesus meant. We are commanded to walk in love, especially to the members of our own families (Eph 5:25-33 and Tit 2:4). Jesus was simply stating that we should prefer Him above any other relationship.

### **MATTHEW 10:42**

***And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold [water] only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.***

Note 6 at Mt 10:42: This verse shows that even our smallest acts of kindness will be rewarded. As revealed in 1Co 3:13, every person's work shall be tried to determine "what sort it is," not what size it is. Many people who have never done anything to gain the attention of the masses will shine bright in the day when the Lord passes out His rewards.

Some of the Lord's rewards for our actions come in this life,

such as children (Ps 127:3-5), financial blessings (1Ti 5:18), health (Isa 58:6-8 with Mt 6:18), etc. However, some of our rewards will not be realized until we stand before God. This is the case with the reward for enduring persecution (Mt 5:12 and Lu 6:23). Moses was motivated by the recompense (compensation) of this reward (Heb 10:35 and 11:26).

Many of the rewards for ministering the Gospel will not come until we appear before the Lord (1Co 3:8-13 and 9:17). As stated in Mt 10:41 and illustrated in 1Sa 30:21-25, rewards can be shared by those who aid others in their righteous tasks [Ro 10:14-15 and 2Jo 10-11 (negative example)].

Our good deeds that would normally be rewarded by our Father can be voided if we do them seeking the praise of people (Mt 6:1-4). We can also receive a partial reward (2Jo 8).

Those (ungodly) who are not in the kingdom of God will receive no rewards even though some of their actions might have been good (Pr 24:20). Rewards are only for those who have been cleansed from their evil deeds by the blood of the Lamb. Regardless of what these rewards shall be, there will not be any exalting of self over another. 1Co 4:7 says, "For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?" The twenty-four elders in Re 4:10 are shown casting their crowns (which are rewards) down before the Lord and giving all their praise and worship to Him.

# MATTHEW

## CHAPTER 11

### MATTHEW 11:4

*Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see:*

Note 1 at Mt 11:4: Jesus' use of the word "again" shows that John had been kept well informed of what was happening in Jesus' ministry (Lu 7:18).

### MATTHEW 11:7

*And as they departed, Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind?*

Note 1 at Mt 11:7: It is very interesting to note that Jesus' proclamation of John the Baptist as the greatest of all Old Testament prophets came after the disciples of John had left. Why did Jesus wait to say these things until after John's disciples were gone? Wouldn't it have comforted John to hear Jesus' announcement of him as the greatest of all the prophets? Instead, Jesus didn't even give John a direct answer but told his disciples to go and show John the miracles that Jesus was performing.

As can be seen by John's earlier testimony (Joh 1:22-23), he was very familiar with the prophecies of Isaiah. When Jesus told John's disciples to show John that "the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them" (Mt 11:5), Jesus was pointing John back to the prophecies of Isaiah (Isa 29:17-19, 35:3-6, and 61:1-2). The faith

John needed to banish his doubts would come from the Word of God (Ro 10:17 and Eph 6:16-17). What might appear to some as Jesus giving an inadequate reply to John was actually Jesus ministering to John in the most powerful way possible. The Word of God is magnified above the name of God (Ps 138:2) and is more trustworthy than the audible voice of God out of heaven (2Pe 1:17-20).

Many times when we experience times of doubt and discouragement, we pray for God to do something special to lift us out of our despair. However, we should remember how Jesus responded to John by pointing him back to the Word, and we should receive the greater blessing of walking by faith and not by sight (2Co 5:7 and see note 2 at Mt 8:10).

#### **MATTHEW 11:12**

***And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.***

Note 2 at Mt 11:12: The phrase "suffereth violence" in this verse is translated from the Greek word "BIAZO," and it means "to force, i.e. (reflexively) to crowd oneself (into), or (passively) to be seized" (Strong's Concordance). The same Greek word was used in Lu 16:16 and was translated "presseth" there.

The idea that Jesus was communicating in both of these passages was that before the time of John the Baptist, the only way to approach unto God was through the Old Testament laws and sacrifices. In Jesus' time, these had become cold and cumbersome rituals in which the heart of the people was far from God (Mt 15:3-9). When John the Baptist came in the power of the Spirit (2Co 3:6), preaching a turning away from sin (Mt 3:8) and faith in the coming Messiah (Mt 3:11), multitudes, who previously were not actively seeking God, began flocking to the wilderness to be baptized by John, confessing their sins and

putting their faith in the coming Messiah. They were truly "pressing in" to the kingdom of heaven, overcoming any obstacle or opposition posed by laws, traditions, unbelief, or any power Satan threw at them, in order to receive the message that John preached. They were "violently resolved" in their zeal and forcefully pressing in to the kingdom of heaven.

Today, as in the days of John the Baptist, Satan is opposing the preaching of the Gospel, and only those who are violently resolved to receive God's best will have it (Jas 4:7).

### **MATTHEW 11:15**

***He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.***

Note 3 at Mt 11:15: Everyone present probably had physical ears. Jesus was referring to their ability to perceive spiritual truth. Spiritual truths can only be received if we incline our ears unto God's Word (Pr 4:20). What we concentrate our attention upon is what we become sensitive to. If we fail to meditate upon spiritual realities, we will become dull of hearing (spiritually) or hardened toward those things (see note 10 at Mr 6:52; also see Ps 92:6, Lu 12:56, Joh 8:43, 1Co 2:14, and Heb 5:11).

### **MATTHEW 11:19**

***The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. But wisdom is justified of her children.***

Note 4 at Mt 11:19: This phrase relates back to Mt 11:15 where Jesus spoke of these people as being spiritually hard of hearing. He was simply saying that those who are walking in the wisdom

of God (children of wisdom) will be able to see the truth that John did not have a devil and that Jesus was not a glutton or a winebibber. Those who twist the facts are showing that they do not have "ears to hear" (Mt 11:15).

### **MATTHEW 11:20**

***Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not:***

Note 1 at Mt 11:20: Remember that Jesus spent so much time in Capernaum that it was referred to as "his own city" (see note 1 at Joh 2:12). Chorazin was only two and a half miles north, and Bethsaida was approximately four to five miles east of Capernaum. Therefore, most of Jesus' mighty works were done in this area because He spent most of His time there.

### **MATTHEW 11:29**

***Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.***

Note 2 at Mt 11:29: A yoke was made of wood with two hollowed-out sections on the bottom portion that rested on the necks of oxen that were used to plow or to draw a cart. Figuratively, a yoke symbolized servitude or submission. Jesus was admonishing us to submit ourselves to Him, for true rest comes from serving Him, not ourselves (Mt 10:38-39, 16:24-25; Mr 8:34-37; and Lu 9:23-25).

A new ox was often trained for plowing or drawing a cart by yoking it with an experienced ox. The yoke kept the young ox from "doing its own thing," and it soon learned obedience to its master. In like manner, we are to commit ourselves to being yoked to Jesus. "It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps"

(Jer 10:23). Therefore, we have to bear the yoke in our youth (La 3:27) if we want to become mature Christians. The comparison ends at this point, though. Unlike the sometimes-harsh treatment oxen are given to bring them into subjection, Jesus is "meek and lowly in heart" and wins us by love (1Jo 4:11 and 19). Jesus pulls more than His "share" of the load; therefore, our burden is light (Mt 11:30).

# MATTHEW

## CHAPTER 12

### MATTHEW 12:2

***But when the Pharisees saw [it], they said unto him, Behold, thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the sabbath day.***

Note 1 at Mt 12:2: No Old Testament law expressly forbids plucking grain and eating it on the Sabbath day. The Pharisees had written their own interpretations of the Mosaic Law and held them to be equal in inspiration to Moses' writings. It was apparently these traditions that Jesus' disciples had violated. The Pharisees were probably interpreting the plucking of corn as being equal to harvesting and rubbing of the grains in their hands (Lu 6:1) as being equal to threshing.

### MATTHEW 12:4

***How he entered into the house of God, and did eat the shewbread, which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the priests?***

Note 2 at Mt 12:4: Ahimelech the priest said to David, "Why art thou alone, and no man with thee?" (1Sa 21:1); yet Jesus referred to "them which were with him." In 1Sa 21:2, David mentioned having appointed his servants to some other place. Ahimelech understood David to be asking for bread for his servants also, as can be seen in 1Sa 21:4. David appeared at the house of God alone but had servants who were traveling with him for whom he was requesting bread also.



## **MATTHEW 12:6**

***But I say unto you, That in this place is [one] greater than the temple.***

Note 3 at Mt 12:6: The priests were commanded to do work in the temple on the Sabbath and were blameless because their service to God in the temple sanctified them. If the priests could be exempted from the Sabbath laws when performing their service, how much more could Jesus, who was greater than the Levitical priests (Heb 7:11-18), and greater even than the temple (2Ch 6:18 and Isa 66:1-2)?

## **MATTHEW 12:10**

***And, behold, there was a man which had [his] hand withered. And they asked him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath days? that they might accuse him.***

Note 1 at Mt 12:10: Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath? The Old Testament made no prohibition, but the rabbis regarded it as work (Lu 13:14). Therefore, the rabbis prohibited healing on the Sabbath unless a victim's life was in immediate danger. But even then, it was clearly laid down that steps could be taken to keep a man from getting worse but not to make him better. So, for example, a plain bandage could be put on a wound but not a medicated bandage, and so on (William Barclay, Comm. on Mt.-Vol. 2, page 129; R.V.G. Tasker, Tyndale N.T. Commentary-Vol. 1, Mt., page 126). What angered Jesus (Mr 3:5) was the wrong scale of values, of which the religious leaders were guilty.

According to Matthew's version of the story, they would not hesitate to rescue a sheep on the Sabbath (Mt 12:11-12) but would argue whether a man was sufficiently ill to be healed or aided on the Sabbath. In God's sight, man is worth more than

sheep, so Christ did not hesitate to do good by healing on the Sabbath day.

### **MATTHEW 12:11**

***And he said unto them, What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift [it] out?***

Note 2 at Mt 12:11: The word "one" in this passage does not imply that the man had only one sheep and was therefore particularly anxious to rescue it. But the Greek word "HEIS" has the implication here that even if one sheep out of a large flock had fallen into a ditch, it would be pulled out.

### **MATTHEW 12:13**

***Then saith he to the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched [it] forth; and it was restored whole, like as the other.***

Note 3 at Mt 12:13: Once again, Jesus told this man who was being healed to do something that required faith (see note 4 at Joh 5:8). This man knew from the conversation that Jesus intended to heal him, and he eagerly complied. It was after he stretched forth his hand that it was healed.

### **MATTHEW 12:20**

***A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory.***

Note 1 at Mt 12:20: The "reed" in this passage is probably referring to the reeds that grew in the marshy areas in the land of Palestine. These were very fragile and could be easily bruised or broken.

The term "smoking flax" refers to a linen wick that was made from flax and burned brightly when floating on oil in an open lamp. However, when the oil was depleted, the flax would just smoke until the oil was replenished.

The meaning of these illustrations is that Jesus was ministering in mercy to those who had been bruised or broken (Lu 4:18). And to those who had lost their oil (spirit), He came to fill them anew (Mt 5:3; Ac 1:5, and 2:4). The Jews were used to the judgment of the Law, but Jesus came to minister grace and truth (Joh 1:17), even to the Gentiles (Mt 12:18 and 21).

#### **MATTHEW 12:22**

***Then was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb: and he healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw.***

Note 1 at Mt 12:22: This instance of casting out a devil and the following criticism by the scribes and Pharisees is nearly identical to the instance Luke recorded in Lu 11:14. However, to maintain the chronological order of Luke's Gospel (see Introduction to Luke), Luke's account must correspond to another casting out of a devil that Matthew recorded in Mt 9:32-33.

#### **MATTHEW 12:31**

***Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy [against] the***

***[Holy] Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.***

Note 1 at Mt 12:31: Outside of total rejection of salvation, the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost is the only unpardonable sin spoken of in the New Testament. The fact that Jesus irrevocably damns those who blaspheme the Holy Ghost further attests to the divinity of the Holy Ghost and the teaching of the trinity (see note 2 at Mr 1:10).

The word "blaspheme" means "1. To speak of (God or a sacred entity) in an irreverent, impious manner. 2. To revile; execrate" (American Heritage Dictionary). In context, Jesus was saying that blasphemy against the Holy Ghost is attributing the working of the Holy Ghost to the devil (Mr 3:30). Many people in the Bible did this, including Saul, who became the Apostle Paul. However, we see in 1Ti 1:13 that Paul said he received mercy concerning his blasphemy because he had done it "ignorantly in unbelief." Therefore, the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost that Jesus was warning against must be willfully reviling the Holy Ghost with knowledge of what is being done.

This parallels Heb 6:4-6 where qualifications are placed on who can fall away from grace. That passage shows that only a mature Christian can commit such a thing. Likewise, with blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, rash statements spoken against the Holy Ghost in ignorance or unbelief by those who don't really know what they are doing can be forgiven.

From our human perspective, no clear line can be drawn as to when people become accountable for blasphemies and have committed this unpardonable sin. We can be assured that God knows the hearts of all people and that He will have righteous judgment concerning this. However, God's Word does show us that when people become "reprobate," they lose all conviction from God (Ro 1:28). Therefore, those who are convicted and repentant over having possibly blasphemed the Holy Ghost have not yet reached the place where it is unpardonable, or they wouldn't care.

## **MATTHEW 12:33**

***Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by [his] fruit.***

Note 2 at Mt 12:33: Jesus was still speaking about blaspheming the Holy Ghost. It is impossible to separate the Holy Ghost from His actions or fruit. Anyone who discredits the acts of the Holy Ghost is also discrediting the Holy Ghost.

## **MATTHEW 12:34**

***O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.***

Note 3 at Mt 12:34: The word "heart" is used 833 times in the Bible. The plural is used 113 times, and variations such as "heartily," "brokenhearted," etc., are used 26 times. There are less than 20 references where the word "heart" is referring to the physical organ that pumps blood (examples: 2Sa 18:14 and 2Ki 9:24).

The dominant words for "heart" are (1) in the Old Testament Hebrew, "LEB" and (2) in the New Testament Greek, "KARDIA." Both of these words signify the chief organ of physical life, but as has already been mentioned, they are used mainly to denote the inward mental and moral makeup of man (1Sa 16:7).

Some of the things Scripture describes as part of the heart are (1) imagination of thought (Ge 6:5, 8:21; 1Ch 29:18; and Pr 6:18), (2) conscience (1Sa 24:5, Ac 2:37, Ro 2:15, Heb 10:22, and 1Jo 3:20-21), (3) wisdom and understanding (1Ki 3:9, 12, 4:29; Pr

10:8, 11:29, 14:33, and 23:15), (4) pride (2Ki 14:10; 2Ch 26:16; Ps 101:5; Pr 16:18 with 18:12, 28:25; and Jer 49:16), (5) gladness or joy (Ps 4:7; Pr 15:13, 15; Isa 65:14; Joh 16:22; Ac 14:17; and Eph 5:19), (6) fear (1Sa 28:5), (7) mischief (Ps 28:3, 140:2; and Pr 6:14), (8) broken heart (Ps 34:18 and 51:17), (9) iniquity (Ps 66:18), (10) the issues of life (Pr 4:23), (11) subtlety (Pr 7:10), (12) foolishness (Pr 12:23 and 22:15), (13) sorrow (Pr 15:13; Isa 65:14; Joh 14:1, 16:6; Ro 9:2; and 2Co 2:4), (14) rebellion (Jer 5:23), (15) deceit and wickedness (Jer 17:9), (16) pureness (Mt 5:8), (17) sin (Mt 15:19, Mr 7:21, and Ac 5:3), (18) faith (Lu 24:25, Ac 8:37, Ro 10:9-10, 1Ti 1:5, and Heb 10:22), (19) love (Mr 12:33, Lu 10:27, Ro 5:5, 1Ti 1:5, and 1Pe 1:22), (20) unbelief (Mr 11:23 and Heb 3:12), and (21) desires (Ps 37:4, Mt 5:28, and 2Pe 2:14).

The spirit is definitely a part of the heart (Ro 2:29, 2Co 1:22, Ga 4:6, and 1Pe 3:4), but as seen in 1Pe 3:4, it is only a part. Sin, iniquity, unbelief, etc., come from the heart but not the born-again spirit. Heb 4:12 suggests that spirit and soul are both part of the heart; hence, the Scriptures admonish us to believe with all our hearts (Ac 8:37), have singleness of heart (Col 3:22), and tell us our hearts can have two minds, or ways of thinking (Jas 4:8).

Therefore, the term "heart" can include all of the inner man: spirit, soul, and any portion thereof.

## **MATTHEW 12:40**

***For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.***

Note 1 at Mt 12:40: It has been traditionally taught that Jesus was crucified and buried on a Friday and resurrected on a Sunday, the first day of the week (Mt 28:1, Mr 16:2, Lu 24:1, and Joh 20:1). However, here Jesus prophesied being three days and

three nights in the heart of the earth. That would mean the crucifixion took place at least on a Thursday or possibly on a Wednesday, depending on when you believe Jesus was resurrected. Joh 20:1 shows that Mary Magdalene found that Jesus was already resurrected while it was still dark. That means Jesus actually rose from the dead some time during the night prior to sunrise. If Jesus' statement in this verse is interpreted as meaning three complete nights, Saturday night could not be included and would thus push the crucifixion and burial back to Wednesday. At any rate, Friday could not have been the day Jesus was crucified.

The reason the crucifixion was traditionally set on Friday was because of a misunderstanding of verses like Lu 23:54 that speak of the Sabbath as being the day after the crucifixion. However, as can be clearly seen in Joh 19:31, the Sabbath spoken of was a high (or special) Sabbath, specifically the feast of the Passover. These special feasts were called Sabbaths also, regardless of the day of the week on which they fell (compare Mr 15:42 with Joh 19:14).

Note 2 at Mt 12:40: A Mediterranean fish has been caught, whose head alone weighed six tons and whose jaws had an opening of eight feet. In the April 4, 1896, Literary Digest, a story was recounted of a whale in the Mediterranean Sea that destroyed a harpoon boat and swallowed a sailor named James Bartley. A day and a half later, Bartley was found alive in the whale's belly with only his skin tanned by the gastric juices. Another fish, caught off the coast of Florida, weighed 15 tons and had a 1,500-pound fish in its belly (The Dake Annotated Reference Bible).

Note 3 at Mt 12:40: In between the crucifixion and the resurrection, Jesus went into the heart of the earth for three days and three nights. Ps 16:9-10 with Ac 2:25-32 show that this was actually hell that Jesus descended into. The word used for "hell" in Ac 2:27 corresponds directly with the Old Testament Hebrew word "SH@'OWL" (or Sheol) (Vine's Expository Dictionary) (see note 13 at Mt 5:22). Sheol was divided into two

parts, one part being a place of torment and the other a place of blessing with a great gulf between the two (Lu 16:26). Jesus led the spirits of the godly dead out of this region at His resurrection (Ps 68:18 with Eph 4:8-10) leaving only the wicked dead in this place of torment, which we call hell. At the last judgment, death and hell will deliver up the dead that are in them, and then they will be cast into a lake of fire where they will be tormented forever (Re 20:11-15).

#### **MATTHEW 12:44**

***Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth [it] empty, swept, and garnished.***

Note 4 at Mt 12:44: These verses have a double meaning. Most often, Mt 12:43-45 is used to teach about demon possession and deliverance from evil spirits. Jesus made it clear that getting rid of an unclean spirit is only a part of deliverance. One must also fill that now-empty place with the presence and power of God as protection. If a person is cleansed from an evil spirit but left "empty," the spirit will return with even more spirits, and the individual will be much worse off. Simply being empty of the devil but not full of God is a very dangerous and short-lived condition. True deliverance is not only getting freed but also staying free.

However, in context, these verses refer to Jesus' rebuke to the scribes and Pharisees and His statement about the people of Nineveh and the queen of the south condemning them at the Judgment. One of the laws of God concerning accountability was being dealt with here. As stated in Lu 12:48, "For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required." The people of Jesus' day who rejected His message will be held more accountable at the Judgment than the people of Nineveh or the Queen of Sheba because Jesus' witness and Person was so much greater than either Jonah or Solomon. Just as a person who receives miraculous deliverance from an evil spirit



becomes more accountable and will end up in even worse condition when not walking in that accountability, even so the people of Jesus' generation were accountable for more than any other generation had ever been. A person would be better off to keep just one evil spirit than to be set free but not filled with God and wind up with eight demonic spirits, seven of which are more wicked than the first. The scribes and Pharisees would have been better off to have never had Jesus bring the kingdom of God unto them than to reject such an offer (Mr 14:21).

# MATTHEW

## CHAPTER 13

### MATTHEW 13:1

*The same day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the sea side.*

Note 1 at Mt 13:1: Matthew very plainly stated that Jesus' parables recorded here were spoken the same day Jesus' mother and brothers came seeking Him. Luke also indicated that these two events happened on the same day (Lu 8:19). However, Matthew and Mark recorded Jesus' family coming to Him first and then the teaching by parables (Mt 12:46-13:3 and Mr 3:31-4:2), while Luke listed them in the opposite order (Lu 8:4-21).

None of the Gospel writers stated that one event definitely happened before the other. They were only as specific as saying that they happened on the same day. At most, any differences could be just a couple of hours. Therefore, any differences in recording such a busy day's events would simply be a matter of style and not of accuracy. With this in mind, Jesus' family seeking Him has been recorded in the sequence Luke listed, to be consistent with the view that Luke was the historian among the Gospel writers and put the events in chronological order (see Introduction to Luke).

### MATTHEW 13:11

*He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.*

Note 1 at Mt 13:11: God's truths are hidden for His children.

God has given an open invitation to all people (Mt 11:28-30, Joh 3:16, Ac 2:39, Ro 10:11-13, and Re 22:17) to receive the spiritual rebirth that entitles them to the revelation of these mysteries of the kingdom (Joh 7:17, 14:26, 15:15, 26; 1Co 2:10, and 16). But as stated in 1Co 2:14, a natural person cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God, because they are spiritually discerned. Therefore, whoever rejects Jesus rejects the source of all wisdom and knowledge (Col 2:3), thereby reserving the deep things of God for those who receive Jesus and draw on His wisdom through the Holy Spirit. This also safeguards the laws of God, upon which the entire universe is founded, from being appropriated and misused by Satan's kingdom.

#### **MATTHEW 13:12**

***For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath.***

Note 2 at Mt 13:12: In context, Jesus was speaking about those who have revelation knowledge (see note 1 at Lu 2:26) of the mysteries of God. They will receive more revelation and, therefore, will walk in the abundant life that Jesus provided (Joh 10:10 and 2Pe 1:3). Those who do not receive God's revelation will lose whatever truth they did have and will go farther and farther into deception. God reveals His truths to people in stages and not all at once (Isa 28:9-10). Therefore, as they walk in the revelation of what the Lord has already shown them, He will reveal more of His truths to them.

#### **MATTHEW 13:15**

***For this people's heart is waxed gross, and [their] ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with [their] eyes, and hear with [their] ears, and should understand with [their] heart, and***

***should be converted, and I should heal them.***

Note 3 at Mt 13:15: The word "waxed" means "to increase gradually in size, number, strength, or intensity," and it shows that this condition of the heart is not something we are born with or that strikes us suddenly. It has to be nurtured over a prolonged period of time. This is the reason we should not violate our consciences, even in small things. This will keep us sensitive to God and will stop our hearts from becoming hardened to God (see note 10 at Mr 6:52). If we will stay faithful to God, even in the small things, then we'll be faithful in the more important things also (Lu 16:10-12).

#### **MATTHEW 13:26**

***But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.***

Note 1 at Mt 13:26: These tares that are spoken of refer to the Old World variety of darnel, which is poisonous. Virtually all grains are almost indistinguishable from tares when they send up the first blade from the ground. By the time the tares become distinguishable, they are so well rooted that if growing in close proximity to a productive grain, uprooting the tares would also mean uprooting the productive grain. Therefore, Mt 13:30 admonishes us to let both grow together until the harvest. The grains of the tares are long and black in contrast to the wheat, and are easily recognizable at harvest time. Many will profess Christianity, but "by their fruits ye shall know them" (Mt 7:20).

#### **MATTHEW 13:31**

***Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field:***

Note 1 at Mt 13:31: This parable is continuing the theme of growth in the kingdom of heaven (this verse), or the kingdom of God (Mr 4:30, see last paragraph of note 30 at Mt 6:10). The mustard seed's smallness contrasted with the mustard plant's largeness (up to ten feet in height) shows this to be the greatest of all herbs.

