



DICKSON
TEACHER'S
NEW TESTAMENT

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The Gospel According To Matthew

Author

The name Matthew means "gift of God." Matthew, the apostle and the son of Alphaeus, who was formerly known as Levi (Mk 2:14), has been commonly accepted as the inspired writer of this document (9:9-13; 10:3). He was a tax collector in Capernaum before being called by Jesus to apostleship (9:9; Lk 5:27,28; see At 1:13).

Date

Though the letter was written before A.D. 70 and the destruction of Jerusalem, it is difficult to determine the date of writing. Some scholars have affirmed that the letter was written as early as A.D. 38. If such were true, then this would have been the first inspired written record of the gospel, if not the first letter of the New Testament canon. Some Bible students, however, have affirmed that the date of writing was from A.D. 58 to A.D. 60. The more probable date of writing is around A.D. 60 and after both Mark and Luke recorded their inspired documents of the life of Jesus.

Theme

Matthew begins the letter by saying, "*The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham*" (1:1). He builds on this theme in recording events and teachings in the ministry of Jesus that bring our understanding of who Jesus is to the same confession of Peter in 16:16. "*You are the Christ, the Son of the living God*" (See 16:13-19). Not only did Jesus bring His immediate disciples to this confession during His ministry, Matthew also brings his readers to acknowledge the same of Jesus. Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ (Messiah), the One who has fulfilled all Old Testament prophecy concerning the Messiah. Jesus is also the Son of God because God confirmed Him as such by the miraculous power that was manifested through Him (Hb 1:1,2; 2:3,4).

Purpose

Matthew is written to a Jewish audience. He possibly has two purposes in mind. First, he seeks to reaffirm the messiahship of Jesus. In the book there are sixty-four references to the Old Testament. There are forty-three direct quotations from the Old Testament. Matthew wants the Christian audience to which he writes to understand that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah for which all Israel hoped.

Secondly, Matthew writes in order to contrast the religion of the religious leadership of Israel with the grace and truth that was revealed through Jesus. Because of the Jewish influence that came into the early church by the conversion of many Jews, there came in with these converts a Jewish approach to religion that was legal in nature. The theological understanding of religion that was practiced by the scribes and Pharisees was legalistic in reference to justification. In other words, the religious leaders of Israel approached God through a legal system of works that was based on the performance of worshippers. This system of religiosity was developed over centuries with the accumulation of traditions that were bound on the consciences of men (See comments 15:1-9; Mk 7:1-9; introduction of GI). Matthew seeks to manifest the difference between this system of religious thought and that which Jesus taught. Matthew manifests the contrast in order to identify the hard hearted attitude of religious leaders who rejected the grace of God that was manifested through Jesus (Ti 2:11).

The theme of the book could also be based on two major ministries of teaching in reference to Jesus and His work. The first is 4:17 where Matthew records, "**From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.'**" Jesus came to fulfill all things concerning prophecy of God's work among men (Lk 24:44). As the Messiah, He came to turn Israel once again to God in order that they accept His kingdom reign that was soon to be established.

Secondly, in 16:21 Matthew recorded, "**From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem ... and be killed.**" Jesus thus manifested to the disciples the purpose for His coming, that He must die on the cross for the salvation of all men. It is Matthew's purpose, therefore, to inform his readers that Jesus knew His destiny, and thus, worked in His ministry toward the fulfillment of all prophecy concerning the cross.

Style of Writing

Matthew seems to give a more detailed account of several events in the life of Jesus that are only recorded in brief in the records of Mark, Luke and John. As an eyewitness of the life and teachings of

Jesus, Matthew seeks to prove the theme of the book. His emphasis in writing, therefore, focuses more on maintaining the theme of the book than on maintaining a chronological order of events in the ministry of Jesus. He is thus more topical in accomplishing the theme than in recording a chronological order of Jesus' life. In writing to a Jewish mind to reaffirm the messiahship of Jesus, he is thus more Jewish in his literary style and composition.

Chapter 1

1 ¶ The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

2 Abraham begot Isaac, and Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot Judah and his brothers.

3 And Judah begot Perez and Zarah of Tamar, and Perez begot Hezron, and Hezron begot Ram.

4 And Ram begot Amminadab, and Amminadab begot Nahshon, and Nahshon begot Salmon.

5 And Salmon begot Boaz of Rahab, and Boaz begot Obed of Ruth, and Obed begot Jesse.

6 And Jesse begot David the king. David the

king begot Solomon by her *who had been the wife* of Uriah.

7 And Solomon begot Rehoboam, and Rehoboam begot Abijah, and Abijah begot Asa.

8 And Asa begot Jehoshaphat, and Jehoshaphat begot Joram, and Joram begot Uzziah.

9 And Uzziah begot Jotham, and Jotham begot Ahaz, and Ahaz begot Hezekiah.

10 And Hezekiah begot Manasseh, and Manasseh begot Amon, and Amon begot Josiah.

11 And Josiah begot Jeconiah and his brothers about the time they were carried away to Babylon.

Chapter 1

GENEALOGY OF JESUS

(Lk 3:23-38)

Both Matthew and Luke record the genealogy of Jesus. However, they record such for different reasons. Matthew gives the account of the ancestry of Joseph, the legal and earthly parent of Jesus. On the other hand, Luke records the ancestry of Jesus through the genealogy of Mary, the mother of Jesus (Lk 3:23-38). Through his genealogy of Joseph, Matthew proves that Jesus is the legal heir to the throne of David. He is the One who has fulfilled all messianic prophecies of the Old Testament (See 2 Sm 7:12-16; Ps 89:29,36,37; 132:11).

In both accounts of Matthew and Luke, the word "son" is used to designate four things: (1) an actual son through the flesh, (2) a distant ancestor (Mt 1:1), (3) a son-in-law (Lk 3:23), and (4) a son by creation (Lk 3:38). By marriage, Joseph was the son of Heli (Mary's father). In this sense, therefore, Joseph is both the son of Jacob (Mt 1:16) and the son of Heli (Lk 3:23). Both Matthew and Luke use this common method of Jewish ancestral recording to prove that Jesus was of the royal Davidic lineage, and thus, the rightful heir to the throne of David.

Matthew divides his account of the genealogy of Jesus into three sections: (1) Abraham to David (vss 1-6), (2) Solomon to the Babylonian captivity (vss 7-11), and (3) the Babylonian captivity to Jesus (vss 12-16). **1-17** Read the genealogies of 1 Ch 1; 2:1-15; 3:1-19; Rt 4:18-22. These genealogies give a background for the genealogies that are recorded here in Matthew and in Luke. **Book:** This is a book of origin or a genealogical table that gives the ancestry of Jesus (Gn 5:1; 37:2; Nm 3:1). **Jesus:** This name is actually a form of the name "Joshua." Joshua means "God is helper," "deliverer," or "savior." Thus, the name is appropriate for the

Son of God. The name Jesus was actually a common Jewish name. In the New Testament times it meant "Jehovah is salvation." **Christ:** The Greek word means "anointed." This is the Greek equivalent for the Hebrew word "Messiah." Jesus is the Christ, or the Messiah who fulfilled all Old Testament prophecies (Lk 24:44). **Son of David:** The phrase "son of" often refers to a distant relative. In other words, when one is the "son of" another, ancestors in the lineage can be left out by the chronicler. Cainan is placed between Shelah and Arphaxad in Lk 3:36, but he is left out of the genealogy of Genesis 11. **Begot:** This term is commonly used to refer to one who is a descendant's father. But in the listing of genealogies by Matthew and Luke, reference is to the descending ancestor. Often in biblical genealogies the prominent ancestor from which one is descended is listed and not the descendant's immediate father. **Tamar:** See Gn 38:12-26. **Ram:** This is the same as Arni (Lk 3:33). **Rahab:** She was a Gentile (See Ja 2:8-11; Hb 11:31). **Ruth:** She was a Gentile woman (Rt 4). **Joram ... Uzziah:** Matthew omits the kings Ahaziah, Joash and Amaziah (2 Kg 8:24; 1 Ch 3:11; 2 Ch 22:1,11; 24:27) between Joram and Uzziah. He possibly does this in order to maintain the continuity of the "fourteen" generations (vs 17). **Jeconiah:** This king of Judah is also called Coniah (Jr 22:24,28) and Jehoiachin (2 Kg 24; 1 Ch 3). After this king of Judah, no one of his seed was to reign legally as a God-anointed king on the literal throne of David in Jerusalem in Palestine as king of Israel (See Jr 22:30; 36:30). This is one reason why Jesus could never reign as a king on this literal earth in the city of Jerusalem. **Carrying away:** Jeconiah was carried into Babylonian captivity in 597 B.C. **After the carrying away:** After spending seventy years in Babylonian captivity, the Jews returned to the land of Palestine in three trips. In 536 B.C. Sheshbazzar led the first group back (Ez 1-6). In 457 B.C. Ezra led

12 ¶ And after they were deported to Babylon, Jeconiah begot Shealtiel, and Shealtiel begot Zerubbabel.

13 And Zerubbabel begot Abihud, and Abihud begot Eliakim, and Eliakim begot Azor.

14 And Azor begot Zadok, and Zadok begot Achim, and Achim begot Eliud.

15 And Eliud begot Eleazar, and Eleazar begot Matthan, and Matthan begot Jacob.

16 And Jacob begot Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.

17 So all the generations from Abraham to David *are* fourteen generations, and from David until the captivity in Babylon *are* fourteen generations, and from the captivity in Babylon until Christ *are* fourteen generations.

18 ¶ Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as

follows: When His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found with child by the Holy Spirit.

19 Now Joseph her husband, being a righteous *man* and not wanting to make her a public disgrace, planned to put her away secretly.

20 But while he thought on these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.

21 "And she will bring forth a Son and you will call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins."

22 ¶ Now all this took place that it might be fulfilled that was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying,

23 "*Behold, a virgin will be with child and*

the second group back (Ez 7-10). In 444 B.C. Nehemiah led the third group (Ne 1:1-13). **Mary, of whom was born Jesus:** Though he is discussing the lineage of Jesus through Joseph, Matthew attributes the birth of Jesus to Mary and not Joseph. Joseph had nothing to do with the conception, for Jesus was born of the Holy Spirit. Luke records in reference to Mary's conception concerning Joseph, "as was supposed." Such was supposed by those who knew Mary and Joseph, for confirmation of the virgin birth had not yet been made known. These statements that surround the conception and birth of Jesus uphold the fact of the virgin birth of Jesus by the Holy Spirit (Mt 1:23). **Fourteen generations:** In order to aid in the memorization of generations, the grouping of the generations was here placed in groups of fourteen. Matthew, as Ezra, intentionally left out some of the names in order to maintain the grouping of fourteen generations (See Er 7:1,2; 1 Ch 6:6-11).

THE BIRTH OF JESUS

(Lk 1:1 – 2:38)

18 Betrothed: Or, "espoused." In the culture of the day, this civil agreement was more binding than a marital promise or engagement, though not as binding as a marriage bond (See Dt 20:7; 22:23,24). It was a legal agreement that was binding as a contract. If one was unfaithful after a betrothal, such a one would be considered an adulterer. Because of the binding of the betrothal, Joseph and Mary were considered husband and wife. **Before they came together:** Mary was pregnant with Jesus before Joseph and Mary had sexual intercourse, which sexual intercourse later resulted in other children being born after Jesus was born (See 13:55; Mk 6:3). **Of the Holy Spirit:** At the time Mary conceived of the Holy Spirit, she had never had sexual intercourse. She was a virgin. Through the Holy Spirit, therefore, she became pregnant in a manner that was not according to the natural processes of conception. Since Jesus was the Son of God, we would expect nothing other than a miraculous virgin birth into this world.

Such a birth is an essential teaching of the New Testament (See Jn 1:1,14; see also Lk 1:31-35). **19 Put her away secretly:** Joseph did not want to embarrass Mary. Since a betrothal was almost as binding as a marriage contract, Joseph sought to secretly divorce Mary in order that she not be publicly shamed (See Dt 22:23,24).

20 Joseph knew that Mary was pure in character. For this reason, he was puzzled concerning her conception.

Angel: This could possibly have been Gabriel on another mission from God to man concerning the incarnation of Jesus (See Lk 1:19,26; compare Gn 16:7-9; Is 63:9; Dn 8:16; 9:21). **Fear not:** It was the angel's intentions to calm the anxiety of Joseph. He thus assured Joseph that God was at work in the conception. Mary was not involved in an adulterous affair. **21** The One in Mary's womb, Jesus (1:1; Lk 1:31; 2:21), would have the mission of saving His people from their sins.

Jesus: This Greek name means, "the Lord is salvation." It is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew name "Joshua." **Save:** Herein is the establishment of the mission of Jesus as the Son of God (See Lk 2:11; 19:10; Jn 1:29; At 4:12; 5:31; 13:23).

22,23 Prophet: It was Isaiah who made this prophecy (Is 7:14). The Son of God was to be born of a virgin, and thus, would be the fulfillment of the prophecy of Genesis 3:15. **Immanuel:** This name means "God with us" or "God in the flesh" (Is 7:14). Thus the character and position of Jesus on earth is expressed in this one name (Jn 1:14; see comments Ph 2:5-8). Here is a proclamation that Jesus was God on earth. God would dwell on earth through the incarnate Son of God. **24,25 Did not know her till:** Joseph had no sexual intercourse with Mary until after Jesus was born (1:18). The word "till" clearly assumes that Joseph later had sexual intercourse with Mary, and from such, other children were born (13:55; Mk 6:3). However, Jesus was the firstborn of Mary and Joseph (Lk 2:7). Jesus, therefore, was not the only child born to Mary. She was not a perpetual virgin after the birth of Jesus. She had other children, which children eventually became very influential in the church.

will bring forth a Son, and they will call His name Immanuel," which being translated is, "God with us."

24 Then Joseph being aroused from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him, and took *Mary* as his wife.

25 And he did not know her until she had brought forth a son. And he called His name JESUS.

Chapter 2

1 ¶ Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the East to Jerusalem,

2 saying, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the east and have come to worship Him."

3 When Herod the king heard *these things*, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

4 And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be

born.

5 Then they said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet,

6 *'And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are not the least among the princes of Judah, for out of you will come a Ruler who will rule My people Israel.'*"

7 Then Herod, when he had secretly called the wise men, diligently inquired from them what time the star appeared.

8 And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the young Child. And when you have found *Him*, bring me word again so that I may come and worship Him also."

9 When they heard the king, they departed. And behold, the star that they saw in the East went before them until it came and stood over where the young Child was.

10 When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy.

11 Now when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His

Chapter 2

THE VISIT OF THE MAGI

1 *Born in Bethlehem:* See Jg 17:9; 19:1; 1 Sm 17:12; Mc 5:2. David, the king of Israel, was born in Bethlehem, and thus, this city was referred to as the city of David (1 Sm 16:1,19). It is about ten kilometers south of Jerusalem. At the time of the decree of Augustus Caesar, Joseph and Mary were living in Nazareth (Lk 1:26,27; 2:1-5). They thus made the long journey to Bethlehem of Judea in obedience to the law of Augustus. (This is not the Bethlehem of Zebulun that is mentioned in Ja 19:15.) *Herod:* See Lk 1:5. Herod the Great was the son of Antipater, an Idumean and descendant of Esau. He was proud, cruel and unmerciful as a ruler of the Jews. There are at least nine Herods mentioned in the New Testament (See Mt 2:22; 14:3; Mk 6:17; Lk 3:1; At 24:24; 25:26). Herod the Great cruelly reigned from 37 B.C. to 4 B.C. according to our calendar today. This establishes the date of the birth of Jesus about two years earlier than 4 B.C., for Herod had sent out a decree before his death to kill all children under two years of age (See vss 16-18). In reference to this event and according to our present calendar, Jesus' death and the establishment of the church would be about A. D. 30. *Wise men:* The Greek word that is used here is "magi." Magi were possibly Gentile astronomers from Arabia, Persia, Parthia, or even India. *Worship:* The fact that these wise men came from a great distance to see Jesus indicates that they had possibly received revelation concerning Jesus. For some reason, they made this great journey to the birth place of our Lord. **2** *King of the Jews:* It was the hope of the Jews that the Messiah would come into the world. It was believed by many that the Messiah would suppos-

edly reign as king on earth and restore Israel to her former glory (See Jr 23:5; 30:9; Zc 9:9; Mt 27:11; Jn 1:49; 18:37; Lk 19:38; 23:38). For this reason, Herod sees the birth of this king as a threat to his throne. *Star:* This was no natural phenomenon. The star was a miraculous signal sent by God to the Magi to alert them to the birth of the Messiah for whom they hoped. **3** *Troubled:* Herod did not want a rival "king of the Jews." His pride and arrogance moved him to scheme against any possible contender for the crown. He thus moved with jealousy when he heard of the inquiries of the Magi. **4** Herod may have been ignorant of the prophecy of Micah 5:1,2 which spoke of Bethlehem as the place of the birth of the Messiah. For this reason he possibly sought those who might know of prophecy concerning a coming king. *Chief priests:* These were the principal leaders of the Jewish religious system. They were in charge of the temple (See 1 Ch 24:6; 2 Ch 34:13; Ml 2:7). *Scribes:* These were the educated men of the Jewish law. It was their responsibility in Israel to preserve and interpret the Old Testament law for the people (See Ez 7:6; Mt 23:34; Lk 10:25; At 5:34). **5,6** Micah made the prophecy of Micah 5:1,2 over seven hundred years before its fulfillment in the birth of Jesus (See Jn 7:42). *Shepherd:* Jesus is the good shepherd who cares for the flock (Jn 10:11; 21:16; Hb 13:20; 1 Pt 2:25; 5:4; Rv 7:17). **7,8** It was not Herod's plan to worship, but to destroy the newly born child whom he saw as a competitor for his throne. **9,10** This proves that the star of verse 2 was miraculous. It appears here again in order to direct the Magi to the babe. Its second appearance makes it possible for the Magi to find the babe without drawing attention to the birth place by making inquiries. **11** *House:* By this time, the babe had been moved from the manger to a house (See Lk 2:7-13). It

mother. And they fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented to Him gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

12 And having been warned by God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed to their own country another way.

13 ¶ Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Arise, and take the young Child and His mother and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him."

14 When he arose, he took the young Child and His mother by night, and departed for Egypt.

15 So he remained there until the death of Herod, so that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, "*Out of Egypt I have called My Son.*"

16 ¶ Then Herod, when he saw that he had been mocked by the wise men, was exceedingly enraged. And he sent and slew all the male children who were in Bethlehem, and in all its districts, from two years old and

under, according to the time when he had diligently inquired from the wise men.

17 Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying,

18 "*In Ramah there was a voice heard, lamentation and weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children. And she refused to be comforted because they were no more.*"

19 ¶ But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt,

20 saying, "Arise, and take the young Child and His mother and go into the land of Israel, for those who sought the young Child's life are dead."

21 Then he arose and took the young Child and His mother, and came into the land of Israel.

22 But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning in Judea in the place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And being warned by God in a dream, he departed into the regions of Galilee.

23 And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, so that it might be fulfilled which

is not known how old Jesus was at this time, though some feel that He could have been four weeks old. **Treasures:** It was a custom of the orient to bring gifts to the newly born (See Is 60:6). Such gifts were commonly given to those who were considered noble. Some commentators believe that the three gifts symbolized the three works of Jesus, that is, He is king, priest and prophet. **Gold:** This would provide money for the flight to Egypt. **Frankincense:** This was incense that was made from the sap of a tree that grew both in Arabia and India. **Myrrh:** This was also a perfume that was made from the sap of a tree. **12** God is directing the movements of the Magi in order that they not be discovered by Herod. Such is the case lest they be caught in Herod's scheme to kill Jesus.

JESUS IS TAKEN TO EGYPT

13-15 Egypt was a Roman province, but not under the jurisdiction of Herod. Therefore, the angel of the Lord instructed Joseph to flee to Egypt and away from the evil that was planned by Herod. **Death of Herod:** According to our calendar today, it is believed that Herod the Great died on April 1, 4 B.C. **Out of Egypt:** The first time God called his "son" (Israel) out of Egypt was when the nation of Israel came out of Egyptian captivity (Ex 4:22,23; Hs 11:1). The statement of Hosea 11:1 is here called a prophecy in that Jesus is called out of Egypt. Israel's deliverance from Egyptian captivity was a prophetic action on God's part to portray the deliverance of His Son from the same country (Nm 24:7,8,17). **16-18 Exceedingly angry:** Herein is revealed the evil

nature of Herod. All babies of two years of age and under were killed in Bethlehem and the area. This action affirms that Jesus was born at least within the two year period before Herod's death on April 1, 4 B.C. **Rachel weeping:** This Rachel was the ancestor of Benjamin and wife of Jacob whose tomb was in Ramah near Bethlehem. Jeremiah's prophecy was of the Israelites who were carried away to Babylonian captivity (Jr 31:15). The second fulfillment of the prophecy is here realized in the death of the babies of Bethlehem.

JESUS RETURNS TO NAZARETH

19-21 After Herod's death on April 1, 4 B.C., Joseph was called through a God-given dream to return to Nazareth (1:24; Lk 2:39). **Those who sought:** Reference here is possibly to all those who were of Herod's scheme to kill the baby Jesus. This would be the officers of Herod's court and Herod's wicked son Antipater, all of whom were killed five days before the death of Herod. **22 Archelaus:** When Herod died, Augustus Caesar of Rome divided his kingdom among Herod's three sons, Philip, Herod Antipas and Archelaus. Philip and Antipas received Galilee and Perea and Archelaus received Judea, Idumea and Samaria. However, because of his cruelty, Archelaus was deposed by Rome in A.D. 6. **23 Nazareth:** This was an insignificant village and Joseph's former home (See Jn 1:45,46). It may have also been the home of Mary (See Lk 1:26,27). It was in this area that Jesus grew, becoming strong in body and filled with wisdom (Lk 2:40,52). **Prophets:** There is no specific Old Testament prophet who spoke

was spoken by the prophets, "He will be called a Nazarene."

Chapter 3

1 ¶ In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea,
2 and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."
3 For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, saying, "*The voice of one crying in the wilderness, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make His paths straight.'*"
4 And the same John had a garment of camel's hair and a leather belt around his waist. And his food was locusts and wild

honey.

5 Then Jerusalem and all Judea, and all the region around the Jordan, went out to him.

6 And they were immersed by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins.

7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his immersion, he said to them, "O generation of vipers, who has warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"

8 "Therefore, bring forth fruits worthy of repentance.

9 "And do not think to say within yourselves, 'We have Abraham as *our* father,' for I say to you that God is able from these stones to raise

the words quoted here. By inspiration, Matthew makes a consensus of the prophets concerning the humble abode and environment from which the Messiah and Son of God would come. This nature of the abode of the Messiah was prophesied (See Is 11:1; 53:1-4). **Nazarene:** Nazareth was a place of contempt (See Jn 1:46; 7:52). Such would only naturally be the dwelling place of the One who would call the humble of the world into a kingdom reign of servanthood (See Mk 1:24; At 22:8).

Chapter 3

John, the Immerser (Mk 1:1-8; Lk 3:1-18)

1 Those days: These events take place about twenty-nine years after the events of chapters 1 and 2 (See Lk 3:1,2,23; Jn 1:6-34). **John:** This is the prophesied John who would prepare the way for Jesus (Ml 3:1; 4:4-6). John the Baptist (immerser) is the son of the priest Zacharias. His mother is Elizabeth (See 1 Ch 24:10; Mk 1:2-8; Lk 1:5). John would also be the cousin of Jesus. **Baptist:** Or, "the immerser." John is here identified by what he did, that is, baptize people in water for remission of sins (Mk 1:3,4; 6:14,25). **Wilderness of Judea:** This was the desert west of the Dead Sea and possibly north of the area where the Jordan enters the Dead Sea (Lk 1:80; 3:2; see Jg 1:16; Ja 15:61). John preached in the wilderness. Those who wanted to hear him had to come from their city environment to the humble surroundings of a preacher preaching in the desert. Therefore, John was not of the religious establishment. He was a humble servant of God who had forsaken the material world in order to announce the coming of the Son of God. **2 Repent:** John's call to the people was for a total commitment to renounce rebellion against God and turn in heart to a kingdom reign that was near unto being established (Ex 33:11,15; Jl 2:12,13; Is 55:7; Zc 1:3,4; At 3:19; 2 Co 7:10). This was also the subject of the preaching of Jesus (Lk 3:3; 13:3). **Kingdom of heaven:** This is the kingdom reign that originates from heaven (11:11; 19:23). Prophecy of such was now in fulfillment as John prepared the way for the King (See Is 2:2,3; Dn 2:44; 7:13,14). This is the kingdom reign that would be announced in At 2 and would be the fulfillment of all prophecy concerning the reign of

the Son of God (See 4:17; 6:10; 10:7; Mk 1:15; 9:1; 10:24; Lk 7:28; 9:27; 10:9; 21:31; see Cl 1:23; Hb 12:23,28). **At hand:** The kingdom reign was near unto being established. It was something that God would establish regardless of the enemies of Jesus who would nail Him to the cross (See Jn 1:11). **3** Luke records that Jesus quoted Is 40:3-6 (Lk 3:4-6). John was the prophesied Elijah who was to be the forerunner for the Messiah (See Ml 4:5,6; Lk 1:15-17; Jn 1:19-23). As the forerunners functioned for the kings of Israel, John came first to proclaim that the King was coming (Lk 1:17). He prepared the hearts of the people that they receive the One coming after him (Lk 3:3; Jn 1:23). **4 Clothed in camel's hair:** John was not the preacher from the city. His clothes portrayed self-denial and sacrifice in reference to those things the religious leaders cherished in the cities (Compare Elijah's dress in 2 Kg 1:8; Mt 3:4; 17:9-13). God sent him to the wilderness to preach in order to call those who were truly repentant out of their materialistic lives in the cities. He called them to accept the life of self-denial and sacrifice. **Locusts:** These were grasshopper related insects John ate for his food (Lv 11:22). **5,6 All ... went out to him:** John's ministry in the wilderness placed the burden of commitment on the shoulders of those who would hear the message of God. They had to go to him because he did not come to them in the city. **Immersed ... in the Jordan:** There was much water in the Jordan in order to immerse people (Jn 3:23). **Confessing their sins:** The repentant humbled themselves by publicly confessing their sins. **7 Pharisees:** The Pharisees were a Jewish sect of legalistic religious leaders in Israel. The sect originated in Palestine during the interbiblical period which began after 400 B.C. By the time Jesus came, they were established as an influential sect of religious leaders in Judaism. They were wealthy, lovers of money (Lk 16:14), zealous, and held the consciences of the people captive by the intimidation of their religious control. They maintained a very legalistic interpretation of Old Testament laws which they combined with numerous traditions (See comments 15:1-9; Mk 7:1-9; 8:11-15; Lk 11:52; 18:9-15). **Sadducees:** The Sadducees were a religious group in opposition to the Pharisees. The Sadducees probably originated with a man named Zadok, who was a president of the Sanhedrin around 250 B.C. The Sadducees denied the existence of angels, spirits and

up children to Abraham.

10 “And now the ax is already laid at the root of the trees. Therefore, every tree that does not bring forth good fruit is cut down and cast into the fire.

11 “I indeed immerse you with water unto repentance. But He who comes after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to bear. He will immerse you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

12 “His winnowing fan *is* in His hand. And He will thoroughly clear His threshing floor and gather His wheat into the barn. But He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”

13 ¶ Then Jesus came from Galilee to the

Jordan to John, to be immersed by him.

14 But John tried to prevent Him, saying, “I have need to be immersed by You. And You are coming to me?”

15 And Jesus answering said to him, “Permit *it* at this time, for thus it is appropriate for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he permitted Him.

16 And Jesus, when He was immersed, went up immediately out of the water. And behold, the heavens were opened to Him and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on Him.

17 And behold, a voice from heaven, saying, “This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.”

the future resurrection (22:23-34; At 4:1,2; 23:6-8).

Brood of vipers: They were children of snakes. With their venom of legalistic hypocritical religion, they infested the minds of innocent victims in Israel with their religion (12:34; 23:33). **Wrath to come:** God was in the process of bringing judgment upon the nation of Israel through the destruction of the Jewish State in A.D. 70 (See comments ch 24). The Jews' rejection of the kingdom reign of Jesus would result in their being rejected by God, and thus, bring God's judgment upon themselves. **8,9 Fruits worthy of repentance:** These religious leaders must manifest in their lives the results of repentance (At 26:20; Lk 17:4). Their mere curiosity in coming to hear what John was preaching was not good enough. They needed a heart change that would result in a change of life-style. **Do not think:** Because they claimed Abraham as their physical father by genealogy, they thought such gave them a special relationship with God (Jn 8:33,39; see Gn 12:1-3; 15). **Raise up children to Abraham:** These Pharisees and Sadducees failed to realize that the true Jew was not one who was of Abraham's genealogy. A true Jew and son of Abraham was such by faith (8:11,12; see comments Jn 8:31-41; Rm 2:28,29; 8:28,29; 4:1-5; 9:6-11; Gl 3:26-29). **10 Ax is laid to the root:** National Israel as God's chosen nation was coming to an end. This was John's prophecy of the end of Israel in A.D. 70 (See comments ch 24). Those Jews who did not repent and turn to the One about whom John was speaking would be cut down and thrown into the fire. **11 I immerse you:** The Greek word *baptizo* means “to dip,” “plunge,” “immerse,” or “overwhelm” (See comments Rm 6:3-6; Cl 2:12). John was preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins (Mk 1:4; see Lk 3:3). **I am not worthy to carry:** John realized the greatness of the One who would follow. He thus considered Jesus more than a prophet, for John himself was a prophet. **Immerse you with the Holy Spirit:** John is again prophesying concerning what would come in the near future. Jesus would baptize with or in the Holy Spirit those of Israel who would accept the calling of Jesus to apostleship (See comments At 2:1-4). The apostles would be the accepted new leadership of the spiritual Israel as opposed to the Pharisees, scribes and Sadducees who assumed the leadership of physical

Israel. There would thus be a change in spiritual leadership in Israel from those who had stolen the flock of God to those who humbled themselves as servants of God. **And fire:** The religious leadership of Israel that rejected Jesus would be baptized with fire in the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. However, God would give them opportunity to hear the Son and the apostles before He rained down judgment on them in the destruction of national Israel. **12 Winnowing fan is in His hand:** Through His ministry and the disciples' preaching of His message, Jesus would separate the chaff (the disobedient) from the wheat (the obedient sons of Abraham by faith). **Unquenchable fire:** There was no turning of God from the destruction that was now looming in the near future. John's message was urgent in order to turn Israel from their religion that they had created after their own desires and traditions. Jesus' message contained the same urgency in that He preached that they must repent or perish (Lk 13:3).

JESUS BEGINS HIS MINISTRY

(Mk 1:9-11; Lk 3:21-23; Jn 1:19 - 4:45)

13,14 Jesus came from Galilee: Jesus was about thirty years old when He began His ministry (Lk 3:23). He here walks about one hundred kilometers from Nazareth to the place where John was preaching. **Be baptized:** Jesus was without sin (Hb 4:15). However, the baptism of John was a command of God, for John had received the message of such from God. **15 Fulfill all righteousness:** In order to fulfill all righteousness, that is, complete the commandments of God, Jesus, though without sin, had to be baptized by John's baptism (See Hb 5:8,9; 10:7). At His immersion, He was manifested to be the Lamb of God (Jn 1:34). **16,17** This particular event portrays the three manifestations of the one God. Jesus is here baptized. The Holy Spirit descends on Him as a dove. The Father speaks out of heaven. Though three in manifestation, God is still one. He could have manifested Himself in numerous ways in order to carry out the eternal plan to save man. The fact that He has so chosen to manifest Himself as Father, Son and Holy Spirit does not mean that there are three Gods. It simply means that the one God has manifested Himself in three ways (See 12:18; 17:5; 28:19; Mk 9:7; Lk 9:35; Jn 12:28-30; 2 Pt 1:17). **Like a dove:**

Chapter 4

1 ¶ Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

2 Now when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He then became hungry.

3 And when the tempter came to Him, he said, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread."

4 But He answered and said, "It is written, '*Man will not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.*'"

5 Then the devil took Him up into the holy city and stood Him on the pinnacle of the temple.

6 And he said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, cast Yourself down, for it is written, '*He will give His angels charge over You,*' and, '*In their hands they will bear You up, lest at any time You dash Your foot against a stone.*'"

7 Jesus said to him, "It is written again, '*You will not tempt the Lord your God.*'"

8 Again, the devil took Him up into an exceedingly high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory.

9 And he said to Him, "All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me."

10 Then Jesus said to him, "Go away, Satan, for it is written, '*You will worship the Lord*'"

This does not necessarily mean that the Holy Spirit confined His being to the body of a dove. A simile is used here. This is a comparison using "like" or "as." The descending of the Spirit on Jesus was God's signal to John that this was the Lamb of God (See Lk 3:22; Jn 1:32-34). **My beloved Son:** See Ps 2:7; Jn 3:16. Jesus was God's Son who was sent into the world to save the world (Lk 19:10).