The church was started with only a handful of the people whom Jesus had ministered to during His earthly ministry. But within a short period of time, a miraculous growth began with the addition of 3,000 souls on the Day of Pentecost (Ac 2:41) and 5,000 men (Ac 4:4) after the healing of the lame man in Ac 3. That growth still continues today and will continue in the future (Isa 9:7).

The fowls of the air can be interpreted in two ways. First, according to the symbolism used in the parable of the sower, the fowls could be Satan and his forces (Mr 4:4 with 15). This would certainly be consistent with other parables in this narrative (Mt 13:36-43 and 47-50). It is a fact that many professors (of salvation) but not possessors of eternal life have infiltrated the established church and are causing much damage. The Lord will divide these "goats" from His "sheep" at the final judgment (Mt 25:31-46).

Second, these fowls of the air could also be interpreted in a positive way to represent those who are pressing into the kingdom of God (Lu 16:16). There are Old Testament examples where fowls of the air lodging in the shade of a tree were used primarily to symbolize people (Eze 31:5-6 and Da 4:21). If interpreted in this way, this parable would be teaching that people (good and bad) were coming into the kingdom. This would be compatible with the theme of growth dealt with in each of these parables, and it would also lend itself to the interpretation of children of the wicked one being sown into the kingdom (Mt 13:38).

### **MATTHEW 13:33**

***Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.***

Note 1 at Mt 13:33: When leaven is used symbolically in Scripture, it always denotes something bad. Examples are bad doctrine (Mt 16:6-12 and Mr 8:15-21), hypocrisy (Lu 12:1), sin (1Co 5:6-7), and malice and wickedness (1Co 5:8). Using this fact as the basis of our interpretation, this parable would be speaking of Satan (the woman) sowing his disciples into the kingdom of God (the meal) for the purpose of corrupting and rendering the church ineffective. History and current observation certainly verify that this has happened.

If leaven is interpreted as producing positive growth in the kingdom of God, that would be an exception to the way it is used elsewhere in Scripture. But the principle of growth in God's kingdom is an established Bible truth (see note 1 at Mr 4:21 and note 2 at Mr 4:31).

### **MATTHEW 13:37**

***He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man;***

Note 1 at Mt 13:37: Jesus made the interpretation of this parable very clear. Satan has secretly placed some of his followers among the church for the purpose of hindering the influence of the church. This has been a more effective strategy than direct opposition. Persecution tends to separate the sheep from the goats (Mt 25:31-33, compare with note 6 at Lu 8:14).

These "wolves in sheep's clothing" (Mt 7:15, 10:16; and Ac 20:29) are very damaging to the body of Christ. However, Jesus warned us against trying to root them out (Mt 13:28-29), especially since it is not always possible to discern other people's hearts. In an effort to destroy these "tares," we might offend some of Christ's "little ones" (Mt 18:6) and cause their profession of faith to waver.

It is important, though, for our own personal benefit that we are aware the children of the wicked one are placed among the true believers. We should be very careful about putting just anyone who professes Christianity into any position of authority (1Ti 3:10). Our best defense is to preach the Word of God without watering it down. False brethren (2Co 11:26 and Ga 2:4) will not endure sound doctrine (2Ti 4:3). They leave when the Word, which is sharper than any two-edged sword (Heb 4:12), begins to expose the thoughts and intents of their hearts (1Jo 2:19).

There will still, however, be those who are deceived and do not recognize that they are not born again, who will remain among the church until the end of this world (Mt 7:21-23 and 13:47-50, see note 1 at Mt 13:31 and note 1 at Mt 13:33). At the second return of Christ, Jesus will send His angels forth to gather all of these "tares" out from among His true church (Mt 13:41) and cast them into a furnace of fire (Mt 13:42).

#### **MATTHEW 13:44**

***Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.***

Note 1 at Mt 13:44: The interpretation of this parable is this: the field is the world (Mt 13:38), the man buying the field is God, the treasure is the true believers in Christ, and the price that is

paid is the very life of Jesus on the cross.

Jesus saw, through His foreknowledge (Ro 8:29 and Eph 1:4), a remnant of people who would receive Him as Lord. Therefore, "for the joy that was set before him," He endured the cross (Heb 12:2) and purchased us unto Himself with His own blood (Ac 20:28). He purchased the whole world (all mankind - 1Jo 2:2), but not everyone will receive what He did. Therefore, the church is hidden (scattered among the world) today. At the end of this world, the Lord will remove His treasure (1Th 4:16-17) out of the world, and then the world and those in it who chose not to become a part of His treasure will be burned up (2Pe 3:10).

Many people interpret this parable as representing us selling all that we have to purchase eternal life. It is certainly true that Bible salvation involves total commitment on our part (Mt 19:21; Lu 5:11, and 14:33), but that is not the point of this parable. It is important that we rightly divide the Word of truth (2Ti 2:15) and do not intentionally misapply Scripture regardless of how accurate the point is that we are trying to make.

### **MATTHEW 13:46**

***Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.***

Note 1 at Mt 13:46: The interpretation of this parable parallels that of the treasure hidden in a field (see note 1 at Mt 13:44). The merchant would be God, and He found a remnant who would love and obey Him, which is the church (or pearl). God literally gave all that He had when He gave Jesus for our sins (Joh 3:16 and 2Co 9:15) and purchased us unto Himself (Ac 20:28).



## **MATTHEW 13:47**

***Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind:***

Note 1 at Mt 13:47: This parable is talking about the growth of the universal church, or kingdom of heaven. The sea is symbolic of the world where every kind of person dwells, both good (receptive to the Gospel) and bad (unreceptive to the Gospel). The net is all of the different ways that God is reaching out to the lost through His church. Just as in the other parables that Jesus taught on this day, true believers (good fish) and false believers (bad fish) are attracted to the Gospel message of salvation. But just as a fisherman separates the good fish from the bad fish in his catch, the Lord will separate all of those who have not had born-again experiences (see note 2 at Joh 3:3) from those who have (Mt 13:40-43, 22:11-14, 25:31-46; and Re 14:18-20). No one is going to "slip" into heaven. "Ye must be born again" (Joh 3:7).

## **MATTHEW 13:48**

***Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away.***

Note 2 at Mt 13:48: These good "fish" aren't just born that way any more than the good "ground" (spoken of in Mt 13:8 and 23) just happens naturally (see note 1 at Lu 8:8). We cannot make ourselves fit for the kingdom of heaven. Religion has deceived millions on this point. Many of us are trusting on our church attendance, good works, etc., to make us good, but the Bible reveals that we cannot rid ourselves of sin any more than a leopard can change its spots (Jer 13:23). All of our self-righteousness is as filthy rags (Isa 64:6), for all have sinned and

come short of the glory of God (Ro 3:23). Jesus bore the penalty of our sins for us (Isa 53:6 and 2Co 5:21) so that through faith in His provision, we could become new creatures (2Co 5:17) by the new birth (see note 2 at Joh 3:3).

## **MATTHEW 13:52**

***Then said he unto them, Therefore every scribe [which is] instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man [that is] an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure [things] new and old.***

Note 1 at Mt 13:52: Jesus had been announcing the arrival (Mr 1:15) of the new kingdom of God (Lu 17:20), and all of these parables that He taught this day were revealing how it would work. People would enter this kingdom through the new birth (Joh 3:3) that came as a result of faith in God's Word being sown in their hearts (Ro 10:17, 1Pe 1:23, also illustrated in the parable of the sower - Mr 4:14). The terms of this New Covenant were dramatically different from those of the Old Testament Law (Ga 3:7-14); hence Jesus' question to His disciples in Mt 13:51, "Have ye understood all these things?"

Then Jesus used the word "scribe" in referring to His disciples (this verse). Although they had no formal training, they were being instructed in the truths of this new kingdom by the greatest Teacher of all. Therefore, they were scribes in the truest sense of the word. Scribes had a duty to share their knowledge with others for the purpose of instruction. Therefore, Jesus taught, through this comparison with the householder, their responsibility to impart these truths to others. The wisdom and understanding that they had received from Jesus about the kingdom of God was truly a treasure. They had a responsibility to bring it forth with both the new wisdom that had just been imparted to them and the old truths revealed to them in the writing of the prophets ("things new and old").

**MATTHEW 13:53**

***And it came to pass, [that] when Jesus had finished these parables, he departed thence.***

Note 1 at Mt 13:53: A number of events took place between Jesus teaching by parables and His departure to Nazareth.

# MATTHEW

## CHAPTER 14

### MATTHEW 14:1

*At that time Herod the tetrarch heard of the fame of Jesus,*

Note 1 at Mt 14:1: Matthew's statement "at that time" simply means that Herod heard of the fame of Jesus during His tour of Galilee that Matthew had just recorded. Mark and Luke spoke of Herod hearing about Jesus after He had sent out His twelve disciples into all the villages of Galilee, but that also took place during the same tour of Galilee that Matthew was describing, so there is no discrepancy between the accounts.

Mark's and Luke's linking of Herod hearing about Jesus with the sending forth of the twelve disciples would imply that these twelve disciples did much to publicize the ministry of Jesus. This was the reason that on another occasion, Jesus sent seventy of His disciples ahead of Him into every city and place where He was planning to go (Lu 10:1). He was publicizing His coming so that everyone would have the opportunity of seeing and hearing Him.

Note 2 at Mt 14:1: The word "tetrarch" means "the ruler of a fourth part of a country" (Strong's Concordance). It was adapted by the Romans to designate many petty rulers whom they chose not to dignify with the title of king. However, in Herod Antipas' case, the title was true in its original meaning. According to Josephus, Caesar Augustus gave one half of the realm of Herod the Great to Archelaus, Herod the Great's son (see note 3 at Lu 3:1), and he divided the other half between Herod Antipas (mentioned here) and his brother Philip (The Antiquities of the Jews, Book 17, Chapter 11, Section 4; and War of the Jews Book 2, Chapter 6, Section 3).

## **MATTHEW 14:16**

***But Jesus said unto them, They need not depart; give ye them to eat.***

Note 1 at Mt 14:16: The disciples were using natural reasoning (see note 5 at Mr 2:6) and recognized that they didn't have the ability to minister to the multitude's need for food. However, Jesus did have the ability and the will to minister to their needs, and so the multitude did not need to depart. All of their needs could be met through Jesus.

The same thing is true now. Some disciples today are sending the multitudes to the world to meet their physical needs (health, finances, counseling, etc.) and proclaiming that God only meets spiritual needs. But "they need not depart." The Lord is willing and able to heal their bodies (1Pe 2:24 and 3Jo 2), prosper them financially (2Co 8:9), and/or counsel them from His Word on any area of their lives where they might have need (Php 4:19). All that is needed is someone with the faith to "break the bread" and give it to them.

## **MATTHEW 14:22**

***And straightway Jesus constrained his disciples to get into a ship, and to go before him unto the other side, while he sent the multitudes away.***

Note 1 at Mt 14:22: It is interesting that the Scripture uses the word "constrained" here. The word "constrained" means "to compel by physical, moral, or circumstantial force; oblige." That shows there was some degree of resistance by the disciples to getting into the ship and going to the other side. The Scripture doesn't clearly state why the disciples were reluctant to obey. It is possible that with their background as fishermen on this very lake, they recognized the signs of the impending storm, which

they were later caught in. Regardless of their reasoning, it is to their credit that they put obedience to Jesus' word above their own judgment.

### **MATTHEW 14:25**

***And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea.***

Note 2 at Mt 14:25: The fourth watch would have been from 3:00 a.m. to 6:00 a.m. The Romans divided the night into four watches: 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., 9:00 p.m. to midnight, midnight to 3:00 a.m., and 3:00 a.m. to 6:00 a.m. The Jews divided the night into three watches: sunset to 10:00 p.m., 10:00 p.m. to 2:00 a.m., and 2:00 a.m. to sunrise. The "fourth watch" indicates Matthew was using the Roman system rather than the Jewish system to reckon time in this verse (see note 3 at Joh 1:39 for more information on time).

### **MATTHEW 14:28**

***And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water.***

Note 3 at Mt 14:28: It is important to analyze Peter's statement. Peter was overwhelmed when he saw Jesus walking on the water, and he wanted to do the same. While there was nothing really wrong with his desire, the request he put before Jesus was totally wrong. He didn't ask the Lord if He wanted him to walk on the water or if his faith was up to it. Instead he said, "If it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water." What was Jesus going to say? "It isn't Me; don't come"?

There are no other examples in the Word of God where

someone walked on the water. Jesus had a definite reason for walking on the water; however, Peter simply wanted to see if he could do it. God will permit us to do things that are not His perfect will for us (Ps 106:15 and Ro 12:2).

Many times, we hinder our own prayers by the way we ask things of God. We say, "Do You want us to do (a) or (b)?" The Lord may not want us to do either of the choices. We should offer a third choice - (c) none of the above. We should trust God's wisdom and let Him even select the options.

If Peter had phrased his statement to Jesus differently, Jesus might have answered him differently.

#### **MATTHEW 14:29**

***And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus.***

Note 4 at Mt 14:29: This "come" was spoken by the one who made all things (Joh 1:3), and it had just as much power in it as the words that were spoken at creation. This was where the power came from for Peter to walk on the water. Likewise, any word spoken to us by God carries in itself the anointing and power it takes to fulfill that word if we will release it by believing it and acting on it.

Despite all the criticism that might be leveled at Peter in this instance, he did walk on the water. There were eleven other disciples in the boat. Although they clearly saw Jesus and Peter walking on the water, they still did not participate. One of the important steps in receiving a miracle from God is to leave the security of your natural resources (get out of your boat) and put yourself in the position where a miracle from God has to hold you up. God is no respecter of persons (Ro 2:11). Any of the

disciples could have walked on the water if they would have asked and gotten out of the boat.

### **MATTHEW 14:30**

***But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me.***

Note 5 at Mt 14:30: The reason that Peter began to sink was because of his fear. In Mt 14:31, Jesus used the word "doubt" in referring to Peter's fear. Fear is simply negative faith or faith in reverse (see note 1 at Lu 8:50).

Where did this fear come from? 2Ti 1:7 says, "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." It didn't come from God. The way that this fear was able to come upon Peter was that he took his attention off of Jesus and put it on his situation.

Fear or doubt cannot just overcome us. We have to let it in. If Peter had kept his attention on Jesus, the Author and Finisher of his faith (Heb 12:2), he wouldn't have feared. In the same way that faith comes by hearing the Word of God (Ro 10:17), fear comes by hearing or seeing something contrary to God's Word. We would not be tempted with fear or doubt if we didn't consider things that Satan uses to minister fear and doubt.

The wind and waves didn't really have anything to do with Peter walking on the water. In the natural, he couldn't have walked on the water even if it had been calm. The circumstances simply took Peter's attention off of Jesus and led him back into carnal thinking. Likewise, Satan tries to distract us with thinking about our problems. No problem is too big for God. We should cast our cares about the problems over on God (1Pe 5:7) and just keep our eyes on Jesus (Heb 12:2), the Word



(Joh 1:1).

Note 6 at Mt 14:30: Peter's faith didn't fail him all at once, as can be seen by the fact that he was only "beginning" to sink. If no faith had been present, he would have sunk all at once and not gradually. This illustrates that the entrance of fear and the exit of faith doesn't happen instantly. There are always signs that this is happening. If we would turn our attention back to Jesus, as Peter did, He would save us from drowning.

#### **MATTHEW 14:31**

***And immediately Jesus stretched forth [his] hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?***

Note 7 at Mt 14:31: It wasn't Jesus' fault that Peter began to sink; it was because of Peter's doubt. However, Jesus immediately reached out and saved Peter without any hesitation. This shows the willingness and compassion of Jesus to save us regardless of what we did to bring the problem on ourselves.

Note 8 at Mt 14:31: What did Peter doubt? He didn't doubt that Jesus could walk on the water. He doubted that he could walk on the water even though Jesus had told him he could by saying "come."

Many of us think that we are operating in all the faith we need if we believe that God can perform the miracle we are requesting. But we aren't using the faith that gets results until we believe it works for us. We not only have to believe that God is (i.e., God is able), but we also have to believe that He rewards us with our answers (Heb 11:6).

Many people who believe that God heals have not been healed, because they haven't believed that God gave them the power to receive that healing. Just as in Peter's situation, Satan doesn't throw doubt on God's ability to perform but on people's ability to receive.

#### **MATTHEW 14:34**

***And when they were gone over, they came into the land of Gennesaret.***

Note 1 at Mt 14:34: The land of Gennesaret was a narrow, fertile plain, about two miles wide and four miles long, that ran along the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee. It ran from the city of Magdala (Mt 15:39) north-northeast almost to Capernaum. It was well watered and fertile and, according to Josephus, produced walnuts, palms, figs, olives, and grapes. Some maps also list a city by that name in the same area. The Sea of Galilee was also referred to as the Lake of Gennesaret (Lu 5:1, see note 9 at Mr 6:45).

# MATTHEW

## CHAPTER 15

### MATTHEW 15:5

***But ye say, Whosoever shall say to [his] father or [his] mother, [It is] a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me;***

Note 1 at Mt 15:5: De 4:2 clearly states, "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it." This same thought is repeated in the New Testament in Re 22:18-19 with very stiff penalties. Religious people are very swift to observe the part about not diminishing any of God's commandments, but there seems to be an unwritten law that adding to them is okay. Every denomination has its own set of "dos and don'ts" that aren't found in Scripture, and just like with these hypocritical Pharisees, these unwritten laws usually have to do with outward appearance. We need to remember that adding to God's commandments is just as bad as taking away from them. We need to speak when the Bible speaks, and be silent when the Bible is silent.

### MATTHEW 15:6

***And honour not his father or his mother, [he shall be free]. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition.***

Note 2 at Mt 15:6: We can see from Jesus' application that the Old Testament command of "honour thy father and thy mother" (Ex 20:12) means monetary support as well as respect. This same point was made by the Apostle Paul in 1Ti 5:8 when he said, "But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those

of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." Therefore, providing financially for our parents in a time of need is part of honoring them.

### **MATTHEW 15:22**

***And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, [thou] Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.***

Note 1 at Mt 15:22: The land of Canaan in the Old Testament generally referred to all the coastland between Egypt and Asia Minor from the Mediterranean Sea on the west to the Jordan River and the Dead Sea on the east. It was given to Abraham by God as an "everlasting possession" (Ge 17:8).

The Israelites were not successful in driving out the Canaanites, however. The book of Judges relates that "all the Canaanites" (Jdg 3:3) were left to "prove Israel" (Jdg 3:1-5).

The "woman of Canaan," as referred to in this verse, was a term used to clearly distinguish her as non-Jewish and therefore not eligible to receive the "children's bread." A country or district of Canaan did not exist in Jesus' day (see note 3 at Mr 7:26).

### **MATTHEW 15:26**

***But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast [it] to dogs.***

Note 2 at Mt 15:26: It is very clear in Scripture that Jesus was sent to fulfill God's covenant to the Jews. However, it was

equally clear that Jesus would open up faith unto the Gentiles (Ac 13:46-47, 15:13-18; and Ro 9:24-33). Jesus certainly knew this (Ac 15:18) and had already ministered to numerous Gentiles without the apparent disdain that we see here with the Syrophenician woman (Mt 8:5-13; Lu 7:1-10; Joh 4:9, and 39-42). Jesus could not have been forced into ministering to this woman's daughter if it was not His will to do so. Therefore, His silence and rough answer to this woman must have been designed to accomplish a positive result.

As mentioned in note 5 at Joh 2:5, humility is an important ingredient of faith. This woman was a stranger from the covenants of promise (Eph 2:12) and had no right to demand anything. Jesus' silence and then comparison of her to a dog would certainly have offended an arrogant person. It is possible that for this very reason, Jesus tried her faith. Jesus didn't need to do this with the centurion in Lu 7:6-7, because the centurion had already humbled himself. Compare this verse with the parable of the Pharisee and publican in Lu 18:9-14.

### **MATTHEW 15:37**

***And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the broken [meat] that was left seven baskets full.***

Note 1 at Mt 15:37: The Greek word used for "baskets" here is "SPURIS," and it means "a hamper or lunch-receptacle" (Strong's Concordance). It is used in only five places: in the account of the feeding of the 4,000 (this verse and Mr 8:8), in two references to the feeding of the 4,000 (Mt 16:10 and Mr 8:20), and in Ac 9:25. In Ac 9:25, the basket spoken of was large enough to hide Saul in as he was lowered down the city wall to escape the persecution of the Jews. This means these seven baskets (Greek - SPURIS) of food taken up from the feeding of the 4,000 contained more food than the twelve baskets (Greek -

"KOPHINOS" - "a (small) basket" [Strong's Concordance]) taken up after the feeding of the 5,000 (Mt 14:20, Mr 6:43, Lu 9:17, and Joh 6:13).

### **MATTHEW 15:39**

***And he sent away the multitude, and took ship, and came into the coasts of Magdala.***

Note 1 at Mt 15:39: The town of Magdala was located on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee about three miles north of Tiberias and situated on the southern edge of the land of Gennesaret (see note 1 at Mt 14:34). It was also known by the name "Dalmanutha" (Mr 8:10). A Greek name of the same town (although not mentioned in Scripture) was Taricheae from "taricheuein" meaning to preserve or to smoke fish, which may have been an occupation of some residents.

Mary Magdalene probably received her name from Magdala and most likely lived there at one point since the word "Magdalene" means "inhabitant of Magdala" (Strong's Concordance) (Lu 8:2). The word "Magdala" is of Chaldean origin. In the Hebrew, it is the word "MIGDAL" or "MIGDALAH," and it means "a tower" (Strong's Concordance). This may refer to the mountains just south of Magdala that rise impressively from the plain of Gennesaret to "tower" over Magdala.

# MATTHEW

## CHAPTER 16

### MATTHEW 16:1

***The Pharisees also with the Sadducees came, and tempting desired him that he would shew them a sign from heaven.***

Note 1 at Mt 16:1: The Sadducees were a Jewish sect (Ac 5:17) of both a political and religious nature. They were best known for their opposition to the more popular party (the Pharisees), with whom they differed on various doctrinal and political issues.

They rejected the oral tradition on which the Pharisees had made their "mountain" of burdensome legislation and accepted only the written law. We are told they believed "there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit" (Ac 23:8). From Josephus, we learn that the Sadducees believed that the soul perishes with the body (The Antiquities of the Jews, Book 18, Chapter 1, Section 4) and therefore can receive neither penalties nor rewards in an afterlife (War of the Jews, Book 2, Chapter 8, Section 14).

The most significant mention of the Sadducees in the Gospels concerns their interview with Jesus in Jerusalem, during which they tried to trap Jesus with a crafty question concerning the resurrection (Mt 22:23-33, Mr 12:18-27, and Lu 20:27-38). In His answer, Jesus accused them of not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God (Mt 22:29). He then proceeded to quote Ex 3:6 from the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Bible), in support of the doctrine of the resurrection.

The Sadducees became alarmed and decided to take action (Joh 11:47), as Jesus posed a threat to their security and position (as in the cleansing of the temple, Mr 11:15-18). Confronted with

Jesus and His claims, the Sadducees were able to unite with their traditional enemies, the Pharisees, for the purpose of disposing of Jesus. Both parties worked together for the arrest and trial of Jesus by the Sanhedrin (Mr 14:53 and 15:1). See note 3 at Mt 3:7 for additional information on Sadducees.

#### **MATTHEW 16:4**

***A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas. And he left them, and departed.***

Note 2 at Mt 16:4: This was the second time that Jesus used Jonah's three days and three nights in the belly of the fish (Jon 1:17) to prophesy His three days and nights in the heart of the earth. Compare this instance with His first mention of Jonah in Mt 12:40.

#### **MATTHEW 16:8**

***[Which] when Jesus perceived, he said unto them, O ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have brought no bread?***

Note 1 at Mt 16:8: In context, Jesus' statement about the disciples' little faith was in regard to them not being able to perceive or understand the spiritual meaning about the leaven of the Pharisees (Mt 16:6 and 12). A hardened heart (see note 3 at Mr 8:17) blinds a person to any spiritual perception and keeps that person thinking only in the natural realm.

By comparing this verse with Mr 8:17, it can be seen that small faith and a hardened heart are the same. Heb 3:12-13 relates an evil heart of unbelief to a hardened heart. It takes great faith to



keep our hearts sensitive to God.

### **MATTHEW 16:12**

***Then understood they how that he bade [them] not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.***

Note 2 at Mt 16:12: Because of their hardened hearts, these disciples thought of only the physical meaning of the word "leaven." However, just as in Jesus' reply to the multitude in Joh 6:22-71, the words that Jesus was speaking were spirit and life (Joh 6:63). He was not speaking of yeast but of the doctrine of the Pharisees, which was hypocrisy (Lu 12:1).

### **MATTHEW 16:13**

***When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?***

Note 1 at Mt 16:13: Caesarea Philippi was a small town located about twenty-five miles north of the Sea of Galilee and about thirty miles east of the Mediterranean coast. This area, near the slopes of Mount Hermon, was presented to Herod the Great by Augustus Caesar. Herod built a temple there in honor of Augustus Caesar, and later Philip the tetrarch, Herod's son, added to the town and named it Caesarea Philippi after himself and Tiberius Caesar and to distinguish it from the Mediterranean port of Caesarea (see note 1 at Lu 3:1).

The town where Herod built his temple was originally called Paneas, in honor of the Greek god, Pan, and was part of a very pagan area. The city today is called Banias (after ancient Paneas).

## **MATTHEW 16:16**

***And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.***

Note 2 at Mt 16:16: The word "Christ" comes from the Greek word "CHRISTOS," and it means the same as the Old Testament Hebrew word "MASHIYACH" (or "Messiah") that means "anointed" (Strong's Concordance). Therefore, the words "Messiah" and "Christ" can be used interchangeably (Joh 1:41 and 4:25). "Christ" is the New Testament term used to designate the anointed one of God and is used 60 times in the Gospels and 495 times in the Epistles for a total of 555 times in the New Testament, all in reference to Jesus. Jesus applied this title to Himself in Joh 17:3. In addition, the possessive "Christ's" appears 16 times, "false Christs" 2 times, and "antichrist(s)" 5 times in the New Testament.

Because the word "Christ" means "anointed," some scholars have argued that Jesus was not the Christ until His baptism by John the Baptist. Therefore, they conclude that the term "Christ" could not refer to the deity of Jesus. However, the angels announced to the shepherds the birth of "Christ the Lord" (Lu 2:11). Also, Lu 2:25-32 states that Simeon saw the "Lord's Christ" (Lu 2:26) when Jesus was presented in the temple forty days after His birth. Jesus was Christ at His birth.

The term "Christ" is used interchangeably with the term "Son of God" many times in the New Testament. Examples are Mt 16:16 (this verse), 26:63; Mr 14:61 ("Son of the Blessed"); Joh 6:69, 11:27, 20:31; Ac 8:37, 9:20; 2Co 1:19; Ga 2:20; and 2Jo 3 ("Son of the Father"). As said in note 5 at Mr 1:1, the terms "Son of God"

and "Christ" are always in reference to the deity of Jesus.

At Jesus' mock trial before His crucifixion (Mt 26:63-66 and Mr 14:61-64), He was asked if He was the Christ. When He answered yes, the high priest rent his clothes and said He had spoken blasphemy (which means He had claimed deity for Himself) and condemned Him to death. Also, in light of 2Jo 7-11, the term "Christ" must refer to more than just the humanity of Jesus.

Peter, here, was proclaiming Jesus to be God just as surely as Thomas did after Jesus' resurrection when he said to Jesus, "My Lord and my God" (Joh 20:28). Jesus not only accepted Peter's claims but also blessed Peter for what he said (Mt 16:17).

#### **MATTHEW 16:18**

***And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.***

Note 3 at Mt 16:18: Some people have mistakenly interpreted this passage to say that Peter was the foundation on which Christ would build His church. However, that would violate many scriptures that state that Jesus is the "chief corner stone" (1Co 3:10-11 - "foundation," Eph 2:20-22, and 1Pe 2:4-9). Eph 2:20 does mention the apostles as being part of the foundation of Christ's church, but it doesn't single Peter out above any of the other apostles. That same scripture says Jesus Himself is the "chief corner stone." It is implied that the Apostle James, the brother of our Lord (see note 2 at John 2:12), was actually the head of the Jerusalem church (Ac 12:17, 15:13, 21:18; Ga 2:9, and 12).

Two different Greek words are used for "Peter" and "rock" respectively in this verse. The word used for "Peter" means

"rock" but signifies "a detached stone or boulder" (Vine's Expository Dictionary). In contrast, the word translated "rock" signifies a massive rock; that certainly refers to Jesus, the "chief corner stone."

Some have suggested that the foundation rock referred to was this confession that Peter made that Jesus was "the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Mt 16:16). Although it is true that people do have to confess Jesus is Lord (Ro 10:9-10) to enter God's kingdom, in light of the O.T. prophecies and N.T. references to Jesus being the "chief corner stone," this passage of Scripture must be referring directly to Jesus as this "rock" upon which He would build His church. Compare this with other statements Jesus made about Himself in the third person (Joh 2:19; 6:32-33, 50, and 58).

Note 4 at Mt 16:18: This statement about the gates of hell not prevailing against us shows that the church is supposed to be on the offensive, not the defensive, in our spiritual warfare. We shouldn't be just trying to hold out behind our own defenses until Jesus comes to rescue us, but we should be pressing the battle to the very gates of hell itself. The devil and his "imps" should be in retreat and hiding behind their walls, not the church.

### **MATTHEW 16:19**

***And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.***

Note 5 at Mt 16:19: The word that is used for "bind" (Greek - "DEO") is the same Greek word that Jesus used when He spoke

of binding the strong man (or controlling demon) and spoiling his goods (Mt 12:29 and Mr 3:27). This binding, then, is actually speaking of spiritual warfare.

A key symbolizes authority or power. Whoever has the key has the authority to open or close whatever is locked. Likewise, Jesus gave us the authority to bind demonic powers and loose people from their dominion (see note 5 at Mt 18:17 and note 6 at Mt 18:18).

### **MATTHEW 16:21**

***From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.***

Note 1 at Mt 16:21: This was the fourth of fourteen times that Jesus prophesied about His death. (1st - Joh 2:19; 2nd - Mt 12:39-40; 3rd - Joh 6:51; 4th - this verse, Mr 8:31, and Lu 9:22; 5th - Mt 17:9-12; 6th - Mt 17:22-23, Mr 9:31, and Lu 9:44; 7th - Joh 10:17-18; 8th - Lu 11:29-30; 9th - Mt 20:17-19, Mr 10:32-34, and Lu 18:31-33; 10th - Mt 20:28; 11th - Joh 12:7-8; 12th - Joh 12:23-33; 13th - Mt 26:26-29, Mr 14:22-25, and Lu 22:19-20; and 14th - Mr 14:27-28.) Of these times, seven of His statements were made publicly (Mt 12:39-40; Lu 11:29-30; Joh 2:19, 6:51, 10:17-18, 12:7-8, and 23-33), while the remaining seven were made in private to His twelve disciples. Some of these prophecies were in parable form (Mt 12:39-40, 26:26-29 [and corresponding scriptures - the Lord's Supper]; Lu 11:29-30; Joh 2:19, and 12:23-32), but seven of these prophecies very clearly told of His resurrection on the third day.

Despite these abundant and clear prophecies about His death and resurrection, Jesus' disciples didn't understand or remember Jesus' words until after His resurrection (Lu 24:5-9).

Luke twice recorded that Jesus' sayings about His resurrection were hidden from the disciples (Lu 9:45 and 18:34). It is interesting to note, however, that the chief priests and Pharisees remembered Jesus' prophecies about His resurrection (Mt 27:63) when His disciples didn't.

This incident happened approximately six months before Jesus' crucifixion. In the two and a half years of ministry prior to this, Jesus had only mentioned His death three times. But from this time forth, He began to expound on it more frequently, mentioning it eleven times in the next six months.

# MATTHEW

## CHAPTER 17

### MATTHEW 17:2

**And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.**

Note 1 at Mt 17:2: It is interesting to compare Jesus' transfiguration with Moses'. Jesus' face shone as the sun, and His garment was as white as the light. This certainly exceeded what Moses experienced (Heb 3:3), yet Jesus' face did not continue to shine when He came down off of the mountain as Moses' face did.

Moses' face reflected the glory of God, but Jesus was the glory of God (Joh 1:14 and Heb 1:3). Moses put a veil over his face to conceal the glory of God (Ex 34:29-35) so that the people would not be afraid to come near him. Jesus' body was His veil that concealed His true glory within. During His transfiguration, He pulled back the veil of His flesh, and those with Him simply caught a glimpse of the glory that He had with the Father before the world was (Joh 17:5). At Jesus' death, the veil of His body was "rent in twain" (Mt 27:50-51 and Mr 15:37-38) giving people direct access to the glory of God (Heb 10:19-20).

### MATTHEW 17:3

***And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him.***

Note 2 at Mt 17:3: The fact that Moses appeared with Elijah proves that there is no soul sleep (see note 14 at Joh 5:28). Elijah never died but was translated (2Ki 2:11), as was Enoch (Heb 11:5). However, Moses did die (De 34:5) and had been dead over

1,500 years. His physical body was in the grave, but his spirit and soul were alive. Moses' soul was visible, recognizable (spiritually discerned - see note 2 at Mt 16:12), and wore clothes.

## **MATTHEW 17:12**

***But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them.***

Note 3 at Mt 17:12: Jesus clearly indicated John the Baptist as being the one who fulfilled the last prophecy of the Old Testament: the coming of Elijah the prophet before the great and dreadful day of the Lord (Mal 4:5-6). This was the second time that Jesus had said that John the Baptist was the fulfillment of Malachi's prophecy (Mt 11:14), yet it wasn't until this explanation that the disciples understood what He said (Mt 17:13). The angel Gabriel also quoted from this prophecy and applied it to John the Baptist when announcing his birth to Zacharias (Lu 1:17).

Some people believe that John came only in the spirit and power of Elijah (Lu 1:17). They believe there is yet to be a real appearance of Elijah before the second advent of Jesus and that he is one of the two witnesses spoken of in Re 11:3-12. It is certain that John the Baptist was not a reincarnation of Elijah, as some have tried to say, since Elijah never died but was taken into heaven (2Ki 2:11). The Bible does not teach reincarnation. John simply had the same anointing and power upon him that was upon Elijah.

## **MATTHEW 17:19**

***Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out?***



Note 1 at Mt 17:19: This was a valid question from Jesus' disciples caused by prior success in casting out devils (see note 1 at Lu 9:41). If they had not believed that they could cast out devils and if they had not already seen that faith produces deliverances, they wouldn't have been surprised and confused at this result. They did have the faith necessary to cast this devil out, and they knew that (see note 2 at Mt 17:20).

### **MATTHEW 17:20**

***And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.***

Note 2 at Mt 17:20: The disciples' unbelief in this instance was not a disbelief that God's power could produce deliverance (see note 1 at Lu 9:41), but rather, it was a "natural" kind of unbelief that came from hardened hearts (see note 10 at Mr 6:52) that were more sensitive to what they saw (Mr 9:20) than to what they believed.

Note 3 at Mt 17:20: Jesus did not say that the reason these disciples could not cast this demon out was because they didn't have faith but rather because they had unbelief. On the contrary, Jesus stated that a very small amount of faith (the size of a "mustard seed") was sufficient to remove a mountain if no unbelief was present to hinder it.

Most of us have the concept that we either have faith or unbelief but that we can't have both at the same time. However, Jesus told Jairus to "believe only" (Lu 8:50) implying that faith and fear can operate in us at the same time. This was also the

reason James said not to be double-minded (Jas 1:5-8). We can be thinking faith yet having thoughts of unbelief at the same time.

As explained in note 1 at Mt 17:19, these disciples did have faith to cast this demon out, and they exercised that faith but didn't see the same results that they had seen before. This was why they were concerned and asked Jesus what the problem was. They wouldn't have asked if they had not believed. They did have faith, the same faith that had effected many other deliverances. The problem wasn't their faith but rather their unbelief.

Every believer has been given "the measure of faith," but unbelief negates it. It's like hooking a team of horses up to a heavy weight and having them pull it. The weight will move. But if an equal team of horses is hooked up to the same weight and pull in the opposite direction at the same time, although great force may be exerted, the weight won't move. Likewise, unbelief counterbalances our faith. If we will just remove the unbelief, a mustard-seed amount of faith will be sufficient to move our problems.

Instead of trying to build huge amounts of faith to overcome our fears and unbelief, a simpler method is to remove our fears by cutting off their source; then our simple, "child-like" faith that remains will do the job. It doesn't take big faith, just pure faith.

Those of us who tolerate high levels of unbelief in our lives will never be able to build our faith big enough to overcome unbelief's negative force. The only way we can receive is to get others to mix their faith with ours or draw on one of the supernatural ministry gifts in someone else, such as the gift of faith (1Co 12:9). God's best is for us to receive directly from Him. We will only be successful at that when we not only build our faith but also destroy our doubts. (See note 10 at Mr 6:52.)

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## **MATTHEW 17:21**

***Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.***

Note 4 at Mt 17:21: Prayer and fasting do not drive out certain demons. If the name of Jesus and faith in His name won't do the job, fasting and prayer won't either. Jesus was saying that fasting and prayer are the only ways of casting out this type of

unbelief.

An unbelief that comes as a result of ignorance can be done away with by receiving the truth of God's Word (Ro 10:17 and 2Pe 1:4). However, the unbelief that hindered the disciples in this case was a "natural" type of unbelief (see note 2 at Mt 17:20). They had been taught all of their lives to believe what their five senses told them. They were simply dominated by this natural input more than by God's supernatural input (God's Word - Lu 9:1). The only way to overcome this unbelief that comes through the senses is to deny the senses through prayer and fasting (see note 1 at Mt 4:2).

#### **MATTHEW 17:22**

***And while they abode in Galilee, Jesus said unto them, The Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men:***

Note 1 at Mt 17:22: This was the sixth out of fourteen times Jesus had prophesied about His death (see note 1 at Mt 16:21), but it was the first of three times Jesus prophesied about Judas' betrayal (1st - this verse; 2nd - Mt 20:17-19, Mr 10:32-34, and Lu 18:31-33; and 3rd - Mt 26:21-25, Mr 14:18-21, Lu 22:21-23, and Joh 13:21-30).

#### **MATTHEW 17:25**

He saith, Yes. And when he was come into the house, Jesus prevented him, saying, What thinkest thou, Simon? of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children, or of strangers?

Note 1 at Mt 17:25: This is one example of how Jesus "made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant...he humbled himself" (Php 2:7-8). Jesus, as Creator (Col

1:16), was not obligated to pay taxes to His creation, yet He did with the explanation that He did not want to offend the tax collectors. This is in stark contrast with Joh 6:61 and Mt 15:12 when Jesus defended His actions that the Pharisees had found offensive.

Here, Jesus gave us the example to submit to civil authority as long as it doesn't contradict God's laws. In the Old Testament, the kings of Israel levied taxes (1Ki 9:15; 2Ch 10:4-18, and 17:10-11), and God also commanded Moses to take a mandatory offering for a ransom of every male in Israel, which was like a tax (Ex 30:12-13 and 2Ch 24:6). The New Testament further establishes submission to government in regard to taxes in Ro 13:6-8. Therefore, Jesus submitted to men's taxes lest He should offend them.

However, when it came to religious laws that had gone beyond God's true intent and had actually changed it, Jesus never compromised, regardless of who was offended (Mt 15:12 with Mr 7:6-13, see note 11 at Joh 6:61). Therefore, we are not to use our liberty in Christ as an occasion to the flesh (Ga 5:13), but we are to hold submission unto God as our number one priority. When man's laws or traditions conflict with God's Word (this usually happens in religion), then we should not obey man but rather God (Ac 4:19 and 5:29). When civil laws contradict God's laws, we can still submit ourselves to every ordinance of man (1Pe 2:13) without obeying their directives. Submission and obedience are not always synonymous.

#### **MATTHEW 17:27**

***Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them for me and thee.***

Note 2 at Mt 17:27: This was quite a miracle. Not only was the money supplied for their taxes, but it was the exact amount needed and in the first fish that was caught.

Although this sets the precedent that God can supply our needs in miraculous ways, it's important to remember that God doesn't counterfeit money. He didn't create money in the fish but rather had the fish miraculously find and swallow the exact Roman coin that Peter needed. It's a mistake to just pray and then wait on God to rain the money down from heaven. As Lu 6:38 says, God uses people (and sometimes fish) to give finances to us. He can do it in very unexpected, supernatural ways, but it will involve people and existing currency. There is a scriptural precedent for God multiplying natural resources (1Ki 17:12-16; 2Ki 4:2-7, 42-44; Mt 14:15-21, 15:32-38; Mr 6:33-44, 8:1-9; Lu 9:11-17; and Joh 6:5-14) but not money (see note 3 at Joh 6:9).

# MATTHEW

## CHAPTER 18

### MATTHEW 18:2

*And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them,*

Note 1 at Mt 18:2: It is interesting that Jesus used a little child to illustrate humility. Although it is true that little children have a purity and humility that is many times missing in adults, they certainly are not selfless. Children come into the world totally self-centered, wanting what they want when they want it. Parents are to train children out of this self-centeredness.

The trait that Jesus was more likely referring to was a child's dependence on others. A child may be self-centered but is certainly not self-sufficient. One of humility's dominant characteristics is God-dependency and not self-sufficiency (see note 1 at Lu 9:46).

### MATTHEW 18:6

*But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and [that] he were drowned in the depth of the sea.*

Note 2 at Mt 18:6: In Mt 18:2-4, Jesus used a child to illustrate what it took to become one of His disciples. Likewise, in this verse, the "little ones" mentioned include, but are not limited to, small boys or girls. The reference is to any disciple of Jesus (see note 10 at Mr 9:38).



## **MATTHEW 18:10**

***Take heed 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 which is in heaven.***

Note 3 at Mt 18:10: In this verse, Jesus probably had an infant or a small child in His arms to whom He was making direct reference. However, just as in Mt 18:6 (see note 2 at that verse), there is a broader application of this verse that includes any disciple of Christ. This passage reveals that we have angels assigned to us. Heb 1:14 further reveals that their purpose is to minister to us (i.e., on our behalf). In the Old Testament, Ps 91 teaches on the ministry of angels to God's people, and there are many examples of this ministry (Ge 16:7, 24:7, 40; Ex 23:20; Nu 20:16; 1Ki 19:5; 2Ki 1:15; Ps 34:7; Da 6:22; Mt 2:13, 4:11; Lu 16:22, 22:43; Ac 5:19, 10:3, and 12:7).

Some people who have realized this truth have taken it as far as to say that we are supposed to speak to our angels and they will obey our commands. There is no instruction in Scripture to do this, nor is there any example of that being done. We don't have the intelligence to administer all of the angels. Many of the angels' protective duties described in Ps 91 are preventative, and we certainly could not effectively command these activities.

Rather, these angels are dispatched exactly like this verse describes, by looking at the Father's face. God Almighty controls them for us; however, we do have a part to play. Ps 91 prefaces all of these promises about angels as being for those who dwell in the secret place of the most High (Ps 91:1). Ps 91:2 further instructs us to say that the Lord is our refuge and fortress and that we are trusting in Him.

It is the combination of our faith in God and His faithfulness to us that releases the angels on our behalf. If it were solely up to

God, His provision would be the same for everyone because of His mercy and grace. However, we have to receive God's grace by faith (Eph 2:8). As we seek the Lord, become aware of His ministering spirits that were created to minister for us, and speak forth our faith in this area, He will send forth His angels on our behalf.

## **MATTHEW 18:12**

***How think ye? if a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray?***

Note 4 at Mt 18:12: This parable is simply illustrating how much God loves people. He even loves those who have gone astray (Isa 53:6, Eze 33:11, Joh 3:16, Ro 5:8, and 2Pe 3:9). As Jesus said in a similar parable (Lu 15:7), "I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance."

Once we experience the life-changing power of Christ, there is a tendency to become harsh and impatient with others who continue to live their lives without Him. We sometimes forget that it was the love and goodness of God that brought us to repentance (Ro 2:4), and we become condemning and judgmental toward the lost. This was not the attitude that Jesus had nor the attitude He wants us to have.

One reason Jesus drew the multitudes was because they perceived His genuine love for them. This parable is teaching us that we should have this same compassion for those who have gone astray.

The next few verses (Mt 18:15-17) teach the same compassion for a brother or sister in the Lord who has gone astray.

## **MATTHEW 18:17**

***And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell [it] unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.***

Note 5 at Mt 18:17: These verses are dealing with church discipline. As Paul said in 1Co 5:12-13, God judges the lost, but He committed the judgment of the members of His church to the church. This discipline can be divided into three major areas.

1. In 2Th 3:6-15, Paul dealt with what he called disorderly conduct. In that passage, he was addressing the specific problem of brothers in the Lord who refused to work and had become busybodies.

2. Paul stated that certain doctrinal issues should not be tolerated but rather disciplined (1Ti 1:19-20 with 2Ti 2:17-18). The angel (or pastor?) of the church at Thyatira was rebuked for allowing Jezebel to teach false doctrine, implying that the Lord expected him to discipline her (Re 2:18-29). Those who are heretics would fall into this group (Tit 3:10).

3. Sins of immorality should be dealt with by the church, as illustrated in 1Co 5.

Discipline (as the word implies) must always be for the purpose of correction and not damnation. The man whom the church at Corinth turned over to Satan for the destruction of his flesh (1Co 5) repented, and Paul instructed the believers to receive him back into fellowship (2Co 2:7-8). The scriptural commands concerning church discipline are designed to help restore the brother or sister who is in sin just as much as they are designed to protect other members of the body from that sin. If the person being disciplined repents, the objective has been

achieved and no further action should be taken.

This instance spoken of in this verse would fit into the first category of discipline. It could involve any dispute among brothers or sisters (1Co 6:1-8) or disorderly conduct by one of the body. The first step is to try to work things out between the parties involved. As Jesus taught in Mt 5:23-24, we are supposed to take the initiative in this reconciliation even if we are not to blame.

If the other person will not reconcile, then we are to take one or two other believers with us as we again try to solve the problem. This accomplishes two main things. First, it verifies all of the charges in the mouths of two or three witnesses, as God commanded, in case the matter has to be brought before the whole church. This keeps us from using church discipline to "railroad" a person we dislike. Second, it brings in the perspective of a third party. In many cases, this could solve the whole conflict because most of us have a big weakness of not being able to perceive the beams in our own eyes (see note 47 at Mt 7:5). Having a third person present who has no vested interest is much like bringing in arbitration.

If this doesn't solve the conflict or cause the person to repent of the disorderly conduct, then the problem should be brought before the entire church. If the entire church is united in its judgment of the situation, this should cause the offending person to repent. Most people are not so much into pride and deception to think that they are the only ones who are correct. This group pressure is very effective, especially if the person being disciplined really loves and respects the others in the church.

If there is still no repentance, then the last step is for the entire church to treat the person in rebellion as we would a lost person. That does not mean that we quit walking in love toward him or her. We are supposed to love the lost too. It does mean that we withdraw our fellowship (1Co 5:9-11 and 2Th 3:14-15) so

that the person will be ashamed and repent. There is also a retaining of the person's sins unto him or her, as Jesus spoke of in Joh 20:23, and that is what turning a person over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh is about.

All of this church discipline is dependent on the church being a praying, loving, healthy church. If a church is not abounding with love among its members, withdrawing fellowship is meaningless. A person won't miss what was never there. Also, a withdrawing of our intercession for a brother or sister, as when we turn him or her over to Satan, is meaningless if we never prayed for that person in the first place.

Church discipline today is also weakened by the division in the body of Christ. All a person who has been disciplined has to do is walk down the road and start attending another church group who will begin to fill that void of fellowship. In the first-century church, this was not the case; broken fellowship with the believers was a devastating discipline. Love and unity in the body of Christ today would restore the effectiveness of church discipline.

However limited the results of this discipline might seem to us, we are still commanded to do it. The more a church has this unity among members and an effective intercessory prayer life, the more effective the discipline will be. As related in Mt 18:18-20, the spiritual significance of this discipline is awesome (see note 6 at Mt 18:18).

### **MATTHEW 18:18**

***Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.***

Note 6 at Mt 18:18: This verse and Mt 18:19 have many

applications, but taken in context, they are specifically referring to the church discipline discussed in Mt 18:15-17. Some might think that church discipline is only symbolic and carries no real weight; however, Jesus was making it clear that in the spiritual realm, discipline that is directed by the Holy Spirit has much power.

The church discipline mentioned in Mt 18:17, and expounded on in note 5 at that verse, is twofold. It consists first of withdrawing fellowship and second of withdrawing our intercession on others' behalf. This second part of discipline actually goes beyond us no longer binding the demonic forces opposing those people. It actually includes us loosing them from our intercession and delivering them unto Satan for the destruction of their flesh. This is the binding and loosing being referred to in this verse.