Chapter 4

THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS

(Mk 1:12,13; Lk 4:1-13)

1 When God starts great movements, His messengers are called to the desert. Moses, John the Baptist, Paul and Jesus all went to the desert before going to the people. In Jesus' case, it was God's will that He be placed in a situation that would allow Him to be tempted in all ways as those He would save (Hb 4:15). He was thus taken to the desert for forty days of fasting followed by the temptations of Satan. **Led by the Spirit:** Luke mentions that Jesus was full of the Holy Spirit at this time, and thus, had received at His baptism the miraculous power of the Spirit in order to do the works of the Father throughout His ministry (Lk 4:1; compare comments Ph 2:6-8). Matthew emphasizes the fact that it is the Holy Spirit who is taking Jesus to the wilderness for this period of fasting. **Devil:** Herein is mentioned for the first time in the New Testament, the accuser and deceiver of all men (See 13:19; Lk 22:31; Ep 6:11; 1 Th 2:18; 2 Tm 2:26; 1 Pt 5:8,9; Rv 20:7-10). Behind the scenes of Jesus' ministry, Satan worked to deter Jesus from His work. This period of fasting would begin the temptations of Jesus. The temptations would not cease until the earthly ministry was completed. **2 Fasted forty days and forty nights:** Jesus went without food for forty consecutive days and nights (Mk 1:12,13; see Ex 34:28; Dt 9:17-19; 1 Kg 19:8; Mt 6:16-18; 9:14; Lk 2:36,37; At 13:1-3; 2 Co 6:4,5). We are not told why He fasted forty days, unless there is some significance to the forty years the nation of Israel wandered in the wilderness of Sinai because of their refusal to take the land of promise. **3** Because Jesus was vulnerable during and after His days of fasting, Satan continually tempted Him in order to make Him turn from His ministry (Mk 1:13). It was at the end of such a fast that Jesus

would be most vulnerable to any temptation. In the same manner as he tempted Eve in the garden of Eden (Gn 3), Satan tempted Jesus after the lust of the eyes and flesh, and the pride of life (1 Jn 2:16). However, even at this time when Jesus would have been most vulnerable to yield to temptation, He did not give in to the lure of Satan's temptations. **Command ... stones:** Satan appealed to the physical hunger of Jesus in order to tempt Him to take control of His situation. The temptation was to miraculously satisfy his hunger by satisfying that lust which is most powerful in the life of a man, that is, hunger. In the temptation, therefore, Satan was seeking to tempt Jesus to use miraculous power for that for which it was not intended, that is, selfish reasons. **4 It is written:** See Dt 8:3. Jesus countered temptation with the word of God (At 20:32; 1 Th 2:13; 2 Pt 1:3). **Bread alone:** Physical life is important. However, the abundant life is the life about which Jesus spoke in Jn 10:10 that is within the individual. It is this life that must be nourished with spiritual food. **5 Holy city:** This was Jerusalem (Lk 4:9; Ne 11:1,18; see Mt 27:53). **Pinnacle:** This was the highest part of the structure of the temple that faced the Kidron Valley. **6 Throw Yourself down:** Satan appealed to Jesus' earthly desire to miraculously prove Himself before the people to be the Son of God. He thus tempted Jesus to perform this circus act of saving Himself from a fall. In this supposed act of defiance to the laws of gravity, Jesus was tempted to speed up the process of God's proving that He was the Messiah. But Jesus would not resort to circus acts in order to be proved to be sent from God. **It is written:** Satan seeks to provoke Jesus. He quoted from the Septuagint, a Greek translation of the Old Testament (See Ps 91:11,12). **7 It is written:** Jesus countered Satan's quotation of Ps 91:11,12 by putting it into the correct context of the general teaching of Scripture (Dt 6:16). Thus, Jesus gives us an example that Scripture must always be understood in the whole text of the principle of the Scriptures. Jesus affirms that Ps 91:11,12 will be fulfilled according to God's scheme of work in the life of Jesus. Satan has no power to subject Jesus to his control nor to change the work of God through Jesus. In the context of Psalm 91, verses 13,14 state that God would in His work in the life of Jesus destroy the works of Satan. **8 Devil took Him up:** Jesus willfully allowed Satan to tempt Him because He knew that such was in

your God and Him only will you serve.”

11 Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him.

12 ¶ Now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, He departed into Galilee.

13 And leaving Nazareth, He came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is on the sea coast, in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali,

14 so that it might be fulfilled that was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying,

15 *“The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles –*

16 the people who sat in darkness saw great light. And those who were sitting in the region and shadow of death, upon them a light dawned.”

17 From that time Jesus began to preach and

say, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

18 ¶ And Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen.

19 And He said to them, “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.”

20 And they immediately left *their* nets and followed Him.

21 ¶ And going on from there, He saw two other brothers, James *the son* of Zebedee and John his brother, in a boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets. And He called them.

22 And they immediately left the boat and their father, and followed Him.

23 ¶ And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gos-

the plan of God. **Showed Him:** Satan could have presented the world governments to Jesus, over which he had power to give Jesus authority. **9 I will give You:** By the power of deception, Satan has control over many governments of the world (Lk 4:6). Here he tempts Jesus to exercise the pride of life, and thus, co-rule with him in his rule of mankind through his power to deceive the nations. Such could not tempt Jesus for He knew that the Father had given all things into His hands and that He was headed to a throne that would make Him King of kings and Lord of lords (See Mt 28:18; Jn 13:3; 17:2; 1 Tm 6:15). **10** Jesus quoted Dt 6:13 in order to show that it is sinful to worship Satan and angels (Rv 19:10), men (At 10:26) or anything other than God. **11 Devil left Him:** Satan left tempting Jesus for only a short time (Lk 4:13; Jn 14:30). He had tempted Jesus at a time when Jesus was most vulnerable (Hb 1:14; 4:15; Js 4:7). He would tempt again at a time when Jesus would be susceptible to temptation. **Angels came and ministered:** Angels ministered to the physical needs of Jesus after the forty days of fasting. Thus the Father in heaven was always with the Son on earth throughout the ministry of the Son (26:53; Lk 22:43). After the temptation, Jesus returned to Galilee.

JESUS GOES TO GALILEE

(Mk 1:14,15; Lk 4:14,15)

12 Matthew passes by several events in the early ministry of Jesus in order to begin immediately a narrative of the Galilean ministry (See Jn 1:43; 2:3; 4:1-43). **John ... put in prison:** John the Baptist was seized by Herod (14:1-13; see Mk 1:14; Lk 3:20). The time between the events of verses 11 and 12 could be about one year. **13 Capernaum:** See 9:1-9; 11:23; 17:24; Mk 1:21; 7:1,2; Jn 6:59. **14-16** Matthew quoted Isaiah's prophecy of the work of Jesus in Palestine (Is 8:22; 9:1,2). **Great light:** This is the light of Jesus and the gospel (Jn 1:4-9). **17 Repent:** See 3:2; Lk 13:3. Jesus' notoriety became great at this time in His ministry (Lk 4:14). **Kingdom of heaven:** This was the kingdom

reign of Deity that would be visibly manifested from heaven (Mk 9:1). **At hand:** Jesus and John called on people to change their lives in order that they accept the coming kingdom reign of Jesus. Only repentant hearts would allow the kingdom reign of Jesus to be done on earth as it is done in heaven (6:9,10; Lk 17:20,21).

CALL OF PETER, ANDREW, JAMES AND JOHN

(Mk 1:16-20; Lk 5:1-11)

18 Sea of Galilee: See Lk 5:1; Jn 6:1; 21:1; Nm 34:11; Ja 11:2; 1 Kg 15:20. **Simon:** See Jn 20:2; 16:18. Jesus named Simon “Peter,” which word means “rock” or “stone” (Jn 1:41,42). Peter is also called Cephas (1 Co 1:12; 15:5; Gl 2:9). Peter and Andrew were possibly in the fishing business with James and John. **19,20 Follow Me:** Peter, Andrew, James and John had possibly been listening to Jesus several months before obeying this formal call to follow Him at this time. The events of Jn 1:35-42 probably took place sometime before this formal call that is recorded here by Matthew. **Fishers of men:** Through the call of the gospel, they would capture the hearts of men. Herein is the first mention of the great commission and work of the disciples of Jesus (Mt 28:19,20; Mk 16:15,16). This commission would identify throughout history the work of true disciples of Jesus. **21,22 James ... John:** See 10:2; 20:20. James and John were the sons of the influential Zebedee. James was the first of the twelve apostles to die (At 12:2). John was possibly the last. Both worked with Peter and Andrew in the fishing business (Lk 5:10). They were cousins of Jesus (Jn 19:25; Mt 27:56), and thus, grew up knowing of one another. **Zebedee:** In view of Zebedee's wealth and the high priest's knowledge of John, Zebedee was evidently an influential man (See Mk 1:20; Lk 5:10; Jn 18:15). **Left the boat and their father:** These disciples left work, homes and family in order to follow Jesus (See 10:37-39; Mk 10:28; Lk 9:23). They knew the cost of discipleship. They realized that what they found was greater than what they had.

pel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people.

24 And His fame went throughout all Syria. And they brought to Him all sick people who were afflicted with various diseases and torments, and those who were possessed with demons, and those who were epileptics, and paralytics. And He healed them.

25 Great multitudes followed Him from Ga-

lilee and Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and from beyond Jordan.

Chapter 5

1 ¶ And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain. And when He sat down, His disciples came to Him.

2 Then He opened His mouth and taught them, saying,

3 “Blessed *are* the poor in spirit, for theirs is

JESUS DOES GREAT WORKS

23 Jesus went about: Jesus preached in a circuit throughout Galilee. He did not just stay in one or two places (See 9:35 - 11:1; Lk 8:1-3). **Teaching ... preaching:** Jesus was effective because He continually taught and preached the word of God (See 9:23; 13:54; 26:55; Mk 1:21; 6:2; Lk 22:53; Jn 6:59; 18:20). **Synagogues:** Public meetings of the Jews in synagogues came into being during the Babylonian captivity which ended in 536 B.C. (See Ez 8:1 for a possible example of the beginning of the synagogue in Babylonian captivity). The synagogue was thus brought back to Palestine with the return of the first captives. The synagogues were a Jewish cultural center and place of teaching. Synagogues were not places of formal assembly, since all Jews in any community could not possibly assemble in a synagogue. Neither were there synagogues in every Jewish community. **All kinds of sickness:** This does not say that He healed everyone, but that He had the power to heal all kinds of sicknesses and diseases (See 8:16; 9:35; 14:14; Mk 1:34; 3:10). Through miraculous work Jesus was proved to be the Son of God (Jn 3:2; 20:30,31). **24 His fame:** See Mk 1:28. Jesus' reputation for healing probably spread faster and farther than His message. **Possessed with demons:** See 8:16,28,33; 9:32; 12:22; 15:22; Mk 1:32; 5:15; Jn 20:21. It was the purpose and work of Jesus to come to this world in order to destroy the works of the devil (Hb 2:14; Ep 4:8). He came in order to openly crush Satan and his evil works (Gn 3:15; Mk 3:23-26). In doing this Jesus made a public show of Satan by openly destroying his works (Cl 2:15; see Mt 12:29; Lk 10:18; Jn 12:31). Therefore, God allowed demons to miraculously possess people in the first century in order to give opportunity for Jesus and His disciples to openly manifest power over Satan and all his works. Every time a demon was cast out by Jesus or His disciples it was an open victory of righteousness over evil (See 9:33; 12:22,23,28,29; Lk 10:17-19). Once the superiority of Jesus and his disciples over Satan was proved, however, demon possession was no longer allowed to exist. We have the record of these victories of good over evil in the New Testament for all men to see throughout history. God does not continually have to prove throughout history what He proved through Jesus and the early disciples in the first century when He allowed demons to possess people. For this reason, God has not allowed demons to possess people since the first century. Satan controls or dwells in an individual today insofar as that individual allows himself to be controlled by evil influences and the desire of one to behave according to the will of Satan. This is different from New Testament demon

possession. We must allow the New Testament to be the dictionary that defines the characteristics of demon possession (See 9:32-34; 12:22,23; Mk 7:24-38; 9:17-29; Lk 4:33-37). Satan's work today is through deception, and thus, the New Testament gives many warnings that we be not deceived (24:23,24; 1 Co 6:9; Gl 6:7; 2 Th 2:9,10; 1 Tm 4:1,2; Rv 12:9; 13:14). **Diseases:** Jesus' power to heal people of all kinds of illnesses proved His miraculous ability over physical laws, and thus, proved that He was more than a prophet and man. **25 Great multitudes followed Him:** See Mk 3:7,8; Lk 6:17. Matthew's list of the area from which the multitudes came would include all of Palestine, as well as, territory on the east side of the Jordan River. Hundreds of people followed Jesus wherever He went. These crowds often numbered in the thousands (14:16-21; 15:32-38). He was constantly with people, and thus, teaching. **Beyond the Jordan:** This would be the area of Perea.

Chapter 5

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

The following three chapters are sometimes referred to as the “constitution of Christianity”, though the message was directed specifically to the Jews in their religious context at the time of Jesus' ministry. This sermon is often paralleled with that of Lk 6:17-49, though Luke's account is referred to by some as the “Sermon on the Plain.” Luke's record is more likely another sermon that Jesus delivered at a different location and time, but was similar to this sermon. It is unlikely that Jesus spoke only one time on these important truths. It is correct to assume that Jesus spoke on these essential teachings on more than one occasion. In this message Jesus sets forth the natural behavioral response of those who love God. His emphasis is not on establishing a legal code of conduct, but on obedience to God in response to loving God with all one's heart, soul and mind (22:37,38) and one's neighbor as himself (22:39,40; see comments Gl 5:13-26). **1,2 A mountain:** The traditional site of this sermon was a mountain between Mount Tabor and Tiberius. **He was seated:** It was traditional during these times that the teacher sit while teaching and the audience stand (26:55).

THE BEATITUDES

3 Blessed: This could also be translated “happy.” Happiness in heart results from the application in life of the following characteristics. **Poor in spirit:** Happy are those who are not proud, conceited or arrogant concerning their spiritual relationship with God. One must

the kingdom of heaven.

4 “Blessed *are* those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

5 “Blessed *are* the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

6 “Blessed *are* those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they will be filled.

7 “Blessed *are* the merciful, for they will obtain mercy.

8 “Blessed *are* the pure in heart, for they will see God.

9 “Blessed *are* the peacemakers, for they will be called the children of God.

10 “Blessed *are* those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

11 “Blessed *are* you when *people* insult you and persecute *you* and falsely say all kinds of

evil against you for My sake.

12 “Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great *is* your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

13 ¶ “You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt has lost its flavor, how will it be salted? It is no longer good for anything, except to be cast out and trampled under foot by men.

14 “You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden.

15 “Nor do men light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand. And it gives light to all who are in the house.

16 “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

17 ¶ “Do not think that I came to destroy the

recognize his humanity, his spiritual poverty and destitution (See Rm 7:24,25). One must empty himself of self-reliance and learn to humble himself before God. Those with such an attitude of mind will submit to the kingdom reign of God (Is 61:3; Lk 6:20; Js 4:6-10; 1 Pt 5:6,7). **4 Mourn:** See Lk 6:21-25. Happy are those who recognize their spiritual poverty, and thus, humbly grieve over their sinfulness (Compare Jn 16:20; Rm 5:3,4; 2 Co 7:10; Hb 12:11; Js 1:2,3; see Is 61:3; Ps 126:5). **5 Meek:** When one mourns over his sin, his relationship with others changes. He becomes mild, gentle, lowly and unselfish in character (See Ps 37:11). He is not arrogant or self-seeking. The meek will inherit the earth in the sense that they will enjoy the greatest that life has to offer (Jn 10:10). Because they understand the brevity of life and the temporary nature of material things, their concentration of thought will be on that which is above (Cl 3:1-3). **6 Hunger and thirst:** Those who realize their sinful condition and mourn over their sin, hunger and thirst after the righteousness that can come only from God by His grace. They seek the knowledge of God through His word (See Ps 19:1,2; 119:97,172; Is 55:1,2; Lk 1:6; Jn 4:14; 6:48; Rm 1:17; 1 Jn 2:29). It is the word of God that will supply knowledge of God’s righteousness (2 Tm 3:16,17; 2 Pt 1:3; 2:2; 3:18). However, God is the source of righteousness. **7 Merciful:** Those who recognize their own spiritual poverty are merciful to others. They sympathize and have pity on others. They thus seek to relieve the suffering of others because God has had mercy on them in relation to their sin (See Ps 41:1; Pv 1:25; 14:21; Hb 2:17). As opposed to the legalistically proud who seek to judge, the meek have mercy (See Js 2:13). Their mercy will reap mercy from God (Mt 18:35; Lk 6:37). **8 Pure:** See Ps 24:4. Happy are those who do not seek evil, but are sincere. Without guile or a vile heart of evil motives, they do not seek or concentrate on the evil in others (Compare Js 4:8 with At 15:9; 1 Th 5:23; 1 Tm 1:5; 1 Pt 1:22; see Js 1:27). **See God:** The pure in heart will understand the pure nature of God (Compare Hb 11:27; Jn 14:9). **9 Peacemakers:** Those who rec-

ognize their own sinfulness will seek peace of mind. They will also seek peace with others (Compare Pv 11:13; Gl 6:1; 2 Tm 2:22-26). Such are sons of God for they portray the spirit of God in their relationship with others. **10-12 Persecuted:** Those who portray in their lives the above characteristics will be sons of God. Being such will bring persecution from those of the world (At 14:22; Gl 4:29; 2 Tm 2:3,9,10; 3:12; compare Mk 3:6; Lk 6:7,11). Christians are persecuted because they refuse to walk in the darkness of the world (1 Pt 3:14; 4:4,16). **Kingdom:** See comments 11:11. **Rejoice:** This is the attitude of those who truly understand the inner nature of the Christian life. They are able to rejoice in persecution for they know that life exists beyond this world (At 5:41; Rm 8:17; Cl 1:24; Js 1:2-4; see comments At 14:22). **Prophets:** See Jr 20:2; 2 Ch 24:21; 36:16; At 7:52; 2 Th 2:15; Js 5:10. The same evil envy that led to the persecution of the prophets of the Old Testament will also lead to the persecution of Christians who stand up for their faith.

SALT AND LIGHT OF THE WORLD

13 You are the Salt: See Mk 9:50; Lk 14:34ff. As salt preserves food, so Christians with their godly characters preserve society from moral decay. **Loses its flavor:** The impurities of unrefined salt had no preservation qualities. When Christians lose their preservative influence of the Christian example, they are useless for God to preserve the decay of society. **14** Christians who live after godly principles are a light that brings hope to a world that is lost in darkness (See Jn 8:12; Ph 1:27; 2 Pt 1:19). **15,16 Basket:** See Lk 8:16-18. If the influence of the Christian is covered, it has no effect on the community. Timid disciples affect few people. **Let your light so shine:** Letting one’s light shine is not an arrogant manner of behavior. One should simply not be ashamed to live the Christian life in the midst of his community (Compare Rm 1;16). By living the principles of God in the community one will give hope to those who desire an escape from the world that is in the bondage of darkness (1 Pt 2:12).

law or the prophets. I did not come to destroy, but to fulfill.

18 “For verily I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law until all is fulfilled.

19 “Therefore, whoever will break one of these least commandments, and teaches men to do the same, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. But whoever does and teaches *them*, he will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

20 “For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds *the righteousness* of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.

21 ¶ “You have heard that it was said by those

of old, ‘*You will not murder,*’ and ‘*whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.*’

22 “But I say to you, that whoever is angry with his brother will be in danger of the judgment. And whoever will say to his brother, ‘*Raca!*,’ will be in danger of the council. And whoever will say, ‘*You fool,*’ will be in danger of the fiery hell.

23 “Therefore, if you bring your gift to the altar, and there you remember that your brother has something against you,

24 “leave there your gift before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.

25 “Agree with your adversary quickly, while you are with him on the way, lest at any time your adversary deliver you to the judge, and

THE OLD TESTAMENT LAW

17 Destroy the Law or the Prophets: The Greek word translated “destroy” here means “to dissolve” or “undo.” Jesus did not come to show disrespect to the Old Testament law. He came to fulfill its purpose, not violate its principles. The fulfillment of the law meant the end of the law. Jesus here shows the stability of the Old Testament law. He does not do this in order to indicate that the law was to continue, but to teach that the law would end when its purpose was fulfilled. Unfortunately, the Jews misunderstood this fact. They did not understand that the authority of the law was to end in the coming of the Messiah. They thought that it would never end. But it would end when the Messiah came (See Cf 2:14-16; Hb 10:9). Through the prophets, God stated that the law would change when the covenant changed (Jr 31:31-33; Hb 8:8ff). See comments Gl 3:24,25. **Law:** Reference is to the first of the three divisions the Jews made of the Old Testament (Gn through Dt). **Prophets:** Reference is to Joshua through Malachi. **18** See Lk 16:17. **Jot:** This is the Hebrew letter *yod*, which is the smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet. **Tittle:** This is a small mark which distinguishes different Hebrew letters. **Law:** Reference is to the entire Old Testament law. **Fulfilled:** All things would be fulfilled in the time that God designated when they should be accomplished (Lk 24:44). The coming of Jesus designated the time when God said the law would be fulfilled. **19 Breaks ... these commandments:** The Greek word of “break” means “loose,” as it is used in Mk 1:7; Lk 13:15; 19:30,31. In the context of Jesus’ Jewish audience, anyone who would loosen, or weaken the authority of any Old Testament commandment of God is considered disobedient to God’s authority. **Kingdom:** The Jews to whom Jesus addressed these words were under the kingdom reign of the Father. They, as John the Baptist, were under the rule of the kingdom of the Father that was in existence at the time these words were spoken (11:11,12). **20** The disciples’ righteousness must go beyond the boastful, self-proclaimed righteousness of the accepted religious leaders of their day. It must be a righteousness that is motivated by God’s grace and not the legal religious righteousness that was

promoted by the scribes and Pharisees. **No means enter:** It was the call of Jesus that men repent. Such repentance demanded that they accept the kingdom reign of the Father. Their repentance would prepare them to accept Jesus’ kingdom reign that was soon to be established.

UNITY OF BELIEVERS

21 You have heard: Jesus emphasizes what they had heard from interpreters of the Old Testament law. However, the interpretations of these interpreters were often a corrupt understanding of the law. God’s law does not cause division. It is the corrupt interpretations of men that cause the division. **You shall not murder:** See Ex 20:13; Dt 5:17. The punishment dictated by the Old Testament law for murder was death (Ex 21:12). However, the Jewish religious leaders of Jesus’ day corrupted the application of the law by saying that those who committed murder only had to be brought to judgment. **22 Angry:** Any who would have murderous thoughts in his heart against a fellow man is considered in the eyes of Jesus to be a murderer. **Raca:** This was an expression of reproach and contempt that meant “empty head” or “vain fellow” (See 2 Sm 6:20). Those who would express words of enmity are guilty of sin against their fellow man. Jesus teaches that all such sins of attitude are punishable by three stages of inflicted punishment: the judgment, the council, and finally, the destruction of hell (10:28). The Old Testament law demanded punishment of the outward actions of crime against one’s fellow man. However, Jesus seeks to correct the heart that causes the outward crimes. **Council:** This is the Jewish Sanhedrin of seventy men. **Hell:** This is the destruction of soul and body in the gehenna which is the final punishment of the wicked (See comments 10:28; 25:41). **23,24** It is useless to worship God when one has sinned against his brother. Reconciliation with one’s brother is necessary before one can worship, for one cannot worship the God of mercy and love by harboring a heart of hate that shows no mercy. **25 Agree with your adversary:** Or, “to be at harmony with.” One must correct the disagreement quickly lest one’s heart carry out some evil

the judge deliver you to the officer, and you be thrown into prison.

26 “Truly I say to you, you will by no means come out from there until you have paid the last cent.

27 ¶ “You have heard that it was said, ‘*You will not commit adultery.*’

28 “But I say to you, that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

29 “And if your right eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out and cast *it* from you, for it is better for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.

30 “And if your right hand causes you to stumble, cut it off and cast *it* from you, for it is better for you that one of your members

perish, than your whole body be cast into hell.

31 ¶ “It has been said, ‘*Whoever will put away his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.*’

32 “But I say to you, that whoever will put away his wife, except for the reason of fornication, causes her to become an adulteress. And whoever marries her who is put away commits adultery.

33 ¶ “Again, you have heard that it was said by those of old, ‘*You will not make false oaths, but will fulfill your oaths to the Lord.*’

34 “But I say to you, make no oath at all, neither by heaven, for it is God’s throne,

35 “nor by the earth, for it is His footstool, neither by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King.

36 “Nor will you make an oath by your head,

motive. An unforgiving heart will become bitter and twisted. **Adversary:** This word is from the accuser in a lawsuit. It is better to settle the dispute before it reaches the court, else the judge will exercise the law against one. Jesus here places the responsibility of reconciliation on the shoulders of the offending party. In 18:15-17 He places the responsibility of reconciliation on the shoulders of the offended party (See 6:14,15; 18:23-35). **26** Once the punishment has been delivered, it is too late for actions of reconciliation.

MARITAL UNFAITHFULNESS

27,28 In this context we must keep in mind that Jesus is talking to Jews. Both He and the Jews are living under the Old Testament law. **You have heard:** Jesus again addresses an interpretation of the law by the religious leaders. **Adultery:** See Ex 20:14; Dt 5:18. The Old Testament penalty for adultery was death by stoning (Lv 20:10; Dt 22:22-27). Adultery was the act of breaking the marriage contract. Such would be broken by the action of one party going outside the marriage bond and sexually engaging oneself with another person. **Looks at a woman to lust:** What Jesus condemns is not the look of admiration and affection, but the lustful look with the intent to commit an adulterous sexual act (Jb 31:1; Pv 6:25; Gl 5:16; 1 Pt 2:11). **29,30** Jesus gives a very vivid illustration to remove the source of adultery. He encourages one to shun any temptation to commit such (18:8; Mk 9:43). **Hell:** This is the Greek word “gehenna” which refers to the final end of the wicked. It originally referred to the rubbish dump of the Valley of Hinnom outside Jerusalem where adulterers were killed and burned (See Rm 8:13; Gl 5:19,20,24; Cl 3:5-8; Hb 13:4; see comments 25:41). **Stumble:** The Greek word here refers to a snare or stumbling block. Any part of the body that would cause one to commit adultery must be brought under control. The lust of the flesh must be controlled at all cost. **31,32 Certificate of divorce:** Moses gave the law of Dt 24:1-4 in order to close the door on divorce for every possible reason, for the Jews were divorcing for every possible reason at the time when the law was given. Jesus was address-

ing the Jews who were in a covenant relationship with God. Under this covenant, they were divorcing for every reason as in the days of Moses. He thus makes it clear that marriage to one who has been unjustly put away by divorce is marriage to an adulterated person, or one with whom a marriage contract has been broken.

Causes her: When the innocent party has been divorced, he or she is now known as one with whom a marriage contract has been broken (See Mt 19:3-9; Mk 10:2-12; Lk 16:18). Jesus also makes it clear to the Jews that the only valid cause for divorce among those who are in covenant relationship with God is fornication. Jesus thus seeks to better the community of God by making this the only reason for divorce, for the Jews were divorcing for several reasons at the time Jesus came (See comments 1 Co 7:8-24 where Paul discusses the marriage relationship between a Christian and an unbeliever. See Dt 24:1-4 for a biblical description of what God considers a divorce. Compare Mt 2:14-16.)

Sexual immorality: Or, “fornication” (See 1 Co 6:18). This is a general term that refers to all sexual sins, including homosexuality, lesbianism and adultery. **Adultery:** This word refers to the breaking of a contract or covenant by the unfaithfulness of one or both parties (Jr 3:8,9; 5:7; 9:2; Ez 16:31,32; 23:37; Hs 2:2,3; Js 4:4), as well as, the illicit sexual actions of married persons with someone other than their mate. In the context here, reference is to the breaking of a marriage covenant.

OATHS

33 Shall not swear falsely: See Lv 19:12; Nm 30:2; Dt 23:21. Making of oaths was an Old Testament law to guarantee against dishonesty in the Jewish society. **34-37 Do not swear:** See Js 5:12. Jesus prohibits all swearing by oath as the Jews did, for they casually swore oaths by the city of Jerusalem, the earth and God. They casually made oaths and then quickly broke them. The Jews were allowed to make vows and swear by the name of God (Dt 6:12; Is 65:16; Jr 4:2). However, Jesus is teaching here against the deceitful oath-making that was practiced by the Jews at the time. **Throne of God:** See 23:22; Is 66:1; At 7:41. Refer-

because you cannot make one hair white or black.

37 “But let your communication be, ‘Yes,’ ‘Yes,’ ‘No,’ ‘No,’ for whatever is more than these is from the evil *one*.

38 ¶ “You have heard that it was said, ‘*An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.*’

39 “But I say to you, do not resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn to him the other also.

40 “And if anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have *your* coat also.

41 “And whoever will compel you to go one mile, go with him two.

42 “Give to him who asks you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you.

43 ¶ “You have heard that it was said, ‘You

will love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’

44 “But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,

45 “so that you may be the children of your Father who is in heaven. For He makes His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.

46 “For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors the same?

47 “And if you greet your brethren only, what do you more *than others*? Do not even the Gentiles the same?

48 “Therefore, you are to be perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.

Chapter 6

1 ¶ “Take heed that you do not do your acts

ence is to the authority of kingdom reign that originates from God. **Yes be yes:** The Christian should live such a character of life that whatever he says should be understood as truth (Js 5:12). If he makes a promise, it should be assumed that he will keep his promise.

LOVE OF ENEMIES

38,39 Eye for an eye: See Lk 6:29,30. The Jews twisted the teaching of Ex 21:23,24; Lv 24:20 and Dt 19:21. In this text Jesus teaches against the concept of retaliation. The teaching of the preceding passages was in the context of the theocratic law of Israel. The “eye for an eye” was a civil law of the Old Testament where the people had the authority to punish offenders. **Not to resist:** Or, “Do not resist the one who is evil.” Wrong that is committed against Christians originates from Satan (1 Jn 2:13,14; Rv 2:10). Christians must resist the temptations of Satan (Js 4:7). However, retaliation against those whom Satan uses to promote his work is not a Christian principle. **Whoever slaps you:** The slap here is an insulting blow (See 26:67; 1 Kg 22:24; Lm 3:30; Jn 18:22; 19:3; 2 Co 11:20). Whoever would so slap a Christian is allowing Satan to use him to persecute Christians. **40 Go to law:** It is better to suffer ill treatment than to resist or retaliate against those who would persecute you (1 Pt 2:18-20). **41 Compels you:** It was a Roman law that a government official could command into service any person or thing that was needed to carry a soldier’s armor. Jesus’ disciples are here commanded to willingly comply with those who would compel their services. **42 Give:** The disciples should not retaliate by withholding from those who would ask of them (See Dt 15:8-10; Gl 6:10). They must willingly give when compelled by those who would demand of them according to law. **43 Love:** The Old Testament law nowhere stated that one “hate his enemies.” This was a false interpretation by the Jews (See Lv 19:17,18; Dt 23:3-6). Therefore, Jesus does not here argue against the Old Testament law, but against those who falsely interpret it for their own desires. **Neighbor:** The principle of loving one’s neighbor fulfills all that law would

command to be one’s duty toward his fellow man (See 22:35-40) **44 Love your enemies:** See 23:34; Lk 6:27,28; At 7:60. A true heart is not one of malice or hate. Hearts of malice and hate identify those individuals who are of the world. Luke adds here that we should do good to and pray for our enemies (Lk 6:27,28). **45 Sons of your Father:** The character that Jesus has just explained identifies those who are of the spirit of the Father, and thus, sons of the Father. God’s love is impartial. He loved us when we were His enemies (See At 10:34,35; Rm 5:8; 1 Jn 4:10,11,19-21). **46 What reward:** There is no reward in a love that acts out of selfish motives to do something for others for the purpose of receiving something in return. True love must be unconditional. It must not seek reward. **Tax collectors:** Or, “publican.” These Jews worked as tax collectors for the Roman government, and thus, were despised by the Jews. **47 Greet:** If one embraces only those of his approval, then there is no true manifestation of love. The disciples’ greetings must extend beyond what the world would do to and for itself. God’s people are to be different in that they are disciples who unconditionally love others. They are expected by God to do more than those who are outside a covenant relationship with God. **48 Perfect:** Jesus establishes a needed high standard of conduct in order that His disciples be made aware of their need for salvation and their need to struggle in order to have the kingdom reign of Jesus within them (At 14:22). The word “perfect” here can refer only to one who is complete as a result of God’s accredited righteousness that results from His grace. Christians are not perfect in behavior, but are perfect in Christ through the blood of Jesus (Cl 1:22,28; 4:12; Js 1:4,25; 3:2; Jd 24; see 1 Jn 1:1-7).

Chapter 6

SHARING

1 Charitable deeds: This is doing good to others. If one does good in order to receive the recognition of men, then he has received his reward. Christians let

of righteousness before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise, you have no reward from your Father who is in heaven.

2 “Therefore, when you do good deeds, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be glorified by men. Truly, I say to you, they have their reward.

3 “But when you do good deeds, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing,

4 “so that your good deeds may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you.

5 ¶ “And when you pray, you will not be as the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets so that they may be seen by men. Truly, I say to you, they have their reward.

6 “But you, when you pray, enter into your closet. And when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in secret. And your

Father who sees in secret will reward you.

7 “But when you pray, do not use meaningless repetitions as the Gentiles *do*, for they think that they will be heard for their many words.

8 “Therefore, do not be like them. For your Father knows what things you need before you ask Him.

9 “Therefore, after this manner pray: Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed be Your name.

10 “Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as *it is* in heaven.

11 “Give us this day our daily bread.

12 “And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

13 “And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. [For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.]