We have the authority to bind demonic powers operating against our brothers or sisters (or "remit" their sins as in Joh 20:23), and we also have authority to loose those same powers in their lives ("retain" - Joh 20:23). This is for the purpose of causing repentance and restoration.

If those in rebellion will not respond to the steps Jesus laid out in Mt 18:15-17, we the church discipline them by not fellowshiping with them and by no longer binding the results of their sins that would normally come through the law of sowing and reaping (Ga 6:7-8). We are actually to retain their sins unto them (Joh 20:23); this is the same as delivering them over to Satan (1Co 5:5 and 1Ti 1:19-20). That simply means we loose Satan to give them as their sins deserve in hopes that they will realize how deadly their sins are and will repent before Satan destroys them.

Proper intercession can actually keep Satan "at bay" though people are living in great sin. This is good if they use this freedom to repent and come back to God. But if they take this freedom to commit more sin, then comes a time when this form

of intercession ceases to be beneficial. In that case, intercession against Satan's attacks should be withdrawn, and we should actually retain those people's sins unto them so that they can no longer get by without experiencing the death that sin brings (Ro 6:23). As they start reaping what they have sown, it will hopefully cause them to turn back to the goodness of God that they once enjoyed.

This is a very severe thing to do and should not be done lightly. That was why Jesus instructed us to employ these other three steps first (Mt 18:15-17). This also should be done as a church body, thus preventing one person from trying to use binding and loosing as a form of vengeance on another member of the body. However, as Mt 18:19 states, any two believers employing the principle of binding and loosing can do it; for according to Mt 18:20, two believers gathered in Jesus' name constitute a gathering of the church, and a special anointing of the Lord is present.

There are also other ways of applying these verses. One of the tragic applications is that anytime two or three believers are gathered together and fall into gossip or criticism, the same spiritual laws begin to work, many times in reverse order from what God intended. We can actually bind up the positive results of sowing and reaping in godly people and loose the attacks of Satan against them by the words we speak (Pr 18:21; Jas 3:5-6, and 9-10). Also, if we fail to lift up our brothers and sisters in intercession, we are, in effect, turning them over to Satan through our neglect. These verses reveal that heaven and earth are affected by our binding and loosing.

## **MATTHEW 18:22**

***Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.***

Note 7 at Mt 18:22: Peter thought he was being very generous by

offering to forgive his brother 7 times in one day, but Jesus said he should forgive him 490 times in one day. It would be impossible to have someone sin against us 490 times in one day. Jesus was actually saying that there should be no limit to our forgiveness.

In context, this principle applies to church discipline (see note 5 at Mt 18:17 and note 6 at Mt 18:18). Regardless of how many times we have to discipline our brothers or sisters, if they repent each time (Lu 17:4), we are supposed to forgive them and confirm our love unto them (2Co 2:6-8).

If God expects us to forgive a brother who has trespassed against us 490 times in one day (actually an unlimited number of times), certainly He who is love (1Jo 4:8) will do no less with us.

### **MATTHEW 18:23**

***Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants.***

Note 8 at Mt 18:23: The word "therefore," with which Jesus began this parable, ties this teaching in with His previous statement on forgiving (Mt 18:22) and, indeed, on the related topics of church discipline (Mt 18:15-20) and God's compassion for the lost (Mt 18:12-14). This parable simply illustrates what He already said.

The main thrust of this parable is that when people wrong us, we should remember God's great mercy that He has shown to us and respond in kind (Eph 4:32). Any debt that could be owed to us is insignificant compared to the debt of which we have been forgiven. We should have compassion on others just as Christ had on us (Col 3:13 and Jas 2:13).



If we fail to forgive others just as we have been forgiven, then this parable teaches that we can once again become liable for the debt that has been forgiven. This could be illustrating the church discipline spoken of in Mt 18:15-20. This man's fellow servants brought him before his master for judgment similar to Christ's instructions about how to discipline a brother (see note 5 at Mt 18:17). This could also illustrate those who have been saved but renounce their faith, become reprobate, and suffer the torments of hell.

It is certain that not every part of this parable can be applied literally, because the lord of this servant commanded this man's wife and children to be sold as part of the payment of this debt. This cannot be applied to the spiritual meaning of this parable in light of the Scriptures' teaching that every man and woman will receive judgment for their own sins and not another's (De 24:16, 2Ki 14:6, Jer 31:29-30, and Eze 18:19-32).

Therefore, caution should be used when drawing conclusions about judgment from this parable. The main point emphasized is the necessity of forgiving others and the severe consequences if we don't.

If God expects us to forgive a brother who has trespassed against us 490 times in one day (actually an unlimited number of times), certainly He who is love (1Jo 4:8) will do no less with us.

#### **MATTHEW 18:24**

***And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents.***

Note 9 at Mt 18:24: In MPE (modern purchasing equivalent), this would represent approximately \$114 million if these were talents of silver. If they were talents of gold, it would be about eighty times as much.

# MATTHEW

## CHAPTER 19

### MATTHEW 19:3

***The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?***

Note 1 at Mt 19:3: There are many references to divorce in the Old Testament, but there is only one passage there that addresses what the grounds for divorce were - De 24:1-4. The reason a divorce was permitted was because the woman had lost favor in the sight of her husband due to some "uncleanness" found in her (De 24:1).

There were two major schools of thought in Jesus' day about what this "uncleanness" might be. The conservatives, headed by Shammai, interpreted this "uncleanness" to be fornication or adultery only. The liberals, headed by a man named Hillel, held that this could be any reason ("for every cause"), such as the way the wife combed her hair, seasoned the food, etc. Josephus, who was a first-century historian, cited De 24:1 (The Antiquities of the Jews, Book 4, Chapter 8, Section 23) and wrote that he divorced his wife because he was not pleased with her manners and behavior (The Life of Josephus, Section 76). Jesus forever settled this dispute with His answer in Mt 19:9. God only permits divorce on the grounds of fornication, and that was the "uncleanness" referred to in De 24:1.

### MATTHEW 19:5

***And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?***

Note 3 at Mt 19:5: Who said this? It is evident from the context here that God spoke the following phrase. However, this is a quotation from Ge 2:24, which was spoken by Adam. This illustrates how God can inspire and speak through people. Adam, who had no father or mother, was speaking prophetically, thus making marriage a sacred and not merely a civil institution.

Note 4 at Mt 19:5: What does it mean for a man and a woman to become "one flesh"? The act of sexual intercourse between a man and a woman produces this one flesh relationship, as can be seen by 1Co 6:16: "What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh." This means that whether or not the man and woman ever cleave to each other in marriage, this physical act binds them together as one flesh.

This is the reason that sexual relationships outside of marriage (whether extramarital or premarital) are so damaging. Whether or not people get caught or pregnant or ever hurt anyone else with their sins, they are doing a lot of damage to themselves. 1Co 6:18 says, "Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body."

A relationship takes place through the sexual act that makes a person one with another person. There is no such thing as just a "night on the town" or a "one-night stand," and that's all there is to it. Alcoholism, child abuse, hatred, and a thousand other things that are certainly wrong are not grounds for divorce, but fornication is. That shows that something very powerful takes place in the physical act and explains why Satan has exploited this area so much.

Becoming one flesh with someone (sexual intercourse) is not marriage. Marriage includes, but is even beyond, becoming one

flesh. This can be seen very clearly in Joh 4:17-18. Jesus said the woman He was speaking to at Jacob's well had previously had five husbands, and the man she was living with at that time was not her husband. It is certain that this woman was having sexual relations with this man she was living with, but that didn't make him her husband.

Therefore, marriage involves more than sexual relations. It is a covenant, a commitment, between the two partners that would correspond to the cleaving to each other that Jesus spoke of here. Once this covenant is entered into, which is customarily done through the wedding ceremony, and the physical relationship is shared, a couple is married in the sight of God.

#### **MATTHEW 19:7**

***They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away?***

Note 5 at Mt 19:7: Instead of a simple answer explaining scriptural grounds for divorce, Jesus had stunned the Pharisees with the revelation that divorce was never intended by God (see note 10 at Mr 10:2). This led the Pharisees to ask then why Moses gave instructions for divorce. Once again, this was not an honest question on their part, but they were trying to entangle Jesus in His talk.

Jesus answered that divorce was permitted but never intended. God allowed something that He hated (Mal 2:16), because of the hardness of people's hearts (see note 10 at Mr 6:52). This was also true of polygamy (see note 11 at Mr 10:6) and slavery. Jesus came to remove our stony hearts and give us hearts of flesh (Eze 11:19) so that we could walk in God's best for us.

## **MATTHEW 19:9**

***And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except [it be] for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.***

Note 6 at Mt 19:9: Although adultery denotes one who has unlawful intercourse with the spouse of another, in its much broader definition, it means to violate or pollute. Israel violated or polluted their covenant with God (Isa 57:3, Eze 23:43, and Ho 2:2). Jeremiah said, "she [Judah] defiled the land, and committed adultery" (Jer 3:9, brackets mine).

Adultery, when used in relation to marriage, also reflects a violation of the covenant of companionship. Sex outside of marriage is adultery because it violates or pollutes the covenant of marriage by the introduction of another party and relationship into the marriage. "They two shall be one flesh" (Eph 5:31, emphasis added).

Divorce also adulterates or pollutes marriage because it disrupts or denies the divorced parties the right to be faithful to their covenant of companionship. Anytime people divorce their mates (except for fornication) and marry others, they are guilty of adultery. They have polluted and destroyed relationships intended by God to be permanent and pure.

Why the "except for fornication" clause? Jesus was not saying that if fornication is involved, the couple must divorce. Rather, when fornication is involved, that is the only time when the person getting the divorce is not guilty of adultery. That is because the partner who had an extramarital relationship has already polluted the marriage vow.

## **MATTHEW 19:10**

***His disciples say unto him, If the case of the man be so with [his] wife, it is not good to marry.***

Note 7 at Mt 19:10: The Pharisees weren't the only ones who were surprised by Jesus' teaching on the permanency of marriage and the seriousness of divorce. Jesus' very own disciples were too.

Apparently, the attitude of Jesus' day was very similar to the views people hold on marriage today. They did not really commit themselves to marriage but simply tried it, and if problems arose, they divorced and tried it again with someone else. When Jesus explained the union that took place through becoming one flesh (see note 4 at Mt 19:5) and the permanency that God intended for marriage, the disciples questioned whether or not it was good to ever marry if it took that much commitment (see note 8 at Mt 19:11).

## **MATTHEW 19:11**

***But he said unto them, All [men] cannot receive this saying, save [they] to whom it is given.***

Note 8 at Mt 19:11: Jesus did acknowledge that marriage is not for everyone. This would correspond to Paul's teaching in 1Co 7. However, both Paul and Jesus stressed that relatively few people were called to a life of celibacy (see note 9 at Mt 19:12). It has to be a calling. God is the one who looked at a sinless man and said that it was not good for him to be alone (Ge 2:18). So marriage is the rule, and living single for the sake of the Gospel is the exception. Paul, who advocated remaining single if a person was called to do so (1Co 7:24-28), said that it was a doctrine of devils to forbid marriage to anyone (1Ti 4:1-3).

## **MATTHEW 19:12**

***For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from [their] mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive [it], let him receive [it].***

Note 9 at Mt 19:12: A "eunuch" was an impotent man (not capable of sexual relations) who usually had been castrated before puberty. Jesus said in this verse, however, that some men were born this way, some were made impotent by men (to serve as chamberlains and to care for harems, Es 2:15), and some made themselves impotent to better serve the kingdom of God. In both the Old and New Covenants, eunuchs had the same standing in God's eyes as anyone else (Isa 56:3-5 and Ac 8:26-39). Because they often served in the courts of kings, there are many Old Testament and New Testament examples of eunuchs with high positions and authority (Da 1:3-18 and Ac 8:27).

The Hebrew word translated "eunuch" in the Old Testament is the word "CARIYC," and it means "to castrate" (Strong's Concordance). This same word is translated "officer(s)" twelve times in the Old Testament (as in Ge 37:36; 39:1; 40:2, and 7) and "chamberlain(s)" thirteen times (as in Es 1:10, 12, 15; 2:21; and 4:4-5). The Greek word translated "eunuch" in the New Testament is the word "EUNOUCHOS," and it means "a castrated person...by extension an impotent or unmarried man" (Strong's Concordance).

On the basis of these definitions, those who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake are simply men who remained unmarried to spend more time seeking the Lord and spreading the Gospel. Paul referred to this as a "gift" (1Co 7:7-9, 17, 20, 25-26, 32, 35, and 37) and said those called to it should walk in that call (1Co 7:17 and 20). Jesus said



the only men who could receive this saying are those "to whom it is given" (compare with note 8 at Mt 19:11). It is a doctrine of devils to forbid anyone to marry (1Ti 4:1-3).

## **MATTHEW 19:16**

***And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?***

Note 1 at Mt 19:16: On the surface, it appears that this rich young ruler was "dead on" in the way he approached Jesus and sought salvation. He ran, knelt down to Jesus, and openly professed Him as a Good Master. What could be wrong with that?

First, he acknowledged Jesus as good but not as God. This is a pivotal point. Every major religion of the world acknowledges that Jesus lived and will even admit that He definitely was a good man, but they won't recognize Him as God. If Jesus was only a good man, He couldn't save anybody. Jesus didn't just come to show us the way to God. He is the way, the only way unto the Father. No man can come unto the Father, but by Him (Joh 14:6). Jesus had made this point publicly many times before (see note 3 at Joh 5:18, note 8 at Joh 5:23, and note 23 at Joh 8:58).

This was the reason that Jesus responded to this young man's question the way He did. Jesus was saying, "God is the only one who is good. You must accept Me as God or not at all." Jesus was either whom He claimed to be (i.e., God - see note 8 at Joh 5:23, note 23 at Joh 8:58, note 2 at Lu 10:18, and note 3 at Joh 10:30) or He was the biggest fraud that ever lived. He had to be one or the other. He couldn't be both.

Second, he asked what he could do to produce salvation. He trusted in himself and believed he could accomplish whatever

good work Jesus might request. This was completely opposed to the plan of salvation that Jesus came to bring. Jesus obtained salvation for us through His substitution, and He offers it to us as a free gift. All we can do is believe and receive. This rich young ruler wasn't looking for a Savior. He was trying to be his own savior. This was the reason Jesus referred him back to the commandments (see note 2 at Mt 19:17).

### **MATTHEW 19:17**

***And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? [there is] none good but one, [that is], God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.***

Note 2 at Mt 19:17: Why did Jesus tell this man to keep the commandments? Many scriptures make it clear that no one can be justified in the sight of God by keeping the commandments (Hab 2:4; Ro 3:20, 10:3-13, 11:6; Ga 2:16, 3:1-3, 7-14; Eph 2:8-9; and Tit 3:4-7). Jesus knew this. However, this rich young ruler didn't know this. He was under the deception that there was some good thing he could do (Mt 19:16) that could purchase him eternal life (see note 3 at Joh 6:28).

The commandments (or laws) were never given for the purpose of producing salvation. Rather, their intent was to show mankind their exceeding sinfulness (Ro 3:20 and 7:13), so they would despair of trying to save themselves and would trust in a Savior (Ga 3:21-25). This was exactly what Jesus used the commandments for here. This rich young ruler either needed to keep all the Law perfectly or he needed a Savior. Jesus desired to turn this man from trusting in himself by showing him God's perfect standard, which no one could keep.

## **MATTHEW 19:18**

***He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness,***

Note 3 at Mt 19:18: This verse is often cited to illustrate the inaccuracy of the King James translation. The same Greek word "PHONEUO" that is translated "murder" in this verse is translated "kill" in Mr 10:19 and Lu 18:20. Should the commandment that Jesus was quoting from in Ex 20:13 actually be, "Thou shalt not murder"? Many people propose that and use this example to show that the King James Version contradicts itself.

There are nine Hebrew words and six Greek words translated "kill" in the King James Version. These Greek and Hebrew words are much more descriptive than either of our English words "kill" or "murder." If only the word "kill" had been used to express God's intent, then that could have restricted any type of killing such as in war, capital punishment, self-defense, etc. That certainly was not what God meant in Ex 20:13, as can be seen by many examples in God's Word.

On the other hand, if only the word "murder" had been used, this would only limit God's restriction of killing to "unlawful" killing with "malice aforethought." That certainly was not what God intended either.

The only way to faithfully preserve what God originally meant in the translation from a very descriptive language to our English language is to use both of these words and by comparison, glean the full meaning. If the translation is taken as a whole and diligently compared, the apparent contradictions are resolved and are found to actually complement each other.

# MATTHEW

## CHAPTER 20

### MATTHEW 20:1

*For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man [that is] an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard.*

Note 1 at Mt 20:1: This parable on the kingdom of heaven begins with the word "for," which is a conjunction, meaning that this parable is a further explanation of His previous statements. The teaching on the hundredfold return that precedes this parable of the laborers is concluded with, "But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first" (Mt 19:30). Then Jesus concluded this parable with the same statement about the last being first (Mt 20:16). Therefore, the parable that is placed between the two must be dealing with the same matter.

As mentioned in note 8 at Mr 10:30, some people could misuse this promise of the hundredfold return and believe that God owes it to them. This parable of the laborers is intended to balance this promise and teach the lesson that rewards are based on grace and not debt. "Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay; but by the law of faith" (Ro 3:27). This faith is in God's grace (Eph 2:8).

The Scriptures teach (and this parable illustrates) that salvation is not earned but is a gift (Ro 5:17, Eph 2:8-9, and Tit 3:4-7). Just as with these laborers, some who are converted to the kingdom at the last minute and who, therefore, have virtually no good works to their credit will be just as cleansed and will enjoy the same benefits of salvation as those who have walked with the Lord in obedience for years. That's because none of us are saved because we earned it. We're saved by grace through faith (Eph 2:8-9). Therefore, we all benefit from Jesus' performance

and not our own.

## **MATTHEW 20:8**

***So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the labourers, and give them [their] hire, beginning from the last unto the first.***

Note 2 at Mt 20:8: This parable begins with Jesus' statement that the kingdom of heaven is likened to a householder (owner of an estate) who went out early in the morning to hire workers to work in his vineyard for the day. An agreed upon price was set at a penny (Greek - "DENARION"), the normal daily wage for a laborer. Later, around 9 a.m., the landowner encouraged others standing idle in the marketplace to work in the vineyard, not for a set wage but for "whatsoever is right" (Mt 20:4). The landowner employed more laborers at noon, at 3 p.m., and even some at 5 p.m. when there was only one hour left to work. According to Jewish law, wages must be paid each evening before the setting of the sun (De 24:14-15 and Le 19:13).

When it came time for the steward to pay the laborers, he began with those working the shortest amount of time and paid each man a penny (a full day's wage). Those working the entire day murmured, for they supposed they would have received more. They had agreed, however, to work for a penny, the stipulated wage agreed upon (Mt 20:13). The landowner stated in Mt 20:15, "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good?" An "evil eye" was a Jewish expression for envy, jealousy, or a grudging spirit (De 15:9).

The conclusion of this parable, "So the last shall be first, and the first last" (Mt 20:16), expresses that there was a truth in the Savior's mind when He both began and concluded this piece of instruction. As this parable stands, it is preceded and followed

by the very same words (see note 1 at Mt 20:1).

The context of this parable supports the teaching that it is impossible to earn the generosity of the Master. This is a lesson on grace. Regardless of whether or not our performance is better than someone else's, we all need God's grace because we have all come short of God's standard (Ro 3:23). Therefore, there will be no division in Christ's body (1Co 12:12 and 25), because we are all made righteous in the sight of God through what Jesus did for us.

The landowner gave freely, making all equal. So Jesus has made all believers joint-heirs with Him through His sacrifice (Ro 8:17). Jesus was saying that the benefits of the kingdom are the same for all who have become subject to its King, regardless of what they have done. Therefore, those who are last (or least) in the sense that they have not served the Lord as long or as well as others, will truly become "first" when they share equally of the Lord's goodness with those who "have borne the burden and heat of the day" (Mt 20:12)

### **MATTHEW 20:16**

***So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen.***

Note 3 at Mt 20:16: The use of the word "chosen" here does not mean that God has limited salvation to only a select few. Salvation is a free gift to everyone (Joh 3:16, Ro 10:13, Tit 2:11, and Re 22:17), but not everyone will be saved (Mt 7:13-14). This is not because God is unwilling to save some (2Pe 3:9) but rather because some are not willing to repent and receive salvation God's way (Ac 4:12). Therefore, God calls all to repentance but only chooses those for salvation who meet the conditions of Ro 10:9.

## **MATTHEW 20:19**

***And shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify [him]: and the third day he shall rise again.***

Note 1 at Mt 20:19: The Greek word used for "scourge" here is "MASTIGOO," and it means "to flog" (Strong's Concordance). Scourging was a cruel punishment of which beating with a whip was a very mild part. The Romans scourged by stripping and tying the victim in a bent position to a pole. Lashes were then administered by a whip containing iron spikes or sharp stones that tore the flesh causing terrible lacerations and even death.

Roman law prohibited the scourging of a Roman citizen (Ac 22:25) but allowed non-Romans and slaves to be examined by scourging (Ac 22:24).

Among the Jews, scourging was often administered by whips and also by rods (2Co 11:24-25). The Mosaic Law permitted a person to be punished by scourging in proportion to an offense but not to exceed forty stripes (De 25:1-3). Therefore, the pious Jews of Jesus' day customarily administered thirty-nine stripes so that in case they miscounted, they would still be complying with the Law. Often, thirteen strokes were administered on the bare chest along with thirteen strokes upon each shoulder (as described in the Mishna). This procedure was inflicted upon the Apostle Paul five times (2Co 11:24).

## **MATTHEW 20:20**

***Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, worshipping [him], and desiring a certain thing of him.***

Note 1 at Mt 20:20: Matthew presented James and John's mother as the actual petitioner, whereas Mark showed James and John asking the question (Mr 10:35). There is no contradiction here, for the three joined in making the petition, and all were certainly, to some extent, responsible (this verse and Mt 20:22).

Note 2 at Mt 20:20: By comparing this verse with Mt 27:56 and Mr 15:40, it can be derived that James and John's mother was named Salome. She is only mentioned by name in Scripture in Mr 15:40 and 16:1.

## **MATTHEW 20:22**

***But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able.***

Note 3 at Mt 20:22: The Greek word for "cup," "POTERION," denotes primarily a "drinking-vessel" (Strong's Concordance) of any sort. However, "the cup" was a common Jewish metaphor used figuratively to describe the "undergoing" or "experience" of something such as salvation (Ps 116:13), joy (Ps 23:5), punishment (Ps 11:6), wrath (Ps 75:8; Isa 51:17, 22; Re 14:10, and 16:19), shame (Hab 2:16), fury (Jer 25:15), abominations and filthiness (Re 17:4), consolation (Jer 16:7), blessing (1Co 10:16), and astonishment and desolation (Eze 23:33).

This phrase is frequently used in the New Testament for the sufferings of Christ (Mt 20:22, 26:39, 42; Mr 10:38, 14:36; Lu 22:42; and Joh 18:11). Jesus applied this figure to Himself (see note 6 at Lu 12:50), for He was to voluntarily suffer drinking the cup of God's judgment for our sins (Mr 10:45, 14:36, and 15:34). Likewise, James and John would share His sufferings even to



the point of death but not in a redemptive sense. James was the first apostle to be martyred (Ac 12:2), and John endured many years of persecution and exile (Re 1:9).

Note 4 at Mt 20:22: The Greek word for "baptized" is "BAPTIZO." This word was used by Plato (fourth century B.C.) to describe a man being "overwhelmed" by philosophical arguments, by Hippocrates of people being "submerged" in water or sponges being "dipped" in fluid, and by Strabo (first century B.C.) to describe people who could not swim as being "submerged" under water. Josephus (first century A.D.) used the word to describe the city of Jerusalem as being "overwhelmed" or "plunged" into destruction by the Romans, and Plutarch (also first century A.D.) used this word in referring to a person being "immersed" in the sea. In the Septuagint (the Greek version of the O.T.), BAPTIZO is used to describe Naaman dipping himself in the Jordan River (2Ki 5:14).

From classical Greek right down to New Testament Greek, the same basic meaning has been retained: "to immerse, submerge, dip or plunge." Jesus was stating that the disciples would indeed be plunged into the same sufferings that He would be experiencing (see note 7 at Mt 5:10).

### **MATTHEW 20:31**

***And the multitude rebuked them, because they should hold their peace: but they cried the more, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, [thou] Son of David.***

Note 1 at Mt 20:31: There are similarities in three of the Gospel writers' accounts of Jesus healing these blind men in Jericho, and there are also differences in their stories that make it difficult to determine if they were describing one instance or

possibly multiple instances.

The similarities are that all of these accounts took place in Jericho and during the same time frame, probably the same day. In all three instances, the blind men called out to Jesus for healing, were told by the crowds to hold their peace, continued calling for help even louder, and were finally summoned by Jesus. All three writers also recorded the blind men saying basically the same thing. In all three accounts, Jesus asked the blind men what they desired Him to do, and Mark and Luke recorded Jesus as saying that their faith had produced their healing.

The differences are that Luke said this incident took place as Jesus came nigh unto Jericho (Lu 18:35), while Matthew and Mark stated it happened as Jesus left Jericho (Mt 20:29 and Mr 10:46). Matthew recorded two blind men, while Mark and Luke mentioned only one. Matthew recorded Jesus touching the blind men, while Mark and Luke mentioned Jesus speaking out that their faith had healed them.

It is possible to harmonize these accounts. There were actually two cities side by side - the old city of Jericho and the new city of Jericho that was built by Herod the Great (see note 5 at Lu 10:30). Therefore, this instance could have taken place while Jesus was coming out of one Jericho into the other. Mark and Luke also did not say that there was only one blind man healed, but they only recorded one. It is possible that all three writers recorded the same instance with Mark and Luke singling out Bartimaeus for some reason. Possibly the other man didn't continue on with the Lord, or perhaps Bartimaeus went on to become very well known among the believers and therefore rated special mention.

It is also possible that the writers were recording separate incidents. Jericho was the second largest city of Israel with approximately 100,000 people living there. Therefore, it would not be unreasonable to believe that Jesus healed many blind

men in Jericho under similar circumstances in the same day.

At any rate, there are possible explanations to any apparent discrepancies in the accounts. This once again shows that the Scriptures are completely accurate, inspired of God, and without contradictions.

# MATTHEW

## CHAPTER 21

### MATTHEW 21:1

*And when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto the mount of Olives, then sent Jesus two disciples,*

Note 1 at Mt 21:1: Although the exact location of Bethphage is not known, many sources place it near the summit of the Mount of Olives between Bethany and Jerusalem. It was on or near the main road from Jericho to Jerusalem and close to where the road began its descent into Jerusalem. There are no remains of it today. The name Bethphage means "fig-house" (Strong's Concordance).

### MATTHEW 21:8

*And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and strawed [them] in the way.*

Note 3 at Mt 21:8: This was a customary way of greeting a king or a conqueror (2Ki 9:13).

### MATTHEW 21:12

*And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves,*

Note 1 at Mt 21:12: This was the second time that Jesus cleansed the temple of these money changers. John recorded in Joh 2:13-17 the first instance at the beginning of Jesus' ministry (see note 2 at Joh 2:15), while this cleansing took place three years later during the last week of Jesus' ministry.

#### **MATTHEW 21:14**

***And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple; and he healed them.***

Note 2 at Mt 21:14: When we (the N.T. temple) are occupied with the cares of this life (Mr 4:19), the needs of the people are not met. But when we are cleansed (Joh 15:3), the Lord can accomplish His ministry through us.

#### **MATTHEW 21:16**

***And said unto him, Hearest thou what these say? And Jesus saith unto them, Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?***

Note 3 at Mt 21:16: Jesus was quoting the scripture from Ps 8:2. By comparing Jesus' quote with that actual passage, we can see that Jesus substituted the word "praise" for the word "strength." Therefore, this was the scripture commenting on itself and likening praise to strength.

Notice also that Ps 8:2 goes on to say that this praise or strength is because of God's enemies, that He might still the enemy and the avenger. So we can see by comparing these scriptures that

praise is strength and is intended to be used in spiritual warfare to stop Satan, our enemy. Satan cannot stand true praise to God (see note 4 at Mt 4:9).

## **MATTHEW 21:19**

***And when he saw a fig tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And presently the fig tree withered away.***

Note 1 at Mt 21:19: Why would Jesus curse this fig tree? The Scripture gives no explanation of this. However, it is a fact that a fig tree should have figs by the time the leaves are evident. The fig tree actually produces green figs before the leaves appear, and if no figs are produced by that time, then that tree will not have any figs that year. Therefore, this fig tree was professing something that it didn't have even though it was still too early for figs. It was hypocritical. It is probable that this hypocrisy in nature occasioned Jesus' curse just as hypocritical people suffered Jesus' harshest rebukes (Mt 23).

It is also possible that Jesus knew this action would gain the attention of His disciples, and He would therefore use it to teach them a lesson on faith (see notes 4-5 at Mr 11:23).

Note 2 at Mt 21:19: The Greek word used for "presently" is "PARACHREMA," and it means "instantly" (Strong's Concordance). However, the disciples didn't realize that the fig tree had died until the next day (Mr 11:20). If the tree died instantly, why didn't they notice it until the next morning? The answer to this question is found in Mr 11:20. The tree was dead from the roots up. The tree did die instantly, just as the Word declared, but what had happened to the roots wasn't visible until the next morning.

There is a spiritual lesson here that applies to us receiving things from God. When we ask (see note 49 at Mt 7:7), we do receive (Mt 7:7), but it may take a period of time before we perceive it in the natural realm. When we see the manifestation of what we believed for is not when God answered. The Lord answered when we prayed (Mr 11:24), but just as with this fig tree, we can't see beneath the surface and therefore don't "see" what God is doing until the manifestation comes.

### **MATTHEW 21:21**

***Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this [which is done] to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done.***

Note 1 at Mt 21:21: Jesus made it very clear that we have to have faith and doubt not. All of us as believers have faith, but most of us also have an abundance of doubt that negates our faith. It is when we purify our faith and only believe that victory comes (see note 3 at Mt 17:20).

### **MATTHEW 21:22**

***And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.***

Note 2 at Mt 21:22: Does this verse mean that we can pray for wisdom to commit the perfect bank robbery and not get caught, or ask for someone else's mate in prayer and receive that? Certainly not! (See note 49 at Mt 7:7.) Faith can only appropriate

what God has already provided by His grace.

### **MATTHEW 21:23**

***And when he was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?***

Note 1 at Mt 21:23: Once again we see that the chief priests and elders were seeking Jesus and asking Him questions, but their motives were totally wrong. They did not sincerely desire Him to teach them, but rather they were looking for something they could use to discredit Him.

Likewise today, there are people who always show up at the places Christians gather, but their hearts are impure. They are always looking for something to criticize. People like that, who only come to criticize, will always find something wrong. They did with Jesus, and they certainly will with us.

### **MATTHEW 21:26**

***But if we shall say, Of men; we fear the people; for all hold John as a prophet.***

Note 2 at Mt 21:26: Pr 29:25 says, "The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe." These men were seeking to snare Jesus in His words, but they couldn't, because He was safely trusting in the Lord. It was easy for Jesus to "turn the tables" on them and catch them, because they feared man (Joh 5:44).



Jesus had already shown that all of their works were done so that they could be "seen of men" (Mt 6:5). They were not really seeking to please God, but they were doing all of their religious works for the praise that they got from people (Joh 12:43). It is totally vain for people who are bound by the fear of man to try to intimidate those whose trust is totally in the Lord.

## **MATTHEW 21:28**

***But what think ye? A [certain] man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to day in my vineyard.***

Note 1 at Mt 21:28: This parable was given in response to the religious leaders rejecting Jesus' authority (Mt 21:23, Mr 11:28, and Lu 20:2). Through this parable, Jesus revealed God's rejection of the Jews in response to their rejection of His Son. Jesus was showing that those who do the will of God are actually the ones invested with God's authority.

These leaders had a form of godliness like this second son (2Ti 3:5), but the bottom line was that they were not doing the will of God. The publicans and harlots had no form of godliness, but when confronted with the preaching of John (Mt 21:32), many repented and began to do the will of God, like the first son in this story.

By their hypocrisy and hard hearts, these religious Jews, who sat in the seat of Moses (Mt 23:2), had therefore disqualified themselves from really being God's representatives here on earth. Even the publicans and harlots, who repented at John's preaching, were ahead of them. There is no sin more frequent among religious people than that of self-righteousness, which is honoring the Lord with the mouth when the heart is far from Him (Mt 15:8 and Ps 139:23-24).

Jesus went on to speak another parable (Mt 21:33-44) that the chief priests and Pharisees perceived He had spoken against them (Mt 21:45). He again showed that the unbelieving Jews who refused the Messiah would have all authority taken from them and given to a nation that brought forth the proper fruit (Mt 21:43).

### **MATTHEW 21:31**

***Whether of them twain did the will of [his] father? They say unto him, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.***

Note 2 at Mt 21:31: These sinners were entering the kingdom of God ahead of these very religious Jews because they knew they were sinners and therefore put faith in a Savior. One of the deadliest things about religious self-righteousness is the deception that we will be saved because of our good deeds.

That kind of thinking makes us our own savior. That will never work because regardless of how good we may be, "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Ro 3:23). We cannot save ourselves regardless of how good we act. Who wants to be the best sinner who was ever sent to hell? Only people who are sinners can be saved (Ro 6:19), and self-righteous people won't admit they are sinners.

## **MATTHEW 21:42**

***Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?***

Note 1 at Mt 21:42: These religious leaders, under the control of Satan, were the ones who rejected Jesus, but the Lord worked it together to accomplish His plan of salvation. God doesn't manipulate people like puppets, but His wisdom is so infinitely wiser than man's wisdom (1Co 1:25) that He can take whatever Satan does and work it together for good (Ro 8:28). This was what God did with the crucifixion of Jesus, and it was a marvelous plan.

## **MATTHEW 21:44**

***And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.***

Note 2 at Mt 21:44: Jesus had just revealed that He was this stone that David spoke of in Ps 118:22 (see note 1 at Lu 20:9). Therefore, Jesus was speaking of Himself as the stone in this verse also. Those who come to Jesus (fall upon that stone) must be broken or of a contrite heart (Ps 34:18, 51:17; and Isa 57:15). Those who refuse to humble themselves and rely (fall) upon Jesus will have Jesus fall upon them in severe judgment at the last day (see note 10 at Joh 3:17).

# MATTHEW

## CHAPTER 22

### MATTHEW 22:2

***The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son,***

Note 1 at Mt 22:2: The Lord's purpose for this parable was to picture the guilt of Israel in ignoring and rejecting the invitation to enter the kingdom (Mt 22:3). He plainly indicated the results of Israel's rejection, the suffering of the nation, and the destruction of Jerusalem (Mt 22:7). He also showed that the Gentiles would be gathered into the church (Mt 22:8-10).

There will also be a final separation before the blessings of the kingdom begin, pictured by the fate of the man "which had not on a wedding garment" (Mt 22:11). He was cast into outer darkness (Mt 22:13). Those who are to enjoy the kingdom must be arrayed in robes of righteousness, provided through faith in Christ. "For many are called, but few are chosen" (Mt 22:14, see note 3 at Mt 20:16). Eternal life is represented as a free choice on man's part and a divine calling on God's part.

### MATTHEW 22:5

***But they made light of [it], and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise:***

Note 2 at Mt 22:5: We see that the real problem with those who were invited to the wedding banquet was neglect. The Greek word for "made light of" in this verse is "AMELEO," and it

means "to be careless of" (Strong's Concordance). It is translated in the New Testament "be negligent" one time, "made light of" one time, "neglect" two times, and "regarded not" one time. Heb 2:3 says, "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation."

### **MATTHEW 22:11**

***And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment:***

Note 3 at Mt 22:11: It is thought that it was customary for wedding garments to be provided for all guests by their host. It was an insult of the highest degree to refuse to use the provided clothing since the guests were brought in directly from the highways and streets (Mt 22:9-10). The wedding garment, no doubt, speaks of the righteousness of Christ that God so graciously provides for all who accept His invitation into the kingdom (Re 19:8), for it must be put on by both good and bad (Mt 22:10).

### **MATTHEW 22:12**

***And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless.***

Note 4 at Mt 22:12: When people stand before the Lord in final judgment, they will be speechless, just like this man. All of the rationalizations that people use now to excuse their refusals of Christ will melt in the awesome presence of the King of kings and Lord of lords.

## **MATTHEW 22:17**

***Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not?***

Note 1 at Mt 22:17: The word "tribute" used here is the Greek word "KENSOS," and it means "census, denotes a poll tax" (Vine's Expository Dictionary) (Mt 17:25). It was taken from a Latin loanword that meant a "census" and referred to the annual poll tax demanded by the Roman emperor from the Jews since A.D. 6 when Judea became a Roman province (The Antiquities of the Jews, Book 14, Chapter 10, Section 6). This money went directly into the emperor's treasury. This tax typified the Jews' subjection to Rome and was unpopular among them (compare with Ac 5:37).

## **MATTHEW 22:18**

***But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, [ye] hypocrites?***

Note 2 at Mt 22:18: The word "hypocrites" comes from the Greek word "HUPOKRITES," and it means "an actor under an assumed character (stage-player)" (Strong's Concordance). It was a custom for Greek and Roman actors to use large masks when acting to disguise their true identities. Hence, hypocrisy became "the practice of professing beliefs, feelings, or virtues that one does not hold or possess; falseness" (American Heritage Dictionary).

In the New Testament, this word is used only in the Synoptic Gospels (the first three Gospels of the New Testament) and is used exclusively by the Lord. It is used fifteen times in Matthew

(Mt 6:2, 5, 16; 7:5; 15:7; 16:3; 22:18; 23:13-15, 23, 25, 27, 29; and 24:51), once in Mark (Mr 7:6), and four times in Luke (Lu 6:42, 11:44, 12:56, and 13:15). (See note 6 at Mr 7:6.)

## **MATTHEW 22:20**

***And he saith unto them, Whose [is] this image and superscription?***

Note 3 at Mt 22:20: The image on the denarius, the only small silver coin acceptable for imperial tax payments, was probably that of Tiberius Caesar (reigned A.D. 14-37). The inscription upon the coin read "Tiberius Caesar Augustus, Son of the Divine Augustus" with the reverse side reading "Chief Priest." This inscription was a claim to divinity and, as emperor, the right to be worshiped. Jesus declared, "Render [give back] to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's" (Mr 12:17, brackets mine). We are made in God's image (Ge 1:27 and Jas 3:9), so we must render to God the things belonging to God (our lives) and to Caesar the things belonging to Caesar (his money and other benefits of his rule).

## **MATTHEW 22:23**

***The same day came to him the Sadducees, which say that there is no resurrection, and asked him,***

Note 1 at Mt 22:23: The Greek word used here for "resurrection" is "ANASTASIS," and it means "a standing up again, i.e. (literally) a resurrection from death" (Strong's Concordance). The Resurrection is a major theme of New Testament teaching. Out of the thirteen sermons in the book of Acts, eleven stress or imply the Resurrection.

A person consists of three parts: a spirit, a soul, and a body (1Th 5:23). The body is mortal, while the spirit and soul are immortal. At death, a person's body goes through the decomposition process and returns to its original elements. At the resurrection, a person's departed soul and spirit (Jas 2:26) are called forth from either heaven or hell. The material elements of the body are raised up, reassembled, and united again to the spirit and soul. Thus the complete personality of the individual is reconstituted. Everyone will be resurrected, some to life and some to damnation (Joh 5:24-25 and 28-29).

The hope of the believer is the resurrection unto life in which the mortal body is said to be raised (1Co 15:44), to be put on (1Co 15:53-54), changed (1Co 15:51 and Php 3:21), fashioned (Php 3:21), quickened (Ro 8:11), redeemed (Ro 8:23), and waiting for the adoption and manifestation of all that it means to be a son or daughter of God (Ro 8:19 and 23). The natural, earthly, terrestrial, corrupt, weak, mortal, vile body is said to be raised, changed, and fashioned into a spiritual, heavenly, celestial, incorrupt, glorious, powerful, and immortal body (Ro 8:11; 1Co 15:40, 42-44, 49, 51, 53-54; and Php 3:21). This is the completeness of all that has been purchased for the believer in Christ (Ro 8:23-25).

Paul said in 1Co 15:12-17 that if there is no resurrection, then our faith is vain and we are yet in our sins. It is the resurrection life of Jesus that brings spiritual life into us (Joh 11:25 and 1Co 15:17) and the resurrection of the body that brings physical regeneration, reconstituting us into the very image of God (1Co 15:44 and 1Jo 3:2, see note 15 at Joh 5:29 and note 3 at Lu 7:15).

## **MATTHEW 22:36**

***Master, which [is] the great commandment in the law?***

Note 1 at Mt 22:36: Jesus revealed that all of the Old Testament



Law was designed to instruct people on how to love God and love others. Therefore, the two commands that dealt directly with loving God and others (Le 19:18 and De 6:5) were the most important.

The religious leaders had become so obsessed with keeping every minor detail of the Law that they had lost sight of its ultimate purpose. They neither loved God nor their fellow man, yet they thought that they were keeping the Law. The same thing is happening today. Some of the cruelest acts toward people have been done in the name of the Lord by those who thought they were defending the holy commandments of God's Word. However, if people violate one of these two greatest commandments in an effort to enforce some other commandment, then they are misapplying God's Word, even as these religious Jews did.

The Old Testament Law and the New Testament grace compelled people to the same end, which was to love God and their fellow man. However, the motivations to this end were different. The Old Testament Law motivated people to love God and their fellow man through fear of punishment if they failed to comply, while the New Testament grace freely gives people this God-kind of love unconditionally and tells them to love as they have been loved (Eph 4:32).

It is possible to have actions of holiness and not love God, but it is impossible for this God-kind of love not to produce holiness. Holiness is a fruit (Ro 6:22) and not a root of loving God (see note 2 at Lu 11:42).

#### **MATTHEW 22:37**

***Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.***

Note 2 at Mt 22:37: The English word "soul" comes from the Greek word "PSUCHE," and it has been translated "heart," "life," "mind," and "soul." The Scripture tells us the soul needs knowledge (Pr 2:10, 19:2, and 24:14), it knows (Ps 139:14), it considers and counsels (Ps 13:2), remembers (La 3:20), chooses (Job 7:15), refuses (Job 6:7), it seeks (1Ch 22:19), it binds or makes a decision (Nu 30), it loves (1Sa 18:1, Ps 42:1, and Song 1:7), hates (2Sa 5:8 and Ps 107:18), has joy (Ps 86:4 and Isa 61:10), grieves (Jdg 10:16), and desires (De 14:26 and 1Sa 20:4).

These scriptures best reveal the mind to be the principal and leading part of the soul, followed by the will and emotions. The soul could also be described as being the hidden part of all existing beings, or what most people would call the personality. The soul is the center of the feelings and emotions, appetites and desires, as well as sense perception and consciousness (1Sa 30:6; 2Sa 13:39; 2Ki 4:27, 23:3; Ps 107:5, 9, 18, 26; Mt 26:38; Mr 12:33; Joh 12:27; Heb 4:12, and 10:38).

The soul may also speak of the totality of a person; i.e., the total being or self (Lu 12:19; Ac 2:43, 3:23; and 1Pe 3:20). The New Testament usage of the Greek word may be analyzed as follows: the natural life of a person's body (Lu 12:22 and Ac 20:10), the invisible or immaterial part of a person (Mt 10:28 and Ac 2:27), the disembodied portion of a person (Re 6:9), the seat of personality that perceives, reflects, desires, and feels (Mt 11:29; Lu 1:46, 2:35; and Ac 14:22), the center of the will and purpose (Mt 22:37 and Ac 4:32), the center of appetite and desire (Re 18:14), the totality of a person (Ac 2:41, 43; Ro 2:9; Jas 5:20; 1Pe 3:20; and 2Pe 2:14), and the hidden or inward person (Lu 21:19, 1Pe 2:11, and 3Jo 2).

The soul and the body do not become born again (see note 2 at Joh 3:3). It is the spirit of a person that becomes totally new at salvation (2Co 5:17). So although every believer receives the same miraculous spiritual rebirth, the visible results of that inward change will vary from person to person according to how much they renew their minds (Ro 12:1-2).

## **MATTHEW 22:46**

***And no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any [man] from that day forth ask him any more [questions].***

Note 1 at Mt 22:46: The religious leaders of the Jews had sought to discredit Jesus many times by asking Him "loaded" questions to which they thought any answer He gave would be the wrong one. On this particular day, Jesus had been asked three questions by the Pharisees, Herodians, and Sadducees. The first question had been from a coalition of the Pharisees and Herodians and was on the subject of paying taxes (see note 1 at Lu 20:20). The second was from the Sadducees on whether or not there was a resurrection (see note 1 at Lu 20:29), and the third came from a lawyer of the Pharisees on what the greatest commandment was (see note 1 at Mt 22:36).

All of these questions were intended to snare Jesus (Mt 22:15). Jesus not only evaded their traps, but also, in His infinitely superior wisdom, He had actually turned the tables on these Jews and made them look like fools. Then He "rubbed salt in their wounds" by asking them a question that they were unable to answer. These Jews who prided themselves on having superior knowledge (Joh 9:34) were totally humiliated by a man who had never been through their religious "seminary" (Joh 7:15). This resulted in them being afraid to ever try to trap Jesus by questions again.

# MATTHEW

## CHAPTER 23

### MATTHEW 23:1

*Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples,*

Note 1 at Mt 23:1: Jesus' rebuke of the scribes and Pharisees for their hypocrisy was the harshest treatment that He ever gave to any group (see note 3 at Lu 11:44). He also did this publicly before the multitude that these hypocrites so longed to impress.

Jesus had faced many battles with the scribes and Pharisees before. On this particular day, this encounter had started with the chief priests and elders challenging Jesus' authority (see note 1 at Lu 20:2). Jesus stunned them by replying with a question that challenged their authority. He then used three parables to illustrate that these Jewish leaders had rejected the rule of God in their lives despite their pious religious acts. "They perceived that he spake of them" (Mt 21:45).

The Pharisees countered by tempting Jesus with a question about paying taxes to the Roman government (see note 1 at Lu 20:20). Then the Sadducees tried to stop Jesus with a question about the resurrection (see note 1 at Mt 22:23 and note 1 at Lu 20:29). Finally, a lawyer tried to snare Him with a question about what the greatest commandment was (see note 3 at Mr 12:28). Jesus did so well in each test that "no man after that durst ask him any question" (Mr 12:34). Jesus then asked these leaders, who were supposed to know it all, a question that none of them could answer.

These were the events of the day that led up to Jesus' stinging public rebuke of these hypocrites, and this rebuke was given with Jesus knowing full well that they were planning to kill

Him. Jesus was totally fearless in the face of their threats.

### **MATTHEW 23:2**

***Saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat:***

Note 2 at Mt 23:2: Mt 23 contains Jesus' public exposure of the scribes and Pharisees' motives (Mt 23:1-7), a warning against being like them that was also addressed to the multitude (Mt 23:8-12), and then Jesus' rebuke and pronouncement of judgment directly to the scribes and Pharisees.

### **MATTHEW 23:5**

***But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments,***

Note 3 at Mt 23:5: Phylacteries were small leather pouches or boxes that were tied to the left arm and to the forehead. In the box were strips of parchment containing the written words of Ex 13:1-16; De 6:4-9, and 11:13-21. This was commanded in De 6:8. Also, an Israelite wore a fringe upon each of the four corners of his outer garment (Nu 15:38-40 and De 22:12). The Pharisees and scribes enlarged their phylacteries or fringes to draw attention to themselves.

Jesus didn't denounce wearing phylacteries or fringes but rather rebuked the Pharisees for their motives. They were not trying to keep God's Word before them continually, as was the intent in De 6:8, but they wanted everyone to notice how holy they were. Motives, not actions, are usually what make people

hypocrites.

### **MATTHEW 23:8**

***But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, [even] Christ; and all ye are brethren.***

Note 4 at Mt 23:8: As explained in note 2 at Joh 1:38, the term "rabbi" primarily meant "master," although it could refer to a doctor or teacher. Jesus' statement that we should not call any person "master" (Mt 23:8 and 10) is not to be taken that we should not submit to those in authority over us, for that would violate many scriptures in God's Word (Ro 13:1-7, Eph 6:1-9, Col 3:20-4:1, and 1Pe 2:13-20). Eph 6:5, 9; and Col 4:1 even use this terminology in referring to human relationships. Therefore, this must be speaking of making some person a master in the sense of Lordship and not of a social or civil situation.