14 “For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

their light shine (5:16), but not for the purpose of drawing attention to themselves (Compare 23:5; 26:41; 1 Co 10:12). **2** *When you do a charitable deed:* The Pharisees hypocritically sounded a trumpet when they gave to the poor in the streets. In drawing attention to their act of giving, they received all the reward they would receive. Christians should give in a manner by which they do not intentionally seek the praise of men. **3,4** *In secret:* Christians should not give for public display. Their giving should be as private as possible in order that one's motives for giving be kept pure (See Rm 12:8).

PRAYER

5,6 *Hypocrites:* The Greek word here was used to refer to one who wore different masks in order to play different parts in a play. The hypocrites about whom Jesus spoke loved to pray in public places in order to be seen of men to pray. Their prayers sounded good but their hearts were far from God. Jesus does not condemn public prayer, but praying in order to be seen of men (See At 4:24-30). *Secret place:* Christians should pray often in a quiet environment in order to express their innermost feelings to the Father. **7** *Vain repetitions:* This was the empty chanting over and over again of designated words that were customarily used in public prayers. Such memorized and repeated words of prayer became a monotonous public show of prayer. Prayer should not be a repetition of memorized words or sermon to those who hear. Prayer should be in the words of the moment that express the feelings and thoughts of the individual or group who desires to call on God for help. The words of our prayers should express sincere thanksgiving to God (See Ph 4:6). **8** *Your Father knows:* The omniscient God who hears our prayers knows our needs (vs 32; see Mk 11:24). **9** *In this manner:* This prayer is a model of several things

to be mentioned in prayer. Jesus is not giving a word system that is to be repeated as a prayer (Lk 11:1). The context here teaches against the repetitious use of the same words in prayer. *Our Father:* Prayer is to be directed to the Father (See Rm 8:14-16). *Hallowed:* Any prayer should contain that which would reverence and honor the Father (See Ex 20:7). **10** *Kingdom come:* At the time these instructions were given, the kingdom reign of Jesus had not yet come (16:18,19). The disciples were to pray that men accept the kingdom reign of Jesus in the sense that the will of the Father be done on earth as it is done in heaven. The kingdom reign is within one as he or she submits to the will of the Father (Lk 17:20,21). As the will of the Father is done in the hearts of men and women on earth as it is done in heaven, then the kingdom comes. Jesus here asks the disciples to pray that people accept the heavenly kingdom reign in order that they accept His kingship that was yet to come. **11** We must pray for those things that are necessary for the sustenance of life (1 Tm 6:7). **12** *Forgive:* A necessary condition for the forgiveness of one's sins before God is that he have a spirit of forgiveness toward others (See vss 14,15; 18:21-35; Mk 11:25,26; Cl 3:13; Js 2:13). One of the characteristics of Christianity is that one have a forgiving spirit. **13** God does not tempt man (Js 1:13). Therefore, the plea here is that God keep one from being tempted beyond that which he is able to bear (See Lk 21:36; Jn 17:15; 1 Co 10:13; 2 Th 3:3; 2 Tm 4:18). **14,15** *If you forgive:* Having a forgiving spirit identifies one after the nature of God who forgives. If one cannot forgive his fellow man, then certainly he is not of the nature of God, and thus, not a candidate for heaven (18:35; Js 2:13).

FASTING

These are the first words Jesus makes concerning

15 “But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

16 ¶ “Moreover, when you fast, do not look gloomy as the hypocrites. For they disfigure their faces so that they may appear to men to be fasting. Truly I say to you, they have their reward.

17 “But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face,

18 “so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

19 ¶ “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal.

20 “But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys,

and where thieves do not break in nor steal.

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

22 ¶ “The lamp of the body is the eye. Therefore, if your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light.

23 “But if your eye is evil, your whole body will be full of darkness. Therefore, if the light that is in you is darkness, how great *is* the darkness!

24 ¶ “No man can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.

25 ¶ “Therefore, I say to you, do not be worried about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor for your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the

the ministry of fasting (Lk 2:36,37). Fasting was a common part of the religious behavior of the Jewish culture, and thus, it is only natural that He would explain the nature of fasting in reference to the disciples' response to His lordship in their lives. **16 When you fast:** It is not if the disciples would fast, but when they would fast. Fasting is an understood practice of the disciples of Jesus. Fasting is the natural response of those who respond with discipleship to the lordship of Jesus. It is the response of those who depend on God's work in their lives, for in fasting one is calling on God to respond to his pleas for help. **Fast:** Fasting is abstinence from food or water for the purpose of calling on God to respond to one's requests (Dt 9:17-19; 2 Sm 12:16,21; compare Is 58:3-7; Zc 8:19). Fasting is done in order to take one's mind off the physical needs of the body in order to concentrate on the spiritual needs of the inner man. Fasting is not a command, but that which Christians do in absence of the Bridegroom (See 9:14,15; At 13:1-3). Fasting not only strengthens our self-discipline, it also helps us to focus our attention on the work of God in our lives. **Disfigure:** The hypocritical Jews of Jesus' day often let their hair go uncut when they fasted over long periods. They would put ashes on their heads and show a disfigured face in order to be publicly identified to be in a fast. Their primary emphasis on the fasting, therefore, was not on a plea for God to work in their lives but to manifest the meritorious performance of a religious rite. By fasting in such a manner and for such purposes, the only reward they had for fasting was the praise of men. **17,18 Anoint your head and wash your face:** It is not the desire of the disciples of Jesus to meritoriously fast, nor to fast in order to draw attention to one's performance of religious rites. Fasting is to be directed toward the inner self in order to focus one's mind on God. By concentrating on the inner spiritual part of man, Christians should give no outward indication of their fasting. The purpose of fasting is to inwardly humble oneself before God in order to proclaim one's dependence on the work of God in his life (See

17:21; Mk 9:29; Lk 2:36,37; At 14:23; 1 Co 7:5; 2 Co 6:5; 11:27). In humbling ourselves before God, we manifest our dependence on God in order to plead for His work in our lives.

TREASURES IN HEAVEN

19 Treasures that we possess on earth can easily be consumed or taken from us (See Pv 23:5; Lk 12:21; 1 Tm 6:9,10). Because we know they can soon be taken from us, we worry about them. **20 Treasures in heaven:** By concentrating on those things that are above this earth, one places earthly things in the right perspective (10:21; Lk 12:33; 18:22; 1 Tm 6:19; 1 Pt 1:4; Cl 3:1-3). The crown of righteousness in heaven awaits those who have forsaken the treasures of the world (See 2 Tm 4:8). Here Jesus contrasts the physical and temporary things of this world (vs 19) with the eternal, spiritual things that will endure the destruction of the physical (See 2 Pt 3:10-12). **21** If one has many things of this world, his thoughts, worry, and usually desires, will be focused on this world (Lk 12:34; Pv 4:23). If one's mind is on those things that are above, then his thoughts, desires and ambitions are on spiritual things (See Lk 11:34,35). **22,23** If the eye, that physical organ through which one perceives what is of the world, is corrupted with evil desire, then the whole of one's life will be headed toward destruction. However, if our perspective of life is focused on that which is good, then our whole life will be full of light. **24 Two masters:** It is impossible to focus one's life on service to the Master in heaven, and at the same time make material things the master of our lives (See Lk 16:13; Js 4:4). If one's focus is on the things of this world, then he cannot give himself to God in a way that God demands of His children. In other words, one cannot trust in his self-sufficiency of the things of the world and at the same time totally trust in God. **25 Do not worry:** One must not be overly anxious about the things of this world (Ps 55:22; Lk 10:41,42; 12:11; see Ph 4:6; 1 Pt 5:7). One must come to an understanding that life does not consist of those things which are empirically

body more than clothing?

26 “Behold the birds of the air, for they do not sow, nor do they reap, nor gather into barns. Yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?”

27 “Which of you by being worried can add one cubit to his stature?”

28 “And why are you worried about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow. They do not toil, neither do they spin.

29 “And yet I say to you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these.

30 “Therefore, if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is and tomorrow is cast into the oven, *will He* not much more *clothe* you, O you of little faith?”

31 “Therefore, do not worry, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear for clothing?’”

32 “For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.

33 “But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

34 “Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will care for itself. Sufficient for the day *is* its own trouble.

Chapter 7

1 ¶ “Do not judge so that you be not judged.

2 “For in the way you judge, you will be judged. And with what standard you measure, it will be measured to you.

3 “And why do you look at the speck that is in your brother’s eye, but do not consider the beam that is in your own eye?”

4 “Or how will you say to your brother, ‘Let me remove the speck from your eye,’ and behold, a beam *is* in your own eye?”

5 “You hypocrite, first remove the beam from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.

6 “Do not give what is holy to the dogs, nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they

beheld and possessed (4:4). **26** Jesus asks that if God cares for the birds that put forth no effort to plant and reap crops, then surely He will take care of His children.

27 Cubit: This Jewish measurement is about eighteen inches (about forty-six centimeters). No one even considers adding height to his stature. Jesus teaches that we should not be overly concerned about the sustenance of life. **28-32 Why do you worry:** Jesus’ exhortation is that if God takes care of grass, flowers and birds, then surely He will take care of His children. The point is that one must trust in God, not in one’s own self-sufficiency.

You of little faith: In the context, these are those who are trusting in material things (See Rm 8:24; 2 Co 5:7).

33 Seek first the kingdom: Emphasis here again is that one desire that the will of the Father be done on earth in one’s heart as it is done in heaven (See vs 9,10). God’s righteousness comes through one’s submission to the will of God. Seeking the kingdom of God, therefore, must always be first. God will take care of those who seek Him first. **34 Do not worry:** Jesus is not here condemning one’s planning for the future. He is encouraging us not to be overly concerned about the future. In other words, we must not add worries about the future to the responsibilities of today. Worry works against faith. We must assume through faith that all things work together for good (Rm 8:28). And thus, we must work by faith (2 Co 5:17). The more one walks by faith, the less worry there is in his life.

Chapter 7

JUDGING OTHERS

1 Judge not: See Lk 6:37-42. Jesus here teaches against the legalistic judging that is exercised by the Pharisees. Their self-righteous legal system of doctrine

moved them to be critical of others who did not agree with them on every point of their systematic theology. Reference here is not to the right one has to form an opinion or to take notice of and help correct the wrong behavior of others. One must always look at others with an attitude of love (See Jn 7:24; Rm 2:1; 14:3,4,10,13; 1 Co 4:3-5; Js 4:11,12). **2 You will be judged:** Legalism moves one to be critical and unmerciful in judgment concerning another’s beliefs and life. God will severely judge those who harbor such attitudes toward one’s fellow man (See 18:21-35). **3 A plank is in your own eye:** This hyperbole expresses the hypocritical error of the legalistic judge who considers himself righteous while judging the faults of another in comparison to his own self-righteousness. His system of religion moves him to be judgmental of small matters in the lives of others who do not conform to his regimented beliefs, while at the same time there is a major flaw in his own life. **4** The legal system of judgment by which the faultfinder lives, makes it impossible for him to be an objective judge of others. **5 Remove the plank:** In order for one to correctly evaluate others, he must first recognize his own sinful state (See Rm 2:21-23; Gl 6:1). One must live his life by the same standard by which he looks at others (See comments 23:23-31).

SEEKING GOD’S BLESSINGS

6 Do not give what is holy to the dogs: When the precious spiritual truths of love and mercy are extended toward the ruthless and hard-hearted, they are received with criticism and mockery (See 5:10-12). How one receives the pearls of truth determines his true nature. Once a vicious nature is discovered, then it is useless to offer opportunity by continual preaching and teaching the precious truths to the one who continually

trample them under their feet and turn and tear you in pieces.

7 ¶ “Ask, and it will be given to you. Seek, and you will find. Knock, and it will be opened to you.

8 “For everyone who asks, receives. And he who seeks, finds. And to him who knocks, it will be opened.

9 “Or what man is there among you, when his son asks for bread, will give him a stone?

10 “Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent?

11 “If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him?

12 “Therefore, all things whatever you want men to do to you, even so do also to them, for this is the law and the prophets.

13 ¶ “Enter in through the narrow gate, for wide *is* the gate and broad *is* the way that

leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it.

14 “Because small *is* the gate and narrow *is* the way that leads to life, and few there are who find it.

15 ¶ “Beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.

16 “You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thorns or figs from thistles?

17 “Even so every good tree brings forth good fruit, but a bad tree brings forth bad fruit.

18 “A good tree cannot bring forth bad fruit, nor *can* a bad tree bring forth good fruit.

19 “Every tree that does not bring forth good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

20 “Therefore, by their fruits you will know them.

21 ¶ “Not every one who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter into the kingdom of heaven,

rejects such. **7,8 Ask ... seek ... knock:** There is a progression here of one’s intensity by which he seeks God’s help. By faith one must seek God according to His will (1 Jn 5:14). As opposed to the self-righteous hearts of dogs who continually reject all righteousness, the humble-hearted must intensify their dependence on God for direction in life. God will provide (See 21:22; Mk 11:24; Lk 11:9-13; 18:1-8; Jn 14:13; 15:7; 15:23,24; Js 1:5,6; 1 Jn 3:22). **9,10** Jesus now illustrates the willingness of God to care for His children. **Stone:** An earthly father would not mock his son’s request for help by giving a stone or a serpent. Neither would God do such a thing in the spiritual realm. **11** It is the rule with God to answer prayer. How and when He answers is His choice. His wise answers are often not the answers we feel we should have. **Good things:** Luke says that God gives the Holy Spirit to those who ask (Lk 11:13). When considered together, both Matthew and Luke are stating that one receives the good things that result from the Holy Spirit. **12 Do also to them:** This is often referred to as the Golden Rule (Lk 6:31). This is the principle of loving our neighbor as ourself (22:36-40; Gl 5:13,14). This is a fundamental principle of the Christian life that manifests one’s relationship both with his fellow brother in Christ as well as non-Christians. This is not a selfish motivation for being kind to others, but a mental check by which we can continually guard our behavior in relation to others. **Law and the Prophets:** This fundamental principle is the foundation upon which is built all that God would have us do in our relationships with others (See 22:36-40; Lv 19:18; Rm 13:8-10; Gl 5:14). **13,14 Narrow gate:** See Lk 13:24. Because the way requires humility that is combined with suffering and persecution, few will enter the gate into heaven (See At 14:22). **Wide ... gate:** Many will enter the gate to condemnation into hell since it is the way of indifference, self-righteousness, laziness and hypocrisy. The

fact that Jesus here states that it is wide assumes that most people will be lost. Most people who live upon the face of the earth will choose not to obey God.

IDENTIFYING THE SOURCE OF FRUIT

15 False prophets: In the context, Jesus here points out the self-righteous and legalistic religious teachings of those in whose midst He came. Their misguided religiosity lends them to being blind religious guides to the sincere (See 24:11,24; Dt 13:3; Jr 23:16; Ez 22:28; Mk 13:22; At 13:6; 20:29,30; 2 Co 11:1-13; 2 Th 2:1-12; 1 Tm 4:1-5; 2 Tm 2:17,18; 3:1-8; 4:1-5; 2 Pt 2:1; 3:1-7; 1 Jn 4:1-3; Rv 19:20; 20:10). **Sheep’s clothing:** Jesus identifies these teachers as religious in nature and accepted by the religious community. However, the true nature of their teaching leads these religious people to depend upon themselves for righteousness, and thus not seek the grace of God. They speak religious words, but their hypocritical character leads people away from God (See comments 23:13-31). **16 Fruits:** See 12:33; Lk 6:44; Js 3:12. The moral life of the hypocritical religious teacher is not in harmony with that which he speaks (Mk 7:6-9). His self-righteous system of religion justifies his ungodly behavior while at the same time he preaches and teaches doctrine to others (See Lk 6:43-45). Thus the false prophet is identified by his behavior and not by his teachings. **17-20 By their fruits:** As fruit inspectors, sons of God identify the false religious teacher by the conduct of his life. A tree with bad fruit is worthless in producing relationships that are acceptable to God. Religious leaders who are of such a nature will meet their destruction (See 3:10; Lk 13:7). It is the responsibility of Christians to judge the fruit of one’s teaching. By the word of God every man’s teaching must be compared with what God says through His word. If one’s teaching does not harmonize with the teaching of the word of God, then he will not produce fruit for God, but

but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven.

22 “Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and performed many wonderful works in Your name?’

23 “And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you. Depart from Me you who practice lawlessness.’

24 ¶ “Therefore, whoever hears these words of Mine and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock.

25 “And the rain descended and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house. And it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.

26 “And everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand.

27 “And the rain descended and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house. And it fell, and great was its fall.”

28 ¶ And it came to pass when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at His teaching,

29 for He taught them as *one* having authority, and not as their scribes.

Chapter 8

1 ¶ When He came down from the mountain, great multitudes followed Him.

2 And behold, there came a leper and worshiped Him, saying, “Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean.”

3 And Jesus put forth *His* hand and touched him, saying, “I am willing. Be cleansed.” And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.

4 And Jesus said to him, “See that you tell no one. But go your way. Show yourself to the priest and offer the gift that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.”

5 ¶ And when Jesus had entered Capernaum, there came to Him a centurion, pleading with Him,

for himself or his man-made religion.

21 The legalistic false teachers of Israel will not submit to the kingdom reign of Jesus that was soon to be established. They cannot enter the kingdom simply because they are not of the nature of the kingdom, that is, the nature of those who submit to the kingdom reign of the Father. Such people would also not be able to enter heaven which is yet to come (See Lk 6:46; 13:25; At 19:13-15; Rm 2:13; 2 Th 1:7-9; Js 1:22). **22,23 That day:** In the context of the ax being laid at the root of national Israel (3:10), reference here is probably to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. However, the same situation will also be at the end of time (10:15; Jn 12:48). Jesus identifies these zealous religious people as legally seeking God according to their works. They performed the right deeds, but their hearts were arrogant and self-righteous. God will reject the invented religiosity of those who presume to approach Him on their own terms (See Jn 14:15,23; 15:14; Cl 2:20-22; 3:16; 2 Jn 9,10). **Depart:** As God cast out of national Israel in the destruction of Jerusalem those who maintained a hypocritical religiosity, so He will also cast away those of such a religious nature in the end (25:41; Lk 13:27). **24-27 These sayings of Mine:** See Lk 6:47-49. One must humbly seek the grace of God, being cautious that he does not depend on his own performance of law and good works as the sole condition for his salvation. Compare 15:1-9; Mk 7:1-9. **Does them:** See Js 1:22-25. One must be obedient to the words of Jesus (Jn 14:15; 15:14; 1 Jn 3:18), however, one does not obey in order to meritoriously justify himself before God. One obeys in response to the love of God (Rm 3:31; 1 Co 15:10; 1 Jn 4:19). **Rock:** The rock is the foundation of God's grace, not one's performance of law and good deeds. Any religious system that is not based on Jesus and His teachings will simply not stand in the end (See At 4:12).

28,29 At the end of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount,

the multitudes were amazed at the nature of His teaching (See 13:54; 22:33; Mk 1:22; 6:2; 11:18; Lk 4:32; Jn 7:46). He did not teach self-righteously as the scribes and Pharisees. **Authority:** Jesus spoke with originality in the sense that His teaching came from Himself, not His quotation of the former religious leaders of Israel. He did not dwell on interpretations of the law or the proclamations of interpretation of the Jews' religious fathers. He did not rely on the distorted interpretations of the scribes and Pharisees. Because He was the Son of God, He spoke as the Son would speak. He spoke with divine authority.

Chapter 8

JESUS HEALS THE SICK

(Mk 1:40 - 2:12; Lk 5:12-16)

1,2 Leper: Leprosy is caused by a bacterium that attacks the nerves and skin and causes the skin to swell and become lumpy and discolored. Lepers were shunned by all (Ex 4:6; Lv 13; Nm 12:10; 2 Kg 5:27). This leper humbly came before Jesus, kneeled down (Mk 1:40), and fell on his face (Lk 5:12). He worshiped Jesus (2:11; 9:18; 15:25; 18:26; 20:20; Jn 9:38). **3,4 Immediately ... cleansed:** Herein are two definitions of a miracle. It is instantaneous and the effect of such can be clearly seen by others. **Tell no one:** At this time in His ministry, Jesus did not want people coming to Him solely for the purpose of being healed. Much teaching needed to be done first (See 9:30; 12:16; 17:9; Mk 1:44; 3:12; 5:43; Lk 4:41; 9:21). However, regardless of Jesus' wishes, many went forth in their excitement and proclaimed what had happened in their lives (Lk 5:15,16; see Mk 6:19,20). **Show yourself:** According to the law, the leper needed confirmation by the priest that he was clean (Dt 24:8; Lv 13:49; 14:1-32). After he was declared clean, he could rejoice society.

6 and saying, "Lord, my servant lies paralyzed at home, terribly tormented."

7 And Jesus said to him, "I will come and heal him."

8 The centurion answered and said, "Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only speak the word and my servant will be healed.

9 "For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to this *one*, 'Go,' and he goes, and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does *it*."

10 When Jesus heard *this*, He marveled and said to those who followed, "Truly I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel.

11 "And I say to you, that many will come from the east and west, and will sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.

12 "But the children of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be

weeping and gnashing of teeth."

13 And Jesus said to the centurion, "Go your way. And as you have believed, *so* let it be done for you." And his servant was healed that *very* hour.

14 ¶ And when Jesus came into Peter's house, He saw his wife's mother lying sick in bed with a fever.

15 And He touched her hand and the fever left her. And she arose and ministered to Him.

16 ¶ When evening came, they brought to Him many who were possessed with demons. And He cast out the spirits with a word and healed all who were sick,

17 so that it might be fulfilled that was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying, "*He Himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses.*"

18 ¶ Now when Jesus saw great multitudes about Him, He gave a command to depart to the other side.

19 And a certain scribe came and said to Him, "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go."

HEALING OF A CENTURION'S SON

5 Centurion: This was a Roman military officer who was captain of one hundred men. This particular centurion came to Jesus. It is probable that the healing of the centurion's servant in Lk 7:1-10 is a different case than the one recorded here (See Lk 7:1-10). **Servant:** The Greek word used here literally means "young boy." **6-8 Paralyzed:** The servant was suffering torment from cramps. We do not know what the particular sickness was. **I am not worthy:** Though the leader of one hundred men, this Roman officer expressed great humility. Such indicates at this time in Jesus' ministry that His fame and work had spread to the highest levels of society. **Only speak the word:** The centurion believed in the power of Jesus to reach beyond His presence. He also knew that a Jew would be considered ceremonially unclean for entering a Gentile house. **9 Authority:** The centurion recognized Jesus' authority by spoken word because he had such authority himself. For this reason, he simply asked for a spoken word of authority in order that the young boy be healed. **10 Great faith:** His faith was great because as a Gentile he acted on his belief that Jesus could do something. Someone of his position could have sent one of his servants. But he humbly comes to Jesus himself (See 15:22-28). **11,12 Many will come:** Many Gentiles would come unto the kingdom reign of God (Ps 107:3; Is 49:12; 59:19; compare Gn 12:1-3; Is 2:2,3; 11:10; Mt 1:11; Jn 10:16; At 2:39-41; 11:18; 14:27). **Sons of the kingdom:** The unbelieving Jews who were the sons of the kingdom would actually reject Jesus (Jn 1:11). Because they would reject Jesus, God would reject them (22:13; 25:30; 2 Pt 2:17; Jd 13). See comments 11:11; 21:43. **Weeping:** This is a figure of terror in realizing that one has

lost something that is great. The Jews' rejection of Jesus would lead to the death of over one million Jews in the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, and eventually, their eternal condemnation in hell at the end of time (See 13:42,50; 22:13; Lk 13:28). **13 His servant was healed:** The great faith of the centurion resulted in the healing of his servant. The centurion's faith was increased because he witnessed the miracle (9:29). The lesson is that if we depend on faith, faith will be increased.

PETER'S MOTHER-IN-LAW IS HEALED

14,15 Peter's ... wife's mother: See Mk 1:29-34; Lk 4:38,39. This is undeniable proof that Peter was married (See 1 Co 9:5). Mark records that Andrew, James and John were also present during this event. **Fever:** It was a great fever according to Luke, the physician. Nevertheless, she was instantly and completely healed, again confirming the nature of a true miracle of God.

16,17 Evening had come: The healing of Peter's wife's mother happened on the Sabbath. The Jews' first day of the week started on Saturday evening at 6:00. Therefore, the people waited until after the Sabbath to be healed, lest they violate the interpretation of the Sabbath law that was imposed on them by the scribes and Pharisees. **Demon possessed:** See comments 4:24. **With a word:** Jesus used no ceremonies or formulas to cast out demons. Since He had complete authority over all that Satan could command, He simply cast out demons by word. **Took our infirmities:** See Is 53:4; 1 Pt 2:24. Jesus took away both physical infirmities and spiritual infirmities by physical and spiritual healing. By word of command, He healed the physically sick. By the cross, He healed the spiritually sick.

20 And Jesus said to him, "The foxes have holes and the birds of the air *have* nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay *His* head."

21 And another of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father."

22 But Jesus said to him, "Follow me, and let the dead bury their own dead."

23 ¶ And when He entered into a boat, His disciples followed Him.

24 And behold, there arose a great storm on the sea, so that the boat was covered with the waves. But He was asleep.

25 And His disciples came to *Him* and woke Him, saying, "Lord, save us! We are perishing!"

26 And He said to them, "Why are you fearful, O you of little faith?" Then He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea. And there was a great calm.

27 But the men marveled, saying, "What kind of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?"

28 ¶ And when He came to the other side into the country of the Gadarenes, there met Him two demon-possessed *men* coming out of the tombs. *They were* exceedingly fierce, so that no one could pass by that way.

29 And behold, they cried out, saying, "What have we to do with You, Jesus, You Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?"

30 And there was a good distance from them a herd of many swine feeding.

31 So the demons begged Him, saying, "If you cast us out, send us into the herd of swine."

32 And He said to them, "Go." And when they came out, they went into the herd of

STORM AT SEA

(Mk 4:35-41; Lk 8:22-25)

18,19 A certain scribe: Before Jesus crossed the Sea of Galilee, a lawyer of Jewish law, a scribe, came to Him. **I will follow:** This scribe had probably not yet counted the cost of discipleship. **20** While on earth, Jesus had no personal house or place to stay which He could call His own. **Son of man:** This was a reference to the Messiah. Jesus is also called the Son of David (1:1), Son of Abraham (1:1), Son of God (16:16), Son of Adam (Lk 3:38), Son of Joseph (Lk 3:23) and Son of Mary (13:55). By referring to Himself as the Son of man, Jesus is referring to Himself as the Messiah because the Jews used the term "Son of man" to refer to the Messiah. **21 Bury my father:** One of Jesus' disciples here feels his responsibility toward his father who was either dying or had just died (Lk 14:26,27). **22 Let the dead bury their own dead:** What is in Jesus' mind is the spiritually dead. In other words, "Let the spiritually dead bury their own physically dead." Jesus is demanding total commitment on the part of the disciples to the work of the kingdom (10:37; Lk 9:23,61,62; 14:25-35). Nothing must come between themselves and the work to which God will commission them. The disciple's destiny must not be diverted.

23 He got into a boat: After a weary day, Jesus withdrew from the crowds in order to rest. **24 Great tempest:** Though there was an impending great storm (Mk 4:37), Jesus fell asleep on a cushion (Mk 4:38). Such storms were common on the Sea of Galilee. The Sea was surrounded by mountains. The level of the Sea was about 180 meters (about 600 feet) below sea level. **25-27 Lord, save us:** Mark records that the disciples said, "Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?" The disciples wondered why He could sleep in the midst of such a storm. But Jesus was unconcerned with the storm, for He knew He could control the elements of nature (Mk 5:1-17; Lk 8:26-37). **He ... rebuked the winds and the sea:** Jesus first rebuked the disciples for their lack of faith (14:22-36). He then re-

buked the winds and sea (Mk 4:39). The event thus manifested Jesus' control over the environment of the supernatural in order to control the environment of man.

Who can this be: See Ps 89:9; 93:4. Jesus was moving the disciples to a confession of who He was. This confession would come chapter 16:13-20. True miracles are not subjectively defined, but empirically witnessed through the senses of men. They are instantaneous in occurrence, and thus, cannot be denied.

JESUS HEALS A GADARENE DEMONIAIC

(Mk 5:1-20; Lk 8:26-39)

28 Gergesenes: Or, Gadarenes. This was a Gentile area on the eastern side of the Sea of Galilee (Mk 5:1; Lk 8:26). **Two demon possessed men:** Both Mark and Luke record the actions of only one of the demoniacs. He was possibly the most outspoken of the two, and thus, was emphasized by Mark and Luke. See comments 4:24. **29 What have we to do with You:** More than one demon addressed Jesus. They recognized Jesus as the Son of God. **Before the time:** The demons, as well as Satan, know their destiny (25:41; At 16:16,17; Js 2:19; 2 Pt 2:4; Jd 6). Their destiny is the Abyss, and finally, destruction in gehenna (25:41; Lk 8:32). The demons know that Jesus has absolute power over them. **30-32 The demons begged Him:** The demons asked permission of Jesus, thus indicating that there is no comparison of power between the Son of God and the forces of Satan. This manifestation of the demons' attitude toward Jesus gives us the reason why God allowed demons to possess people in the first century. Demon possession was for the purpose of manifesting Jesus' absolute power over the realm of Satan and his work. **Herd of swine:** Spirits seek embodiment. These demons would take the bodies of swine over being disembodied. There were about two thousand swine feeding on the side of the mountain (Mk 5:11-13). The demons thus asked Jesus' permission to indwell the swine instead of being sent into the Abyss. **33,34** The possession of the swine by the demons drove

swine. And behold, the whole herd of swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea and perished in the waters.

33 And those who kept *the swine* fled. And they went away into the city and told everything, and what *had happened* to the demon-possessed *men*.

34 And behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus. And when they saw Him, they begged *Him* that He depart from their region.

Chapter 9

1 ¶ And He entered into a boat and crossed over *the sea* and came to His own city.

2 And behold, they brought to Him a paralytic man lying on a bed. And seeing their faith, Jesus said to the paralytic, "Son, be of good cheer, your sins are forgiven you."

3 And behold, some of the scribes said within themselves, "This *man* blasphemes."

4 And Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, "Why are you thinking evil in your hearts?"

5 "For which is easier to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Arise, and walk'?"

6 "But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins" – then He said to the paralytic, "Arise, take up your bed and go to your house."

7 And he arose and departed to his house.

8 But when the multitude saw *it*, they feared and glorified God who had given such authority to men.

9 ¶ And as Jesus passed from there, He saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, "Follow Me." And he arose and followed Him.

10 And it came to pass that as Jesus was reclining *at the table* in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples.

the swine senseless. They thus rushed into the sea and drowned. When God allows Satan to control a situation, only destruction occurs (See Jb 1:12-22). **They begged Him to depart:** This is certainly a sad legacy of a people who had given up godliness. They were more concerned about pigs than people. They asked Jesus to leave. They were afraid of the unknown, and because of their fear, these unspiritual people asked the Son of God to leave their presence (Lk 8:36,37). They were more concerned over their situation than over the two demoniacs who had been healed. One of the men who was possessed was commanded by Jesus to tell others what God had done for him. He thus went throughout the region proclaiming to all what Jesus had done for him (See Lk 8:39; Mk 5:20).

Chapter 9

JESUS HEALS A PARALYTIC

(Mk 2:1-12; Lk 5:17-26)

1,2 His own city: This was the city of Capernaum (4:13; Mk 2:1). **Paralytic:** This paralytic could not walk. Four of his friends thus brought him to Jesus on a bed. Since they were unable to get to Jesus through the crowd, they let him down on his bed through the roof. **Your sins are forgiven:** In this case, Jesus dealt first with that which was most important. He obviously does this in order to generate a controversy with the scribes who were present. Compare Mk 2:5,9; Lk 5:20,23; 7:48; 23:43. **3 This Man blasphemes:** The scribes and Pharisees (Lk 5:21) thought it blasphemy to assume the position of God by forgiving sins (See Jn 10:31-36; Lv 24:15,16). They were right. Only God can forgive sins. However, the opposite is taking place here. Blasphemy is assigning that which is of God to be of the Devil. This is exactly what they were doing. **4 Knowing their thoughts:** See 12:25; Ps 139:2; Lk 6:8; 9:47; 11:17. Jesus knew the thoughts and hearts of men (Jn 2:24,25). He has thus worked this situation in order to

reveal the evil thoughts and hearts of the scribes and Pharisees. **5-7 Which is easier:** The conclusion to the question is that the one who had the power to forgive sins, would also have the power to heal the sick. Both were possible with God, but impossible with men. If Jesus could heal, then certainly He had the authority to forgive sins. Only Jesus could do both. No one today has the power to forgive sins, for no one today is in the position of Jesus as the Son of God. **Power on earth to forgive sins:** The fact that Jesus could command the paralytic to be healed was proof of His messiahship, sonship, and thus, His authority to forgive sins (See Jn 3:2; 20:30,31; At 2:22). **8 They marvelled:** The multitudes who witnessed this miracle were filled with fear (Lk 5:26). They were convinced that God had given to Jesus the power to heal. They had never before seen anything as this (Mk 2:12; Lk 5:26).

THE CALL OF MATTHEW TO APOSTLESHIP

(Mk 2:13-17; Lk 5:27-32)

9 Matthew: This Matthew, or Levi, is the inspired writer of the book. He was a tax collector (publican) (Mk 2:14). He would later be an apostle of Jesus. **Tax office:** He was sitting on the high platform where taxes were collected. Tax collectors were given a portion from the taxes they collected, and thus, they often collected taxes dishonestly by taking advantage of their office by overtaxing the people (See 10:3; Lk 6:15; Mk 3:18; At 1:13). Some Jews considered them traitors to Israel, for as Jews they worked for the Roman government. **Follow me:** Matthew was surely acquainted with Jesus and His teachings before this call. This would explain the immediate response of Matthew to Jesus' call to follow Him (8:22). He could have been a disciple of John the Baptist before knowing Jesus (see At 1:21,22). **10 At the table in the house:** After deciding to follow Jesus, Matthew gave a party in his house in order to invite his acquaintances to hear what Jesus taught (Mk 2:15; Lk 5:29). **11** One concept the Pharisees had of

11 And when the Pharisees saw *this*, they said to His disciples, "Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?"

12 But when Jesus heard *this*, He said to them, "Those who are healthy do not need a physician, but those who are sick."

13 "But go and learn what *this* means, '*I desire mercy and not sacrifice*,' for I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

14 ¶ Then the disciples of John came to Him, saying, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast, but Your disciples do not fast?"

15 And Jesus said to them, "Can the atten-

dants of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them, and then they will fast.

16 "No one puts a piece of new cloth on an old garment, for the patch pulls away from the garment, and the tear is made worse.

17 "Nor do men put new wine into old wineskins, else the wineskins break and the wine runs out, and the wineskins are ruined. But they put new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved."

18 ¶ While He spoke these things to them,

the Messiah was that He would not sit in the presence of those who were considered dishonest and the outcast of society. Tax collectors, and those the Pharisees considered sinners, were not those with whom they thought Jesus, if He were the Messiah, should socialize. Compare 11:19; Mk 2:16; Lk 5:30; 15:2. **12 Those who are sick:** It was the Pharisees who considered tax collectors and the ones they identified as sinners, to be sick. Jesus uses a proverbial saying here in order to answer the Pharisees' accusation that He was with the sinners. They would certainly agree that if such people were sinners, then He as the physician should be with them (See Mk 2:17; Lk 5:31). **13 I desire mercy and not sacrifice:** This is a quote from the Greek Septuagint translation of Hosea 6:6 (See 1 Sm 15:22). Sacrifice was a command of God. However, the greater law of mercy must be exercised in order to bring sinners to righteousness (See comments 23:23,24). The legalistic approach to religious matters that was exercised by the Pharisees made it difficult for them to understand this principle of God. **I did not come to call the righteous:** This was an ironical statement that was applicable to the Pharisees who thought that they needed no repentance. They were legalistically righteous in their own eyes. However, in reality they needed to repent just as the ones they considered to be the most vile of sinners. Those who mourned over their sins are called to repentance (5:4). Those who do not recognize that they are sinners will not repent. Jesus knew that the faithful of Israel would accept Him as the Messiah. It was the unfaithful, those who were not of the faith of Abraham, that He sought to call to repentance (See Rm 3:23; 1 Tm 1:15; see comments Rm 4).

FASTING

(Mk 2:18-22; Lk 5:33-39)

14 According to the record of Mark and Luke, this question comes from the scribes and Pharisees (Lk 5:30). They asked why the disciples of John the Baptist and the disciples of the Pharisees fast and pray often and Jesus had not taught His disciples to do the same (Mk 2:18). The complaint is made to Jesus. **Your disciples do not fast:** These events took place at a time of fasting when the disciples of the Pharisees and John's disciples were fasting and praying (Mk 2:18; Lk 5:33). **Disciples:** Both the Pharisees and John had disciples. The term "disciple" is simply a term that is used to refer to one who was an apprentice, and thus, a follower and

learner of the one to whom the apprentice has given allegiance to be his teacher. In this context, the disciples of John had learned from him that they should fast. **15** Jesus answers the disciples of John by stating that it is not the time to fast when the bridegroom is present. Mark records, "As long as they have the bridegroom with them they cannot fast" (Mk 2:19). However, there would be a time when the bridegroom leaves. It will be in that time that His disciples would fast. **Then they will fast:** The companions (sons) of the bridegroom did not have to fast while the bridegroom was still in their presence. Jesus is describing Himself as the bridegroom. The time to fast will be when He goes away. In Jesus' situation, He was taken away at the cross in order to reign at the right hand of God. Since Jesus as the bridegroom has left, it is now the time for the disciples of Jesus to fast (See At 13:1-3; 1 Co 7:5). Jesus thus assumed that after His death and ascension, His disciples would fast. Those who are disciples of Jesus in this present age are therefore fasting. They will fast until the bridegroom (Jesus) comes for the bride (the church).

16 An old garment: One does not stitch a piece of new cloth that has not had time to shrink on to old clothes. If he does, the new piece will shrink and tear away from the old that has already shrunk. Jesus is saying that the new ways of His teachings cannot be patched to either Jewish traditions or the Old Testament law. Both must be taken away in order to make room for the new covenant and law (Cl 2:14; Rm 7:1-4; Hb 10:9,10). **17 New wineskins:** These were animal skins that were used to bottle liquids. New wine would ferment, expand, and thus, burst the old wineskins that were already brittle. Jesus did not pour His teachings of new wine into the old wineskins of Jewish traditions or any other teaching. Jesus is here preparing men to accept Him as the one through whom the Father will communicate all truth (Hb 1:1,2).

HEALING OF JAIRUS' DAUGHTER

(Mk 5:21-24; Lk 8:40-42)

A great multitude was now following Jesus (Mk 5:21). **18 A ruler:** Or, "magistrate." Jairus was one of the rulers of a local synagogue (Mk 5:22) who had only one daughter of about twelve years of age (Lk 8:42). **Worshiped Him:** Jairus knew that Jesus was more than a teacher of Israel and a prophet (8:2). **19** The multitudes crowded around Jesus as the man begged

behold, a certain ruler came and worshiped Him, saying, "My daughter has just died. But come and lay Your hand on her and she will live."

19 And Jesus arose and followed him, and *so did* His disciples.

20 And behold, a woman who was diseased with a hemorrhage of blood for twelve years, came behind *Him* and touched the hem of His garment.

21 For she said to herself, "If I only touch His garment, I will be healed."

22 But Jesus turning and seeing her said, "Daughter, be of good cheer. Your faith has made you well." And the woman was made well from that hour.

23 And when Jesus came into the ruler's house and saw the fluteplayers and the noisy crowd,

24 He said to them, "Make room, for the maid is not dead, but sleeps." And they *be-*

gan laughing at Him.

25 But when the people were put outside, He went in and took her by the hand, and the girl arose.

26 And the report of this went throughout all that land.

27 ¶ And when Jesus departed from there, two blind men followed Him, crying out and saying, "Son of David, have mercy on us!"

28 And when He came into the house, the blind men came to Him. And Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" They said to Him, "Yes, Lord."

29 Then He touched their eyes, saying, "According to your faith let it be done to you."

30 And their eyes were opened. And Jesus sternly charged them, saying, "See *that* no one knows *about this*."

31 But when they departed, they spread the news about Him throughout all that country.

32 ¶ As they went out, behold, they brought

Him to come to his house and heal the girl. Without questioning, Jesus went with Jairus. Now was the time in His ministry to resurrect someone from the dead.

HEALING A WOMAN WITH AN UNHEALED SORE

(Mk 5:25-34; Lk 8:43-48)

20-22 **A woman:** This woman had spent all she had on doctors who could not make her well (Mk 5:26).

Flow of blood: This was possibly a hemorrhaging or open sore that continually bled. It could also have been a chronic menstrual disorder that would make her unclean according to the Old Testament law (Lv 15:25).

Touched: She reasoned that if she could only touch the tassel or fringe of Jesus' robe then she would be healed (Mk 5:28). As a result of her faith, she was immediately healed when she touched the garment of Jesus (Mk 5:29). Mark and Luke record that Jesus insisted on being told who touched Him. The woman subsequently came forward in fear and trembling (Mk 5:33).

Your faith: Faith was not the condition upon which she was healed, but the motivating factor that drove her to touch Jesus. Her faith motivated her to overcome all obstacles in order to reach out and touch the One who could heal her (See Lk 7:50; 8:48; 17:19; 18:42).

RAISING JAIRUS' DAUGHTER

(Mk 5:35-43; Lk 8:49-56)

23 While Jesus was involved in the events concerning the healing of the woman, news came that Jairus' daughter had died (Mk 5:35). When Jesus arrived at the house, He allowed only Peter, James and John (the brother of James) to follow Him into Jairus' house (Mk 5:37). **Flute players:** It was a custom to hire musicians and professional mourners to wail over the death of a person (See Jr 9:17; 16:6; Ez 24:17; Am 5:16). **24** **The girl is ... sleeping:** In the eyes of God, the death of the righteous is only a sleep, for they shall rise. In the

situation here, the One who has the power to resurrect can change into life what may seem terminal to man. The people scorned at the statement of Jesus, for they knew that the young girl was actually dead (Compare Jn 11:13; At 20:10). **25,26** When Jesus took the girl by the hand, He commanded her to arise (Mk 5:41; Lk 8:54). Both Mark and Luke record that Jesus did not want this miracle to be made known. The reason He did not was that such would excite the crowds to ask Jesus to heal their friends instead of listening to His teaching. Nevertheless, the resurrection of the girl was proclaimed throughout the region (See 4:24; 14:1; Mk 1:28,45; Lk 5:15; 7:17).

HEALING OF

TWO BLIND MEN AND A SPEECHLESS MAN

27 **Son of David:** The two blind men recognized that Jesus was the Messiah. They followed Jesus and cried out for healing (Compare 12:23; 15:22; 20:31; 21:9,15; 22:44,45; see Is 35:5). **28** **Do you believe:** Their faith led them to follow Jesus into the house in which He was staying in Capernaum. Their faith was not a condition for healing, but evidence that they believed He was the Messiah, the Son of David. Their belief that Jesus was the Messiah led them to believe that as the Messiah, He could heal them. **29** **According to your faith:** They were healed according to their faith that Jesus as the Messiah could heal them (See vs 22; 8:13). **30,31** True miracles happened instantaneously. **See that no one knows it:** Early in the ministry of Jesus He wanted to do much teaching and preaching. If people knew of the healing, they would throng Him for such without listening to what He had to say (See 8:4; Mk 5:43). **Spread the news:** The two men who were healed probably thought that the only way they could thank Jesus was to tell others what He had done for them (4:24; 14:1).

to Him a mute man possessed with a demon.

33 And when the demon was cast out, the mute spoke. And the multitudes marveled, saying, "Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel."

34 But the Pharisees said, "He casts out demons by the ruler of the demons."

35 ¶ And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of sickness and every kind of disease.

36 But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were distressed and were scattered, like sheep having no shepherd.

37 Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest truly *is* plentiful, but the laborers *are* few.

38 "Therefore, pray *to* the Lord of the harvest so that He will send laborers into His harvest."

Chapter 10

1 ¶ And when He had called His twelve disciples to *Him*, He gave them authority *over* unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease.

2 Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother;

3 Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James *the son* of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus;

4 Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed Him.

5 ¶ These twelve Jesus sent out and commanded them, saying, "Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter into *any* city of the Samaritans.

6 "But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

7 "And as you go, preach, saying, 'The king-

32 As the two blind men went out of the house, a man who could not speak and was demon possessed was brought to Jesus (11:5; Mk 7:32; Lk 7:22). **Pos-sessed:** See comments 4:24. **33 It was never seen like this in Israel:** No demon had ever been cast out before in Israel. The proof that exorcists and witches had no power to cast out demons is seen in the fact that no one before Jesus had seen them cast out. **34** The Pharisees who witnessed the casting out of the demon did not deny that the demon had been cast out (See At 4:16). They simply affirmed that what Jesus had done was of the Devil. Such is blasphemy. **Ruler of the demons:** This is Satan (12:24-32). Jesus' work was either from God or Satan. The Pharisees here assign Jesus' work to Satan. They are thus saying that Jesus is of Satan (See 12:24; Mk 3:22; Lk 11:15; compare Jn 7:20ff; At 5:39).

NEED FOR LABORERS

35 It was the work of Jesus to go about teaching and preaching. He did not stay in one village, but went to all He could physically go during His ministry. **Every sickness and every disease:** Emphasis is on healing every kind of sickness and disease. No physical sickness was too difficult for Him to heal. **36 Moved with compassion:** Jesus was sympathetic for the physical needs of the people (See 14:14; Mk 1:41; 6:34). **Sheep having no shepherd:** The multitudes had no spiritual leader who would guide them unto the truth of God (See Mk 6:34; compare Nm 27:17; 1 Kg 22:17; Ez 34:5). **37 The harvest:** The people were being blindly led by legalistic teachers whose ambition it was to maintain their own positions and power over the people. There were few among the people who were spiritually leading the people according to the grace and love of God (See Lk 10:2; Jn 4:35). It is always the case that there are too few laborers for the need of harvesting. Christians live

in a world where much preaching of the gospel must be accomplished in every nation of the world. The problem is usually that the harvesters are diverted from the harvest to use their talents on things other than preaching the gospel to the lost. However, we must keep in mind that no one really has a right to hear the gospel a second time when there are countless millions who have never heard it once. **38 Pray:** One of the commands Jesus gave concerning prayer was that we express in our prayers a plea for more evangelists to carry forth the good news to the people. It is the duty of every Christian, therefore, to pray for more messengers to proclaim the gospel to the lost (2 Th 3:1).

Chapter 10

THE TWELVE APOSTLES

(Mk 6:7-13; Lk 9:1-6)

1 Jesus had chosen the twelve apostles by this time (Lk 6:13-16). **Gave them power:** Jesus here gives the twelve the authority to unleash the power of the supernatural would work miracles in the lives of men. They received this authority before the events of At 2 when they were baptized with the Holy Spirit (At 2:1-5). He is here giving them this authority in order to send them forth on preaching tours during His earthly ministry. **2-4** See Mk 3:16-19; Lk 6:14-16; At 1:13. Compare 1 Co 15:5,9; Ep 2:20.

5,6 Sent out: This was one of many limited commissions Jesus gave to the twelve apostles (Mk 6:7; Lk 9:2). They were not to go at this time to the Gentiles or Samaritans (15:24; Jn 4:9). They were to go only to the Jewish towns. After Jesus' ascension and the coming of the Holy Spirit on the apostles in At 2, they would go into all nations (28:19; Mk 16:15). One must keep in mind that Jesus sent the disciples out on many preaching tours in order to prepare the way for the cross and

dom of heaven is at hand.'

8 "Heal the sick. Raise *the* dead. Cleanse *the* lepers. Cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.

9 "Provide neither gold nor silver nor copper in your money belts,

10 "nor bag for *your* journey, nor two coats, nor sandals, nor a staff, for the worker is worthy of his food.

11 "And into whatever city or town you enter, inquire who is worthy in it, and there stay until you go.

12 "And when you come into a household, greet it.

13 "And if the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it. But if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you.

14 "And whoever will not receive you or hear your words, when you depart out of that

house or city, shake off the dust from your feet.

15 "Truly I say to you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city.

16 ¶ "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore, be wise as serpents and harmless as doves.

17 "But beware of men, for they will deliver you up to councils and they will scourge you in their synagogues.

18 "And you will be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and the Gentiles.

19 "But when they deliver you up, do not worry how or what you will say. For it will be given you in that same hour what you should say.

20 "For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit

establishment of His kingdom reign. The records of both Mark and Luke contain accounts of other tours, though some of the facts of those tours are similar to those given here by Matthew. **7,8 Kingdom of heaven is at hand:** See 3:2; 4:17; Lk 10:9. Jesus' kingdom reign was about to be established. Reference here is not to some supposed earthly kingdom that would come in the future. Jesus never intended to set up an earthly kingdom reign. Through His preaching and the preaching of the twelve, He was preparing Israel for His kingdom reign from heaven that would be the fulfillment of prophecy (See Dn 2:44; 7:13,14). **Devils:** See comments 4:24. **Freely give:** Herein is a principle of Christianity. In the context reference is to their freely receiving the power to heal the sick. They were not to heal for money. In the context here they were to use the free gift of healing in a generous manner. After their empowerment with the Holy Spirit in At 2, they would remember this principle, and thus, freely impart the miraculous gifts to all by the laying on of their hands (See comments At 8:18). However, the principle of freely giving as one freely receives permeates all principles of Christianity. God has freely given His grace. We should freely proclaim it to others. **9,10** They were to take no extra things that would burden their trip. They were to take only the clothes they wore and one staff (Mk 6:8). In other words, Jesus wanted them to go as quickly as possible to proclaim the message that the Messiah had arrived. In doing so, they must depend on God to take care of them. **Worker is worthy of his food:** Those who minister spiritual things are worthy of physical things. The preacher of the gospel to the lost must be paid. This has always been a principle among God's people (See Lk 10:7; 1 Co 9; Gl 6:6; 1 Tm 5:17,18). Brethren who do not support those who teach in all good things are not obeying the will of God in this matter (See comments 3 Jn 1-8). **11-13** They were not to lodge from house to house in the towns and cities unto which they went in order not to appear as men seeking material

blessings. They were to stay in one house. **Greet it:** See Lk 10:5-8. **Peace:** See Lk 10:5. Emphasis in these directives is based on the thought that the household that received the messengers was in agreement with and sought to fellowship the preaching of the messengers. **14,15 Shake off the dust:** This was a Jewish custom that was a show to the inhospitable their lack of hospitality and acceptance of the messenger (See Ne 5:13; Lk 10:10,11; At 13:51). In this case, those who would receive the messengers of Jesus were receiving Jesus (See 12:41; Jn 15:18-27). **Day of judgment:** If they did not receive Jesus and what He taught, they would be rejected by God in judgment (See 11:22-24; 24:12,13; At 17:31; 2 Co 5:10; 2 Pt 2:9; 3:7,8). In view of the statements in verses 16 through 23, the context seems to have reference to the disciples work unto the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. The day of judgment, therefore, would have reference to the judgment of God on Jerusalem (See comments of ch 24). **Sodom and Gomorrah:** See Gn 19; Jd 7. **16 Wise as serpents:** In these areas the serpent was symbolic of prudence, cunning and wisdom. The disciples are to exercise great wisdom in their work for the Master (See 2 Co 12:16; Ep 5:15; Cl 4:5). **Harmless as doves:** The dove was symbolic of peace, innocence and purity. In venturing into the dangers of their journey, the disciples must maintain their innocence in an environment of evil. In order to do such, they must exercise great wisdom on their journey (See Ep 5:15; Ph 2:14-16). **17,18** In this and the following verses, Jesus looks beyond the limited commissions that will occur during His ministry. He envisions the persecution the twelve apostles will endure throughout their ministry (See 23:34; At 5:18,40; 9:16; 12:1; 22:19; 26:11). **Testimony to them:** The arrests and trials before councils will give them an opportunity to preach to the Gentiles and government officials (See At 23; 26). **19,20 What you should speak:** This message is given directly to the apostles, for it signifies inspiration by the Holy Spirit (See Mk 13:11; Lk

of your Father who speaks in you.

21 “And a brother will deliver up brother to death, and a father *his* child. And the children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death.

22 “And you will be hated by all *men* for My name’s sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved.

23 “But when they persecute you in this city, flee to another. For truly I say to you, you will not have gone through the cities of Israel until the Son of Man comes.

24 “A disciple is not above *his* teacher, nor the bondservant above his master.

25 “It is enough for the disciple that he become like his teacher, and the bondservant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more *will they call* those of his household!

26 “Therefore, do not fear them. For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed and

hidden that will not be known.

27 ¶ “What I tell you in darkness, speak in the light. And what you hear in the ear, preach on the housetops.

28 “And do not fear those who kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

29 “Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father.

30 “But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

31 “Therefore, do not fear. You are more valuable than many sparrows.

32 ¶ “Therefore, whoever will confess Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven.

33 “But whoever will deny Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.

12:11,12; 21:14,15; Jn 14:26; 16:13,14; At 4:8; 13:9; compare Ex 4:12; Jr 1:7). **21** Jesus changes in the discourse to the third person. He thus states that not only would the apostles receive persecution, but persecution would also be waged against all the disciples of Jesus (At 14:22). In this case, loyalty to earthly things will outweigh loyalty to either family or faith. There will be great betrayal within relationships during times of persecution (See vss 34-36; Mc 7:6; Lk 21:16). **22** Jesus now turns to discussing specifically the case of the apostles. He warns them that all groups of peoples will persecute them (24:9; Lk 21:17; Jn 15:18). **He who endures:** Regardless of persecution, they must remain faithful even if it means death (24:13; Mk 13:13; 1 Co 13:7; Rv 2:10; 3:11). **23 Flee to another:** The disciples were not cowards. However, they must flee persecution in order to spare their own lives for another day and occasion for preaching. **Before the Son of Man comes:** Since the context is probably talking about the ministry of the disciples throughout their lives, emphasis here is to the coming of the Son of God in time in judgment upon the Jewish State in A.D. 70. **24 A disciple is not above his teacher:** It was a Jewish proverb that the teacher must be considered with greater respect than the student (Lk 6:40; Jn 15:20). Jesus here teaches that if the teacher suffers insult and persecution, then surely His disciples will suffer the same (Jn 13:16; 15:20). **25 Beelzebul:** This is the Greek equivalent to the name Baalzebul. This was the Philistine god who was lord of flies (2 Kg 1:2,3). Compare 10:25; 12:24-26; Mk 3:22; Lk 11:15,18,19 where Beelzebul is called the prince of demons. **Those of his household:** Jesus forewarns the disciples that they as His disciples are headed for persecution. **26 Do not fear:** Because of their faith, Christians are not cowards (Lk 12:2-9; see Rm 8:31,37; Ph 4:13). **Revealed:** Those misguided religious people who are after the nature of

Beelzebul will self-righteously persecute the disciples of Jesus. However, when the destruction of Jerusalem comes in A.D. 70, the truth that God was with the disciples will be manifested and the persecuting Jews will be openly manifested to no longer be God’s people. Compare Lk 8:17; 12:2,3; 1 Co 4:5. **27 Speak in the light:** What Jesus taught them privately they must boldly speak publicly (At 5:20; Rm 1:16; 16:25). **28 Do not fear:** Jesus instructs the disciples not to fear those who are able to kill the physical body. They must remember that they cannot destroy the soul (Lk 12:4; 1 Pt 3:14). They must fear God (Is 8:13; Lk 12:5; Hb 10:31). Their fear of God must overshadow their fear for their lives. **Able to destroy both soul and body in hell:** Reference here is to gehenna, the final destruction of the wicked (25:41; 2 Th 1:7-9). Jesus would not have made this statement if it were not possible. After just punishment has been meted out to the wicked, God can annihilate both the soul and the body of the wicked in the end. If He could not, then Jesus would never have made this statement. We must not assume that He made this statement as a passing thought that was not going to happen. The fact that He made the statement is evidence that such will happen to the wicked after their resurrection in the end and just punishment for their sin. **29-31** The question that Jesus asks here demands an affirmative answer. Though sparrows are insignificant in comparison to man, God notices and cares for them. Certainly He will care for the righteous (See 6:25-30; Rm 8:31-39). **Copper coin:** The Greek word here is *assarion* which was about one sixteenth of a denarius. **32,33 Confesses Me before men:** In this context reference is to the disciple’s living behavior that proclaims him to be a disciple of Jesus. Those who bravely live for Jesus on earth have their names confessed before God and written in the book of life (Ph 4:3; Rv 20:15; 21:27; see 10:21; Lk 12:8,49-53; Rv 3:5; compare

34 ¶ “Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword.

35 “For I came to ‘*set a man against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.*’

36 “And a man’s enemies *will be* those of his own household.

37 “He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.

38 “And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.

39 “He who finds his life will lose it. And he who loses his life for My sake will find it.

40 ¶ “He who receives you receives Me. And he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me.

41 “He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet’s reward. And he who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man will receive a righteous man’s reward.

42 “And whoever, in the name of a disciple, will give to one of these little ones a cup of cold *water*, truly I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward.”

Chapter 11

1 ¶ And it came to pass when Jesus had finished commanding His twelve disciples, He departed from there to teach and to preach in their cities.

2 Now when John had heard in the prison *concerning* the works of Christ, he sent *word* through his disciples,

3 asking Him, “Are You the One who is to come, or do we look for another?”

16:17,18; Rm 10:9,10; 1 Tm 6:12,13). **Denies Me before men:** One denies Jesus by not living according to the standards of the One after whom he calls himself (See Lk 9:26; Jn 12:42; 2 Tm 2:12).

THE COST OF DISCIPLESHIP

34-36 The statements that Jesus makes here must be considered a part of the instructions of verses 1-33. He is giving the disciples instruction concerning the limited commission and their ministry in general. **Sword:** Though Jesus is the Prince of peace, the message which He brought would divide the righteous from the unrighteous (Lk 12:49). His message would cause great tension between those who want to do right and those who want to continue to walk in darkness (See Mc 7:6). He is again emphasizing the persecution that the wicked would bring on His disciples. Families would be divided when one member would obey the gospel and the other would not. **37** Jesus calls on His disciples to follow Him even if the wishes of their fathers or mothers are contrary to the will of God. One’s relationship with God is far more important than his relationship with his family on earth. This passage explains Luke’s use of the word “hate” in reference to the disciples’ allegiance to Jesus over family (See Lk 14:26; compare the example of Gn 29:31). **38** See 16:24; Mk 8:34; Lk 9:23; 14:27. **Cross:** As the condemned person had to bear his own cross to his own crucifixion, so Jesus affirms that His disciples must bear their own crosses of persecution in their ministry to His will. **39 Finds his life:** The one who would deny Jesus in order to save his life will lose his own soul. However, he who would stand firm in the face of persecution and death will receive eternal life in the end (16:25; Lk 9:24; 17:33; Jn 12:25; Rv 2:10). **40-42 He who receives you:** See verse 14; 12:41; 25:35-40,42-45; Lk 9:48; Jn 12:44. Compare Ja 2:8-22; 1 Kg 17:10; 18:3,4; Hb 11:31. **Receives:** Those who receive the disciples into fellowship by accepting their teaching are actually receiving Jesus and His teachings (See Jn

13:20; At 16:15; Gl 4:14; 2 Jn 9; compare 1 Kg 17:10; 2 Kg 4:8). **Reward:** See 25:40; Mk 9:41; Hb 6:10. Those who receive Jesus shall receive the reward one receives for receiving a prophet or righteous man (Mk 9:41). Receiving Jesus is more than acknowledging Him to be the Son of God. Receiving means obedience to His will. In order to receive Jesus, therefore, one must obey the gospel of Jesus by immersion for remission of sins (See comments Rm 6:3-5).

Chapter 11

MESSENGERS FROM JOHN

(Lk 7:18-35)

1 This verse actually concludes the instructions concerning the ministry of and teachings given to the disciples that Jesus delivers in chapter 10 (Mk 6:12,13; Lk 9:6). The assumption here is that the disciples then went forth preaching and healing the sick. Jesus, however, went on to preach and teach in other cities (9:35; Lk 23:5). **2 John ... in prison:** John the Baptist had been cast into prison by Herod because he preached against Herod’s unlawful living with his brother’s wife, Herodias (Lk 3:19,20; Mk 6:17,18). Since Herod was related by blood to Herodias, he was living in incest. **3 Are You the Coming One:** John wanted to know for sure if Jesus were the Messiah (See Gn 49:10; Nm 24:17; Dn 9:24; Jn 6:14). John knew that Jesus was the Messiah (Jn 1:29; 3:27-36). However, John was possibly despondent while in prison and just wanted reassurance that Jesus was the Messiah. On the other hand, John may have known that his end was near. He thus sent his disciples to Jesus in order to turn their interest toward Jesus. At this time in His ministry, Jesus did not want to openly proclaim His messiahship lest He be tried and condemned before He had accomplished His work of teaching and preaching. Therefore, He presents His miraculous works to John’s disciples as proof of His messiahship (See Jn 3:2). **4,5** Luke records that

4 Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and show John again those things that you hear and see.

5 "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.

6 "And blessed is he who does not take offense because of Me."

7 And as they departed, Jesus began to say to the multitudes concerning John, "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind?"

8 "But what did you go out to see? A man clothed in soft clothing? Behold, those who wear soft *clothing* are in kings' houses.

9 "But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I say to you, and more than a prophet.

10 "For this is the one about whom it is written, '*Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, who will prepare Your way before You.*'"

11 "Truly I say to you, among those who are born of women there has not risen a greater than John the Baptist. However, he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

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

13 "For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John.

when the disciples of John made the inquiry, Jesus worked many miracles. Jesus' answer to John, therefore, was the works that He did. **Poor:** One of the characteristics of the work of the Messiah was that He would preach to the poor (Is 29:18,19; 35:4-6; 61:1). One of the characteristics of the true disciples of Jesus, therefore, is to follow this example. **Dead are raised up:** No false prophet could raise the dead or heal the sick. God does not allow Satan to work miracles. If He did, then Jesus' proof of His messiahship here would mean nothing. However, Jesus' miracles will always stand as proof that He was more than a man (Jn 3:2; 20:30,31; At 2:22). His miracles will always stand proof that God has never allowed Satan to work miracles in order to cancel the witnessing effect of the miracles of God's messengers. **6** John and others were not to lose faith or be ashamed because of the humble life Jesus lived as the Messiah (Is 8:14,15; 53; Rm 9:32; 1 Pt 2:8). Jesus came to restore spiritual life to the hopeless in spiritual death. He came to encourage those who have nothing of this world in how they can be rich in faith (Js 1:9). Compare 13:21,57; 16:23; Jn 6:61; 16:1. **7 What did you go out ... to see:** In Jesus' tribute to John, He proclaims that John was not a vacillating or unstable reed blown by the wind (Ep 4:14). John was a strong personality who was able to live in the desert and stand firm for what he believed. **8** John was not a man dressed for the rich and luxurious life of those who lived in a worldly manner. He was not a graduate of the schools of higher learning in the cities, nor a dweller of suburban Jerusalem. He lived a rural life-style that demanded faith on the part of those who would go out to hear and obey his message. **9,10 More than a prophet:** See 14:5; 21:26; Lk 1:76; 20:6. John's coming was specifically foretold (Mt 3:1). He was filled with the Holy Spirit from his mother's womb (Lk 1:15). In other words, as the special messenger of God who was prophesied in Malachi 3:1, he was born for a specific purpose that was determined by God over four hundred years before his birth. His calling to be the forerunner for the Son of God made him more than the ordinary prophets of God. **11 Born of women:** See this idiom in Job 14:1; 15:14; 25:4. **The Baptist:** Literally, this would be translated "the immerser." He was "John, the immerser." John

was called such because he immersed people. **Least in the kingdom:** God's kingdom reign over all things has always existed (See 1 Ch 29:11). It was in existence at the time Jesus made these statements concerning John. Therefore, John was a subject of this kingdom (See 5:10,17-19; 8:11,12; 21:43; Ps 10:16; 22:28; 24:10; 44:4; 103:19; Dn 4:3,34; 6:26; 1 Ch 29:9-11; 1 Tm 1:17). John was a subject of God's kingdom reign that has always existed. However, he was not in the church, for the church and the kingdom are two different things. Kingdom refers to God's rule from heaven. Church refers to man's response on earth. The response to the establishment of the kingdom reign of Jesus that was announced on the day of Pentecost in At 2 was the submission of men on earth. And thus, the church started in At 2 as a result of the first official announcement of the kingdom reign of Jesus by Peter in At 2 (See comments 16:18,19). Those who are now subjects to the kingdom reign of Jesus know more of the kingdom of Jesus than John. **12 The kingdom of heaven suffers violence:** This is undeniable proof that John was in the kingdom of God. He was in the kingdom of God's divine rule that has been in existence since the beginning of time (1 Ch 29:9-11). **Of heaven:** Or, "kingdom of God" (Lk 7:28). The authority of the kingdom originates from God and out of heaven. **Suffers violence:** From the beginning of John's ministry, when the preparation for the kingdom reign of Jesus began, the disciples of John and Jesus were zealous to bring into being what they misunderstood to be a physical kingdom reign of Jesus on earth. They believed that the Messiah would restore governmental and military power to Israel in order to expel the Romans from their land (See At 1:6; Jn 6:14:15; Mt 20:21; Lk 19:11; 22:24-30). However, God never intended that Jesus' kingdom be of this world (Jn 18:36,37). **13 Until John:** See Lk 16:16. The law and prophets foretold the coming of John as the voice of the one crying in the wilderness (Mt 4:4-6). The law and prophets also spoke of the Messiah who was at this time standing in their midst. **14 Elijah:** See 17:10-13; Mk 9:11-13. John was not Elijah who had been resurrected from the dead (Jn 1:21). He was the one of whom it was prophesied (Mt 4:4-6). It was prophesied that he would come in the spirit and

14 “And if you are willing to receive *it*, this is Elijah who was to come.

15 “He who has ears to hear, let him hear.

16 “But to what will I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to their fellows,

17 “and saying, ‘We played the flute for you and you did not dance. We sang a dirge to you and you did not mourn.’

18 “For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, ‘He has a demon.’

19 “The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Behold, a man gluttonous and a winebibber, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.’ But wisdom is vindicated by her works.”

20 ¶ Then He began to rebuke the cities in which most of His mighty works were done, because they did not repent.

21 “Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works that were

done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

22 “But I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you.

23 “And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? No, you will be brought down to Hades, for if the mighty works that were done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.

24 “But I say to you, that it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for you.”

25 ¶ At that time Jesus answered and said, “I thank You, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and have revealed them to babes.