Likewise, Jesus told us not to call any man on earth "Father" (Mt 23:9). This is not speaking of a physical, father-child relationship, since the Apostle Paul applied this term to people often (Ro 4:11-12, 16; 1Co 5:1; Eph 5:31, 6:2; 1Th 2:11; 1Ti 1:9, 5:1; Heb 7:3, 10, and 12:7). Paul even referred to himself as being a father to the believers in Corinth in a spiritual sense (1Co 4:15). However, Paul made it clear that the head of every person is Christ (1Co 11:3). Therefore, Paul was not emphasizing the sovereignty of a father but rather referring to the part he played in their spiritual births.

In both of these instances, the point that Jesus was clearly making was not to seek self-exaltation or recognition through titles. As Pr 27:2 so aptly puts it, "Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips." Trying to apply these statements with an unreasonable literalism could make us just like these Pharisees Jesus was rebuking who "strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel" (Mt 23:24).

## **MATTHEW 23:12**

***And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.***

Note 5 at Mt 23:12: It needs to be pointed out that if people become servants or humble themselves with the motive of seeking to be exalted, then they are not truly fulfilling Jesus' command and will not reap the reward promised here. Hypocrisy is an attitude or motive (see note 1 at Mt 21:23 and note 2 at Mt 23:2), and many people today have taken on religious mannerisms that appear self-debasing but in truth are "Pharisaisms."

"You all pray for me while I try to sing this special. I don't have a very good voice, but the Lord said all we had to do was make a joyful sound." This line has become a standard with many singers, yet if you agreed with them and said, "You're right! Your voice really is terrible," you would be in for a fight. That's hypocrisy. It was just a backhanded way of seeking to gain a compliment. That was not what Jesus was advocating.

Jesus was teaching about a true servant's heart that loves others more than self and will joyfully do without so that someone else may prosper.

## **MATTHEW 23:13**

***But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in [yourselves], neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.***

Note 6 at Mt 23:13: Jesus pronounced eight denunciations in Mt 23, each beginning with, "Woe unto you" (Mt 23:13-16, 23, 25,

27, and 29). "Woe" is the Greek word "OUAI" used by the Lord as an interjection in denunciation of hypocrisy (note 6 at Mr 7:6 and see note 2 at Mt 22:18). The word "woe" actually means "deep distress or misery, as from grief; wretchedness...misfortune; calamity." Jesus pronounced it against those religious leaders who professed to hold virtues that they did not possess.

It is used in Scripture in Mt 11:21 (twice), 18:7 (twice), 23:13-16, 23, 24:19, 26:24; Mr 13:17, 14:21; Lu 6:24 (thirteen times), 6:25 (twice), 6:26 (once), 10:13 (twice), 11:42-44, 46-47, 52, 17:1, 21:23, 22:22; 1Co 9:16; Jude 11; Re 8:13 (twelve times), 9:12 (twice), 11:14 (twice), and 12:12 (once). Re 18:10, 16, and 19 use the word "alas" twice in each of those verses, which means essentially the same as "woe."

Note 7 at Mt 23:13: In Jesus' exposure of these scribes and Pharisees, He detailed the main characteristics of hypocrites. Hypocrites don't practice what they preach (Mt 23:3-4), they always seek self-glory instead of seeking to glorify God (Mt 23:5-7), they have their priorities wrong (Mt 23:16-24), they focus on outward show instead of the inner condition of the heart (Mt 23:25-28), and they always persecute the true worshipers of God (Mt 23:29-35).

Note 8 at Mt 23:13: There are two main types of hypocrisy: (1) not practicing what one preaches (Tit 1:16) and (2) right actions with wrong motives (Mt 15:8). This second type of hypocrisy was what Jesus rebuked in the scribes and Pharisees. It is more subtle than the first type and is very prevalent in religion today.

People universally dislike blatant hypocrisy, but this subtle type of hypocrisy has been encouraged and even promoted by religion. Religion teaches tithing or giving for selfish motives, while 1Co 13:3 and 2Co 9:7 make it clear that giving will profit people nothing unless they have the proper motives. The same thing is done when people try to achieve holiness and when they do many other religious acts. It is not always the acts that



are wrong, but if the motivations behind those acts are wrong, those motives can make hypocrites too.

Note 9 at Mt 23:13: These scribes and Pharisees "shut up the kingdom of heaven against men" in two main ways. One way was that they put down so many requirements for salvation that people despaired of ever being good enough to be accepted by God. And the second way was that their hypocrisy made people think, "If what they have is salvation, then I don't want it."

The same thing is happening today. However, those who are rejecting salvation because of the religious hypocrites should remember that if they don't go ahead and receive Jesus as their Lord, then they will have to spend eternity with all those hypocrites in hell.

#### **MATTHEW 23:14**

***Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.***

Note 10 at Mt 23:14: The Lord has always put a very high priority on taking care of widows (Ex 22:22; De 10:18, 14:28-29, 24:17, 26:12, 27:19; Ps 68:5; Isa 1:17; Jer 22:3; 1Ti 5:3-16; and Jas 1:27). It was concerning ministering to widows that Paul said, "But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel" (1Ti 5:8). James said, "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world" (Jas 1:27).

Note 11 at Mt 23:14: Jesus prayed for long periods of time including some all-night prayer times (see note 1 at Mr 1:35). In

Mt 26:40, Jesus was disappointed that His disciples could not pray with Him for one hour. Therefore, Jesus was not rebuking long prayers but rather the fact that the scribes and Pharisees were praying only for pretense or show (see note 27 at Mt 6:6).

### **MATTHEW 23:15**

***Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.***

Note 12 at Mt 23:15: The Greek noun translated "proselyte" here is "PROSELUTOS." It comes from a verb meaning "to approach" (Strong's Concordance) and is used to designate a stranger from a foreign region (Ex 22:21, 23:9; and De 10:19). The Law of Moses permitted certain rights to strangers living in Israel but obligated them to comply with certain religious laws.

Strangers were not to blaspheme God's name (Le 24:16), indulge in idolatrous worship (Le 20:2), work on the Sabbath (Ex 20:10), eat leavened bread during the Passover (Ex 12:19), or eat blood or the bodies of animals that had died of natural causes or were torn by wild beasts (Le 17:10 and 15). If a stranger wanted to become a citizen, he was to be circumcised and come under the observance of the whole Law (Ex 12:48-49). Exceptions to this were the Ammonites and Moabites (De 23:3).

The wide usage of the word "proselyte" in the New Testament means "a convert to Judaism" (Mt 23:15; Ac 2:10, 6:5, and 13:43). Its general meaning refers to a convert from one religion to another.

Note 13 at Mt 23:15: Jesus bore witness to the evangelistic zeal of the scribes and Pharisees. However, they were not converting people to the Lord but rather to follow their own

traditions. Likewise, many religious groups today appear zealous for God, but if their intentions were analyzed, they would be just like this group that Jesus was rebuking.

Most people are motivated to tell others of Jesus by preaching that scares or condemns them for failure to do so. They don't witness, but instead, what comes across is harsh legalism that always accompanies "works-oriented" religion.

Those receiving the witness might accept the Lord in spite of the motives behind the witness, but if they continue to associate with that group, they will be poisoned by these hypocritical motives.

#### **MATTHEW 23:17**

***[Ye] fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold?***

Note 14 at Mt 23:17: The Lord used the term "blind" five times in His rebuke of the scribes and Pharisees in this chapter (Mt 23:16, 17, 19, 24, and 26). Their greatest sin was not in their blindness but in their hypocrisy in professing to see (Joh 9:41).

Spiritual blindness is hereditary. People are born spiritually separated from God. However, God is constantly revealing Himself to people and seeking to draw them out of their blindness (Ro 1:18-20). For people to persist in this condition, they have to harden themselves against innumerable internal and external witnesses of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, it is inexcusable to continue in spiritual blindness. These scribes and Pharisees were blind by choice.

Note 15 at Mt 23:17: It is God who gives value to everything. Things mean nothing without Him. These scribes and Pharisees

were making the same mistake that people make today. They put more value on material things than on spiritual things.

### **MATTHEW 23:19**

***[Ye] fools and blind: for whether [is] greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift?***

Note 16 at Mt 23:19: Just as with the gold on the temple, these hypocrites put more emphasis on the material gift than the spiritual altar that sanctified the gift. Jesus revealed that the motives behind the gift are more important than the gift itself (Lu 21:1-4 and 1Co 13:3). An inferior material gift given with the proper motives is recognized by God as superior to a larger material gift given with the wrong motives.

### **MATTHEW 23:20**

***Whoso therefore shall swear by the altar, sweareth by it, and by all things thereon.***

Note 17 at Mt 23:20: In the Hebrew way of thinking, an oath was a solemn appeal to the truth of an affirmation or promise. Invoking God's name in an oath carried the idea of the all-knowing, all-seeing God watching over people's words with the most serious consequences for those who broke them (Ge 31:49-53; 1Sa 12:5, and 19:6). The Apostle Paul used the same kind of Hebrew thinking when he called upon God as a witness to the truthfulness of his statements (2Co 1:23, Ga 1:20, and Php 1:8).

The Law of Moses established guidance concerning oaths in several situations: the loss of one's personal property (Ex 22:10-

11), the finding of lost possessions (Le 6:3), when a woman was suspected of unfaithfulness to her husband (Nu 5:11-31), and the misuse of swearing and concealing the truth (Le 5:1). The Old Testament also cautioned against swearing lightly with the solemn warning of Ec 5:5, "Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay."

Although Jesus accepted the credibility of a claim confirmed by an oath (Mt 26:63-64), His teaching denounced a double standard accepted by some Jews that one's word had to be confirmed by an oath. For Christ's followers, one's life and word should be as sacred as an oath (Mt 5:37). Under His rule, oaths should be an unnecessary thing (Mt 5:34-37), for Christians carry Christ's name in all that they say and do (1Co 6:20).

### **MATTHEW 23:23**

***Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier [matters] of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.***

Note 18 at Mt 23:23: Some have taught that Jesus did away with the tithe since He did not specifically make it a part of His New Testament teaching. But in this instance, Jesus made reference to the scribes and Pharisees tithing and implied that they were right in doing so. The New Covenant did not do away with the tithe, but it did clarify what the motives for tithing should be.

Abram tithed over 430 years before the Law was given (Ge 14:20). Jacob also tithed approximately 300 years before the time of the Law (Ge 28:22). Therefore, tithing was a Bible principle that didn't begin or end with the Law of Moses.

However, the Law of Moses did include tithing as a part of its commandments (Le 27:30-32) with stiff penalties attached for failure to comply (De 28:15 with Mal 3:8-9).

It was concerning these punishments for not tithing that the New Testament differed from the Old Testament. Mal 3:8-9 says that if people don't tithe, they have robbed God and are cursed with a curse. Therefore, people gave out of the motivation of debt and obligation. Jesus redeemed people from this and all the other curses of the Law (Ga 3:13-14) so that God will not curse them for not tithing.

The Apostle Paul also made it very clear that any type of giving motivated by anything less than God's kind of love was useless (1Co 13:3). He went on to explain in 2Co 9:7 that God wants people to give "not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver." The type of giving that God loves is cheerful, freewill giving.

This does not mean that tithing is contrary to the New Testament. It was the fear-of-punishment motive that the Old Testament Law attached to tithing that has been done away with. Giving and tithing are still very much a part of New Testament doctrine and, if done with the New Testament attitude, are still acceptable to God.

Note 19 at Mt 23:23: One of the ways that God's goodness is revealed is in mercy. We may describe mercy as the readiness of God to relieve the misery of fallen creatures. Many times, mercy is called "compassion" or "lovingkindness." It is expressed toward sinners because of the misery that sin has brought upon them.

God's mercy is described as tender (Lu 1:78), plenteous (Ps 86:5), great (1Ki 3:6), from everlasting to everlasting (Ps 103:17), and as a sovereign act of God (Ex 33:19).

God's mercy to the believer is revealed by God taking away the misery of sin's consequences through the New Covenant of a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. Mercy is not something merited or earned but, as the Apostle Paul stated, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us" (Tit 3:5, emphasis added).

The prophet Micah in the Old Testament summed up our duty to God as being "to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God" (Mic 6:8).

Some scriptures from the Old Testament Law and prophets that speak of God's mercy are Ex 34:6; De 7:9-12; 2Ch 6:14; Ne 1:5; Ps 86:5, 103:8; and La 3:22-23.

#### **MATTHEW 23:24**

***[Ye] blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel.***

Note 20 at Mt 23:24: The Pharisee was careful to strain his drinking water lest he swallow a gnat, the smallest of unclean animals. However, Jesus revealed that while he was putting such emphasis on the tiniest details, he was missing the very obvious and more important truths of judgment, mercy, and faith. Hypocrites always have misplaced priorities because they worship self instead of God.

#### **MATTHEW 23:26**

***[Thou] blind Pharisee, cleanse first that [which is] within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also.***

Note 21 at Mt 23:26: These scribes and Pharisees were only aware of external actions and were ignorant of the issues of the heart. Religion (man trying to approach God) will always differ with Christianity (God coming to man) in this respect. "Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart" (1Sa 16:7).

Religion deals only with the actions of people because it is administered by carnally minded people. True Christianity goes to the very hearts of people. Jesus said if people would clean the inside of the cup and platter (i.e., their hearts), then the outside would be clean also (i.e., their actions). It is impossible to change people in their hearts and not have that change reflected in their actions (Pr 23:7 and Mt 12:34).

One of religion's favorite messages is that if you will just act right, you will be right. Nothing could be further from the truth. You must be born again (Joh 3:3-7). And if you are born again, then holiness is a byproduct of, and not the way to, a relationship with God (Ro 6:22).

### **MATTHEW 23:28**

***Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.***

Note 22 at Mt 23:28: Jesus continued to expose the hypocrisy of the scribes and Pharisees by dealing with issues of the heart. Just as a grave may be whitewashed on the outside but be full of corruption and decay inside, so these scribes and Pharisees appeared holy outwardly, but their hearts were far from God (Mt 15:8 and Mr 7:6).



### **MATTHEW 23:30**

***And say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.***

Note 23 at Mt 23:30: Hindsight is always 20/20. These Jews could see, through the historical record of the Scriptures, who the real prophets of God were. They built and decorated tombs for the prophets whom their fathers had killed. Yet they were committing a far greater sin than their fathers in seeking to kill the Prophet about whom all the other prophets had prophesied. This is a classic example of spiritual blindness (see note 14 at Mt 23:17).

### **MATTHEW 23:34**

***Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and [some] of them ye shall kill and crucify; and [some] of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute [them] from city to city:***

Note 24 at Mt 23:34: Jesus ended His rebuke to the scribes and Pharisees, and He prophesied about their judgment in Mt 23:35-36.

### **MATTHEW 23:35**

***That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar.***

Note 25 at Mt 23:35: Abel was the first righteous martyr mentioned in the Scriptures (Ge 4:8), and apparently the prophet Zechariah was the last. Zec 1:1 makes it very clear that the prophet who wrote the Old Testament book bearing his name was the same "son of Barachias" that Jesus was speaking of here. Therefore, Jesus added to the knowledge of this Old Testament saint by revealing that he was martyred between the temple and the altar. It is unclear if this is the same Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada, who was killed in 2Ch 24:20-21.

By Jesus referring to the first and last martyrs listed in Scripture, He was saying that all of the blood of righteous people of all times would be required of this generation. This was appropriate, since the blood of Jesus, whom they would slay, would be worth infinitely more than all of the other martyrs' blood combined.

### **MATTHEW 23:37**

***O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, [thou] that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under [her] wings, and ye would not!***

Note 26 at Mt 23:37: Jesus was not deserting Jerusalem, but Jerusalem had deserted Him. Here, Jesus expressed the heart of God. He had desired to draw the people unto Himself, but they refused. This should forever stop anyone from thinking that an individual is predestined to be saved or damned. Jesus would have saved Jerusalem, but they would not receive it.

### **MATTHEW 23:38**

***Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.***

Note 27 at Mt 23:38: Jerusalem forsook Jesus, so He forsook Jerusalem (2Ch 15:2). The results were that in A.D. 70, less than forty years after their rejection of Jesus, Jerusalem was leveled, burned, and plundered (see note 4 at Lu 19:43).

### **MATTHEW 23:39**

***For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed [is] he that cometh in the name of the Lord.***

Note 28 at Mt 23:39: By comparing this verse with Lu 13:35, we see that this prophecy of Jesus had been given before (see note 6 at Lu 13:35). The first time Jesus said this, He was on His way to Jerusalem, and the multitudes used these exact words to praise Him as He made His way into the city. However, in this case, there was no triumphant entry, and only rejection lay ahead. Therefore, this prophecy must be in reference to a yet-future fulfillment when the Jews will recognize Jesus as their Messiah (Ps 14:7, 53:6; Isa 59:20; and Ro 11:26).

# MATTHEW

## CHAPTER 24

### MATTHEW 24:4

***And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you.***

Note 1 at Mt 24:4: Deception can be avoided or else Jesus would not have said, "Take heed that no man deceive you." Satan can only deceive those who allow him to do it. Eph 6:11 tells us to "put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." Putting on the whole armor of God (Eph 6:11-18) will protect against the deception of the devil.

### MATTHEW 24:5

***For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.***

Note 2 at Mt 24:5: The way to recognize deception is not to analyze all the false claims but rather to become so familiar with what is genuine that a counterfeit will be easily recognizable. Anyone who is truly grounded in the Word of God will not be deceived.

### MATTHEW 24:6

***And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all [these things] must come to pass, but the end is not yet.***

Note 3 at Mt 24:6: The Lord was saying not to be troubled because of wars and rumors of wars. The natural mind would think that this is totally unreasonable. How could anyone not be troubled by some of the terrible wars that have ravaged the earth since Jesus' prophecy?

The answer to this lies in the fact that we know God has ultimate control over the affairs of people (Ex 9:16; Ps 75:6-7; Pr 16:9, 21:1; Jer 10:23; Ro 9:15-24, and 13:1), and He has assured us of His complete, final conquest and the manner in which it will happen. The earth will not be destroyed by some "madman" or in a conquest of war. The Lord will destroy this present earth with a fervent heat (2Pe 3:7 and 10), create a new heaven and earth (Re 21:1), and right all the wrongs as He judges the world (Re 20:11-15). Those of us who believe these promises of God can laugh with the Lord (Ps 2:4) at all the heathens who rise up against Him.

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### **MATTHEW 24:9**

***Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.***

Note 4 at Mt 24:9: Jesus was speaking to Jews in this discourse. It has already come to pass that the Jews have been hated of all nations. But Jesus added that they would be hated for His name's sake, and Mark added that the Holy Ghost would give them special directions as to what to speak to their accusers (Mr 13:11). This leaves no doubt that Jesus was more directly speaking to His followers. Christians will be hated of all nations before the end comes.

### **Matthew 24:12**

***And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.***

Note 5 at Mt 24:12: The only reason that an abundance of iniquity would make people's love for the Lord wax cold is if they were not separated from that iniquity. As with Lot, righteous people can vex their souls from day to day by hearing and seeing the unlawful deeds of the ungodly (2Pe 2:8). This is the reason for the commands and promises of 2Co 6:14-18. "Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners" (1Co

15:33).

### **MATTHEW 24:13**

***But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.***

Note 6 at Mt 24:13: Here Jesus was teaching that there is perseverance on the believer's part for complete salvation. Salvation is a gift that cannot be earned (Ro 6:23 and Eph 2:8-9) nor maintained (Ga 3:3 and Col 2:6) by the believer's own works. It has to be received by faith. However, there is effort on the believer's part to maintain that faith. This is where holiness comes in.

Holiness will not produce relationship with God, nor will a lack of holiness make God turn away from us. He deals with us according to our faith in Jesus and not our performance. But holiness will keep Satan from stealing our faith from us, while lack of holiness is an open invitation to the devil to do his worst. Those of us who want to endure to the end cannot live lifestyles that permit Satan free access to us.

### **MATTHEW 24:14**

***And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.***

Note 7 at Mt 24:14: The "gospel of the kingdom" that Jesus referred to and what much of "Christianity" preaches today are not the same thing. The word "Gospel" means good news, or glad tidings. While it is certainly true that God hates sin and all sin will be judged, that is not the good news of the kingdom. Yet

most religious preaching centers on what we do or should do and not on what Jesus has already done for us. The Gospel that Jesus referred to is that He has purchased a way to the Father through His own death and resurrection, and it is ours if we will just believe (Ro 10:1-13).

Many people who have heard the "bad news" of religion are working their fingers to the bone to earn God's favor. They have not only made Jesus their Savior, but they also have had the burden of salvation put on their own backs. That is not the Gospel of the kingdom. There are still millions of people who have not heard the good news that Jesus alone saves.

Note 8 at Mt 24:14: World evangelization is a must before the Lord will come back (compare with Mr 13:10). That is not to say that all people will believe on Jesus as their Savior, but every nation will hear the Gospel of the kingdom.

#### **MATTHEW 24:15**

***When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)***

Note 9 at Mt 24:15: The holy place that Jesus was referring to was the temple in Jerusalem. The Old Testament temple was divided into three sections: the outer court where the sacrifices were made, the middle court called the holy place (1Ki 8:10-11; 2Ch 5:11, 29:5, 7, 35:5; and Heb 9:2), and the inner court where God dwelt, called the holy of holies (Le 16:2; Heb 9:3-5, and 7-8).

Although Jesus was speaking of the abomination of desolation being placed in the holy place, the holy place He was referring to was probably designating the entire temple rather than a specific part. Daniel specifically mentioned the daily sacrifice being taken away as part of this abomination (Da 9:27). The



sacrifices were offered not in the holy place but on the brazen altar in the outer court. Therefore, the whole temple was being referred to by the term "holy place."

Note 10 at Mt 24:15: When Daniel prophesied about the end times, he was commanded to "shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end" (Da 12:4). This was repeated to Daniel in Da 12:9. What this means is that the Holy Spirit would not give revelation of these prophecies until the end times.

By Jesus saying "whoso readeth, let him understand," He removed the seal on Daniel's prophecy, making the revelation of the Holy Spirit on these prophecies available to all who have ears to hear. He also revealed that we are already in the end times since Daniel was told that the words would be sealed until then. If that was true nearly two thousand years ago when Jesus spoke these words, then how much closer must we be today?

#### **MATTHEW 24:28**

***For wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together.***

Note 11 at Mt 24:28: Many people are very offended that anyone would interpret the carcass ("carcase") in this verse as being Jesus and the eagles as being true believers. However, the context would seem to suggest that.

The point that has just been made is, "Don't let anyone deceive you about the coming of Christ, because you will not be able to miss it. Everyone will see the Lord coming just like lightning is visible to everyone." Then the Lord said that just like eagles are somehow always able to find a carcass, so His followers will be gathered unto Him.

The analogy that Jesus used is very fitting. Just as eagles feed off

of a carcass, so we must feed on Jesus (Joh 6:47-58). A carcass speaks of death also, and that was the means that Jesus used to provide us with His life (Mt 17:22-23, 20:18-19, 28; Joh 10:17-18, and 12:23-24).

### **MATTHEW 24:31**

***And he shall send 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.***

Note 12 at Mt 24:31: Angels are created (Ne 9:6 and Col 1:16) spirit beings (Ps 104:4 and Heb 1:14) who are superior to man in might and power (Isa 37:36, 2Pe 2:11, and Re 20:1-2). Although their substance is spirit (1Ki 22:21 and Ps 104:4), they have oftentimes appeared in human form (Ge 19:1-22 and Jdg 6:11-22). They are holy (Mr 8:38), elect (1Ti 5:21), and engaged in God's work (Ps 103:20). Although heaven is their home (Mt 18:10, Mr 12:25, and Lu 1:19), they nevertheless are involved in God's service on earth (Heb 1:14). In Ge 28:12 and Joh 1:51, they are seen as ascending and descending between heaven and earth.

Some facts concerning angels are as follows: They are not to be worshiped (Col 2:18); they are innumerable (Heb 12:22); they serve God's people (Ac 12:7-11 and Heb 1:14); they rejoice over the salvation of the lost (Lu 15:10); they protect and deliver God's children (2Ki 6:17-18, Da 6:22, and Ac 5:19); they observe the affairs of people (1Co 4:9); they accompany the saints at death (Lu 16:22); they neither marry nor are given in marriage (Mt 22:30); they never die (Lu 20:36); they excel in strength, do God's commandments, and obey His Word (Ps 103:20); they will accompany Christ at His return (Mt 25:31); and they execute God's judgments (Mt 13:39-42, see note 2 at Lu 20:36).

### **MATTHEW 24:32**

***Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer [is] nigh:***

Note 13 at Mt 24:32: Many have interpreted this fig tree as being the nation of Israel and, therefore, the rebirth of the nation of Israel as being this sign of the end that Jesus spoke of. While Israel was spoken of in parabolic form as a fig tree (see note 1 at Lu 13:6), in Luke's account of this illustration, he reported Jesus as using the fig tree and all the trees to make His point in this parable (Lu 21:29). Therefore, Jesus was simply stating that just as we can tell when summer is near by the budding of trees, so we will be able to tell when His return is near by the occurrence of the events He had just described.

### **MATTHEW 24:34**

***Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.***

Note 14 at Mt 24:34: Jesus was speaking of the generation that sees all these signs come to pass; they will not pass away before the Lord's return.

### **MATTHEW 24:38**

***For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark,***

Note 15 at Mt 24:38: Jesus was prophesying that just as in Noah's day, the people would be dominated with the temporary affairs of this life instead of eternal spiritual truths. Before the Lord's second return, there will be plenty of signs to show that the time is drawing near, but few will heed them. Preoccupation with the affairs of this life can dull people to the spiritual realm (Mr 4:19, see note 3 at Mr 8:17).

#### **MATTHEW 24:40**

***Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.***

Note 16 at Mt 24:40: This shows that the believers will not be assembled on a mountaintop somewhere waiting for the Lord's return; they will still be going about their daily routines. In the parable of the talents, the lord said to "occupy till I come" (Lu 19:13). Believers should be ready for the Lord to come back at any moment yet work as if His return is still far off.

#### **MATTHEW 24:43**

***But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up.***

Note 17 at Mt 24:43: This was the first of four parables (2nd - the faithful and wise servant in Mt 24:45-51, 3rd - the ten virgins in Mt 25:1-13, and 4th - the different talents in Mt 25:14-30) that Jesus used to emphasize the need to be ready for His return. He then followed all of these parables with an illustration of how the true possessors of Christ would be separated from mere

professors (Mt 25:31-46).

Many doctrines have been developed from the details of these parables. While there is no doubt that there are doctrinal truths to be learned in these passages, we cannot take the liberty to use symbolism and create doctrines that are not well established in other passages of Scripture. The overall point that each parable is making is very clear and can be agreed on by all, and that is to "be ready!"

#### **MATTHEW 24:44**

***Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.***

Note 18 at Mt 24:44: The Lord kindly but seriously pointed out the urgent need to be ready for His return. In the same way that a thief comes when people are least prepared, so the Lord will return in a time when people are not looking for Him.

This is not because our Lord desires to surprise all of us and see how many He can catch off-guard. On the contrary, this very prophecy is urging us to be watchful so we will be prepared. Jesus gave these signs of the end times to help us to be prepared. He was simply prophesying that there will be a condition of apathy in the latter days (Mt 24:12) that will tend to lull even the faithful to sleep if we don't take heed to His words.

In Noah's day, the people refused to prepare themselves for the coming flood because they were caught up with the affairs of this life (Mr 4:19) and didn't realize that judgment had come upon them until they were taken away in it (Mt 24:37-39). The Lord was prophesying the conditions that will be prevalent on the earth in general so that people in particular may take heed and spare themselves.

**MATTHEW 24:45**

***Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season?***

Note 19 at Mt 24:45: This parable about the faithful and wise servant is not limited to the twelve disciples, as Mr 13:37 makes very clear. It is intended for all disciples of the Lord.

# MATTHEW

## CHAPTER 25

### MATTHEW 25:1

***Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.***

Note 20 at Mt 25:1: This parable of the ten virgins clearly continues the lesson on the need to be ready for the Lord's return. Those who are not ready will have no time to prepare once the Lord comes. Just as with the five foolish virgins, there will be no second chances. This parable, along with the other three in this discourse (see note 17 at Mt 24:43), also teaches that the Lord will make a separation. Not everyone who cries unto Him, "Lord, Lord" will enter the kingdom of heaven (Mt 7:21).

### MATTHEW 25:14

***For [the kingdom of heaven is] as a man travelling into a far country, [who] called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods.***

Note 21 at Mt 25:14: This parable of the talents continues the theme of being ready for the Lord's return (see notes 17-18 at Mt 24:43-44), but it also makes a very strong point that we are accountable to the Lord for the gifts that He has given us.

There is much disagreement about what the talents entrusted to these servants are supposed to illustrate. Some believe that they are representative of the gift of salvation, while others teach

that they illustrate talents, abilities, or other gifts. One thing is certain. The Lord intended people to use these gifts to further His kingdom, not keep them hidden.

This parable also shows the lord dealing with his servants according to their own individual gifts and abilities. The servants who doubled their lord's money were praised exactly the same, even though one had produced two and one-half times as much revenue for his lord as the other. Every person's work shall be judged as to what sort it is, not what size it is (1Co 3:13).

#### **MATTHEW 25:26**

***His lord answered and said unto him, [Thou] wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed:***

Note 22 at Mt 25:26: Those who believe that the Lord is too demanding and therefore choose to do nothing about serving Him are like this slothful servant. Instead of that reasoning exempting them from accountability, it will actually increase their accountability. If they really believe that the Lord is so demanding, they should be more diligent about being faithful with the gifts God has given them than anyone else.

#### **MATTHEW 25:29**

***For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.***

Note 23 at Mt 25:29: This is a familiar theme among Jesus' teachings. Those who have will be given more, and those who



have not will have the little that they have taken away. This could be misunderstood as being unfair on the Lord's part. In Lu 19:24-25, that is exactly what those who were standing by said.

However, this parable makes it very clear that what was being taken away from this unprofitable servant was not his own but his lord's money that had been entrusted to him. In Lu 19:13, the nobleman who gave his servants the money specifically said, "Occupy till I come," and the same thing is implied here. These servants were only stewards of their lord's money (see note 4 at Lu 12:42), and as stewards, they were accountable to their lord for their use or misuse of his resources.

Likewise, we did not save ourselves. Jesus purchased redemption for us and has given salvation to the whole human race as a gift. However, only those of us who take hold of His gift and use it in our lives are truly saved.

There will be those who are like this unprofitable servant, who knew the truth of the Gospel and never denied it but never did anything with it. These will have the grace that God has given them taken away and bestowed upon those who will receive it while they themselves will be cast into outer darkness where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

#### **MATTHEW 25:32**

***And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth [his] sheep from the goats:***

Note 24 at Mt 25:32: The rest of the scriptures in this chapter use a parable of a shepherd dividing his sheep from the goats (this verse and Mt 25:33), but the teaching itself is not in

parable form. It is to be taken literally that the Lord will separate His own true followers from among all nations.

Notice that there were only two categories of people, those who did honor the Lord with their actions and those who didn't. There was not the popular category many people think they fall into of "I meant to" or "it wasn't our ministry." A goat may not see any difference between himself and a sheep, but the Shepherd can.

### **MATTHEW 25:35**

***For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in:***

Note 25 at Mt 25:35: Besides this passage's obvious teaching on the rewards to the faithful (see note 6 at Mt 10:42, note 2 at Mr 12:43, and note 1 at Lu 19:12), it also shows us just how deeply the Lord feels our hurts. When a kind act was done to someone in need, He said it was done unto Him. When someone was neglected, He said He was the one being neglected. We have a High Priest who is touched with the feelings of our infirmities (Heb 4:15). When we hurt, He hurts. When we are blessed, He is blessed. The God of the entire universe is intricately involved with every detail of our lives.

### **MATTHEW 25:40**

***And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done [it] unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done [it] unto me.***

Note 26 at Mt 25:40: Although faith is never mentioned in the parables of Mt 25, we know that a living faith is involved

because the only difference between the sheep and the goats was what they did and didn't do. The Scriptures are abundantly clear that what we believe is what we'll do (Tit 1:16; Heb 4:2, 6, 11, 11:7-8, 17, 28, 30; Jas 2:18, 20, 26; and 1Pe 2:7-8).

It is interesting to see that the unrighteous felt that the hungry, thirsty, stranger, prisoner, poor, and sick were the least and lowest of importance in the human race. To their surprise, the Lord answered, "Truly I tell you, in so far as you did it for one of the least [in the estimation of men] of these My brethren, you did it for Me" (this verse, Amplified Bible). Christ's principle is, "What you do to others, you do to Me. The way you treat others is the way you treat Me" (Pr 19:17; Mt 5:7, 6:14-15, 18:33-35; and Ac 9:4). Therefore, in judgment, "there will be no mercy to those who have shown no mercy. But if you have been merciful, then God's mercy toward you will win out over His judgment against you" (Jas 2:13, The Living Bible).

As John Calvin said, "Faith alone saves, but saving faith is never alone."

# MATTHEW

## CHAPTER 26

### MATTHEW 26:2

*Ye know that after two days is [the feast of] the passover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified.*

Note 1 at Mt 26:2: In Israel, crucifixion was a common sight according to Josephus (The Antiquities of the Jews, Book 17, Chapter 10, Section 10 and Book 20, Chapter 5, Section 2). The Jews, unlike the Romans, never crucified living persons but did hang dead bodies on trees as an act of public humiliation and shame (Jos 8:29, 10:26; and Ezr 6:11). This practice was first mentioned in Scripture as one used by the Egyptians (Ge 40:19). Anyone hung upon a tree was accursed by God according to the Mosaic Law (De 21:22-23 and Ga 3:13).

The crucifixion and resurrection, with their spiritual implications, supply the foundation and heart of all that God has provided (1Co 15:3-4). These provisions include (1) justification - the act of declaring one righteous or just by being acquitted from sin (Ro 4:25 and 5:8-9); (2) sanctification - to be made holy or set apart through the atoning work of Christ (Ga 1:4 and Heb 10:14); (3) reconciliation - to change or exchange enmity for friendship by Jesus' removal of our sins, thus effectively dealing with the root cause of the enmity (Col 1:21-22); (4) redemption - to pay a price whereby something is purchased (1Co 6:20), or to free and release from sin and its effects (Ro 3:24 and Eph 1:7); and (5) propitiation - coming from a Greek word involving the Old Testament concept of the mercy seat, having the idea of both the payment for sin (the sacrifice) and the place of payment (the place of mercy) (Ro 3:25 and 1Jo 2:2).

## **MATTHEW 26:6**

***Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper,***

Note 1 at Mt 26:6: Matthew's and Mark's placement of this event in their Gospels differs greatly with where John placed this anointing of Jesus. John made it very clear, however, that this event took place the day before Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem (Joh 12:12); therefore, John was the writer who was setting forth the proper sequence of events.

Matthew and Mark both list Mary anointing Jesus and then Judas' reaction in association with his betrayal of Jesus (Mt 26:1-16 and Mr 14:1-11). This might possibly have been done to emphasize a connection between Judas' disdain for this "waste" (Mt 26:8) and his betrayal of the Lord. Judas might also have been embarrassed by Jesus' rebuke (Mr 14:6-9) and therefore used his betrayal to "get even" with Jesus. Chronological order was not the main concern of Matthew's and Mark's Gospels.

## **MATTHEW 26:7**

***There came unto him a woman having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and poured it on his head, as he sat [at meat].***

Note 2 at Mt 26:7: The Greek word for "alabaster box" ("ALABASTRON" - this verse, Mr 14:3, and Lu 7:37) was originally the neuter form of the adjective "ALABASTROS" meaning an alabaster flask or cruse. It was a long-necked vessel for storing or holding ointment or perfume. When the neck was broken off, the contents were used. It derived its name from the alabaster stone from which it was usually made. Ancient alabaster was a variety of calcium carbonate resulting from the

slow buildup of mineral deposits from cold water solutions in caves. In its pure state, it is white or translucent. In its impure state, it can be a variety of colors including cream, yellow, brown, and red, due primarily to the presence of iron oxide.

Note 3 at Mt 26:7: Anointing a guest's head was a common custom at Jewish festive meals (Ps 23:5 and Lu 7:46). Matthew's and Mark's Gospels say that Mary poured the ointment on Jesus' head (Mt 26:7 and Mr 14:3). John's account says she poured it on Jesus' feet (Joh 12:3). Apparently, she did both. Both are possible since Jesus was reclining on a dining couch at the table (Mt 26:7). The word "sat" used in this passage is the Greek word "ANAKEIMAI," and it means "to recline, guest, lean, lie, sit" (Strong's Concordance).

#### **MATTHEW 26:17**

***Now the first [day] of the [feast of] unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the passover?***

Note 1 at Mt 26:17: Matthew and Mark recorded the disciples approaching Jesus and asking Him where they should prepare the Passover meal, while Luke recorded Peter and John's question (Lu 22:9) as being a response to Jesus' initiative.

To avoid any contradiction, the proper sequence must have been that some of Jesus' disciples asked Him the question first, and Jesus responded by telling Peter and John to go and prepare the place. Then Peter and John asked where it was that He wanted them to prepare it.

## **MATTHEW 26:24**

***The Son of man goeth as it is written of him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born.***

Note 1 at Mt 26:24: One of the most convincing arguments that Jesus was the Christ are the hundreds of Old Testament prophecies that He fulfilled. This is a list of some of the main Old Testament prophecies concerning His death and their New Testament fulfillments.

### **O.T. REFERENCE - PROPHECY - N.T. FULFILLMENT**

- Ge 3:15      Victory over Satan - Col 2:15
- Nu 21:9      The type of serpent - Joh 3:14-15
- Ps 16:9-10    The Messiah would not see corruption - Acts 2:27, 31; and 13:35
- Ps 22:1      Christ forsaken - Mt 27:46 and Mr 15:34
- Ps 22:7-8     Messiah mocked and ridiculed - Lu 23:35
- Ps 22:16     Piercing His hands and feet - Mr 15:25; Lu 23:33; Joh 19:37, and 20:25
- Ps 22:18     Parting His garments and casting lots for them - Lu 23:34 and Joh 19:23-24
- Ps 34:20     Not one bone broken - Joh 19:36
- Ps 35:11     Accused falsely - Mr 14:57-58
- Ps 35:19     Hated without a cause - Joh 15:24-25
- Ps 41:9      Betrayed by a close associate - Lu 22:47-48
- Ps 49:15     His resurrection - Mr 16:6
- Ps 68:18     His ascension to God's right hand - Mr 16:19 and Eph 4:8
- Ps 69:21     Given vinegar to drink in His thirst - Mt 27:34, 48; Mr 15:36; and Joh 19:29

Ps 109:25 They reviled Him, wagging their heads - Mt 27:39  
Isa 50:6 They spit in His face - Mt 26:67  
Isa 50:6 The Messiah scourged - Mt 27:26  
Isa 52:14 Lost human appearance by physical mistreatment  
- Mt 26:67, 27:26, 29-30; Mr 15:15-19; and Joh 19:34  
Isa 52:15 Gentiles shall receive spiritual cleansing - Heb 1:3  
Isa 53:3 He was despised & rejected of people - Joh 1:10-11  
Isa 53:4 He bore our sicknesses - Mt 8:16-17  
Isa 53:5-6 He was wounded for our transgressions - Ro 4:25  
and 1Pe 3:18  
Isa 53:7 He opened not His mouth - Mt 26:63, 27:12, 14; Mr  
14:61, 15:5; and 1Pe 2:23  
Isa 53:9 He was buried with the rich - Mt 27:57-58 and 60  
Isa 53:11 He shall justify many - Ro 3:26 and 5:19  
Isa 53:12 He was numbered with the transgressors – Mr 5:28  
and Lu 22:37  
Isa 53:12 He was crucified with criminals - Mr 15:27-28  
Jon 1:17 The sign of the prophet, Jonah - Mt 12:40 and 16:4  
Mic 5:1 Smitten with a rod upon the cheek - Mt 27:30  
Zec 11:12 He was betrayed for thirty pieces of silver - Mt  
26:15  
Zec 11:13 The betrayal money was used to buy the potter's  
field - Mt 27:5-10  
Zec 13:7 The shepherd is smitten and the flock is scattered -  
Mt 26:31 and Mr 14:27



## **MATTHEW 26:26**

***And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed [it], and brake [it], and gave [it] to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body.***

Note 1 at Mt 26:26: The Lord's Supper actually took place in two parts during this Passover meal. The three Gospel writers who recorded the Lord's Supper recorded the breaking of the bread and the blessing of the wine in unbroken sequence because together, they make one new observance. But in actuality, Jesus washed the disciples' feet and prophesied Judas' betrayal between the sacraments of the bread and the wine.

Matthew and Mark made a point of saying that the sharing of the bread, which symbolized Jesus' broken body, was while they were eating (Mt 26:26 and Mr 14:22). Likewise, they prefaced their accounts of Jesus revealing Judas as the betrayer with the same statements of "as they did eat" (Mt 26:21 and Mr 14:18). However, Luke made it equally clear that it was after supper that Jesus took the cup and revealed that it symbolized His blood of the New Testament (Lu 22:20).

Therefore, these events separated the actual administration of the different elements of the Lord's Supper. The significance of this is beneficial in harmonizing the different accounts and takes nothing away from the observance of the bread and wine as being parts of the Lord's Supper.

## **MATTHEW 26:28**

***For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.***

Note 1 at Mt 26:28: The Greek word for "testament" used here is

"DIATHEKE," and it primarily denotes a contract, covenant, agreement, or promise (Ga 3:17). Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words states that this Greek word "does not in itself contain the idea of joint obligation, it mostly signifies an obligation undertaken by a single person." In other words, in the New Covenant, it is not what we can do for God but what God has done for us.

The principle of the Old Covenant was "do" and we shall live (Ro 10:5). The principle of the New Covenant is "it is done" (Ro 10:6-9), and that includes redemption, reconciliation, righteousness, and sanctification. The work is finished! We are complete in Him (Col 2:10)!

If the Old Covenant had been without defect, there would have been no attempt to institute another (Heb 8:7). In the Old Covenant, people found themselves unable to abide in its agreement, for it was based upon people's performance (Ex 19:5-8). The new agreement, however, was based totally upon God's grace (Ro 4:4-5). Under the Old Covenant, people approached God through a priest (Heb 5:1), while under the New Covenant, people have direct access to the Father through Jesus Christ (Heb 4:16). Under the Old Covenant, people's sins led to their deaths (Heb 10:28), while under the New Covenant, God is merciful to people's unrighteousness (Heb 8:12; 1Jo 1:8-9, and 2:1). Under the Old Covenant, people could not be cleansed of sin-consciousness (Heb 10:1-4); while under the New Covenant, people's sins and iniquities are remembered no more (Heb 8:12 and 10:17), and their guilty consciences are cleansed (Heb 10:22).

#### **MATTHEW 26:31**

***Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad.***

Note 1 at Mt 26:31: According to Mr 4:17, being offended stops God's Word from bearing fruit in our lives. Jesus had certainly given the Father's words to His disciples, and in just a matter of minutes, Jesus would privately give His disciples one of His longest discourses recorded in Scripture (Joh 14-16), for the express purpose of keeping them from being offended during the time between His crucifixion and resurrection (Joh 16:1). But Satan was able to steal away that word because the disciples took offense.

### **MATTHEW 26:33**

***Peter answered and said unto him, Though all [men] shall be offended because of thee, [yet] will I never be offended.***

Note 1 at Mt 26:33: There are only sixteen instances in the Gospels that are common to all four Gospel writers and only nine common instances outside of the crucifixion events, and this prophecy of Peter's denial is one of them. For the Lord to inspire the repetition of an event like this, there must be a special significance to it.

One of the points that the Lord must be stressing is that we are nothing without Him (Joh 15:4-5). Peter went on to become probably the best known of the twelve apostles. He was used mightily of the Lord. But the Lord didn't want him or us to forget that it was Christ in Peter (Ga 2:20) and not Peter himself who was great. This incident illustrates what Peter was capable of on his own.

This also shows that the Lord has never had anyone who was qualified working for Him yet. Peter wasn't qualified and, even at our best, neither are we. If we realize that we are nothing

and have nothing, then we are prime candidates to be used of God (1Co 1:26-29).

This also illustrates the extent of our Father's love and forgiveness. If God not only forgave Peter for this sin but also reinstated and advanced him, then surely we have not pushed God's grace beyond its limit. Where sin abounds, grace much more abounds (Ro 5:20).

### **MATTHEW 26:35**

***Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples.***

Note 2 at Mt 26:35: Notice that Peter and the other disciples took issue with Jesus about them denying Him, but He didn't argue with them. The Lord doesn't debate things with us once He has spoken. There is no variableness or shadow of turning with Him (Jas 1:17). He will not alter what has gone forth out of His lips (Ps 89:34). We may try to argue with Him, but He won't join in. Anytime that we fail to get the Lord to respond to our comments, it might be that we haven't taken heed of what He has already said.

### **MATTHEW 26:36**

***Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder.***

Note 1 at Mt 26:36: "GETHSEMANE" is a Greek word meaning "oil-press" (Strong's Concordance). The meaning of this word

conveys the idea that this was an olive yard or garden where the oil was taken from olives by pressing or squeezing. This garden was located near Jerusalem at the foot of the Mount of Olives. Jesus often retired to this place with His disciples to pray (Mt 26:36, Mr 14:32, Lu 22:39-40, and Joh 18:1-2).

### **MATTHEW 26:38**

***Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me.***

Note 2 at Mt 26:38: Jesus' sufferings for us were more than just physical. Here, before any of His physical sufferings, He suffered emotionally to the point of death. As Luke recorded (Lu 22:43), an angel had to come and give Him strength, or the emotional struggle alone would have killed Him (compare with note 4 at Lu 22:44).

### **MATTHEW 26:41**

***Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed [is] willing, but the flesh [is] weak.***

Note 3 at Mt 26:41: Our spirits are not our problem. As born-again Christians, we each received a new spirit at conversion (2Co 5:17) that is just like Jesus (1Jo 4:17) because it is the Spirit of Jesus (Ro 8:9 and Ga 4:6). Our born-again spirits are always willing to do God's will. It's our flesh that is the problem.

The flesh, as Jesus was using it here, not only includes our physical bodies but is also describing our souls too (see note 2 at Mt 22:37). God has given every one of us everything that it takes to walk in victory, but "we have this treasure in earthen vessels" (2Co 4:7). That is to say that our spirits, where God has

deposited all of His power and glory, are locked inside our flesh.

That does not mean that we cannot tap this divine source. As much as we will renew our minds (Ro 12:2) and act on the Word of God (Jas 2:20), we can experience this divine flow through our physical bodies. However, just as in the physical, muscles have to be used to increase in strength, so our souls and physical parts have to be exercised unto godliness (1Ti 4:7-8).

Prayer is one important way of exercising ourselves unto godliness, and this was why Jesus admonished His disciples to watch and pray with Him.

#### **MATTHEW 26:46**

***Rise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray me.***

Note 4 at Mt 26:46: Jesus knew fully what was about to transpire, yet He gathered His disciples and went to meet Judas and the mob. Through the prophetic insight of Isaiah (Isa 50:6-9), we can see that Jesus had set His face like a flint and actually welcomed the confrontation with His archenemy, the devil.

#### **MATTHEW 26:50**

***And Jesus said unto him, Friend, wherefore art thou come? Then came they, and laid hands on Jesus, and took him.***

Note 1 at Mt 26:50: Jesus had already revealed Judas as the one who would betray Him (Mt 26:21-25, Mr 14:18-21, Lu 22:21-23,

and Joh 13:21-30), and in Joh 18:4, it is stated that Jesus knew all things that were going to happen to Him. So there is no doubt that He knew exactly what Judas was doing. Yet Jesus greeted Judas by saying, "Friend." Jesus never rejected Judas until after Judas had rejected Him (2Ti 2:12-13).

### **MATTHEW 26:53**

***Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?***

Note 2 at Mt 26:53: A Roman legion was made up of 6,000 men. Therefore, twelve legions would have been 72,000 angels. When you consider the fact that 1 angel had slain 185,000 men in one night (Isa 37:36), then this was more than enough protection. This was why Jesus had told His disciples that two swords were enough (Lu 22:38).

### **MATTHEW 26:54**

***But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?***

Note 3 at Mt 26:54: In other instances, Jesus used His superior power and authority to escape being taken (Lu 4:29-30; Joh 7:44-46, 8:20, 59, and 10:39; see note 8 at Joh 7:30). Yet here He refused to draw on supernatural or natural means of deliverance. The only explanation that can be given for this is the one that Jesus gave Himself: He was fulfilling Scripture by yielding to His persecutors.

Supernatural protection is promised in Scripture (De 31:6, 8; Ps

4:8, Ps 91; Pr 3:21-25; and Isa 43:2). Yet there are times, just like this instance with Jesus, when God would want it to be otherwise. If the Lord had struck all of Stephen's assailants dead, then there never would have been an Apostle Paul (Ac 7:58 and 13:9). There are other examples of when people did not accept God's supernatural deliverance because they wanted the greater reward that awaits those who have been martyred for their faith (Heb 11:35, see notes 2-3 at Lu 21:18-19).