26 “Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight.

power of Elijah (Lk 1:17). **15 Let him hear:** See 13:9; Mk 4:9; Lk 8:8; Rv 2:7. One must have an open heart and mind in order to hear what the prophets spoke concerning the coming of the Messiah. **16,17 This generation:** As unruly children misbehave in the marketplace, Jesus says that His generation is dissatisfied with the religious games they play. Jesus did not behave as the religious leaders of his day assumed the Messiah would behave. **18,19 He has a demon:** John came living the sacrificial life of a prophet in the wilderness. Nevertheless, his generation was dissatisfied with one who led such a lowly life. **Gluttonous man:** Jesus is here repeating what people were gossiping about Him. John preached in the wilderness, but Jesus preached in the cities. Regardless of the setting in which they preached, those who did not want to hear the truth propagated all sorts of slanderous gossip about them. **Wisdom:** Because the results of correct decisions manifest wisdom, Jesus said that the wise would eventually recognize and justify the life and teachings of both John and Jesus. The wise could recognize that the teachings of both John and Jesus have originated from God and not man.

WOE UNTO THE CITIES

20 Rebuke the cities: Jesus had preached in the cities. However, many in these cities had rejected His teaching. In this context, therefore, He rebukes them for their unbelief. **Mighty works:** The cities had rejected His message regardless of the many miracles He had worked in them (Lk 4:23; Jn 21:25). The miracles were worked in order to produce belief, but in the case of these cities, such did not happen (See Jn 20:30,31). **21,22 Chorazin ... Bethsaida:** Chorazin and Bethsaida had great witness manifested to them by the personal miraculous work of Jesus within their limits. They had more opportunity to repent than the ancient Gentile cit-

ies of Tyre and Sidon (See Is 23:7-18; Ez 26:14; 27:1-11; 28:1-10). **Sackcloth and ashes:** This was an outward sign of repentance, humility and submission to God (Is 58:5; Jn 3:5). If the miraculous works that Jesus did in Chorazin and Bethsaida had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented. Jesus seems to indicate that the citizens of the Jewish cities have contented themselves with their metropolitan religious life and were uninterested in a carpenter's son from Nazareth. **Day of judgment:** See 10:15; 11:24. Reference here could be to the destruction the Roman armies would spread across the land of Palestine in the final destruction of the Jewish State in A.D. 70. This would be a day of judgment in time, though such a judgment would also come at the end of time upon the earth and all who reject Jesus (2 Pt 3:10,11). **23,24 Capernaum:** Jesus resided here after leaving Nazareth. Many miraculous works and teachings were accomplished in this city. As a result, the residents of Capernaum would be held accountable for much. Their privilege of having the personal testimony and work of the Son of God gave them more responsibility concerning their reaction to Him. **Hades:** Proud Capernaum would be brought down to the realm of the unseen world of the dead. **Sodom:** This Old Testament Gentile city was destroyed because of her wickedness (Gn 19:24,25,34; Ez 16:48,49). However, if she had had the personal witness of Jesus, she would have repented.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

25,26 Hidden these things: The behavior of the righteous life is considered foolishness by those who have exalted worldly wisdom and ways (See 13:10ff; Ex 7:3,4; 2 Sm 12:11,12; Is 12:1; Ps 8:2; Rm 6:17; 1 Co 1:19,21-25; 2:8; 2 Co 3:14). **Babes:** Those who are of a humble heart will listen to those things that deal with our spiritual relationship with God. For this reason, God

27 “All things have been delivered to Me by My Father. And no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and *the one* to whom the Son desires to reveal *Him*.

28 “Come to Me all *you* who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

29 “Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

30 “For My yoke *is* easy and My burden is light.”

Chapter 12

1 ¶ At that time Jesus went on the Sabbath through the grainfields. And His disciples

were hungry and began to pluck the ears of grain and to eat.

2 But when the Pharisees saw *it*, they said to Him, “Behold, your disciples do what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath.”

3 But He said to them, “Have you not read what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him,

4 “how he entered into the house of God and ate the showbread, which was not lawful for him to eat, nor for those who were with him, but only for the priests?”

5 “Or have you not read in the law that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple break the Sabbath and are innocent?”

6 “But I say to you, that in this place is *One*

sent forth John and Jesus into a humble environment. Those who are of a humble heart will listen. **27** *All things have been delivered to Me:* During His ministry on earth, Jesus knew that all authority had been delivered to Him in order to reign over all things (See 28:18; Jn 3:35; 13:3; 17:2; 1 Co 15:27; 1 Pt 3:22). He was moving toward the ascension to the right hand of the Father where He would exercise all authority as King of kings and Lord of lords (Ep 1:20-23; 1 Tm 6:15). Since He has now ascended to the right hand of the Father, all men approach God through Him (Jn 14:6; compare Jn 7:29; 10:15; 17:25; 1 Tm 2:5). *Know the Father:* See Jn 1:18; 6:46; 10:15. **28** *Come to Me:* Because all authority had been given to Jesus, He made this invitation to all men to come unto Him. Compare Jn 6:35-51; 7:37; Jr 31:25. *Labor ... heavy laden:* Jesus' invitation is to those who live under the stress and turmoil of the world. Those who recognize their spiritual poverty realize that they need grace and mercy. Those who live under the oppression of religious traditions and religious emotionalism need the freedom that Jesus has to offer (See 5:3; 23:4; At 15:10; Gl 5:1; 1 Pt 5:6,7). In the religious context of Jesus' teachings are those who have been burdened with their struggle for legal justification through the performance of law and good works (See Rm 3:20; Gl 2:16; 3:11-14). These people needed to be delivered from the bondage of their own self-imposed religion (Gl 5:1). **29,30** *Take My yoke:* The yoke was a heavy burden that was used to laden oxen for plowing the fields. The burdens of the world and religious traditions laden those of this world who trust in themselves (See Dt 28:48; Jr 28:14; Lm 1:14; Gl 5:1). The freedom that one receives in Christ makes the yoke of Jesus' commandments light. When one is motivated by grace and love, the commandments of God are not a burden (1 Jn 5:3). *Learn:* Jn 6:45; 13:15; Ep 4:20; Ph 2:5; 1 Pt 2:21; 2 Pt 3:18; 1 Jn 2:6. *Rest for your souls:* One finds peace in realizing that his sins are forgiven by the grace of God. One finds peace of mind when understanding that God has loved us and delivered us from our sin through the cross of Christ. In Christ, one is not under the curse of law, that is, having to keep law perfectly in an effort to be saved oneself (See comments Gl 3:11-14). In Christ one can cast all anxiety upon God

who cares for our emotional and spiritual well-being (1 Pt 5:6,7; compare Jn 14:27; 16:33; Rm 1:7; 8:6; 14:17; Ph 4:7).

Chapter 12

THE SABBATH CONTROVERSY

(Mk 2:23 - 3:6; Lk 6:1-11)

1,2 The events Matthew records here are not necessarily in chronological order concerning Jesus' ministry. Matthew's purpose is to show the increasing hostility of the Jewish leadership that Jesus generates in order to take Himself to the cross (See Jn 10:17,18). **At that time:** This is after the second Passover of Jesus' ministry (Lk 6:1). **Began to pluck heads of grain:** The legalistic Pharisees were not accusing the disciples of stealing the grain. Under the Old Testament law one had a right to pluck the grain from one's field when travelling, though he could not put a sickle to the crop (See Dt 23:25). They were accusing them of breaking their traditions of the Sabbath by doing the minor work of plucking out the grain on the Sabbath. Jesus and the disciples were violating one of the numerous laws the Pharisees had bound as a result of the traditions of the fathers in order that the Sabbath be kept (See Ex 20:10; 36:2,3; Nm 15:32-36; introduction to Gl). **3-5** *What David did:* See 1 Sm 21:1-7. What David did was actually against lesser legalities of the law, for only the priests were to eat of the showbread (See Ex 25:30; Lv 24:5-9; Nm 28:9,10; 1 Sm 21:6). Though David's actions were technically unlawful according to the law that only the priests were to eat of the bread, there was a higher law of God that superseded the original law. That higher law was the preservation of God's anointed, who was David. The Pharisees recognized this. However, they justified David's actions while at the same time complained that Jesus and the disciples were breaking the law of the Sabbath. Jesus points out their inconsistent application of the law, though in this context Jesus and the disciples did not violate any Old Testament law. They violated the Pharisees' interpretation of the Sabbath law. **Priests ... profane the Sabbath:** The priests had to work in violation of Sabbath laws in order to prepare sacrifices because they had to work on the Sabbath in

greater than the temple.

7 “But if you had known what *this* means, ‘*I desire mercy and not sacrifice*,’ you would not have condemned the innocent.

8 “For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.”

9 ¶ And when He had departed from there, He went into their synagogue.

10 And, behold, there was a man whose hand had withered. In order that they might accuse Him, they asked Him, saying, “Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?”

11 And He said to them, “What man is there among you who has a sheep, and if it falls

into a pit on the Sabbath, will not lay hold of it and lift it out?”

12 “How much more valuable then is a man than a sheep? Therefore, it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.”

13 Then He said to the man, “Stretch forth your hand.” And he stretched it forth, and it was restored to normal like the other.

14 Then the Pharisees went out and held a council against Him, how they might destroy Him.

15 ¶ But when Jesus knew it, He withdrew Himself from there. And many followed Him, and He healed them all.

preparation of sacrifices (Nm 28:9,10). They were blameless because their God-ordained work to prepare sacrifices for the people superseded the law to rest on the Sabbath. **6 One greater than the temple:** See verses 41,42; Is 66:1,2. Jesus was more glorious than the temple which the Jews honored above all things on earth (See the prophecy of Hg 2:7-9; compare 2 Ch 6:18; Mt 3:1; Hb 3:3). **7 I desire mercy and not sacrifice:** Sacrifice was a law of God. However, mercy was a higher law. The Pharisees in their legal understanding and application of law could not understand this principle concerning the laws of God (See Hs 6:6; Mc 6:6-8). Jesus here attacks the judgmental attitudes of the Pharisees which motivated them to criticize the plucking of the corn. **8 Lord even of the Sabbath:** The One who was in their midst was the One who had authority over the Sabbath. Jesus was of the triune God who instituted the Sabbath. Mark records that Jesus said that the Sabbath was made for man (Mk 2:27). The Sabbath was made for the benefit of man, for on the Sabbath men were to rest from their labors (Ex 20:11). The Pharisees thought that man was made for the Sabbath. In other words, they believed that God made the Sabbath a holy day of worship in order that men renew their spiritual life and worship to God on this day. However, God intended it to be a day of rest for man (Ex 20:10,11). It was thus a law that was established for the physical well-being of man (See Mk 2:27,28). In reference to the nation of Israel, the Sabbath was given to national Israel as a sign between God and the nation of Israel. When the Old Testament law was abolished, the Sabbath law was also taken away (See Cl 2:16).

9,10 The events recorded here took place on another Sabbath than the one in the previous verses. See Mk 3:1-5; Lk 6:6-10; Jn 5:10; 7:23. **They asked Him:** The Pharisees here seek another opportunity to accuse Jesus of violating their laws of the Sabbath. They do such in order to accuse Him before the people that He violates the law. **Withered hand:** The legalistic Pharisees are here more concerned over the violation of their Sabbath laws than the healing of this man. Such manifests the hypocrisy of religion that is based on an outward manifestation of a legal presentation of religiosity without concentration on the heart for spiritual change (See comments Mk 7:6-9). **11** Mark records that at this time Jesus was angered with their hardened hearts (Mk 3:5). It seems that they did not doubt that Jesus could

miraculously heal the withered hand. They wanted to see if He would do such on the Sabbath. If He did such work on the Sabbath, then they could accuse Him of working against their laws of the Sabbath. The real conflict here is between the legal and earthly interest of the Pharisees as opposed to the human interests of Jesus. Jesus pointed out that if the Pharisees' material interests were in danger on the Sabbath, they would do what was necessary to rescue a sheep. However, they were here critical of Jesus because of His human interest in healing on the Sabbath. **12 Is it lawful:** By asking a question in order to answer their argument, Jesus is saying that it is always right to do good (Gl 6:10). It is simply right to do good on the Sabbath in reference to human interest because men are more important than sheep. **13,14 The Pharisees ... took counsel against Him:** Herein is manifested the hardness of heart of those who profess a legal-oriented religion. The Pharisees cared nothing for the man with the withered hand. Their concern was for their doctrinal strictness in keeping their traditions in reference to the keeping of the Sabbath and their arrogant positions of leadership among the people. At this time in the controversy between Jesus and the religious leaders, the tension begins to grow. The Pharisees now scheme to remove Jesus (Lk 6:11). He was in competition with their positions of leadership, their hypocritical lives and inconsistent beliefs. They were infuriated because He manifested the inconsistencies of their theology and the callousness of their hearts. **Destroy Him:** Because these religious leaders could not consistently argue with Jesus through correct reasoning from the Old Testament Scriptures, they were frustrated to the point of killing Him. Religions that are developed with emphasis on outward appearances and ceremonial worship, are often hypocritical in the sense that adherents can be members of such religions without changed hearts. The religious leaders in this context manifested the hypocrisy of such religions by planning evil when professing a form of righteousness. See Mk 3:6; Lk 6:11; Jn 5:18; 10:39; 11:53.

JESUS HEALS MANY DISEASES

(Mk 3:7-12)

15,16 Jesus ... withdrew from there: We must always keep in mind that throughout Jesus' ministry He is controlling the tension between Himself and the religious leaders. He is doing such in order to take Himself

16 And *He* charged them that they should not make Him known,

17 so that it might be fulfilled that was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying,

18 “Behold, My Servant whom I have chosen. My Beloved in whom My soul is well pleased. I will put My Spirit upon Him and He will proclaim justice to the Gentiles.

19 He will not strive, nor cry. Nor will anyone hear His voice in the streets.

20 A bruised reed He will not break and a smoking flax He will not quench, until He leads justice to victory.

21 And in His name the Gentiles will hope.”

22 ¶ Then one was brought to Him possessed with a demon, blind and mute. And He healed him, so that the mute both spoke and saw.

23 And all the people were amazed, and said, “Is not this the Son of David?”

24 But when the Pharisees heard *it*, they said, “This *man* does not cast out demons except by Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons.”

25 And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said to them, “Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation. And every city or house divided against itself will not stand.

26 “And if Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand?

27 “And if I by Beelzebul cast out demons, by whom do your children cast *them* out? Therefore, they will be your judges.

28 “But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come unto

to the cross by their envious hands (See comments Jn 10:17,18). In this case, therefore, Jesus perceived that the Pharisees and Herodians (Mk 3:6) were about to kill Him. He therefore withdrew to the sea of Galilee (Mk 3:7). It was not in His plan to be killed by these religious leaders at this time (Compare 10:23). **Herodians:** These were an influential political group which was composed mainly of the aristocratic Sadducean priests. They supported the reign of the Herods in Palestine, as well as Roman occupation of Palestine (See 22:16; Mk 3:6; 12:13). **He healed them all:** Jesus healed all in the multitudes who followed Him on this occasion (See Mk 3:7-12). **Not to make known:** See 8:4; 9:30; 17:9. He did not want to expedite at this time the desire of His enemies to take His life. **17-21** Isaiah prophesied of the characteristics of the Messiah (Is 42:1-4). The nature of the prophecy was that the Messiah would not be one who sought recognition as men do. Jesus would not manifest an egotistical spirit in order to seek publicity and popularity. He came from a humble earthly background with a spirit to call all men into humble service of God and their fellow man. **Spirit:** See Lk 4:18; Jn 3:34. **Declare justice to the Gentiles:** The prophecy is that the Gentiles would have the gospel of God's grace declared to them. They would be justified by faith (Rm 1:17; Gl 3:11; Hb 10:38). **Bruised reed ... smoking flax:** These are figures of the Gentiles' weakness of faith and mourning over their sin. As prophesied by Isaiah, the Messiah would not be hardened concerning the Gentiles' recognition of their spiritual poverty. He would respond with compassion and forgiveness of their sins. And thus, in Him the Gentiles would have faith (Ep 2:12).

ACCUSATIONS CONCERNING BEELZEBUB

(Mk 3:22; Lk 11:14-28)

22 Demon possessed: See comments 4:24. The demon who possessed this man caused him to be deaf and blind. **23 Son of David:** See 1:1; 9:27; 21:9. They were asking if this Jesus could be the Messiah. Compare Jn 4:29,30; 7:31. **24 Beelzebul:** The Greek text reads “Beelzebul.” Reference is probably to the Philistine god of Ekron the Jews of Jesus' day considered to

be the ruler of all demons (2 Kg 1:2,16; see Mt 9:34; 12:24,27; Mk 3:22,29; Lk 11:15-20). **By Beelzebul:** This is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit (vss 31,32). The Pharisees were stating that the work of the Holy Spirit through Jesus – casting out of demons – to be the work of Satan. As long as one believes that the work of Jesus was the work of Satan, then he will not come to a knowledge of the truth and be obedient to the will of Jesus. Therefore, those who oppose the work of the disciples of Jesus by claiming that the disciples are false teachers, are blaspheming against the work of the Holy Spirit. There can be no forgiveness for this sin simply because the ones who so blaspheme will not accept the truth spoken by the disciples, and thus, repent. **25,26 Knew their thoughts:** See 9:4; Jn 2:25; Rv 2:23. Compare Ps 44:21; 139:2. Jesus could know the thoughts and motives of men while on earth. **Divided against itself:** Jesus answers the Pharisees by saying that Satan cannot work against himself by casting out his own demons who were doing his work. **27 Your sons:** If the disciples of the Pharisees pretended to cast out demons, then certainly they were doing such by Beelzebul. Jesus thus asked them to judge their sons. If they accused Him of casting out demons by Beelzebul, then their sons were attempting to exorcise demons in the name of Beelzebul (See Mk 9:38; At 19:13,14). **Your judges:** In the end it will be found that the false Jewish exorcists were falsely claiming the casting out of demons. The manifestation of their false work will be a judge against them that they were not of God. No one was allowed to cast out demons in the first century except those who were sent forth by Jesus. **28 By the Spirit of God:** The Holy Spirit was working through Jesus to cast out demons, therefore, accusations against Jesus that He was doing such by Beelzebul was actually accusation against the Holy Spirit (See 31,32). Luke records that by “the finger of God” (Lk 11:20) – the power of God (Ex 8:19) – Jesus cast out demons. Therefore, if Jesus cast out demons by the power of God, then the kingdom reign of God has been manifested to them (See Dn 2:44; 7:24; Lk 1:22; 11:20; 17:20,21). **29 Strong man's house:** Satan is pictured as the strong man. Jesus would crush the domain of Satan when He died

you.

29 “Or how can one enter a strong man’s house and plunder his goods, except he first bind the strong man? And then he will plunder his house.

30 “He who is not with Me is against Me. And he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad.

31 ¶ “Therefore, I say to you, all manner of sin and blasphemy will be forgiven to men. But the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven.

32 “And whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him. But whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the *age* to come.

33 ¶ “Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or else make the tree bad and its fruit bad. For the tree is known by *its* fruit.

34 “O generation of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.

35 “The good man brings good treasure out of good things. And an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things.

36 “But I say to you, that every idle word that men will speak, they will give account for it in the day of judgment.

37 “For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.”

38 ¶ Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered, saying, “Teacher, we want to see a sign from You.”

on the cross and was resurrected from the dead (See comments Rv 20:1,2). At this time, Jesus was entering the domain of Satan and destroying his house by the casting out of demons. Thus is manifested the reason why God allowed demons to possess people at this time in history. The purpose was to manifest the power of Jesus over all that Satan had or has. **30** Jesus is now calling on those who hear Him to choose sides. In the conflict between God and Satan, one will have to choose either the side of righteousness (God) or the side of evil (Satan). One does not have the option to choose both (6:24; 16:24-26; Mk 9:40). One is either producing fruit for God or is producing fruit for Satan (Jn 15:1-5; Rv 3:15,16). **31 Blasphemy:** See verse 24; Mk 3:28-30; Lk 12:10; At 7:51. This is malicious and injurious speech against the work of God. It is such because the accusers are assigning the work of God to Satan. This was the grave error of the Pharisees in their attack against Jesus and His ministry. Jesus came from God and His works came from God through the Holy Spirit (Jn 3:2). But the Pharisees proclaimed that Jesus had an unclean spirit (See Mk 3:30). They were thus blaspheming against the divine work of the Holy Spirit through Jesus. When Jesus would leave the world by His ascension, then He would carry on His work through the disciples. Malicious speech and work against the disciples’ work would also be blasphemy against the work of God through the Holy Spirit. **32 Will not be forgiven:** Blasphemy cannot be forgiven simply because those who are making the accusations will not accept the message of truth the disciples are proclaiming, and thus, be saved by obedience to the gospel. Many misunderstood and thus rejected Jesus during His earthly ministry. However, when Jesus ascended, He sent the Holy Spirit upon the early disciples in order to confirm the message they preached (Jn 16:7,8,13,14; Mk 16:17-20; Hb 2:3,4). Many of those who first rejected Jesus during His earthly ministry later accepted Him through the Spirit-inspired preaching of the apostles and prophets (At 2:36-41; 6:7; 9:7). However, those who rejected this last means of revelation to man through the giving of the Holy Spirit to the early apostles and prophets, would receive no mercy from God. They would be guilty

of “eternal sin,” that is, sin that would result in their final separation from God (Mk 3:29). In this context, therefore, Jesus looks beyond the immediate confrontation He is having with the Pharisees. He is looking to the time when the kingdom would be manifested with power in At 2. **33 Known by its fruit:** Jesus is asking the Pharisees to be logical concerning the good works that He did. As the good fruit of a tree is evidence that the tree is good (7:16-20), then Jesus’ good works are evidence that He is doing the good work of God, not Beelzebub (Compare 7:15-20; Jn 9:25,30,33). In this context, the Pharisees were blaspheming against the work of Jesus because they were assigning His good work to be of Satan (See At 5:33ff). **34** The principle of the preceding verse is here applied to the Pharisees. The evil accusations that were coming out of their mouths against Jesus were evidence of their evil and hardened hearts (Pv 4:23). **Brood of vipers:** See 3:7; 23:33; Jn 8:44. The legalistic Pharisees in their self-righteous religiosity manifested themselves as a group of snakes who spit out venom against those who would manifest the grace of God among men (See introduction to Gl). Such is the case when traditional religions rise up against the truth and work of God. **35** Good hearts produce good things. However, malicious and slanderous speech will always betray the evil hearts from which such originates (Compare 15:18; Lk 6:45; Ep 4:29; Js 3:2-12; 3 Jn 9,10; 1 Sm 24:13). **36 Every idle word:** Reference here is to the slanderous, malicious and injurious words that the Pharisees spoke against Jesus. One will reap the results of such wickedness in the day of judgment. In the historical context of these Jews, judgment would be handed down on them in A.D. 70 with the destruction of Jerusalem and national Israel. Therefore, their judgment was soon to come. In the final judgment their destiny would be the destruction of eternal hell. **37 By your words you will be condemned:** Jesus’ statement here emphasizes the tremendous responsibility one has in reference to what he says. Sins of the mouth will condemn one (See Js 2:21-25; 3:2). They will do such because our speech manifests our hearts. By good speech the heart of the good man is judged good and accounted righteous before

39 But He answered and said to them, “An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign. And no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.

40 “For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

41 “The men of Nineveh will rise up in judgment with this generation and will condemn it, because they repented unto the preaching of Jonah. And behold, someone greater than Jonah *is* here.

42 “The Queen of the South will rise up in the judgment with this generation and will

condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon. And behold, someone greater than Solomon *is* here.

43 ¶ “When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, it passes through dry places, seeking rest, and finds none.

44 “Then he says, ‘I will return to my house from where I came out.’ And when he comes, he finds *it* empty, swept and put in order.

45 “Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there. And the last *state* of that man is worse than the first. So will it be also with this wicked generation.”

God. Therefore, by one's speech he is judged either to be justified or condemned.

SEEKING FOR SIGNS

38 *We want to see a sign:* See 16:1; Mk 8:11; Jn 2:18; 1 Co 1:18. They wanted to see a sign from heaven (Lk 11:16). But to ask for a sign from Jesus at this time in His ministry was to ignore all the signs that He had already done which proved that He was from God (Jn 2:18; 3:2; compare 4:6; Mk 8:11; Lk 11:16; Jn 2:18; 6:30; 1 Co 1:22). Therefore, the scribes and Pharisees are not here asking for proof of Jesus' sonship. They are seeking for a basis upon which to further accuse Him.

39 *An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign:* See 16:4. The word “adultery” is here used with a common meaning, that is, reference is to Israel's breaking of their covenant with God. The nation of Israel was in a covenant relationship with God (Is 57:3; Hs 3:1; Ez 16:15). They were married to God. However, they rejected the conditions of the contract they had with God and followed after the creation of gods they imagined in their minds (See comments Js 4:4). They invented their own religion (See comments Mk 7:1-9; Gl 1:13:14). By their rejection of Jesus they were once again committing spiritual adultery. They were thus an adulterous generation who were once again rejecting their covenant with God by rejecting God's Son. *Sign of the prophet Jonah:* See Jh 1:17. As Jonah was three days in the whale, so Jesus, after His death on the cross would be three days in the tomb. **40** *Three days:* See 16:21. Some have argued that Jesus was not actually three full days in the tomb. However, any part of a day was considered by the Jews to represent the full day. Most Bible students believe that Jesus was crucified on Friday and subsequently buried on that day. He was in the tomb, therefore, on Friday evening, stayed there throughout Saturday, and then rose early on Sunday morning (Mk 16:9). In the minds of the Jews, this would have been considered three days. On the other hand, some Bible students affirm that Jesus was crucified on Thursday, and thus, was in the tomb the whole of Friday and Saturday (See Mk 8:31; 9:31; 10:34; Lk 24:7). *The great fish:* The Greek word that is used here refers to a “sea monster.” We do not know the type of fish that swallowed Jonah. It was a fish that was prepared by God

(Jh 1:17). *Heart of the earth:* That is, He would be in the tomb (See Ps 63; 9; Ep 4:9). **41** *Nineveh:* This was the ancient capital of the Assyrian Empire (Gn 10:11; Nh 2:8; Zp 2:13-15). *Shall condemn:* The reason the inhabitants of Nineveh will condemn Jesus' generation is that they eagerly repented because of the preaching of Jonah (Jh 3:5). Though Jesus was the Son of God and did many miracles, the generation to which He preached would not repent. *At the preaching:* They repented in the sense that they turned their lives unto that which Jonah preached (Jh 3:5). They repented in that they turned to the principles that were preached.

42 *Queen of the south:* Sheba came to see the marvels of Solomon (1 Kg 10:1-13; 2 Ch 9:1). *Ends of the earth:* In reference to Israel, Sheba came from the most distant known part of the earth. She came from what is believed to be the northern parts of present-day Ethiopia. The fact that she came was a manifestation that her heart was open to discover the work of the God of Solomon. In the context here Jesus contrasts her eagerness to hear of God with the hardness of heart of the generation to which He was speaking. *Greater than Solomon:* Because Jesus was greater than both Jonah and Solomon, His generation should be eager to hear what He had to say.

43-45 *Unclean spirit:* Jesus warns that evil spirits that He casts out could be invited back by the unrepentant heart. When they return they are worse than when they first indwelt. *Dry places:* Jesus refers to a commonly accepted belief that affirmed evil spirits dwelt in the deserts. His point here is that upon repentance the evil practices of one's life must be replaced by that which is good. If one does not fill in the vacuum of unrighteous deeds with good, the last state will be worse than the first (See 2 Pt 2:20-22; Hb 6:4-6). The generation to which Jesus spoke was spiritually dry. It was a generation religiously led by scribes and Pharisees who taught an outward performance of ceremonial religion with little or no concentration on the heart. Ceremonial religion is often void of spirituality. God had given the best to the generation of the Jews of the first century by sending His Son. The religious leaders' rejection of the Son of God would judge them to be more spiritually dry than any generation before them. Their knowledge of the Son made them more accountable.

46 ¶ While He was still talking to the people, behold, His mother and His brothers stood outside, desiring to speak with Him.

47 Then one said to Him, "Behold, Your mother and Your brothers stand outside, desiring to speak with You."

48 But He answered and said to him who told Him, "Who is My mother? And who are My brothers?"

49 And He stretched forth His hand toward His disciples and said, "Behold, My mother and My brothers!"

50 "For whoever will do the will of My Father who is in heaven, the same is My brother and sister and mother."

Chapter 13

1 ¶ The same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the sea shore.

2 And great multitudes were gathered together to Him, so that He went into a boat and sat. And the whole multitude stood on the shore.

3 ¶ And He spoke many things to them in parables, saying, "Behold, a sower went forth to sow.

4 "And when he sowed, some *seeds* fell by the wayside. And the birds came and devoured them.

5 "Some fell on stony places, where they did not have much soil. And they immediately sprang up, because they had no depth of soil.

6 "And when the sun was up, they were scorched. And because they had no root, they withered away.

7 "And some fell among thorns. And the thorns sprang up and choked them.

8 "But others fell on good ground, and

JESUS' MOTHER AND BROTHERS

(Mk 3:31-35; Lk 8:19-21)

46,47 Mother and brothers: After Jesus was born of Mary, she had other children by Joseph her husband. However, Joseph had no sexual intercourse with Mary until Jesus was born (1:25). According to 13:55,56 Jesus had four brothers and at least two sisters (Mk 6:3). Jesus, though, was Mary's firstborn (Lk 2:7). At the time of this event, Joseph had possibly died. See 13:55; Mk 6:3; Jn 2:12; 7:3,5,10; At 1:14; 1 Co 9:5; Gl 1:19. **48,49 Who is My mother:** Jesus is not showing disrespect for His mother. What He is stating is that one's spiritual relationship with the family of God is greater than physical family relationships. In this sense, therefore, Christians have mothers, fathers, brothers and sisters throughout the world. In making this statement, Jesus was not minimizing His relationship with His physical family. He was bringing all spiritual brothers and sisters into the same relationship that He had with His physical mother, brothers and sisters (Compare 1 Tm 5:1,2). **50** Those who commit themselves to serve God will enjoy the extended family of the church. They will become a part of the universal family of God (19:29; Mk 10:29,30). Therefore, when one is spiritually born into the family of God, he comes into a spiritual relationship with God's family throughout the world (See Jn 15:14; Gl 5:6; 6:15; Cl 3:11; Hb 2:11).

Chapter 13

BESIDE THE SEA

(Mk 4:1,2; Lk 8:4)

1,2 Matthew brings together in this chapter many of the parables that Jesus taught on different occasions. **3 Parables:** A parable is a metaphorical story or illustration that is taken from something that can happen in real life. The real-life possibility of the parable is used to illustrate a spiritual truth. However, the interpreter should be careful not to attach a meaning to every de-

tail of a parable. Through parables Jesus sought to teach a principle truth. It is this truth that must be considered as the main purpose for any particular parable. Jesus never intended that one parable teach all truth concerning the nature of the kingdom. For this reason, He used different parables. Each parable explains a different or added concept of truth of the kingdom of God. Jesus explained the purpose for His use of parables in verses 10,11. Through His parables He sought to reveal truth to those who were humbly sincere. Through parables He also sought to conceal truth from those who had established in their minds their own invented religious thoughts. The parables, therefore, judged the minds and hearts of the audience. Those who would understand the spiritual truth of the parables judged themselves to be of a heart that would accept the kingdom reign of Jesus.

PARABLE OF THE SOILS

(Mk 4:3-25; Lk 8:5-18)

3 Sower: This is one who plants seeds by scattering them on the ground. The sower is the proclaimer of the word of God. He speaks of the word of God which affects the hearts of people in different ways. **4 Wayside:** Some of the seeds inadvertently fell on the walkway of the field. The soil had been trampled down, and thus, was hard. The seed did not penetrate the soil. Subsequently, the birds could easily see it, and thus, devour it. **5,6 Rocky places:** This was the area of the field where the soil was thin on top of the rocks. The rocks would retain the rain water under them, and thus, produce a damp soil in which the seeds would quickly germinate and grow. However, these areas of the field would also quickly dry when the sun scorched the earth. **7 Thorns:** The water of the soil around the thorn bushes would be dried up by the roots of the thorns. As a result, any seed that was planted and grew in the area of the thorns would eventually be choked out by the thorns. **8 Good ground:** This would be the soil that was espe-

brought forth fruit, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.

9 “He who has ears, let him hear.”

10 ¶ And the disciples came and said to Him, “Why do you speak to them in parables?”

11 He answered and said to them, “Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given.

12 “For whoever has, to him will be given, and he will have more abundance. But whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him.

13 “Therefore, I speak to them in parables because seeing they do not see and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand.

14 “And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says, ‘By hearing you will hear and will not understand. And seeing you will see and will not perceive.

15 *For the heart of this people has become calloused. Their ears are hard of hearing and their eyes they have closed. Otherwise, they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, and understand with their heart and return so that I would heal them.*’

16 “But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear.

17 “For truly I say to you, that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and have not seen it; and to hear what you hear, and have not heard it.

18 ¶ “Therefore, hear the parable of the sower.

19 “When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand, then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside.

20 “But he who received the seed on stony

cially prepared for the seed. As a result, the seed produced what was expected of it. **9** Jesus now challenges His hearers to listen to the meaning of the parable (11:15). Those who would have a receptive mind would seek to understand what He was teaching through the parables.

PURPOSE OF THE PARABLES

10 Four of the seven parables that Jesus gives and are recorded in this chapter by Matthew, were addressed to the multitudes in general. Three of the parables were spoken only to the disciples. Because of their receptivity, the disciples sought to know the meaning of this parable that Jesus spoke (See Mk 4:10-12; Lk 8:9,10). **11** *Given to you to know:* Jesus taught in parables in order to reveal truth to those who had an open mind and heart. The disciples were willing to hear, and thus, the parables were meant to teach them. On the other hand, the truth of the parables was concealed from those who were blinded by their own prejudices, pride, jealousy or religious traditions. (See 11:25; 16:17; 19:11; 20:23; Mk 4:11; compare Jn 6:65; 1 Co 2:10; 1 Jn 2:20,27). *Mysteries of the kingdom:* The secret or hidden truths of the kingdom reign of God were now being revealed to those who were willing to listen and learn (Compare 1 Co 2:7,8; Ep 3:1-5; 1 Pt 1:10-12). However, for those who would not listen to Jesus, the truth concerning the kingdom reign would not be revealed simply because they would not listen to Jesus. **12** *For whoever has:* The scribes and Pharisees thought that they had a privileged relationship with God because of their religious positions. However, they were hardened of heart, and thus, were not willing to listen to the teachings of Jesus (25:29; Mk 4:25; Lk 8:18; 19:26). But those who had willing hearts and hungered after spiritual truth would perceive the teachings of Jesus concerning the kingdom. **13** *Seeing they do not see:* Jesus taught in parables in order to separate the truth

seekers from those who had hardened hearts. The scribes and Pharisees thought that they were spiritually right. However, their inability to understand the truth of the message of the parables identified them as blind guides (Jr 5:21; Ez 12:2). The parables thus placed the responsibility of judging on the shoulders of those who heard. Compare Is 42:19,20; Dt 29:4. **14,15** *Prophecy of Isaiah:* The rejection of Jesus' teachings by the religious leaders fulfilled the prophecy of Is 6:9,10 (See Jn 12:40; At 28:26,27; Rm 11:8; 2 Co 3:14,15). Isaiah's prophecy was originally made in the context of the hardness of heart of his generation. However, the same was also true of Jesus' generation. *Grown dull:* This figure of speech emphasizes the fact that their minds had grown dull by the influence of worldly thinking and empty religion (Compare Dt 32:15; 1 Tm 5:11; Hb 5:11). **16** The disciples were blessed by Jesus (16:17; Jn 20:29) because they were honest and sincere in their efforts to follow the teachings of Jesus (Lk 10:23,24). **17** *Desired to see:* The Old Testament prophets and righteous by faith who lived under the Old Testament law and covenant looked forward to the things that were revealed through Jesus (See Jn 8:56; Gl 4:4,5; Hb 11:13,25,26,39,40; 1 Pt 1:10-12).

EXPLAINING THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER

18,19 *Wayside:* This soil represents the hearts of those who are prejudiced, jealous and full of pride. Because there are those who are of such a nature, they do not understand the teachings concerning the kingdom. They hear the teaching, but they cannot understand because of the condition of their hearts. **20,21** *Rocky places:* These are those who quickly and easily receive the word of God. They are quickly converted. However, their commitment to the Lord never develops. Their dedication is only surface. Because they have no depth in their spirituality, the trials of life and persecution cause them to fall away (Compare Js 1:23-26). **22**

places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy.

21 “However, he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he falls away.

22 “He who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the worries of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful.

23 “But he who received seed sown on the good ground is he who hears the word, and understands it. He indeed bears fruit and brings forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.”

24 ¶ Another parable He set before them, saying, “The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field.

25 “But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way.

26 “But when the grain sprouted and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.

27 “So the bondservants of the landowner came and said to him, ‘Sir, did you not sow

good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?’”

28 “He said to them, ‘An enemy has done this.’ The bondservants said to him, ‘Do you want us, then, to go and gather them up?’”

29 “But he said, ‘No, lest while you gather up the tares, you root up also the wheat with them.

30 ‘Let both grow together until the harvest. And in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, “Gather together first the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them. But gather the wheat into My barn.”’”

31 ¶ Another parable He set before them, saying, “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his field,

32 “which indeed is the least of all seeds. But when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches.”

33 ¶ Another parable He spoke to them, “The kingdom of heaven is like leaven that a woman took and hid in three measures of meal until the whole was leavened.”

Among the thorns: These are those who genuinely receive the word of God. They grow. However, the love of the things of the world and the desire to have the wealth of the world is stronger in their lives than their love of God (19:23; Lk 21:34; 1 Tm 6:9,10,17; Js 4:4).

23 Good ground: This is the honest and good heart (Lk 8:15). This is the one who desires truth, for he is seeking for truth. Because he is a willing hearer and learner, he comprehends the truth, and subsequently, brings forth fruit in his life (Jn 15:2-5). We must also assume that there are those who want to hear the gospel (See comments At 18:8-10). By assuming this we will be driven to preach the gospel.

PARABLE OF THE TARES

24,25 The explanation to this parable begins in verse 36. **Kingdom of heaven:** Reference is to the kingdom reign of God that originates out of heaven. The Father was reigning at the time Jesus made these statements (1 Ch 29:10,11). However, there was going to be a change in the King and head of the kingdom reign of Deity. The change was going to be from the Father to the Son. After the ascension, Jesus would be King and head over all things (28:18; Dn 2:44; 7:13,14; Mk 4:30; Lk 13:18; Ep 1:20-22; 1 Pt 3:22). **While men slept:** It was the responsibility of those who slept to keep watch over the fields. When those who are responsible for the hearts of men fail in their duty to watch over the flock, Satan will damage or destroy the flock through his influences. **Sowed tares:** This was darnel, a plant that resembled wheat until the time of maturity. It hindered the growth of the wheat and the harvest. **26** It was not

known that the tares had been sown in the field and among the wheat until the time of the harvest when the grain was formed. **27-30** If the tares were removed during the growing period, then too much wheat would have been destroyed in the process of rooting up the tares. Therefore, the harvesters had to wait until the time of the harvest in order to separate the tares from the wheat. However, because the harvest is delayed, they must not assume that the harvest will not occur. God sometimes delays His judgment. His delays must not be understood that He will not judge.

PARABLE OF THE MUSTARD SEED

(Mk 4:30-32; Lk 13:18,19)

31,32 Kingdom of heaven: See verse 24. **Mustard seed:** It is less than all seeds (See Mk 4:30-32). Though it is small, it grows to become a strong tree. In this way, the response to the kingdom reign of God starts small in any area of the world. But from small beginnings it spreads to the hearts of men throughout an entire region. Such was the case with the response to the kingdom reign of Jesus in At 2. It started small with the few disciples that were with Jesus during His earthly ministry, but grew greater after the beginning and spread throughout the world (See Lk 24:47; At 1:8; 2:41; 4:4; 6:7). Evangelists must therefore be patient in beginning the movement of the kingdom in the hearts of men in any particular region. Patient planting and cultivation of the seed of the kingdom in the hearts of men will eventually produce a great movement. Masses make movements, not individuals. The task of the leader is to move the masses.

34 ¶ All these things Jesus spoke to the multitude in parables. And without a parable He did not speak to them,

35 so that it might be fulfilled that was spoken by the prophet, saying, "*I will open My mouth in parables. I will utter things that have been kept secret from the foundation of the world.*"

36 ¶ Then Jesus sent the multitude away and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field."

37 He answered and said to them, "He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man.

38 "The field is the world. The good seed are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the children of the wicked *one*.

39 "The enemy who sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are messengers.

40 "Therefore, as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so will it be at the end of this age.

41 "The Son of Man will send forth His messengers, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who commit lawlessness.

42 "And He will cast them into a furnace of

PARABLE OF THE LEAVEN

33 Leaven: Yeast is placed in the dough where it is not seen. It later grows throughout the dough. Only the effects of its growth can be seen. The influence of Jesus' disciples is quiet and consistent. When the kingdom reign of God is accepted by honest and willing hearts, it changes the entire man, and subsequently, the entire man becomes an influence to the entire community (5:13-16; See Lk 17:20,21). When kingdom truths are sown in the hearts of men in any society, they eventually spread throughout the society. The hearts of men of a society are changed one at a time. In view of one's understanding of this nature of the seed of the kingdom, one must be motivated to live the word in every aspect of life. Evangelism is a way of life, not a church program. **Measure:** This is about the amount of one and a half US gallons, or four liters. The power and influence of the leaven is that it affects all.

34,35 At this time in the ministry of Jesus, Jesus used the teaching method of parables to communicate truth to the people (Mk 4:33). In reference to this method of teaching, Jesus quoted Psalm 78:2, a psalm of Asaph (1 Ch 6:39). In this text Matthew paraphrases the Psalm in applying it to Jesus' ministry of teaching. As Jesus continued teaching throughout His ministry, people would begin to understand the parables. Because we have the full revelation of God in the Bible, it is easier for us to understand than the audience who first heard the parables. **Kept secret:** See Rm 16:25,26; 1 Co 2:7; Ep 3:9; Cl 1:26.

EXPLANATION OF THE TARES

36 Explain to us: The disciples did not understand the parable of the tares. At this time in their training by Jesus, they did not understand the nature of the kingdom nor all the implications of what He was teaching. They thus waited until everyone left, and then, in a private conversation with Jesus, asked Him to explain the parables. **37 Son of Man:** Jesus was the Messiah who was sowing the good seed of truth in the hearts of men. **38 Field is the world:** This is the hearts of all the world where teaching can be received (See 24:14; 28:19; Mk 16:15; Rm 10:13-15; Cl 1:6,23). **Good seed:** These are those in whom the truth of God has had impact and who have been sent forth to spread their influence throughout the world. These are the sons of Abra-

ham by faith whom Jesus sends forth among the inhabitants of the world. **Tares:** These are the hardened and disobedient of the world who often dwell among the sons of the kingdom. In the context here, these would be the legalistic religious leaders who had arisen in Israel and were influencing the hearts of the Jews away from God and unto their own legal system of religion (See 15:1-9; 23; Mk 7:1-9; Jn 8:44; At 13:10). **39 Enemy:** Satan has done this work. Therefore, one of Satan's greatest works is to influence religious people to remain religious, but in their religious work, they influence the righteous away from truth and true worship of God. In the context of Jesus' ministry to the Jews, Satan had worked through misguided religious leaders to lead Israel away from God.

Harvest is the end of this age: The text says end of "this" age. Reference here is not to the end of the world, but the end of the Jewish dispensation. The Greek phrase translated "end of the age" is from a phrase that means "consummation of the age" (See also 24:3; 28:20). The consummation of the age would come in A.D. 70 with the final destruction of the Jewish State by the destruction of Jerusalem. **Angels:** A better translation of this Greek word (*angelos*) in this context would be "messengers" as it is so translated in 11:10; 24:31; Lk 7:24; 9:52; 2 Co 12:7; Js 2:25. These were the messengers of Jesus who went forth preaching the gospel of the kingdom to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Mk 16:14,20). **40,41 Tares are gathered and burned:** Jesus' emphasis here is on the separation of those who are righteous by faith, and thus, accepted Jesus, from those Jews who rejected Him or hypocritically accepted Him (See Gl 2:4,5). When Rome destroyed Jerusalem, Judaism was visibly manifested to be rejected by God. This was God's open demonstration that Israel was no longer His chosen people with whom He would maintain a special covenant relationship. It was also God's visual demonstration that He had rejected the Jews' religion (See Gl 1:13,14). After the cross, national Israel was to be dissolved in Christ where there is neither Jew nor Gentile (Gl 3:28,29). As a result of the destruction of national Israel, those who were sons of God by faith were manifested as the true children of God. **Gather out of His kingdom:** Through the preaching of the gospel after the first official announcement of the kingdom reign of Jesus in At 2, the messengers of God went forth preaching the gospel. They went to the Jews

fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

43 “Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.

44 ¶ “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field that a man found and hid *again*. And for joy over it, he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

45 “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking fine pearls,

46 “who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it.

47 ¶ “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was cast into the sea, gathering *fish* of every kind,

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

49 “So it will be at the end of the age. The messengers will go out and separate the wicked from among the righteous,

50 “and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

51 “Have you understood all these things?” They said to Him, “Yes.”

52 Then He said to them, “Therefore, every scribe *who is* made a disciple of the kingdom of heaven is like a man *who is* a householder who brings out of his treasure *things* new and old.”

53 ¶ And it came to pass when Jesus had fin-

throughout the world, and thus, gathered out of the physical kingdom of Israel those who would allow the kingdom reign of Jesus to dwell in their hearts (See Lk 17:20,21). These were those who accepted the reign of Jesus who had become the King of kings and Lord of lords (See 28:18; Ep 1:20-22; 1 Tm 6:15; Rv 3:21; compare Lk 19:14-17). **42,43 Cast them into the furnace of fire:** The horrific destruction that took place in A.D. 70 on the nation of Israel was certainly the fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy that is stated here. Over 1,100,000 Jews were killed and the city of Jerusalem was burned (See comments 24:1ff). **Wailing and gnashing of teeth:** This metaphorical statement emphasizes the terror and agony of those who realized that they missed out on acceptance by God because of their disobedience and rejection of the Son of God. Surely, during the weeks of the war of Rome against Israel in A.D. 70, many recalled the righteous preaching and teaching of the Jesus they had crucified. However, it was too late for repentance. **Righteous will shine forth as the sun:** God's judgment on the rebellious Jews manifested that He was no longer with national Israel. He was present with those who had responded to the gospel of Jesus. When the rebellious Jews were taken away in the destruction of Jerusalem, Christians were proven to be the new Israel of God because the church continued on and grew. The righteous of God were manifested to all the world when apostate Israel was cast off by God (See comments 24:38-42).

PARABLE OF THE HIDDEN TREASURE

44 Like treasure hidden: As one would seek a hidden treasure that he knew existed, so one must eagerly seek that God's will reign in his heart as it does in heaven (6:9,10; Lk 17:20,21). One must be willing to make every possible sacrifice in order to acquire that which he has discovered in the gospel (See Lk 14:25-35; Ph 3:7,8; Gl 2:20; Rv 3:18). In view of the impending judgment of God on national Israel that was in the near future with the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, Jesus here seeks to emphasize the importance that the Jews accept Him.

PARABLE OF THE PEARL

45,46 One pearl of great price: See Pv 2:4; 3:14,15; 8:10,19. One must be willing to sacrifice all that is necessary in order to be of the mind and heart to accept the kingdom reign of God. If one is truly seeking truth, and finds it, he will be willing to sacrifice all to retain it (See Ep 1:3). There is nothing of this world that can be measured with the value of the kingdom reign one has in his heart.

PARABLE OF THE DRAGNET

47-50 The emphasis of this parable is similar to that of the tares (See vss 24-30,36-43). The net (the preaching of the gospel) is cast out into the sea (the world of the hearts of men). All sorts of fish are caught (those who respond to the gospel) (22:10). Of those who respond, not all will remain faithful. Such will be manifested by the turmoil of the consummation of the age of national Israel. In the decade before the end of national Israel, Jewish persecution of the church caused many to fall back into the deception of Judaism (See Gl 5:11; 6:12; see Hb 10:39). These subsequently suffered the fiery destruction of the Jewish State. In the work of God beginning with the preaching of John the Baptist until the consummation of the age of national Israel, God was throwing out the dragnet of truth in order to draw out of Israel those who were sons of Abraham by faith (See comments Rm 9:1-3; 10:1).

SUMMATION OF THE PARABLES

51,52 Have you understood: Jesus is now testing their hearts by asking if they had open minds for His teaching. He thus sought another opportunity to continue to teach them. **Scribe:** This term was originally used to refer to those who copied the Old Testament law. The term at the time of Jesus was used to refer to one who interpreted and taught the law. These were the authorities on the Old Testament law and Jewish traditions. **Things new and old:** The one who is responsible for the keeping of the family can instruct by using old truths that need new applications. The disciples understood the old truths. Jesus was in their pres-

ished these parables, He departed from there.

54 And when He came into His own country, He taught them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished, and said, "Where did this man *receive* this wisdom and *these* powers?"

55 "Is this not the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary, and His brothers, James and Joseph and Simon and Judas?"

56 "And His sisters, are they not all with us? Where then did this man *receive* all these things?"

57 And they took offense at Him. But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor, except in his own country and in his own house."

58 And He did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief.

Chapter 14

1 ¶ At that time Herod the tetrarch heard of the fame of Jesus,

2 and said to his servants, "This is John the Baptist. He is risen from the dead, and that is why these powers are at work in him."

3 For Herod had laid hold on John and bound him and put *him* in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife.

4 For John said to him, "It is not lawful for you to have her."

5 And although he wanted to put him to death, he feared the multitude because they consid-

ence with new teachings and applications of old truths. **53,54 His own country:** This is the area surrounding Nazareth (2:23; Mk 6:1; Lk 4:16). **He taught:** It was the work of Jesus to teach. In this situation, the teaching was done where religious people in the community met for teaching, that is, the synagogue (Mk 6:1-6). The synagogue was not a part of Old Testament law. Synagogues were evidently constructed in Palestine sometime after Israel returned from Babylonian captivity in 536 B.C. **Astonished:** What astonished them was that Jesus, one who was from their area, the son of a common carpenter, taught them many things with authority and wisdom (See 7:28,29). **55,56** It was difficult for them to accept someone who was local. All of them knew that Jesus was the son of Joseph, the carpenter. **His brothers ... sisters:** After Jesus was born to Mary, Joseph and Mary had many other children (See 1:25; 12:46-50; Mk 6:3). **57 A Prophet:** Jesus had risen above those of his home town. He taught them great things, which things, it was hard for them to accept since they accepted Him only as the carpenter's son. The prophet, therefore, that spiritually and intellectually rises above those of his own country will often be rejected by those of His community. Compare Mk 6:4; Lk 4:16ff; Jn 4:44. **58** Because of their unbelief in Him, Jesus felt that it was of little use to do the miraculous works of the Father in His home town. If He had, they would, as the Gaderenes, asked Him to leave, for they did not at this time understand who He really was (Lk 8:37). The miracles were used to confirm the spoken word of God (Mk 16:20; Hb 2:3,4). However, where there was no searching for truth in the hearts of men, then there is no need to uselessly confirm the spoken word. By leaving the area because they did not believe, Jesus is emphasizing that believing in His teaching is more important than working miracles. These of Jesus' home town would not have believed Him even if He would have worked many miracles among them (Mk 6:5,6). The great power of a prejudiced mind is certainly manifested in this and other cases where people refused to believe in the miraculous works He worked in order to prove that He was from God (Jn 3:2). Israel as a nation experienced the wonders of God when she was delivered from Egyptian captivity. However, when in Sinai, the Israelites rebelled

against God. Miracles, therefore, are not a guarantee that one will accept the word of God. The religious leaders of Jerusalem experienced the miracles of Jesus, however, they rejected Him as the Messiah of Israel (See comments At 4:14-16). Reception of God's word depends on one's heart.

Chapter 14

HEROD AND JOHN

(Mk 6:14-29; Lk 9:7-9)

1 Herod: This is Herod Antipas, the son of Herod the Great (Mk 8:15; Lk 3:1,19; 8:3; 13:31; At 4:27; 12:1). Herod Antipas divorced his own wife and married his own niece, Herodias, who was the wife of his half-brother, Herod Philip II. **Tetrarch:** This Greek word refers to the ruler of a fourth part of the kingdom. When Herod the Great died, his kingdom was divided among his sons. **2 John the Baptist:** See 16:14; Mk 6:14. Herod had earlier beheaded John. In this situation, Herod could have been stricken with a guilty conscience concerning what he had done to John, for Herod had believed that John was a righteous man and tried to keep him safe (Mk 6:20). There was also gossip going around that Jesus was the resurrected Elijah (Lk 9:7) or possibly a resurrected Old Testament prophet (Mk 6:16; see Mt 16:13,14). **3** Mark's account of these events is given in more detail. John was imprisoned soon after the beginning of Jesus' ministry. **Herodias:** See Mk 6:17-22; Lk 3:19. Herodias was the granddaughter of Herod the Great. She divorced Philip in order to marry Herod Antipas. **4 It is not lawful:** According to Old Testament law, it was unlawful for Herod to be married to Herodias (See Lv 18:14-16; 20:21; Dt 25:5-10). Therefore, this incestuous marriage was boldly condemned by John. Such indicates the bravery of John's character. He was willing to stand up against that which was wrong, regardless of the consequences. **5 They counted him as a prophet:** Herod considered John with great respect and the people considered him a prophet. But regardless of all this consideration, Herod had to fulfill his foolish promise that he had made to a wicked woman (Mk 6:22). Therefore, as a result of the lust of one man for a woman, John the Baptist was put

ered him as a prophet.

6 But when Herod's birthday came, the daughter of Herodias danced before them and pleased Herod.

7 Therefore, he promised with an oath to give her whatever she might ask.

8 And she, having been prompted by her mother, said, "Give me here the head of John the Baptist on a platter."

9 And the king was sorry. Nevertheless, because of the oath and those who sat with him, he commanded *it* to be given *to her*.

10 And he sent and beheaded John in the prison.

11 And his head was brought on a platter and given to the girl. And she brought *it* to her mother.

12 And his disciples came and took up the body and buried it, and went and told Jesus.

13 ¶ When Jesus heard *of it*, He departed privately from there by boat to a deserted place. And when the people heard *this*, they followed Him on foot out of the cities.

14 And Jesus went out and saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion for them. And He healed their sick.

15 And when it was evening, His disciples came to Him, saying, "This is a deserted place and the time is now past. Send the multitude away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves."

16 But Jesus said to them, "They do not need to go away. You give them *something* to eat."

17 And they said to Him, "We have here only five loaves and two fish."

18 He said, "Bring them here to Me."

19 And He commanded the multitudes to sit down on the grass. And He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed and broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples. And the disciples *gave them* to the multitudes.

20 And they all ate and were filled. And they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments that remained.

21 And those who had eaten were about five

to death. **6 Pleased Herod:** This was a lascivious dance by Herod's step daughter, Salome, who eventually married Philip the tetrarch. **Birthday:** The lords, captains and chief men of Herod's kingdom were present at this occasion (Mk 6:21). **7,8 He promised:** This is not the promise a good king would make. It was a careless oath made because of lust, and was kept in order to save face with the surrounding company of pompous friends. The text here reveals that John's death was schemed by Herodias. **9** Though Herod had finally come to his senses, he had to keep his promise and save face before his royal guests. **10-12** Matthew informs us concerning what subsequently happened. There is no grief or sorrow expressed in these historical words of Matthew, thus indicating that this was an inspired account and not the account of a man. John had completed his ministry, and it was time for him to depart from the scene. We thus see in this event God again turning into good the work of Satan to use evil men.

FEEDING OF THE FIVE THOUSAND

(Mk 6:30-44; Lk 9:10-17; Jn 6:1-13)

13 When Jesus heard it: The disciples came to tell Jesus all that had happened to John. **To a deserted place:** Jesus knew that the disciples needed solitude, for many of them had first believed because of John's preaching. They withdrew across the sea of Galilee (Jn 6:1,2) to a quiet place for meditation and prayer (Mk 6:30:31). **14 Moved with compassion:** Jesus was a leader with compassion for the multitudes. On this occasion His healing of the sick was motivated by His compassion (15:32; 20:34; Mk 6:34). **15 Send the multitudes away:** This occasion leads to the only miracle that Jesus worked which is recorded in all four records

of the gospel. **16 You give them something to eat:** Jesus asked Philip where they were going to get food in order to feed so many people (Jn 6:5,6). Jesus asked the question in order to stimulate a faith response from Philip and the others. **17** Jesus allowed them time to search for food to feed the people. Among the disciples, or among the multitude, they came up with only five loaves of bread and two fish. The disciples suggested that someone go into the city and buy food (Lk 9:10-17). **18-21** The multitude of about five thousand men, plus women and children, were asked to sit down in groups of fifty (Mk 6:40). **Blessed and broke and gave:** Jesus thanked the Father for the food (Jn 6:11). Such left a good example for the disciples in the years to come to do likewise concerning the blessing of food (1 Tm 4:4,5). **They took up twelve baskets full:** This miracle was unique. Jesus asked them to take up the leftovers in order to impress on the minds of the disciples that this was a miracle of creation. They knew how much bread and fish they started with and how much was left over. The only deduction they could make was that bread and fish had been created by God who was in their midst. Later in His ministry when He wanted to confirm who He was in the minds of the disciples, Jesus asked them to recall this miracle and a second feeding of four thousand in 15:32-38 (See 16:8-19; see Jn 6:27-59 where Jesus discussed the "bread of life," which discussion resulted from this miracle.)

THE STORM AT SEA

(Mk 6:45-52; Jn 6:14-21)

22,23 Made His disciples get into the boat: It was now late in the day after the feeding of the five thousand on the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee. The

thousand men, besides women and children. **22 ¶** Immediately, Jesus made His disciples get into a boat and go before Him to the other side, while He sent the multitudes away.

23 And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up on a mountain by Himself to pray. And when evening came, He was there alone.

24 Now the boat was many furlongs away from the land, tossed by waves, for the wind was contrary.

25 And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went to them, walking on the sea.

26 And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out for fear.

27 But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Be of good cheer! It is I. Do not be afraid."

28 And Peter answered Him and said, "Lord,

if it is You, command me to come to You on the water."

29 And He said, "Come." And when Peter got down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus.

30 But when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink, he cried out, saying, "Lord, save me!"

31 And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?"

32 And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased.

33 Then those who were in the boat worshiped Him, saying, "Truly, You are the Son of God."

34 ¶ And when they had crossed over, they came to Gennesaret.

35 And when the men of that place recognized Him, they sent out into all the surround-

Greek text emphasizes the fact that Jesus strongly urged the disciples to leave Him in order that He might go into a mountain and pray (Jn 6:15; Lk 9:28). **Other side:** He urged them to go to the northwestern side of the sea of Galilee. Because the great miracle of the feeding of the 5,000 stimulated the multitudes to try and make Jesus their king on earth, he sent both the disciples and multitudes away (Jn 6:15). Even the disciples believed at this time that Jesus was the prophesied prophet (Dt 18:15) who would become a king on this earth (See comments At 1:6). **He was alone there:** There are times when Jesus needed to be alone (Jn 6:16). So it is with those who would be His servants in ministering to the people. **24,25** The disciples were now in the middle of the Sea of Galilee which is about four or five kilometers from the shore (Jn 6:19). **Fourth watch:** According to the Roman accounting of time this is between 3:00 and 6:00 in the morning. They had thus been rowing almost all night against the wind. **Walking on the sea:** Jesus knew their predicament. He thus comes to them with a miracle that manifests His power over natural law. **26 It is a ghost:** The disciples were afraid because they thought they were seeing the manifestation of a spirit (See Lk 24:37). **27 It is I:** The Greek text literally says, "I am" (See Ex 3:14; Is 41:4). Jesus was the manifestation of the great "I Am" who was in their midst. The presence of Jesus surely brought them peace of mind in the midst of a scary night (Compare 17:7; 28:10; Jn 6:20; Rv 1:17). **28 Lord, if it is You:** This could be translated, "Since it is You" Peter's limited faith in the power of Jesus is manifested since he asked that Jesus command that he also walk on the water. **29,30** Peter did walk on the water. We do not know how far he came to Jesus before his faith began to waver because he took his eyes off Jesus. His fear overpowered his faith, and thus, he began to sink rapidly. **31 Jesus stretched out His hand:** Peter was close to Jesus. He was close enough for Jesus to reach out and save

him. In the midst of stormy trials, all men should reach for the outreached hand of Jesus. **O you of little faith:** For lack of faith Peter failed to continue walking on the water. He thus deserved the rebuke. Nevertheless, man's inability to cope with the turmoil of his environment allows God the opportunity to stretch out His helping hand. What men need to do is reach for God (See 6:30; 8:26; 16:9). **32,33 Worshiped Him:** Recognition of the divine presence of God motivates worship. People do not worship, therefore, because they have no realization of the presence of God. **Truly You are the Son of God:** See 16:16; 26:63; Mk 1:1; Lk 4:41; Jn 1:49; 6:69; 11:27; At 8:37; Rm 1:4. This miracle of Jesus greatly increased the faith of the disciples. Matthew, who was personally there, gives us this testimony of one of the greatest miraculous events in the life of Jesus. Jesus was more than a good teacher of ancient Palestine. The fact that He could create by feeding the multitudes and have power over the laws of nature boldly affirms that He was of God. And God must be worshiped.

AT GENNESARET (Mk 6:53-56)

34 Gennesaret: This word means, "garden of the prince." It was on the west side of the Sea of Galilee and south of Capernaum (Mk 6:53). **35,36** The people recognized that Jesus had the power to heal their sickness. They seem to have been more concerned about healing than the spiritual blessing that would come from the teachings of Jesus. Nevertheless, Jesus granted them their wishes by healing them. **Perfectly well:** Contrary to the fake healings of modern-day counterfeits, Jesus' healing of the sick and lame was perfect. They were completely healed (See Mk 5:24-34; Lk 6:19). Every supposed miracle today must be compared to the definition of miracles as we see how they occurred in the Bible.

ing country and brought to Him all who were diseased.

36 And they begged Him that they might only touch the hem of His garment. And as many as touched *it* were made perfectly whole.

Chapter 15

1 ¶ Then the scribes and Pharisees who were from Jerusalem came to Jesus, saying,

2 "Why do Your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread."

3 But He answered and said to them, "Why do you also transgress the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition?"

4 "For God commanded, saying, '*Honor your*

father and mother,' and, '*He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.*'

5 "But you say, 'Whoever says to *his* father or *his* mother, "Whatever gift you might receive from me has been given to God,"

6 'he is not to honor his father.' Thus you have made the word of God of no effect by your tradition.

7 "*You hypocrites!* Rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying,

8 '*These people honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me.*

9 *But in vain do they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.*"

10 And He called the multitude and said to them, "Hear and understand.

Chapter 15

CONDEMNATION OF HUMAN RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS

(Mk 7:1-23)

The events that are recorded here in Matthew happened during the last year of Jesus' ministry. **1,2 Tradition of the elders:** The disciples were violating a religious tradition that had been handed down from the Jewish fathers (See Mk 7:1-9). This and many other religious traditions of the Jews were not a part of the Old Testament law. **Do not wash:** This was a ceremonial washing. It was good to wash one's hands before eating. However, to make such a religious tradition that was bound on the consciences of men, was adding to God's will. The scribes and Pharisees were here binding where God had not bound. **3 Transgress the commandment of God:** By adding human religious traditions to the law of God, they were actually transgressing God's law. Not only does the adding of such traditions assume that the law is insufficient, men start honoring the traditions above the law (See 2 Tm 3:16,17). They progress to the point of ignoring and rejecting the law of God in order to keep their traditions (Mk 7:9). It is not wrong to do things traditionally in the realm of religious behavior. However, when the traditional way of doing something becomes the only way it can be done, then the tradition has become a binding law on the consciences of men. In this way, the religious traditions of the world in which we live have brought thousands into bondage (See At 15:10; Gl 5:1). **4,5** In these two verses Jesus gives an example of the contradiction between God's law and the religious traditions of the scribes and Pharisees. Verse 4 states that one must honor his father and mother by taking care of them. Verse 4 also states God's law which said that the one who spoke evil of either father or mother was to be stoned (Ex 20:12; 21:17; Dt 5:16; 27:16). However, the scribes and Pharisees changed the law. They said that the material possessions owned by the children did not have to be used to help their aged parents. They did not have to give their possessions in order to take care of their parents if the possessions were "corban" (Mk 7:11), that is, "given

to God." When something was "corban" it was set apart by a formal vow to be used in service to God. That which had been set aside for religious purposes went to the support of those whom Jesus was here addressing. In other words, these selfish religious leaders were binding their traditional laws on Israelites who had parents that needed help. The children could not help their parents because their goods had been promised to these selfish religious leaders. **6 Of no effect:** They had rejected the commandment of God concerning the children's responsibility toward parents by binding on the consciences of the children their religious traditions. In this way, the commandment of God was not effective in the lives of the children. **7 Hypocrites:** In their legalistic approach to religion, they manifested their own hypocrisy. They made sure that the actions of the children were according to their laws, but in reality, the hearts of the scribes and Pharisees were far from God. Such is the case with all legalistic religions. As long as one performs the statutes of the law in these religions, one's heart can go unchecked (See introduction to Gl). **8 Their heart is far from Me:** See Is 29:13; Mk 7:9; Cl 2:18-22; Ti 1:14. Their lips proclaimed religious proclamations, but their hearts were full of evil. Legalistic religion deceives one into believing that as long as he performs the statutes of law, his heart can remain unchecked, and thus, be far from God. **9 In vain they worship Me:** They had deceived themselves into believing that they were worshiping God acceptably after their own invented religious behavior. They had created a religion after their own traditions, and then, led themselves to believe that God was pleased with their worship. When men seek to construct worship of God after their own desires, they end up worshiping God in vain (See Cl 2:18-22; Ti 1:14). They often end up creating a god after their own image, one whom they believe condones their vain worship.

10,11 The multitudes were willing to follow the religious traditions of the scribes and Pharisees. However, Jesus turns His attention to those who are willing to be led astray by the traditional religions of blind religious leaders. In the context of what the scribes and Pharisees were accusing the disciples in verse 2, Jesus

11 “It is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a man. But what comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man.”

12 Then His disciples came and said to Him, “Do You know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?”

13 But He answered and said, “Every plant that My heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted.

14 “Let them alone. They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both will fall into the ditch.”