### **MATTHEW 26:57**

***And they that had laid hold on Jesus led [him] away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled.***

Note 1 at Mt 26:57: The trial of Jesus took place in two parts. First, there was His religious trial that is recorded here. This took place during the night hours before dawn, at the palace of the high priest (Mt 26:58 and Mr 14:54). Second, Jesus was brought before Pilate, the Roman governor, where Jesus' civil trial took place.

### **MATTHEW 26:58**

***But Peter followed him afar off unto the high priest's palace, and went in, and sat with the servants, to see the end.***

Note 2 at Mt 26:58: This was the second step in Peter's denial of our Lord (see note 2 at Lu 22:59).



### **MATTHEW 26:59**

***Now the chief priests, and elders, and all the council, sought false witness against Jesus, to put him to death;***

Note 3 at Mt 26:59: This was not a simple case of a witness not telling the truth, but the Sanhedrin itself sought witnesses who would lie so that they might convict Jesus. They had already passed judgment in their hearts, and this trial was nothing more than a formality that they were going through.

### **MATTHEW 26:62**

***And the high priest arose, and said unto him, Answerest thou nothing? what [is it which] these witness against thee?***

Note 4 at Mt 26:62: By comparing Matthew's and Mark's accounts with that of John (Joh 18:20-21), we can see that Jesus did say some things to the high priest, but His statements didn't really answer any questions. Jesus said that He had already publicly stated who He was and that they should ask those who had heard Him.

### **MATTHEW 26:63**

***But Jesus held his peace. And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God.***

Note 5 at Mt 26:63: Only Matthew recorded that the high priest commanded Jesus under oath to answer his questions. This

shows the frustration of the high priest. This mock trial was not going well for Jesus' opponents. All of their so-called evidence had failed to prove anything. Out of desperation, they tried to make Jesus say something that they could use against Him.

If Jesus had refused to talk, the Sanhedrin (see note 11 at Mt 5:22) would have had to let Him go, as they had failed to prove any guilt. Jesus voluntarily spoke truths that He knew would seal His death. This illustrates once again that no man took Jesus' life from Him; He gave it (see note 3 at Mt 26:54).

### **MATTHEW 26:69**

***Now Peter sat without in the palace: and a damsel came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee.***

Note 1 at Mt 26:69: As already pointed out in note 1 at Mt 26:33, the fact that all four of the Gospel writers recorded Peter's denial of the Lord is significant.

Note 2 at Mt 26:69: This damsel was the one who tended the door that opened to the palace proper (Joh 18:17), and she had seen Peter enter the palace with John for the trial of Jesus.

### **MATTHEW 26:70**

***But he denied before [them] all, saying, I know not what thou sayest.***

Note 3 at Mt 26:70: Peter's conduct here is a dramatic contrast with his boldness on the Day of Pentecost (Ac 2:14-40; 4:8-12, 19-20; and 5:29-32), and this once again illustrates the difference that the indwelling of the Holy Spirit makes.

## **MATTHEW 26:73**

***And after a while came unto [him] they that stood by, and said to Peter, Surely thou also art [one] of them; for thy speech bewrayeth thee.***

Note 4 at Mt 26:73: Some have thought that this statement about Peter's speech was a reference to Peter speaking in a holy manner that somehow connected him with Jesus and that, therefore, Peter began using profanity to distance himself from Jesus. However, as explained in note 5 at Mr 14:71, Peter's cursing was not profanity but rather an oath.

The speech that was being referred to was Peter's Galilean dialect. It was public knowledge that Jesus and His disciples were from Galilee, and that was what this man was referring to.

# MATTHEW

## CHAPTER 27

### MATTHEW 27:2

***And when they had bound him, they led [him] away, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor.***

Note 1 at Mt 27:2: There was no need to bind Jesus. He had submitted to them without any resistance and had forbidden His disciples to fight when He was taken (Joh 18:10-11). Furthermore, if Jesus had wanted to escape, they couldn't have restrained Him no matter how much they bound Him (see note 2 at Mt 26:53).

Note 2 at Mt 27:2: This was the civil trial of Jesus (see note 1 at Mt 26:57). By comparing all of the Gospel writers' accounts, we can arrive at the following order of events in this trial.

First, Pilate questioned Jesus, and Jesus answered Him (see note 5 at Joh 18:33). The chief priests and elders then accused Him of many things, but Jesus answered nothing (Mt 27:12-14 and Mr 15:3-5). Through the Jews' accusations, Pilate learned that Jesus was under Herod's jurisdiction, and he sent Him to Herod (Lu 23:5-7). Herod sent Jesus back to Pilate, having found Him innocent (Lu 23:14-15). Pilate then tried to sway the Jews to his verdict by offering them a choice between releasing Barabbas or Jesus (Mt 27:15-22, Mr 15:6-14, Lu 23:16-19, and Joh 18:39-40).

When Pilate's offer failed, he then beat Jesus and mocked Him, hoping to appease the Jews (Joh 19:1-5). The Jews continued to demand Jesus' death and mentioned that Jesus claimed to be the Son of God (Joh 19:7). Pilate again interrogated Jesus, but this time, Jesus gave no answer (Joh 19:8-9). Pilate tried to intimidate Jesus, but Jesus' answer convinced Pilate to let Jesus go (Joh

19:10-12). When the Jews threatened Pilate with charges of treason if he didn't crucify Jesus (Joh 19:12), he finally conceded and condemned Jesus to death (Mt 27:26, Mr 15:15, Lu 23:24, and Joh 19:16).

### **MATTHEW 27:3**

***Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders,***

Note 1 at Mt 27:3: The placement of Judas' death in this chronological sequence could be questioned. Matthew was the only writer to mention it, and he placed it in between the religious trial and the civil trial of Jesus. So Judas could have regretted his actions after he saw that Jesus was condemned by Caiaphas, before He was brought before Pilate.

However, Matthew also mentioned that Judas went to the chief priests and elders in the temple and admitted his sin, and that would suggest that the time was later in the day, after the civil trial of Jesus.

Note 2 at Mt 27:3: The Greek word used for "repented" here is "METAMELLOMAI" (compare with note 1 at Mt 3:2), and it is used in the passive voice expressing regret rather than true repentance. Judas regretted that Jesus was condemned (see note 2 at Lu 22:3), but it is certain that this was not the type of repentance that brought him back into right standing with God (see note 2 at Mr 14:21). This is an example of the sorrow of this world that produces death (2Co 7:10), not the godly sorrow that gives life.

## **MATTHEW 27:4**

***Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What [is that] to us? see thou [to that].***

Note 3 at Mt 27:4: These Jews, who had courted Judas' favor to obtain his cooperation in arresting Jesus, cared nothing for Judas. They had simply used him. The devil's crowd may flatter you as long as they can use you, but you can be assured that when there is no longer anything in it for them, they will forsake you just as the chief priests did Judas.

## **MATTHEW 27:5**

***And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself.***

Note 4 at Mt 27:5: No doubt, Judas' love of money was one of his primary motives for betraying Jesus (Joh 12:6 with 1Ti 6:10). Yet the money he coveted so much didn't satisfy. Regardless of what Satan may say, nothing fills our emptiness except Jesus.

Note 5 at Mt 27:5: Judas didn't escape anything by committing suicide. He ushered himself into the very pits of hell and the wrath of God. Suicide is never the end of anything but rather the beginning of an even worse existence.

Note 6 at Mt 27:5: Peter also spoke of Judas' death in Ac 1:18. In that passage, he said that Judas fell "headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out." If Peter was

speaking literally rather than figuratively, then it can be assumed that Judas hung himself from some great height, then fell, mutilating his body.

### **MATTHEW 27:6**

***And the chief priests took the silver pieces, and said, It is not lawful for to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood.***

Note 7 at Mt 27:6: Here again (see note 2 at Joh 18:28), we see that the Jews attended to the smallest detail of the Law while they grossly violated the two foundational principles of the Law (Mt 22:37-40). They thought nothing of shedding the blood of an innocent person but were very concerned about being defiled by the blood money. Attention to detail at the expense of the more important matters of the heart is always a characteristic of legalism (see note 21 at Mt 23:26).

### **MATTHEW 27:7**

***And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in.***

Note 8 at Mt 27:7: Even the blood money used to purchase Jesus' betrayal was ultimately redeemed and used for a positive purpose.

## **MATTHEW 27:8**

***Wherefore that field was called, The field of blood, unto this day.***

Note 9 at Mt 27:8: In Ac 1:19 we are told that the proper name of this field was Aceldama, and it means "field of blood" (Strong's Concordance).

## **MATTHEW 27:9**

***Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value;***

Note 10 at Mt 27:9: The closest Old Testament passage to what was being quoted here is found in Zec 11:12-13, not in Jeremiah. This looks like a human mistake on Matthew's part in citing the correct author and throws doubt on whether Matthew was really inspired in writing this Gospel. There could be a number of explanations that would still maintain the inspiration and infallibility of the Scriptures.

First, there are some differences between the text of Zec 11:12-13 and the quotation here, so it is not certain that this quotation was from Zechariah. It is possible that Jeremiah did write prophetically concerning this instance, but we no longer have a copy of that manuscript.

It's also possible that Matthew cited some of Jeremiah's writings about the potter (Jer 18:2, 19:1-2, and 32:6-14) and combined them with the prophecy of Zechariah, crediting only the first writer.



There are other explanations, including the possibility that Jeremiah may have authored some of the passages Zechariah used in his prophecy. It cannot be said emphatically what the answer to this apparent discrepancy is. However, it cannot be said emphatically that there is a discrepancy either, when other solutions are possible.

### **MATTHEW 27:14**

***And he answered him to never a word; insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly.***

Note 3 at Mt 27:14: Pilate marveled greatly that Jesus kept silent. This was unusual behavior. No doubt Pilate had condemned many people to die and had witnessed the entire spectrum of human emotions as they faced death. However, he had never seen any of those people so fearless that they didn't even try to justify and deliver themselves before their accusers.

### **MATTHEW 27:17**

***Therefore when they were gathered together, Pilate said unto them, Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ?***

Note 1 at Mt 27:17: Pilate knew that Jesus was innocent, but he was looking for some diplomatic way of releasing Jesus that would not cost him any loss of popularity with the Jewish leaders. This was why he sent Jesus to Herod. He was hoping that Herod would pass judgment on Jesus and save him the trouble.

When that scheme failed, he then drew on an old custom of releasing a prisoner to them at the feast. He gave the people a choice between Jesus, who he knew was innocent, and Barabbas, who was a murderer. Pilate thought that the crowd would certainly choose Jesus. However, through the insistence of the chief priests and scribes, the people chose Barabbas as the one who should be released.

Pilate was out of ideas as to how to let Jesus go yet save face with the Jews, so he condemned Jesus to death. Pilate violated what he knew to be true in his heart because of a fear of man (Pr 29:25) and what he thought they might do to him. Without the chief priests' cooperation, he ran the risk of unrest among the Jews and possible punishment by Caesar for failure to govern well.

As it turned out, Pilate was deposed by Tiberius Caesar anyway just a few years later and died in exile in Gaul in A.D. 41. Pilate gained a five-year extension of his troubled rule at the most and damned his soul in the process. What people compromise to keep, they'll lose. Sin is never worth the price (Ro 6:23).

### **MATTHEW 27:18**

***For he knew that for envy they had delivered him.***

Note 2 at Mt 27:18: The Jews were God's chosen people and therefore God's representatives on earth. Yet they lied and condemned an innocent man to death. Pilate could see that their real motivation for wanting Jesus dead was envy (see note 6 at Mr 15:10). If these Jews had thought about what type of witness they were giving, even they would have known that God could not have been inspiring their actions.

We should remember that we are God's witnesses here on

earth. Or, as Paul said, we are epistles "known and read of all men" (2Co 3:2). Judging our actions in the light of, "What kind of witness will this give to others?" will help us discern whether or not we are being led of God.

#### **MATTHEW 27:19**

***When he was set down on the judgment seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him.***

Note 3 at Mt 27:19: Matthew was the only writer to record Pilate's wife coming to him with the details of this dream. Secular accounts record her name as Claudia. She was the only one who spoke for, instead of against, Jesus' life during the trial.

This dream, no doubt, came from God since she had to have dreamed it before she knew of Jesus being brought to Pilate. The Lord not only bore witness in Pilate's heart as to the innocence of Jesus, but He also gave Pilate's wife a very clear message through this dream. Pilate was not innocent in this matter.

#### **MATTHEW 27:24**

***When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but [that] rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed [his] hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye [to it].***

Note 4 at Mt 27:24: This was not only a symbolic custom of the day to show innocence, but it was also a ritual prescribed in the Jewish Law (De 21:6-7 and Ps 26:6).

Matthew was the only writer to record Pilate washing his hands of guilt, just as he was the only writer to record the dream that Pilate's wife had (see note 3 at Mt 27:19). Together, these instances underscore that Pilate did not innocently condemn Jesus to death. Pilate will be trying to wash the blood of Jesus off of his hands through all eternity.

Just as God was faithful to show even Pilate the truth in this situation, we can be assured that all those who have ever rejected Jesus have done it in spite of the conviction of the Holy Spirit in their hearts (Ro 1:18-20).

#### **MATTHEW 27:25**

***Then answered all the people, and said, His blood [be] on us, and on our children.***

Note 5 at Mt 27:25: This impetuous statement by the crowd had severe consequences. Not only did it damn their souls eternally, but it has cost the Jewish race untold suffering in this life too. In A.D. 70, when Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans, up to 500 Jews were crucified per day. Since that time, history has been bathed in the blood of Jews.

#### **Matthew 27:27**

***Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall, and gathered unto him the whole band [of soldiers].***

Note 1 at Mt 27:27: This instance of Jesus being mocked by the Roman soldiers was the same instance as the one recorded by

John in Joh 19:1-3.

Matthew started this verse with the word "then," putting this occurrence of Jesus being mocked by the Roman soldiers after He had been condemned to be crucified. John also began his account of this incident with the word "then" and followed it with further attempts of Pilate to release Jesus. This looks like a discrepancy between the two accounts.

It must be remembered that Luke was the only Gospel writer to state that he was setting forth events in chronological order (see Introduction to Luke). There are many examples of when the other Gospel writers varied the order of events, as it was not their purpose to present events in the proper order. Luke did not record this event of the soldiers mocking Jesus, so we do not have his input as to the proper sequence.

Any differences in the listing of this event would only amount to a matter of minutes. It is also possible that this mockery by the soldiers could have happened simultaneously with some of Pilate's efforts to free Jesus (compare with note 1 at Lu 22:54).

#### **MATTHEW 27:34**

***They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted [thereof], he would not drink.***

Note 1 at Mt 27:34: There were two instances during the crucifixion when Jesus was given vinegar to drink. The first instance is recorded here (also Mr 15:23 and Lu 23:36), which may have taken place before Jesus was actually nailed to the cross. The second instance is recorded in Mt 27:48, Mr 15:36, and Joh 19:29; just before Jesus "gave up the ghost" (Joh 19:30), a sponge was dipped in vinegar and lifted to Him on the cross.

The "vinegar" that Matthew was speaking of was actually sour wine. The Greek word that is used here is "OXOS," and it "denotes sour wine, the ordinary drink of labourers and common soldiers" (Vine's Expository Dictionary). Mark, in describing this same instance, used the word "wine" as the drink that was given to Jesus. Wine is spoken of as vinegar elsewhere in Scripture (Nu 6:3 and Ru 2:14).

The sour wine was mixed with gall or, as Mark recorded it, with myrrh (Mr 15:23). Scholars differ on exactly what this gall was, but all agree that it had a narcotic effect that dulled the senses. Therefore, Jesus refused to drink, desiring to have His full senses and endure the complete extent of suffering for us on the cross.

The second time Jesus was offered this sour wine (Mt 27:48 and Joh 19:29-30), it was not mixed with anything but was simply given to quench His thirst and He received it.

#### **MATTHEW 27:42**

***He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him.***

Note 2 at Mt 27:42: Jesus did something greater than coming down from the cross. He rose from the dead, yet they didn't believe Him (see note 8 at Lu 16:31).

## **MATTHEW 27:52**

***And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose,***

Note 3 at Mt 27:52: This was an amazing event that only Matthew recorded. This earthquake apparently rolled the stones away from many of the graves in the vicinity of Jerusalem, and some of the saints buried there rose from the dead. Even at the death of Jesus, such power was released that death lost its grip on its captives.

It is uncertain whether these resurrected saints died again or were caught up to God. If they were resurrected at Christ's death, then they would have had to die again, just as Lazarus or Jairus' daughter or the widow's son at Nain or anyone else whom Jesus had raised from the dead during His ministry. This was because Jesus was "the firstfruits of them that slept" (1Co 15:20, see also Ac 26:23). Jesus was not the first person physically raised from the dead, but He was the first person begotten from the dead never to die again.

If these people were not actually resurrected until after Jesus' resurrection when Matthew stated they came out of the graves, then they could have been resurrected with their glorified bodies never to die again.

At any rate, these saints went into Jerusalem after Jesus had been resurrected and appeared to many people. We can only guess at the effect this must have had.

## **MATTHEW 27:56**

***Among which was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's children.***

Note 4 at Mt 27:56: Mary, called Magdalene, who had been healed and delivered of seven evil spirits (Mr 16:9 and Lu 8:2), was the first to whom the risen Lord appeared (Mr 16:9 and Joh 20:1-18). She was one of a group of ladies who gave financial support to the work and ministry of Jesus (Lu 8:2-3 and Mr 15:40-41). She was an observer of the crucifixion (Joh 19:25) and went to the tomb expecting to anoint His body with sweet spices (Mr 16:1). Instead, she became the first witness to the unbelieving disciples of the resurrection of the Lord (Lu 24:9-11). She is mentioned in all four of the Gospel accounts (Mt 27:55-56, 61, 28:1; Mr 15:40-41, 47, 16:1-11; Lu 8:2-3, 24:10-11; Joh 19:25, and 20:1-18).

#### **MATTHEW 27:63**

***Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again.***

Note 1 at Mt 27:63: It is an amazing fact that the enemies of Jesus remembered His prophecies about His resurrection, but Jesus' own followers did not.

#### **MATTHEW 27:64**

***Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first.***

Note 2 at Mt 27:64: In the Jews' efforts to prevent anything from happening that would cause people to believe Jesus was resurrected, they gave people one of the most sure proofs of His resurrection. They sealed the tomb so it would be obvious if it had been opened (see note 4 at Mt 27:66), and they obtained a guard of soldiers to protect it.



This removes all doubts that the followers of Jesus could have stolen away His body. Therefore, Jesus' enemies themselves became witnesses for all of history that Jesus literally rose from the dead.

#### **MATTHEW 27:65**

***Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch: go your way, make [it] as sure as ye can.***

Note 3 at Mt 27:65: A watch of soldiers was four men (Ac 12:4). They had four soldiers stationed at the tomb with replacements every three hours.

#### **MATTHEW 27:66**

***So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch.***

Note 4 at Mt 27:66: The Greek word translated "sealing" is "SPHRAGIZO," and it means "to stamp (with a signet or private mark) for security or preservation (literally or figuratively)" (Strong's Concordance). A clay seal was applied to the stone in such a way that it could be easily detected if the stone was moved.

# MATTHEW

## CHAPTER 28

### MATTHEW 28:2

*And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it.*

Note 1 at Mt 28:2: The earthquake and the stone being rolled away had actually taken place before the women arrived at the tomb (Mr 16:3-4).

### MATTHEW 28:4

*And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead [men].*

Note 2 at Mt 28:4: This was possibly another instance of people being made to fall prostrate on their faces by the awesome power of God (see note 5 at Joh 18:6).

### MATTHEW 28:9

*And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him.*

Note 1 at Mt 28:9: This was the second time Jesus appeared to some of His followers after His resurrection (1st - Mary Magdalene, Mr 16:9).

## **MATTHEW 28:10**

***Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me.***

Note 2 at Matthew 28:10: Jesus actually saw the disciples later this same day in Jerusalem (Joh 20:19). He also appeared to His disciples in Galilee at the Sea of Tiberias before His ascension (Joh 21:1).

## **MATTHEW 28:11**

***Now when they were going, behold, some of the watch came into the city, and shewed unto the chief priests all the things that were done.***

Note 1 at Mt 28:11: The guards told the chief priests all the things that had happened at the tomb. That means they had the complete account of the earthquake, the angels rolling away the stone, the angels' message to the women that Jesus was alive from the dead, and possibly they had even seen Jesus walk out of the tomb.

The very ones whom the Jews had secured to guarantee that there would be no rumors of Jesus being raised from the dead became the first witnesses and heralds of the Resurrection. Yet with the testimony of impartial, non-religious eyewitnesses, they chose not to believe (Lu 16:31).

## **MATTHEW 28:16**

***Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them.***

Note 1 at Mt 28:16: This was the seventh or eighth (depending on how the appearance to the 500 is listed) recorded resurrection appearance of Jesus (see note 9 at Joh 21:14).

## **MATTHEW 28:17**

***And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted.***

Note 2 at Mt 28:17: Many people have thought that if they could have only been present during Jesus' earthly ministry and have seen Him resurrected from the dead, then they would certainly be strong believers. This scripture is proof that this is wrong thinking.

In many ways, it took more faith to believe Jesus was the Christ for those who walked with Him on earth than it does for us today. They saw His humanity, which we don't see. We have the benefit of the Scriptures, and that even surpasses the supernatural manifestations that the disciples witnessed (2Pe 1:16-20 and see note 8 at Lu 16:31).

## **MATTHEW 28:18**

***And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.***

Note 3 at Mt 28:18: God had delegated the power over the earth to mankind in the beginning (Ge 1:26-28; Ps 8:4-8, and 115:16). When man disobeyed God (Ge 3:1-6), that power was delivered to Satan (Lu 4:6). Therefore, the Lord did not have absolute control over the earth and its affairs.

When Jesus died, He descended into hell (Ps 16:10 with Ac 2:31, and Eph 4:8-10) and stripped Satan of all his power (Re 1:18). Now, God once again has all power in heaven and earth.

### **MATTHEW 28:19**

***Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:***

Note 4 at Mt 28:19: The reason we can go into all the world and share the Gospel is because Jesus now has all power in heaven and earth. And, as His ambassadors (2Co 5:20), we have that power too.

Note 5 at Mt 28:19: Notice that teaching was mentioned twice in this commission. We have not been commanded to proclaim only, but we are also supposed to explain and provide training. This is the cornerstone of Jesus' plan of evangelization.

The present-day church has put the majority of its evangelistic efforts into just proclaiming the Gospel with little or no thought to discipleship (see note 8 at Joh 8:31). The consequences have been that people have responded and been born again, but the new believers as a whole don't mature to a place where they can reproduce their Christian faith in others. This has placed the burden of evangelism on a few individuals and mass crusades.

If 1 man led 1,000 people to the Lord each year, in thirty-five years there would be 35,000 converts through his ministry. However, if the same man only led 1 person to the Lord every six months, then made disciples of those converts so that they could share their faith as he does, in ten years he would have 1,048,576 converts. In fifteen years he would have evangelized over 1,000,000,000 people, and in just over sixteen years he would have evangelized the present population of the entire world. Jesus' plan is the best.

Note 6 at Mt 28:19: In the same way that this commission is to every believer, not just to ministers, the command to baptize is to every believer too. It is proper for any believer to administer the ordinance of water baptism.

Note 7 at Mt 28:19: Here Jesus commanded believers to baptize in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, yet there is no recorded instance where the believers did so. Instead, the instances of baptism that are recorded in the book of Acts (Ac 2:38, 8:16, 10:48, and 19:5) show people being baptized in the name of Jesus only.

Because of this noticeable difference, doctrines have come into being that teach that there is no Trinity (see note 2 at Mr 1:10), and unless water baptism is administered in the name of Jesus (only), with faith in the water baptism, a person cannot be saved. This is not what the Bible teaches, and it has actually damned many people.

Water baptism is an outward witness of the inner change that has already taken place. In Ac 10:44-48, Cornelius and his friends were filled with the Holy Ghost and spoke in tongues, proving that they were already born again (see note 27 at Joh 14:17), before they were baptized in water (see note 8 at Mr 16:15).

The harmony between this commission of Jesus and the practice of the early church is simple. When they baptized in the name of Jesus, they were baptizing in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost because "in him [Jesus] dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Col 2:9, brackets mine). Therefore, baptizing in the name of either the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost or the name of Jesus is correct as long as Col 2:9 is understood.