15 Then Peter answered and said to Him, “Explain to us this parable.”

16 And Jesus said, “Are you also still without understanding?”

17 “Do you not yet understand that whatever enters into the mouth goes into the stomach and is eliminated?”

18 “But those things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile the man.

19 “For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slander.

20 “These are *the things* that defile a man. But to eat with unwashed hands does not defile a man.”

21 ¶ Then Jesus went away from there and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon.

22 And behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same region and cried to Him, saying, “Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David. My daughter is cruelly possessed with a demon.”

23 But He did not answer her a word. And His disciples came and urged Him, saying, “Send her away, for she cries after us.”

affirmed that what goes into the body through the mouth does not spiritually defile the person. That which comes out of the mouth through speech defiles the man because such is the action of an evil heart (Compare At 10:15; Rm 14:14,17,20; 1 Tm 4:4). Evil hearts are always reveal through one's speech.

12 The Pharisees were offended: The Pharisees were offended because Jesus had publicly pointed out the hypocritical system of religion that they practiced and bound on the consciences of men. **13 Every plant:** The Father did not plant either the scribes or Pharisees with their religion. Both will be rooted out of His people when the truth of the gospel is preached. This would begin in Jerusalem in At 2 (Compare comments Gl 4:30; 5:12). **14 Let them alone:** This was good advice that Jesus gave to the disciples. Christians should shun those religious leaders who have given themselves over to creating religion after their own misguided desires (See comments 7:6). **They are blind leaders:** See 23:16,24; Is 9:16; Mt 2:8; Lk 6:39; Jn 9:40. The scribes and Pharisees were blind religious leaders in the sense that they had rejected the commandment of God in order to keep their own religious traditions that had been handed down from the fathers (See Mk 7:1-9). They legally concentrated on the outward appearance of religious ceremonies but failed to check their own hearts. Those who are intimidated to follow after the leadership of those who are spiritually blind will also reap the same consequences as their leaders (See 2 Pt 1:9). **15 Explain this parable:** The disciples did not understand because they were also the victims of their religious environment. They were brought up in the doctrines and traditions of men, and thus, at times had difficulty understanding the truth and grace that was being revealed through Jesus. **16** See 16:9. Mark records that all the disciples questioned Jesus because of their lack of understanding (Mk 7:17,18). They had given their allegiance to Jesus, however, they were still the victims of their religious heritage. **17-20** There is nothing in food that would spiritu-

ally or morally defile one (1 Co 6:13; see 7:20; compare 13:34). But the things that are spoken by the mouth betray what is in the heart of the man. **For out of the heart:** The heart is the origin of all sin (Js 1:14,15). What is spoken from the mouth identifies the nature of the heart. The problem with the legalistic religious system of the scribes and Pharisees was that the religion focused on the outward performance of the religion and not on the heart of the man (See introduction to Gl).

HEALING A GRIEVING MOTHER'S DAUGHTER

(Mk 7:24-30)

21,22 Jesus again sought rest. He withdrew into a house in the area of Tyre and Sidon (Mk 7:24). This was a country that was under the jurisdiction of Herod Antipas. The area of Tyre and Sidon was a Gentile area, and thus, the ministry of Jesus extended beyond the Jews. His teaching in areas of the Gentiles would not have been approved by the Jewish religious leaders. **Woman of Canaan:** This was a Greek woman, a Syrophenician (Mk 7:26). She was a Gentile. **Son of David:** See 1:1; 20:30,31; 22:41,42. Here is a confession that Jesus is the Son of Man, the Messiah of Israel. The fact that this woman in the area of Tyre and Sidon came making this confession is evidence that the knowledge of who Jesus was had spread even to Gentile regions. **Demon possessed:** See comments 4:24. **23 He answered her not a word:** Jesus did not answer her in order to teach the disciples a lesson. It was their Jewish prejudice that made them unwilling to heal her. The lesson Jesus is trying to teach is that all must be reached regardless of their nationality (See 28:19,20; Mk 16:15). Jesus' refusal to answer the woman gave them the opportunity to manifest their inward feelings. The woman's cries annoyed them because they were prejudiced against the Gentiles. **24 Lost sheep of the house of Israel:** Jesus' earthly mission was primarily to the Jews, for it was to them that God had prophesied the Messiah (10:5,6). The disciples would have been pleased with this statement, for they were prejudiced

24 But He answered and said, "I was not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

25 Then she came and worshiped Him, saying, "Lord, help me!"

26 But He answered and said, "It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to dogs."

27 And she said, "Yes, Lord. But even the dogs eat of the crumbs that fall from their master's table."

28 Then Jesus answered and said to her, "O woman, great is your faith. Let it be to you even as you wish." And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.

29 ¶ And Jesus departed from there and came near to the sea of Galilee. And He went up onto a mountain and sat down there.

30 And great multitudes came to Him, having with them *those who were* lame, blind, mute, crippled, and many others. And they laid them down at Jesus' feet. And He healed them.

31 So the multitude marveled when they saw the mute speaking, the crippled made whole, the lame walking, and the blind seeing. And they glorified the God of Israel.

32 ¶ Then Jesus called His disciples to Him, and said, "I have compassion on the multitude because they have continued with Me now three days and have nothing to eat. And I do not want to send them away hungry, lest they faint on the way."

33 And His disciples said to Him, "Where would we get enough bread in the wilderness to fill such a great multitude?"

34 And Jesus said to them, "How many loaves do you have?" And they said, "Seven and a few small fish."

35 And He commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground.

36 And He took the seven loaves and the fish. And giving thanks, He broke *them* and gave to His disciples, and the disciples to the multitude.

37 And they all ate and were filled. And they

against the Gentiles. **25** Without any arguments, the woman simply poured out her worship of Jesus (See 8:2). We cannot help but believe that Jesus knew her heart, and thus, knew that she would behave in this manner toward Him. She thus presents herself in a manner that would break down the prejudice of the disciples. **26** Jesus continued to show the hardness that was in the hearts of the Jews toward the Gentiles. At this time in the incident, surely the disciples were beginning to realize their own prejudices, and thus, were even thinking in themselves that something must be done for the woman. **27 Crumbs which fall:** If at this stage in the incident the disciples were still hardened against the pleas of the woman, then they were men of no compassion, and thus, would have disqualified themselves as disciples of Jesus. The willingness of the woman to accept the most humble blessings from Jesus was certainly a rebuke of Jewish pride. **28 O woman, great is your faith:** Jesus now relinquished to the pleas by proclaiming to the disciples the great faith of the woman (8:10; 9:22). One cannot but believe that the disciples were embarrassed with themselves as they saw their own hardness of heart melt into compassion for this Gentile woman and her beloved daughter.

FEEDING THE FOUR THOUSAND

(Mk 7:31 - 8:9)

29,30 At this time in Jesus' ministry the multitudes are continually with Him because of the publicized power of His healing (See Is 35:5,6). He now goes around the Sea of Galilee and up a mountain in order to offer the opportunity for the multitudes to come to Him. In doing this He was taking the multitudes away from their environment for a retreat to a mountain for teaching. Jesus

led them to this location in order that they be in a situation where they could concentrate on Jesus' teaching. In order that they be prepared for the teaching, Jesus heals all the physically deformed who were in the group.

Lame: These are those with deformed limbs (At 3:2).

Mute: These are those who could not speak because they could not hear. **Maimed:** Those who had suffered injury to body limbs. **31 The multitude marveled:** The

healing of all who had physical deformities prepared the minds of the multitude in that they were now fully aware of Jesus' power from God (See Jn 3:2; 20:30,31; Mk 16:20; Hb 2:3,4). The miracles proved that the messenger of God was in their midst, and thus, they should listen. The result of the healing was that they glorified God (Lk 5:25,26). **32** Jesus not only had compassion on their physical infirmities (9:36), He also had compassion on their physical necessities. **Three days and have nothing to eat:** The people had been so enthralled with Jesus' healing and teaching that they had forgotten about food. It was a retreat where all fasted because of their concentration on the work and teaching of the Son of God. **33-36** See the feeding of the five thousand in 14:14-21. Jesus asked the disciples where they could get food to feed this multitude. He thus prepared their minds for the miraculous feeding. **Where could we get enough bread in the wilderness:** It seems that the disciples had soon forgotten the feeding of the five thousand. **37,38 Seven large baskets full:** A miracle of creation is again worked in the lives of the disciples. The disciples were to realize that the One who had created the universe and all that is in it was standing in their midst (See Cl 1:16; see comments 14:15-20; 16:8-13). They could accept Jesus as the Messiah. However, their acceptance of Him must go beyond His

took up of the broken *pieces* that were left, seven baskets full.

38 And they who ate were four thousand men, beside women and children.

39 And He sent away the multitude, got into the boat, and came into the region of Magadan.

Chapter 16

1 ¶ The Pharisees and the Sadducees came, and testing Him, desired that He would show them a sign from heaven.

2 He answered and said to them, "When it is evening, you say, '*It will be fair weather, for the sky is red.*'"

3 "And in the morning, '*It will be bad weather today, for the sky is red and threatening.*' You can discern the face of the sky, but you can-

not *discern* the signs of the times.

4 "A wicked and adulterous generation seeks after a sign. And no sign will be given to it, but the sign of Jonah." And He left them and departed.

5 ¶ And when His disciples came to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread.

6 Then Jesus said to them, "Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees."

7 And they reasoned among themselves, saying, "*It is because we have taken no bread.*"

8 But Jesus, aware of this, said to them, "O you of little faith, why do you reason among yourselves because you have no bread?"

9 "Do you not yet understand, or remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets you took up?"

messiahship. He must be accepted as the Son of God, the Creator of the world. Jesus must be accepted for being nothing less. If He is, then the impact He would have on one's heart is not what God intended. He is the Messiah and Son of God (See comments 16:12-19). **39 *Magdala*:** This could be spelled "Magadan" or "Maddala." This was the place from which Mary Magdalene had received her name. Mark refers to this area as Dalmanutha (Mk 8:10).

Chapter 16

ATTACK OF THE PHARISEES AND SADDUCEES

(Mk 8:11,12)

1 The Pharisees and Sadducees theologically disagreed with one another. The Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection of the dead, the soul, or the after life (22:23; At 23:8). However, on this occasion both groups were united in their attack against Jesus (Lk 23:12). **Testing Him:** These religious leaders were not seeking either teaching or wisdom from Jesus. They had already seen many miracles and heard the reports of many more. Nevertheless, their desire for position among the people and their allegiance to their own traditions blinded them as to who Jesus was and what He taught (See Jn 3:2). They came with the motive to disprove that Jesus was the Messiah because they saw the great multitudes of people who were now accepting Jesus as the Messiah. **2,3 *Hypocrites*:** Jesus exposes the evil motives of the Pharisees and Sadducees. They had common sense to discern the signs of the weather and its changes. However, they did not have enough spiritual sense to discern that the signs of Jesus' work indicated that a great change was coming in the near future. Their preconceived ideas that were based on their religious traditions had clouded their minds. We must never underestimate the power traditional thinking has over an individual to cloud his objectivity in accepting that which is truth. **4 *A wicked and adulterous generation seeks after a sign*:** See comments 12:38-40. They had committed themselves to follow

after their own religious traditions, and in doing so, they rejected the commandments of God. They had thus committed spiritual adultery (See 15:8,9; Mk 7:6-9). Such a commitment to religious traditions hindered them from accepting the clear truth that the Son of God was in their midst. Mark records that this greatly grieved Jesus (Mk 8:12). **Sign of the prophet Jonah:** See 12:38:40. **And He left them:** There is no use in casting pearls before swine (See 7:6). There comes a time in one's efforts to reach a lost person that he must make a decision that one must be left to himself if he has a hardened heart. It is useless to strive about theologies when one's mind is set in the tradition of the fathers. On this occasion, Jesus simply left these Pharisees and Sadducees, for their hearts were hardened against Him.

WARNING CONCERNING THE LEAVEN

(Mk 8:13-26)

5,6 *Forgotten to take bread*: The disciples were enthralled in the teaching and work of Jesus. As a result, they forgot physical necessities in order to concentrate on spiritual food. They had only one loaf of bread left (Mk 8:14). **Beware:** Jesus again takes an opportunity to teach concerning the evil influences and teachings of the Pharisees and Sadducees (See 15:12-20). **Leaven:** Or, yeast. It is the nature of yeast to spread throughout the bread, and so, it would be with the teachings and influence of the legalistic system of religion of the Pharisees whose hearts were far from God (15:1-9; Mk 7:1-9). **7,8 *Reasoned among themselves*:** The disciples are now cautious because of former rebukes, so they discuss the problem of no food among themselves lest they be rebuked for not bringing more food. **O you of little faith:** Jesus rebuked the disciples for their concern over material things. They deserved the rebuke because they did not perceive His teaching concerning the leavening evil influence of the Pharisees and Sadducees. He thus took another opportunity to impress on their minds the great impact the traditional religious teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees had on the Jewish society, and would have on them if they

10 “Or the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets you took up?”

11 “How is it that you do not understand that I did not speak to you concerning bread, but beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees?”

12 Then they understood that He did not say to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.

13 ¶ When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, “Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?”

14 And they said, “Some say John the Bap-

tist; some, Elijah; and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.”

15 He said to them, “But who do you say I am?”

16 And Simon Peter answered and said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

17 And Jesus answered and said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed *this* to you, but My Father who is in heaven.

18 “And I also say to you, that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it.

19 “And I will give to you the keys of the

are not aware of such. **9,10** The Pharisees and Sadducees had tremendous influence on the society. Their influence was great because they controlled the religious thought and institutions of the Jewish society. In this context, Jesus is moving the disciples' thinking toward the greater influence He will have because of who He is. He is moving them toward the confession of verse 16, that He is the Christ, the Son of God. In Matthew's record of these events and teachings, he is also moving us as readers to the same confession. Therefore, Jesus asked the disciples to recall a specific type of miracle that He worked with the feeding of the multitudes (14:16-21; 15:32-38). This type of miracle proved beyond any doubt the greatness of Jesus over any possible influence the Pharisees and Sadducees could possibly have in the world. Their influence was regional in the land of Palestine among the Jews. But Jesus' influence would be global and unto all nations. **11,12 Teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees:** This is the teaching of these religious leaders that had permeated Jewish society. It was not the teaching of the Old Testament, but their teaching of the religious traditions of men that led them to reject the commandment of God (See comments 15:1-9; Mk 7:1-9; Lk 12:1). The legalistic system of religious thought that was taught by the Pharisees and Sadducees was a system of religious thought that brought men into bondage (See At 15:10; see comments on legalism in the introduction to Gl.)

JESUS IS THE CHRIST AND SON OF GOD

(Mk 8:27-30; Lk 9:18-21)

13 Caesarea Philippi: This city was in the northern extremity of Palestine at the foot of Mount Hermon. The city was built by Philip, one of Herod's sons, to honor Caesar Augustus. It was the ideal location where Jesus and the disciples could be away from the multitudes in order for Jesus to discuss the great subject that Matthew records for us in this chapter. **Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am:** This is a turning point in the ministry of Jesus, for from the time of the confession He draws from the disciples on this occasion, He turns His face toward Jerusalem and the cross (vs 21). He thus asks the disciples this question in order to move them toward their own confession of who He is in verse 15. **14 Some say:** Some may have been saying that

Jesus was John the Baptist who was resurrected from the dead (See 14:1-3). Then others were saying that Jesus was the fulfillment of the belief that Elijah would be raised (17:10; See 2 Kg 1:1-12; Mk 6:15). **One of the prophets:** Many people accepted Jesus as a prophet, possibly one that had arisen from the dead. However, they failed to recognize Him as the Messiah and Son of God. **15** In the context Jesus is not actually concerned about what people are saying about Him. He wants to know the inner beliefs of the disciples. **16** Impetuous Peter makes a confession that contains two facts concerning Jesus upon which faith must be founded. Peter confessed that Jesus is the Christ (the Greek equivalent for the Messiah, the anointed one of Israel. See Jn 11:27) and the Son of God (See 14:33; Jn 6:69; 11:27; Hb 1:2,5; 1 Jn 4:15). Peter confessed that Jesus was the Messiah in that He fulfilled all prophecy concerning the Messiah. As the Son of God, Peter confessed that Jesus came from God (See 14:33; Jn 6:69; 11:27). **17 Blessed are you:** “Bar” is the Syriac word for the Hebrew “Ben” which means “son of.” Peter was the son of Jonah (Jn 1:42; 21:15-17). **Flesh and blood has not revealed this to you:** In this reference to men in general (1 Co 15:50; Gl 1:16; Ep 6:12; Hb 2:14), Jesus is saying that the content of Peter's confession was not revealed to him by the hearsay of men, for men did not accept Jesus as such. God made these things known to Peter (Jn 3:2; 5:36; 10:37,38; 14:11; 20:30,31). **Father who is in heaven:** At the time of these events Jesus as God was on earth and the Father as God was in heaven. Jesus was the manifestation of God on earth to work the scheme of redemption through His own sacrifice. **18 Peter:** Peter's name (*petros*) is a Greek word that is masculine in gender. The word means a stone or rock (Jn 1:42). **On this rock:** The gender of this Greek word (*petra*) is feminine, and thus, does not refer to Peter whose name is masculine. The rock here is the fact that Jesus is the Messiah and Son of God. **I will build my church:** The fact that people believe that Jesus is the Messiah and Son of God, makes such the foundation upon which church is built. Church would exist, therefore, because people believed that Jesus was the Christ and Son of God. As Christ, He fulfilled all Old Testament prophecy in reference to the Messiah (Lk 24:44). As Son of God He was God on earth with the power and authority of

kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will have been loosed in heaven.”

20 Then He charged His disciples that they should tell no one that He was the Christ.

21 ¶ From that time Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief

priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.

22 Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, “Far be it from You, Lord! This will not happen to You!”

23 But He turned and said to Peter, “Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.”

God. **Church:** This word is from *ekklesia* and refers to people. The word refers to a called out assembly of people. The church is the called out assembly of God's people. They are called out of the world by their belief that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. Since the grammar of the statement that is here used by Jesus is in the future tense, the church was yet to be established. John the Baptist is already dead, and thus, was not a part of the church of Christ (See 14:1ff). The church would be established in relation to the disciples' lives when the first official announcement of the kingdom reign of Jesus would be made. Such was made in At 2 after the ascension of Jesus to the right hand of God. When men responded to the kingdom reign of Jesus, therefore, church was established (At 2:41,47). The church on earth would be the manifestation of the kingdom reign of Jesus in heaven. **The gates of Hades:** The gates of ancient cities were the most vulnerable part of the city. When a city was attacked by an enemy, the enemy attacked the gates. If the gates fell, the city fell. Therefore, the strength of the fortifications of a city depended on the strength of the gates. The word “gates” came to mean power or strength. Hades is the unseen abode of the dead. What Jesus is here saying is that the strength or power of physical death will not prevail against the building and existence of the church. Physical death would not keep Him in the tomb, and thus, He would be raised in order to sit at the right hand of the Father and reign over all things (Ep 1:20-22). His reign would be announced in At 2, and thus, the assembly of submitted hearts of the world that responded to Jesus' kingdom reign would be the church. **19** Jesus now turns to a different subject that is related to the church, but is not specifically the church. **Keys:** This is a metaphorical statement that refers to privilege or authority (See Is 22:22; Lk 11:52; Rv 1:18; 3:7; 9:1). Peter was given the privilege, and thus, the divine authority to make the first official announcement of the kingdom reign of Jesus. He was the first apostle to stand up in At 2 and declare that Jesus was Lord and Christ (See comments At 2). **Kingdom of heaven:** Reference is to the sovereignty of Deity that proceeds from heaven. Kingdom reign, therefore, originates from God out of heaven. Church refers to people on earth. When Peter made the first official announcement of the kingdom reign of Jesus in At 2, which kingdom was already in existence at the time the announcement was made, people on earth responded by obedience to the gospel (At 2:26-41). The church thus began when people first submitted to the kingdom reign of Jesus. Church was established because kingdom reign had been established first when Jesus ascended to reign at the right hand of God (See Dn 2:44; 7:13,14). **Bind on earth ... loose on earth:**

The Greek text literally says, “Shall have been bound ... shall have been loosed.” In other words, what the apostles spoke on earth in revelation of the truth, had already been bound in heaven, for the truth was revealed from heaven (See Jn 14:26; 16:13; 1 Co 14:37). The authority of binding and loosing truth was also given to all the apostles in 18:18 (See Jn 20:23). Therefore, in reference to the revelation of truth, Peter had no more authority or privilege than the rest of the apostles. **20 Tell no one:** See 8:4; 17:9; Lk 9:21. Jesus did not want the disciples at this time to preach the subject of this personal discussion, for in this discussion He had claimed sonship and messiahship, which claim would at this time have motivated a mob to kill Him. Their going out and preaching this subject would have caused the social environment that Jesus was controlling to get out of hand. We must always keep in mind that Jesus is controlling public opinion, and especially the antagonism of the religious leaders, in order to take Himself to the cross (Jn 10:17,18). He would not suffer death at the hand of a mob. He would take Himself to the cross in order to lay down His life as the sacrificial Lamb for mankind.

PROPHECY OF JESUS' DEATH

(Mk 8:31-37; Lk 9:22-25)

21 From that time: Jesus knew that by this time in His ministry the disciples' faith in Him had grown. It had grown strong enough to accept the teaching concerning His death. **Suffer many things:** See 17:9,12,22ff; 20:18,19; 27:63. **Elders ... chief priests ... scribes:** It was the religious leaders who crucified Jesus. In this case a truth is illustrated. The power of misguided traditional religion directs people to do those things that are evil. **22 Peter ... began to rebuke Him:** Peter does not yet understand the necessity of the crucifixion. His ignorance of the plan of God to redeem man made it possible for Satan to use him on this occasion. Satan used Peter as Jesus' friend to dissuade Him from going to the cross. Though Satan did not understand the final purpose of Jesus, he knew that something was about to happen in reference to the crushing blow to his head that God had revealed to Adam and Eve (Gn 3:15). He thus attacked the Seed of woman through the persuasion of Peter to dissuade Jesus from His destiny. **23 Get behind Me, Satan:** Though ignorantly, Peter played the part of Satan to divert Jesus from the cross. Satan was using Peter's love and concern for Jesus as an appeal to cause Jesus to stumble in His mission. Today, too many friends and family use their appeal, as Peter, to discourage men and women from going into all the world to preach the gospel. **The things of God:** Peter did not understand the scheme

24 ¶ Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me.

25 "For whoever desires to save his life will lose it. And whoever desires to lose his life for My sake will find it.

26 "For what will it profit a man if he will gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?

27 "For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward every man according to his works.

28 "Truly I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste of death until they

see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom."

Chapter 17

1 ¶ And after six days Jesus took Peter, James and John his brother, and led them up on a high mountain by themselves.

2 And He was transfigured before them. And His face shone as the sun and His garments became white as the light.

3 And behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah talking with Him.

4 Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here. If You wish, I will make here three tabernacles, one for You and one for Moses and one for Elijah."

5 While he was still speaking, a bright cloud

of God to save man by the cross. However, he would later understand, which things he wrote in 1 Pt 2:24. **24**

Take up his cross: In the context of the discussion of His own suffering on the cross, Jesus now turns to the future of the disciples (See 10:38). The true disciple of Jesus must be willing to endure the same sufferings as the Teacher. When one lives after the manner which Jesus instructed His disciples, persecution will come (2 Tm 3:12; 1 Pt 2:21; 4:16). **25** See 10:39; Lk 17:33; Jn 12:25. If one desires to live after the world in order to save his life, he will lose it (Rm 6:16,17). If one denies Christ in order to save himself, in the end he will lose his life. The one who gives himself to the Lord will gain eternal life in the end (Mk 10:29,30; 2 Pt 1:3,4). Those who crucify themselves, and allow Jesus to control their lives, will live eternally with Him (Gl 2:20). **26** The value of one's soul is beyond comparison with anything of this world. If one owned all that is of this world, such would not profit toward the salvation of his soul. If we truly realized the value of our eternal salvation, we would not trade anything of this world for it (See Lk 12:20,21). If we understood the glory that will be revealed to us, we would understand the foolishness of clinging to this world in a manner that would divert us from Jesus (Rm 8:18).

27 The Son of Man will come: The Son of Man, the Messiah, was standing in their midst. In view of the context of verse 28, reference here is to the coming of the Son of Man in time. Jesus came in time in judgment of this world by the preaching of the gospel. He came with His messengers (See 10:23; 26:64; Mk 8:38; 9:1; Lk 9:26). The prophecies of Daniel 7:10 and Zechariah 14:5 describe the coming of the Lord with His angels in order to establish His kingdom reign. Therefore, this judgment has in view those who either obeyed or rejected the preaching of the gospel by Jesus and His messengers. One's acceptance or rejection of the gospel has eternal consequences that will be made known in the final judgment (See Rm 2:6; 14:12; 2 Co 5:10; Ep 6:8). **28** Some of Jesus' immediate disciples would not die until they saw the presence of Jesus in His kingdom reign (Mk 9:1; Lk 9:27). **Coming:** This Greek word could be translated "presence." The presence of the power of the kingdom reign was manifested in the sending of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles in At

2 (See Mk 9:1; Jn 14:26; 16:13; At 1:8). God's presence is always manifested in the miraculous.

Chapter 17

THE TRANSFIGURATION

(Mk 9:2-13; Lk 9:28-36)

1 After six days: Luke says eight days (Lk 9:28). The Jews counted any part of a day to represent a whole day. Therefore, by counting the partial beginning and ending of two days, with six full days, we would have the eight days of Luke. **Peter, James and John:** Though Jesus worked with all twelve disciples, it seems that special attention was given to these three (See 26:37; Mk 5:37; Lk 8:51). Jesus thus gives Peter, James and John the privilege of this exceptional event. He knows they will eventually relate the happenings of this event to others. By inspiration, Matthew is here revealing to us what happened on this unique occasion. **High mountain:** Most scholars believe that this was Mount Hermon which was in the northern part of Palestine (See 2 Pt 1:17,18). This mountain is about 2,700 meters high (about 9,000 feet). Some believe this may have been Mount Tabor. **2 Transfigured:** This word means to be changed or transformed. In some way Jesus' appearance was changed into a state of heavenly glory in order to manifest His deity (Jn 1:14). **3 Moses and Elijah appeared:** Moses was the lawgiver to Israel, and thus, represented the law (Jn 1:17). However, Peter, James and John are to be shown that they should now listen to Jesus. Elijah was the great prophet of Israel, and thus, represented the prophets. Again, the three witnesses are to listen to Jesus. **Talking:** They were talking of the fulfillment of the purpose for which both Moses and Elijah came to do their work. They were talking about the death of Jesus for the salvation of mankind (Lk 9:31). **4** All three disciples were suddenly awakened (Lk 9:32,33). Peter was probably not fully conscious of what he was saying when he made the suggestion of the tabernacles. **Tabernacles:** This would be "booths" or "tents." According to the tradition of the Jews, these would have been temporary dwellings of prayer and meditation according to the teachings of Lv 23:34 and Ex 25:8,9. Peter may have been suggesting that places of worship be

overshadowed them. And behold, a voice out of the cloud said, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him."

6 And when the disciples heard *it*, they fell on their faces and were greatly afraid.

7 And Jesus came and touched them, and said, "Arise, and do not be afraid."

8 And lifting up their eyes, they saw no one except Jesus.

9 And as they were coming down from the mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying, "Tell the vision to no one until the Son of Man has risen again from the dead."

10 And His disciples asked Him, saying, "Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must first come?"

11 And Jesus answered and said to them, "Elijah is coming and will restore all things.

12 "But I say to you that Elijah has already

come, and they did not know him, but have done to him whatever they wished. Likewise will also the Son of Man suffer at their hands."

13 Then the disciples understood that He spoke to them of John the Baptist.

14 ¶ And when they had come to the multitude, a man came to Him, kneeling down to Him, and saying,

15 "Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is a lunatic and is very ill, for he often falls into the fire and often into the water.

16 "And I brought him to your disciples, and they could not cure him."

17 Then Jesus answered and said, "O faithless and perverse generation, how long will I be with you? How long will I put up with you? Bring him here to Me."

18 And Jesus rebuked the demon and he departed out of him. And the child was cured

placed at the location for worship to Jesus, Moses and Elijah. **5 *This is My beloved Son ... hear Him:*** Moses and Elijah represented the Old Testament covenant and law that God had with Israel. But here God announces that Jesus is to be heard and obeyed (3:17; 12:18; Hb 1:1,2; 10:9,10; see 2 Pt 1:16-18). Thus the Old Testament covenant and law were in the process of passing away because of their fulfillment (See 5:17:18). Jesus was the Prophet to whom they must now give heed (Dt 18:14ff ; At 3:22,23). This heavenly proclamation and affirmation was meant to signal Jesus as God's final prophet through whom He would call all men to Himself. Jesus was more than a prophet. He came to do the work of a prophet as Moses and Elijah. However, this proclamation from heaven affirms that He is the Son of God. No other prophet assumed to be the Son of God. **6** When the disciples heard the voice of God, the natural reaction was worship (Dn 8:17; Rv 1:17; see 2 Pt 1:18). Prophets were not worshiped. Because Jesus was God, all three witnesses worshiped as a natural response to their realization of the presence of God. **7,8** After the fearful event of hearing the voice of God, Jesus reassured the disciples. They had prostrated their bodies on the ground during the fearful experience and raised them only when Jesus spoke. **9 *Tell the vision to no one:*** At this time in the ministry, Peter, James and John did not believe in the death of Jesus, let alone His resurrection from the dead (Mk 9:10). What they saw and heard here, they did not fully understand. Therefore, they were not to speak of this event until after Jesus had been raised from the dead (Compare 8:4). If this event was spoken of publicly at this time in Jesus' ministry, there would have been unnecessary confusion. The other disciples would also possibly have become envious of Peter, James and John for having the special treatment (Compare Mk 9:34; Lk 22:24). **10** The scribes had correctly interpreted the Old Testament law concerning the prophecies that a messenger must first come before the coming of the Messiah (See Is 40:3; Mt 3:1;

4:5; Mt 11:14). **11-13 *Restore all things:*** The prophecies were of John the Baptist who came in the spirit and power of Elijah (Lk 1:16,17). He came preaching repentance and baptism for remission of sins (Mk 1:1-4). However, the Jews failed to see the fulfillment of prophecy in John. ***The Son of Man is also about to suffer:*** As the Jews did not recognize John as the fulfillment of prophecy in preparation for the Messiah, so they would not recognize Jesus (Jn 1:11). They would thus crucify Him because of their refusal to believe and accept Him as the Son of God (Mk 9:12).

FAITH AND HEALING A DEMONIAIC BOY

(Mk 9:14-29; Lk 9:37-43)

14-16 Jesus, Peter, James and John had remained part of a day and night on the mountain of Transfiguration (Lk 9:37). While He was on the mountain, the scribes were entering into argument with the other disciples (Mk 9:14). ***Lord, have mercy on my son:*** The disciples were not able to cast out the demon from this son because of their lack of faith (vs 19,20). ***Epileptic:*** This is a physical brain disorder that causes sudden seizures, unconsciousness and loss of body control. **17** Mark gives an extended account of the events surrounding the exorcism. ***O faithless and perverse generation:*** Jesus makes this indictment of all who were present. All were still having a hard time accepting Him as the Messiah and Son of God. **18 *Jesus rebuked the demon:*** Mark records that the demon caused epileptic fits that would cause the boy to be cast into fires (Mk 9:20). Jesus said on this occasion that all things are possible to those who believe (Mk 9:23). Therefore, this healing was a test of Jesus' divine power in contrast to the lack of power in the disciples because of their lack of faith. ***Rebuked:*** See Lk 4:41. Jesus had total control over the world of Satan and his works (See comments 4:24). Because of Jesus' command, the demon immediately left the boy (See Mk 9:26). There were no formulas, performances or ceremonies in order to

from that very hour.

19 Then the disciples came to Jesus privately, and said, "Why could we not cast him out?"

20 And Jesus said to them, "Because of your little faith. For truly I say to you, if you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move. And nothing will be impossible to you.

21 ["But this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting."]

22 ¶ And while they came together in Galilee, Jesus said to them, "The Son of Man will be betrayed into the hands of men.

23 "And they will kill Him, and the third day He will be raised up." And they were exceedingly sorrowful.

24 ¶ And when they came to Capernaum, those who received the *temple* tax came to Peter, and said, "Does your teacher not pay

the *temple* tax?"

25 He said, "Yes." And when he had come into the house, Jesus spoke to him first, saying, "What do you think, Simon? From whom do the kings of the earth take custom or taxes, from their own sons or from strangers?"

26 Peter said to Him, "From strangers." Jesus said to him, "Then the sons are exempt.

27 "However, lest we should offend them, go to the sea and cast in a hook, and take up the fish that first comes up. And when you have opened his mouth, you will find a piece of money. Take that and give to them for Me and you."

Chapter 18

1 ¶ At the same time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"

2 And Jesus called a little child to Himself

exorcise this demon. Jesus simply spoke and it was done. **19-21** *The disciples came to Jesus privately:* The disciples seem to be somewhat embarrassed over their inability to take care of the demon possessed boy. **Because of your unbelief:** It was unbelief on their part, not the part of the one who was healed. They could have cast out the demon because Jesus had given them such authority. However, the qualification for being able to command the power of the supernatural demanded that they believe (19:26; 21:21-22; Lk 10:1,17). **Faith as a mustard seed:** See 21:21,22; Mk 11:23,24; Lk 17:6; 1 Co 12:9; 13:2. At this time in the ministry of Jesus, they had a little faith. Therefore, their faith was filled with doubts and fears. But this would change. They would grow to a non-doubting faith that would lead them to do great things for God. **Prayer:** Mark says much prayer (Mk 9:29). Jesus said that much prayer must be added to the ability to command the power of God. **Nothing will be impossible for you:** Nothing would be impossible to them for nothing is impossible for the One who actually does the miraculous work (Mk 9:23; Jn 11:40). Keep in mind that in this context Jesus is not talking to all the disciples but only to the twelve. He was promising them special authority in reference to their work as His apostles.

22,23 See Mk 9:30-32; Lk 9:43-45. From the time of His ministry that is recorded in 16:21, Jesus began to explain to the disciples that He was headed for the cross. It was difficult for them to accept this concept because they still had in their minds the belief that Jesus was going to be an earthly king of Israel and reign on this earth. They maintained this belief even to the days immediately before the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in At 2 (See At 1:6). **Exceedingly sorrowful:** When Jesus spoke of His death, it did not bring them any comfort (Jn 16:6; 19:30). They knew something was going to happen, but did not understand. They believed His words when He spoke of His death, and thus, were sorrowful.

However, they did not believe His words concerning His resurrection. If they had believed His words concerning His resurrection, they would have been joyful.

THE TEMPLE TAX

24 Tax: This was the amount of a half-shekel. The Greek word is "didrachma." This was the Jewish pool tax of about two days' wages that was bound on the Jews in order to maintain the temple. It was paid yearly, about a month before Passover, in order to support those who worked with the religious services of the temple (See Ex 30:13,14). **Does your Teacher not pay the temple tax:** The question was undoubtedly asked Peter in order to bring an accusation against Jesus. **25,26 Yes:** Peter affirms that Jesus pays the tax, though he evidently had not seen Jesus do such. **Sons are free:** The sons of the king are free from paying the taxes. However, the subjects of the king must pay. Since Jesus is greater than the temple because He was the Son of God, then He would not be subject to pay the tax to the temple. Jesus thus claims sonship of God in this statement. **27 Lest we offend them:** In order to avoid unnecessary controversy concerning the payment of the tax, Jesus miraculously provided the money to pay the tax. Peter had to pay the tax. He, as well as all citizens, were subject to pay the tax though they were not the creators of the temple. **Piece of money:** Some translate this "shekel," which is from the Greek word "sater." It was about eighty U.S. cents. This is the exact amount of the temple tax for two people.

Chapter 18

THE GREATEST IN THE KINGDOM

(Mk 9:33-50; Lk 9:46-50)

1 Greatest in the kingdom: The question of this verse was asked on the basis that the disciples believed that the kingdom would be a physical kingdom of this

and set him in the midst of them,

3 and said, "Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.

4 "Therefore, whoever will humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

5 "And whoever receives a little child like this in My name receives Me.

6 "But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him that a millstone were hung around his neck and he were drowned in the depth of the sea.

7 "Woe to the world because of offenses! For it is inevitable that offenses come, but woe to that man through whom the offense comes!

8 "Therefore, if your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and cast *it* from you. It is better for you to enter into life crippled

or lame, than having two hands or two feet, to be cast into everlasting fire.

9 "And if your eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out and cast *it* from you. It is better for you to enter into life with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into the fiery hell.

10 "Take heed that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that in heaven their angels continually see the face of My Father who is in heaven.

11 [For the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost.]

12 "What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them goes astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine and go into the mountains and seek the one that is straying?

13 "And if he should find it, truly I say to you, he rejoices more over that *sheep* than over the ninety-nine who did not go astray.

14 "Even so it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones

world (See comments At 1:6). Selfish ambition for position of leadership after the thinking of this world continually plagued the disciples throughout the ministry of Jesus (See comments Mk 10:35-45). This is one of four times this subject came up during the time the apostles were with Jesus (See 20:20-28; Mk 9:33,34; 10:35-45; Lk 22:24-27). However, after the events of At 2 and throughout their ministry, they learned the nature of servanthood leadership in the spiritual kingdom. **2,3 Unless you are converted:** The Greek text says that they must turn (See At 3:19; 28:27). **Become as little children:** One must have the attitude of submissive little children in order to be of the spiritual nature that is necessary in order to enter the spiritual kingdom (See Js 4:6,7; 1 Pt 5:6,7; compare 1 Co 14:20; 1 Pt 2:2; compare also 19:14; 20:27; 23:11; Ps 131:2; Mk 10:15; Lk 18:17). **4 Whoever humbles himself:** This is the servanthood leadership that is characteristic of those who submit to the needs of others (See comments Mk 10:35-45). **5 Whoever receives:** If one receives a Christian who is of the disposition and character of what Jesus discusses in this context, he receives Jesus (10:40-42). **6 Causes ... to sin:** Those who persecute Christians in order to cause them to stumble, will be held accountable (See Lk 17:2). **Millstone:** This is a great stone of many kilograms in weight that was used to grind grain into flour. Jesus' emphasis here is that there will be no deliverance for those who seek to cause His disciples to fall. God is now patient with those who persecute Christians. However, He will eventually rain down severe punishment on those who have caused hurt to His flock (Dt 32:35; Rm 12:19; Hb 10:30). **7 Woe to the world because of offenses:** The pronouncement of "woe" by God upon rebellious men is a sign of sure condemnation for rebellion against God. Specific condemnation is here pronounced by Jesus upon those who cause others to sin (Lk 17:1; 1 Co 11:19; 1 Tm 4:1). **8,9 Cut it off:** Jesus did not mean that one

literally cut off one of the limbs of his body. He emphasizes the seriousness by which one must consider those things that would cause him to fall. In this context where the disciples are having problems with selfish ambition concerning greatness, He emphasizes the fact that they should seriously consider this attitude, lest it lead to their condemnation. Carnal attitudes of leadership will cause many to stumble (See comments 2 Jn 9:10). See comments 5:29,30; Mk 9:35-45. Cl 3:5. **Life:** Reference is to entering, as Mark explains, the kingdom of God (Mk 9:47). **Everlasting fire:** "Everlasting" is from the Greek word *aionios*. Reference is to the certain punishment of the wicked that has consequences that will not be undone (See 5:22; 10:28; 2 Th 1:7-9; Rv 20:14,15). This is the gehenna which will be the place of the final destruction of the wicked after punishment has been rendered to them for their sin. In this context, Jesus explains that severe punishment will be rendered to those who harm the flock of God (See comments 10:28). **10 Their angels:** Compare Ps 34:7; At 12:5ff; Hb 1:14; Rv 8:2. This is a difficult verse to understand. Some have affirmed that there are guardian angels assigned to children. If such is true, then we would wonder what these angels do since children and Christians fall victim to calamity (At 14:22). Hb 1:14 teaches that angels are ministers of God's will on behalf of the righteous, thus angels function in some way to carry out the will of God in the lives of the righteous. **11** The manuscript evidence for the inclusion of this verse is weak. Both the Nestle-Aland and United Bible Societies Greek text omit the verse. However, the teaching of the verse is found in Lk 19:10 (See Jn 3:17; 12:47). **12-14** See Lk 15:4-10. Jesus' illustration here teaches the great value of just one person who has gone astray. Jesus gave up heaven in order to seek and save those who are lost (Lk 19:10). His example should motivate Christians to seek those who are overtaken by the world (18:12-14; Gl 6:1; Js 5:19,20).

should perish.

15 ¶ “Moreover, if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother.

16 “But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more so that *‘by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.’*

17 “And if he refuses to hear them, tell *it* to the church. But if he refuses to hear the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.

18 “Truly I say to you, whatever you will bind on earth will have been bound in heaven. And whatever you will loose on earth will

have been loosed in heaven.

19 “Again, truly I say to you, that if two of you will agree on earth concerning anything that they will ask, it will be done for them by My Father who is in heaven.

20 “For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there I am in the midst of them.”

21 ¶ Then Peter came to Him and said, “Lord, how often will my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?”

22 Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.

23 “Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his bondser-vants.

THE BROTHER WHO OFFENDS ANOTHER

15 *If your brother sins against you:* In 5:23,24 Jesus spoke of the innocent party who remembered that someone had a complaint against him. Here Jesus speaks of the one who causes the sin (Lk 17:3; compare Gl 6:1; 2 Th 3:15; Js 5:19,20; Lv 19:17). In this teaching of Jesus, the one who is sinned against must take the initiative and go to the offending brother. Taken together, both Matthew 5 and this context teach that both the offended and the offender have the responsibility to settle the conflict. **Between you and him alone:** The two parties that are involved in the problem must first seek to settle the matter in a private manner (Compare 1 Jn 5:16). The purpose for the action is to open communication and save the soul of the one who sinned against his brother. It would be wrong for a brother to publicly accuse another brother without going to him first in private. **16,17** *Mouth of two or three witnesses:* See Dt 17:6; 19:15; Jn 8:17; 2 Co 13:1; 1 Tm 5:19; Hb 10:28. The witnesses would stand as a testimony to the entire church if the sinning brother did not repent. The presence of the witnesses also manifests to the sinning brother the seriousness of the matter. **Tell it to the church:** In the context of Jesus' ministry, the word “church” (*ekklesia*) referred to the Jewish assembly of the synagogue. However, the principle Jesus is teaching here is applied to the church as in 1 Co 6. In reference to the church, consider the instructions of 1 Tm 5:20 and Ti 3:10. **If he refuses:** If one refuses to listen to the witnesses, as well as the church, then such a one has given up his right to fellowship with those who have submitted to one another in love (See Ep 5:21; compare 1 Co 5:11; 2 Co 2:6,7; 2 Th 3:6-15). **Heathen and a tax collector:** Those who were considered ungodly or as dishonest tax collectors were shunned by the Jews. Jesus here states that those who are unrepentant should be shunned (See 1 Jn 5:14-16). **18** *Will be bound in heaven:* These words make the matter of verses 15-17 serious. What is agreed on by the church on earth concerning the unrepentant spirit of the sinner, has already been recognized by God in heaven (See Rm 16:17; 1 Co 5:4,5; Ti 3:10,11). When the church withdraws its fellowship from the unrepentant, then the sinner cannot expect to have fellowship with God. These matters must

be lovingly carried out with much fasting and prayer for the souls of men are involved. **19** *If two of you agree:* The united prayers of the saints accomplish much (See At 4:24ff). The disciples of Jesus must make a concerted effort to work in harmony with one another. Unity among Christians is a fundamental teaching of the New Testament that must be guarded (Jn 17:20,21; 1 Co 1:10; Ph 1:27). **20** This verse is not teaching that the presence of God is guaranteed by the assembly of two or three Christians. God is everywhere always (At 17:28). The context is emphasizing the agreement of Christians on matters that pertain to their unity with one another. The agreement of two brothers constitutes unity.

21,22 *Seven times:* See Lk 17:4. The Jewish religious leaders taught that the most one needed to forgive those who sin against others was four times. Peter here thought that if he suggested seven times he would be manifesting a greater nature of forgiveness. He is thinking about being legally right in reference to Jewish traditional teaching. However, by the time Jesus finishes the parable of the unforgiving debtor in verses 24-35, Peter will understand that mercy and forgiveness must come from the heart as a result of God's mercy and forgiveness of our sins (See Jb 33:29,30; Am 1:3; 2:6). **Seventy times seven:** Peter's proposal was not enough. Forgiveness must be unlimited. As often as the sinner truly repents, then those against whom the sin is committed are bound to forgive. Such is the nature of forgiveness with God. If a man repents, there is no sin too great for God to forgive. Such should be the nature of Christians. If we do not forgive those who sin against us, God will not forgive us (6:12; Js 2:13; see vs 35). The spirit of forgiveness guards one against becoming bitter. It guards the joy that must be characteristic of our hearts. An unforgiving spirit will destroy Christian attitudes. Therefore, one must forgive for his own benefit. If he does not forgive, he will ruin his own character.

PARABLE OF THE UNFORGIVING

23 The following parable of Jesus illustrates the extent to which we must forgive and the reason why we should. **The kingdom of heaven:** Those who are subjects of the kingdom reign of Jesus should be of a for-

24 “And when he had begun to settle *them*, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents.

25 “But since he was not able to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, along with his wife and children and all that he had, and repayment to be made.

26 “The bondservant therefore fell down before him, saying, ‘Lord, have patience with me and I will pay you all.’

27 “Then the lord of that bondservant was moved with compassion and released him and forgave him the debt.

28 “But the same bondservant went out and found one of his fellow bondservants who owed him a hundred denarii. And he laid hands on him and took *him* by the throat, saying, ‘Pay me what you owe.’

29 “And his fellow bondservant fell down and begged him, saying, ‘Have patience with me and I will pay you.’

30 “And he would not, but went and cast

him into prison until he should pay the debt.

31 “So when his fellow bondservants saw what was done, they were very grieved and came and told their lord all that had happened.

32 “Then his lord, after he had called him, said to him, ‘You wicked bondservant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me.’

33 ‘Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow bondservant, just as I had pity on you?’

34 “And his lord was angry, and delivered him to the tormentors until he should repay all that was due to him.

35 “So likewise will My heavenly Father do also to you, if each one of you does not from the heart forgive his brother.”

Chapter 19

1 ¶ And it came to pass when Jesus had finished these sayings, He departed from Galilee and came into the region of Judea beyond

giving nature (See 6:9,10). **King:** One should always view forgiveness in comparison to how much God has forgiven us. **24,25 Ten thousand talents:** This would be about sixty million denarii. One denari was about one day's wage (See Ex 38:24; 1 Kg 10:10; 2 Kg 18:14; 1 Ch 29:4-7; 2 Ch 36:3). So much money is indicated that it would be impossible for a normal man to work every day of his life in order to repay. The spiritual implication of the parable is clear. We owe God more than we can pay in reference to our eternal salvation in heaven. We will receive more in heaven than we can possibly earn. Salvation is truly by grace (Rm 7:14).

That he be sold: Old Testament law stated that if one could not pay his debts, he could be sold in order to pay the debt (2 Kg 4:1). **26** The debtor needed to be brought to account in order to recognize his debt. Before one will repent of sins, he must first recognize the impossible situation he is in with reference to his inability to work in order to earn his salvation. **27 Moved with compassion:** We must not miss the spiritual message of what Jesus is here teaching. His disciples have grown up in a legalistic religious system. But God's message is one of grace. He was moved with love to extend grace to all mankind through the cross (Ps 145:8; Jn 3:16; 1 Jn 4:19). He thus showed great mercy toward us (Ep 2:4-9). Even while we were in sin, and thus, undeserving of God's love, Jesus was sent to die for our sins (Jn 3:16; Rm 5:8) in order that we be forgiven (Hb 8:12; 10:17). **28 A hundred denarii:** This is only a few cents. It is a trivial amount in comparison to what the unmerciful servant originally owed the king. **29-34** The unforgiving servant showed no appreciation for his own forgiveness. In his relationship with his fellow brother, he was hard and cruel (See 19:19; Gl 5:14). Instead of manifesting mercy in his heart because of the mercy that was extended toward him, he only thought

of himself in reference to his fellow man. He showed no mercy though he had received great mercy (See comments Js 2:13). **His master was angry:** The unforgiving spirit of the one who was forgiven must stimulate anger with the master. Even those who witnessed the unforgiving spirit of the man were grieved. The unforgiving man was subsequently delivered to torment. **35 So My heavenly Father also will do to you:** If God's mercy toward us does not stimulate the same in our lives toward others, we also will be delivered to the tormentors. Those with unforgiving spirits cannot inherit the heavenly environment of a forgiving God. God will have judgment without mercy on those who do not show mercy (Js 2:13). Therefore, we must store up mercy for judgment by exercising mercy with others in reference to their sins against us (See 6:12-14; 7:2; Pv 21:13; Mk 11:26; Lk 6:37; Ep 4:32; Cl 3:13; Js 5:9). One must keep in mind that the ability to forgive is a necessary quality that one must possess in order to be a candidate for heaven. It is the nature of God to forgive. His children must have the same nature.

Chapter 19

CLOSING THE DOOR ON DIVORCE

(Mk 10:1-12)

1,2 After the teaching situation of the preceding chapter, Matthew records that Jesus goes south to the region of Judea east of the Jordan. About five months transpire before the teaching incident of the following verses takes place. **Great multitudes:** At this time in Jesus' ministry the number of the multitudes is increasing. **3 Pharisees:** Again, these legalistic religious leaders are seeking inconsistencies in what they consider the theology of Jesus. If such inconsistencies can be found, they believe they have just cause to discredit

Jordan.

2 And great multitudes followed Him, and He healed them there.

3 The Pharisees also came to Him, testing Him, and saying to Him, "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?"

4 And He answered and said to them, "Have you not read that He who created *them* in the beginning '*made them male and female,*'

5 "and said, '*For this cause will a man leave his father and mother and will cleave to his wife. And the two will become one flesh?*'"

6 "Therefore, they are no more two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate."

7 They said to Him, "Why then did Moses command to give a certificate of divorce, and to send her away?"

8 He said to them, "Because of the hardness of your hearts, Moses permitted you to put away your wives. But from the beginning it was not so.

9 "And I say to you, whoever puts away his wife, except for fornication, and marries an-

Jesus before the multitudes. On this occasion they use the present controversy concerning divorce that exists in the teaching of the religious community of Israel. **Is it lawful:** The Pharisees are approaching the argument from a strict legal position (See comments 5:31,32). There were two schools of thought at this time among Jewish scholars concerning divorce under the Old Testament law. The question that is asked by the Pharisees is based on the background of contention between these two schools of thought. (1) There were those of the teaching of the Jewish teacher Hillel who taught that a man could divorce his wife for any reason. They based their reasoning on Dt 24:1-4. (2) There were also those of the teaching of the Jewish teacher Shammai who taught that fornication was the only cause for divorce. They also based their teaching on what Moses instructed in Dt 24:1-4. Therefore, both groups were basing their teachings on the interpretation of the same passage. The Pharisees in this context were testing Jesus as to which interpretation of Dt 24 He would condone. The Pharisees were asking from the viewpoint of God's people, the Jews, who were in covenant relationship with God, and thus, Jesus is answering in the following statements from the same understanding. **Have you not read:** It is important to note that Jesus bypasses arguments over interpretations, and even Moses' instructions in Dt 24. He goes straight to God's original plan as instituted from the very beginning of time (See Gn 1:27; 2:21-24; 5:2; Mt 2:14-16). **Made them male and female:** God made the two sexes in the beginning for the purpose of procreation. They were to be fruitful and multiply in order to populate the world. **4 Leave his father and mother:** When marriage occurs, the man should leave his father and mother and cleave unto his wife. In reference to earthly relationships, the attention of the husband and wife should first be directed primarily toward one another (See Gn 2:24; 1 Co 6:16; 7:2). **5 The two shall become one flesh:** In a spiritual sense, the man and woman in marriage are to be committed to one another. Their minds should not be set on other men or women as prospects for marriage or intimate relationships. Their mental and emotional bond is to be even stronger than their relationship with either parents or children. It was God's original plan from the beginning that among men and women there should be one man and one woman paired together for one life. When such is done, God hates the divorce of the two for every foolish reason that is invented by man (See Mt 2:14-16). **6 Let not man separate:** Man cannot of himself

invent reasons for divorce. God has joined the man and wife together and it is only God who can separate them. Divorce was not a part of God's original plan in marriage. God allowed such in Israel only because of man's digression away from His original law concerning marriage. **7** Jesus' teaching concerning God's original plan for marriage makes the Pharisees now question concerning the certificate of divorce that God later gave to Israel through Moses (Dt 24:1-4). **8 Because of the hardness of your hearts:** God allowed Moses to give the certificate of divorce in Dt 24 as a concession because at the time the certificate was given to the Israelites, they had forgotten the original law of God (Hb 3:15), and thus, were divorcing for many man-made reasons. Thus the certificate of divorce was given for the purpose of closing the door on divorce in order to restore the marriage situation in Israel to be in closer harmony with the original marriage law. Therefore, Moses allowed divorce, not because it was a change in God's original law, but because it was the lesser of two evils. The two evils were divorce for every possible reason of man and divorce for only one reason, that reason being the violation of the marriage contract by the promiscuous actions of one partner. **9 Whoever:** This was to whom-ever among the Jewish audience He was addressing the application of the law of Moses. **Except for sexual immorality:** The Greek word here is "fornication" (See 5:32; Mk 10:11,12; Lk 16:18). Fornication is a generic word in reference to sexual sins. It would include homosexuality, lesbianism and adultery. Homosexuality is illicit sexual activity between two males. Lesbianism is illicit sexual activity between two females. Adultery is the breaking of a contract because of the unfaithfulness of one partner. The marriage contract is broken by the sexual activity of one mate outside the bond of the marriage (See also comments 5:31,32). Fornication on the part of either marriage partner establishes grounds upon which the marriage contract can be dissolved. Jesus' teaching here for the Jews, who were in covenant relationship with God, is again given on the basis of closing the door on divorce, for the Jews were at this time in Jesus' ministry, divorcing for every possible man-made reason. In 1 Co 7:8-15 Paul gives more revelation of God concerning the situation where one partner is converted into a covenant relationship with God by obedience to the gospel and the other partner is not. Further revelation is also given in 1 Co 7 concerning situations where the Christian is deserted by the unbelieving mate. **10 If such is the case:** The disciples were living in the

other, commits adultery.”

10 His disciples said to Him, “If such is the case of the man with *his* wife, it is better not to marry.”

11 ¶ But He said to them, “All *men* cannot receive this saying, but only *those* to whom it is given.

12 “For there are some eunuchs who were born that way from *their* mother’s womb. And there are some eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men. And there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven’s sake. He who is able to accept *it*, let him accept *it*.”

13 ¶ Then little children were brought to Him so that He might put *His* hands on them and pray. And the disciples rebuked them.

14 But Jesus said, “Let the little children come to Me and do not forbid them, for of such is the kingdom of heaven.”

15 And He laid *His* hands on them, and departed from there.

16 ¶ And behold, one came and said to Him, “Teacher, what good thing must I do so that I may have eternal life?”

17 And He said to him, “Why do you ask Me about what is good? *There is only One* who is good, *that is*, God. But if you wish to enter

environment where divorce was enacted for many reasons. Jesus’ law to restore the family situation of His day to be closer to the original law of God seems to be difficult for them in view of their social situation. The disciples are thus surprised by the strictness of Jesus’ teaching on the matter of divorce. If such were true, then they concluded that it would be better not to marry than to marry, and then be unable to divorce a wife except for the reason of fornication. **11 *All cannot accept this saying:*** Jesus assured them that His teaching of verse 9 was more strict than the commonly accepted teaching of the Jewish religious teachers. Nevertheless, He gives such in order to return the Jews to God’s original plan of one man for one wife for one life.

12 *Eunuchs for the kingdom’s sake:* Men can exercise sexual restraint if their desire is not to marry. Marriage is good, but it is not a law of God that everyone marry. A eunuch is a person who is unable to procreate, and thus, would not marry for such a reason. In this context, Jesus speaks of those who would desire not to marry in order to dedicate their lives to the work of the kingdom. Therefore, remaining single for the sake of the kingdom is sanctioned here by Jesus, though not made a law for religious workers (Compare 1 Co 7:2-17).

JESUS AND CHILDREN

(Mk 10:13-16; Lk 18:15-17)

13 *Little children were brought to Him:* Mark states that when these children were brought to Jesus, He took them into His arms and blessed them (Mk 10:16; Lk 18:17; compare 1 Co 14:20; 1 Pt 2:2). ***The disciples rebuked them:*** If the bringing of the children occurred during Jesus’ discussions on divorce, then possibly the disciples saw the bringing of the children to Jesus as an interruption of their serious conversation with Jesus concerning the subject of divorce. The children were a trivial matter to them in comparison to the subject that was under discussion. **14,15 *Of such is the kingdom:*** Those who would submit to the kingdom reign of Jesus must have the humble and childlike character of little children (Mk 10:15; Lk 18:17). Therefore, the manifestation of the kingdom on earth is seen in the hearts of those who have submitted to Jesus as their Lord and King (See 18:3,4). It must be stated that the erroneous practice of infant baptism is nowhere justified in this text

or any other text of the New Testament simply because such is never stated. These children were not being brought to Jesus for baptism. This is simply an incident that happened during the ministry of Jesus. It was not a common practice for parents to bring their children to Jesus in this manner. Those who were baptized were only those who could hear, believe and repent. Baptism in obedience to the gospel, therefore, was for those who were of the age of recognizing their sin against God. These children who are here in the presence of Jesus are not of this age. It was be twisting the Scriptures, therefore, to assume that Jesus is here condoning infant baptism.

THE RICH YOUNG RULER

(Mk 10:17-31; Lk 18:18-30)

16 *One came:* Mark records that this rich young person came running to Jesus and kneeled down (Mk 10:17). Jesus subsequently looked on this person with great love because of his dedication (Mk 10:21). Though the young ruler was legalistic in his thinking concerning his obedience to God, he was not a wicked person. However, he had possessions and position. He was rich and he was a ruler. These two aspects of his life made it difficult for him to follow Jesus. ***Good Teacher:*** See Mk 10:17. “Good” was a Jewish reference to God who is the only one who is good in the sense that in Him there is no darkness (1 Jn 1:5). ***What good things shall I do:*** In considering the legalistic system of religious practice in which the youth grew up, he is asking from the viewpoint of what more religious laws or good deeds must he perform in order to save himself. **17 *No one is good but One, that is, God:*** The young ruler simply addressed Jesus as “teacher”. But Jesus here teaches that it is God who is standing before Him. Jesus makes the statement here to stimulate thought. If God is the only one who is good in the sense of being without any sin and darkness (1 Jn 1:5), then Jesus as God is such. He did not deny or refute the young ruler’s statement. ***Keep the commandments:*** Obedience to law is evidence of one’s appreciation of sonship. It is evidence of one’s love of God (See Jn 14:15; 15:14). However, obedience to law in and of itself will not save, for by works of law no man can justify himself before God (Rm 3:20; Gl 2:16; 3:11,12; see introduction to Gl). **18,19** The young ruler lists five of the ten command-

into life, keep the commandments.”

18 He said to Him, “Which ones?” Jesus said, “*You will not murder. You will not commit adultery. You will not steal. You will not bear false witness.*”

19 ‘*Honor your father and your mother. And, you will love your neighbor as yourself.*’”

20 The young man said to Him, “All these things I have kept. What do I still lack?”

21 Jesus said to him, “If you want to be perfect, go *and* sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. And come, follow Me.”

22 But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

23 ¶ Then Jesus said to His disciples, “Truly I say to you that it is hard for a rich man to

enter into the kingdom of heaven.

24 “And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.”

25 ¶ When His disciples heard *this*, they were greatly astonished, saying, “Who then can be saved?”

26 And looking at *them*, Jesus said to them, “With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”

27 Then Peter answered and said to Him, “Behold, we have forsaken all and followed You. Therefore, what will we have?”

28 And Jesus said to them, “Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on the throne of His glory, you also will sit on

ments (See Ex 20:12-16; Dt 5:16-20; Lv 19:18). Instead of counting off his performance of law, he should have been mourning over his inability to keep law perfectly in order to be saved. **20** *What do I still lack:* He had kept the law from his youth, but still felt that something was lacking. In this statement the young ruler evidently came to the conclusion that salvation was more than simply keeping statutes and precepts of law (See Ph 3:6,7). If one could be saved by performance of law alone, then certainly law should have brought comfort to the heart of this young ruler. But it did not. He was good, but he knew that he still lacked something (See At 10:1-6; Gl 3:21). **21** *Go, sell what you have and give to the poor:* Jesus here tested the sincerity of the young ruler's heart. Jesus does not make the statement as a general principle for Christians. He is simply helping the young ruler realize that every sacrifice that is necessary must be paid in order to become a disciple of Jesus (See Lk 12:33; At 2:45; 4:34,35; 12:12; 21:8). In this case, that which caused the young ruler to stumble was his love of riches. In order to become a disciple of Jesus, he had to get rid of that which stood between him and God. *Treasure in heaven:* See 6:20. The problem with a great amount of material possessions is that such distracts one's mind from kingdom thinking (See Cl 3:1,2). Materialism promotes self indulgence as one thinks of what he can buy or do to entertain himself. **22** *He went away sorrowful:* The young man failed the test of discipleship. He had been overcome with materialism and was not willing to make the necessary sacrifices in order to follow Jesus. One must keep in mind that there is no material sacrifice too great to be paid in order to follow Jesus (See Lk 9:23; Rm 12:1,2). **23,24** It is difficult for the rich to be about kingdom business because their minds are continually directed and controlled by that which is of this world (See 13:22; Mk 10:23ff; Lk 18:24,25; 1 Co 1:26; 1 Tm 6:9). Their wealth diverts their attention away from those spiritual things that will exist long after the material has been destroyed (See 2 Pt 3:10,11). *Camel ... eye of a needle:* This may have been an exaggeration of speech in order to show the difficulty by which the rich and influential would

humble themselves in order to allow the kingdom reign of Jesus in their hearts (See Lk 17:20,21; Js 2:6,7). The figure may have been taken from a gate in the walls of Jerusalem that was so small that it was difficult for a camel to enter. Whatever the source of the figure, the principle is still the same. It is difficult for the rich and influential rulers of this world to become obedient subjects of the kingdom reign of God. **25** *Who then can be saved:* The disciples erroneously thought that wealth placed one in a better standing with God because the wealthy could supposedly earn salvation by their many good deeds. But if it is difficult for the wealthy to be saved according to Jesus' teaching, then they wondered who can be saved. **26** *With God all things are possible:* The great performers of the law, such as the rich young ruler, cannot save themselves. The rich cannot save themselves by good deeds. All men must be saved on the basis of the grace of God (See Ep 2:8). What men cannot do in reference to saving themselves, God can (See comments Rm 7:24,25). **27** *We have left all:* Peter reasons that he and the other eleven had long since left all they had in order to follow Jesus (See 4:20; Lk 5:11). He now wonders what preferential treatment they would receive for such sacrifice. **28** *In the regeneration:* This is the time of the establishment of the kingdom reign of Jesus which was first officially announced on earth in At 2. This time of regeneration would conclude with the final coming of Jesus at the end of time (See 1 Co 15:24-28). *Sits on His throne:* See 25:31; Ep 1:20-22. Jesus, in this time of regeneration which we are now in, presently sits on David's throne and rules over all things (Zc 6:12,13; Lk 1:31,32; At 2:22-35). *Twelve thrones:* See Lk 22:28-30. The meaning here is that the apostles would be judges on their thrones in the time of regeneration. They would be such by delivering unto man the will of God for this time (Jn 14:26; 16:13; 16:18,19). Men would subsequently judge themselves by their reactions to the truth of God as delivered through the apostles. The apostles' thrones of judgment continue with us today in the sense that the truth they revealed continues to be preached throughout the world (See 1 Co 14:37; 2 Tm 3:16,17; 2 Pt 1:3; 3:15,16;

twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

29 “And every one who has left houses, or brothers, or sisters, or father, or mother, or children, or lands, for My name’s sake, will receive a hundredfold, and will inherit everlasting life.

30 “But many *who are* first will be last, and the last *will be* first.

Chapter 20

1 ¶ “For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard.

2 “And when he had agreed with the laborers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard.

3 “And he went out about the third hour and saw others standing idle in the marketplace,

4 “and said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard, and whatever is right I will give you.’ And they went their way.

5 “Again he went out about the sixth and

ninth hour and did likewise.

6 “And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing, and said to them, ‘Why do you stand here idle all day?’

7 “They said to him, ‘Because no man has hired us.’ He said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard.’

8 “So when evening had come, the lord of the vineyard said to his steward, ‘Call the laborers and give them *their* wages, beginning with the last to the first.’

9 “And when those came who *were hired* about the eleventh hour, they received every man a denarius.

10 “But when the first came, they supposed that they would receive more. And everyone likewise received one denarius.

11 “And when they had received *it*, they grumbled against the landowner,

12 “saying, ‘These last have worked *only* one hour and you have made them equal to us, who have borne the burden and heat of the day.’

Jd 6). **29** Mark says that those who leave these family relationships and possessions in order to follow Jesus, will receive a hundredfold in this life (Mk 10:30). He also adds that in the age to come in reference to the time of Jesus’ ministry with the disciples in the Jewish age, they shall receive eternal life. In this age about which Jesus was speaking, Christians do have eternal life (1 Jn 5:13). In reference to relationships and possessions, the sacrificial Christian has houses and spiritual family relationships with Christians throughout the world. He has such as a result of the loving hospitality that one has in Christ with his fellow brother in Christ. **30** Those who place themselves first in this present world because of wealth, position or power, will be last in the age of the church that was to come (20:16; Lk 13:30). Being last meant that they would not be a part of the church since they would refuse to obey the gospel.

Chapter 20

LABORERS IN THE VINEYARD

One lesson learned from the following parable is that the accumulation of good works is not significant in reference to one’s standing in the kingdom. When it comes to acceptability in reference to God, spirituality is not determined as we would determine such according to the standards of the world. The accumulation of deeds and position may be valuable in the world, but in reference to one’s righteousness before God, good works and seniority are of no valuable (See comments Rm 3:27; 4:4,5; 11:6; Ep 2:9; compare comments Rm 3:20; Gl 2:16). **1 Kingdom of heaven:** Subjects who have responded to the kingdom reign of Jesus are depicted in this parable. In this parable God is pictured as

hiring laborers to work on behalf of the kingdom. **2 Laborers:** God calls people to work on His behalf (See 9:37,38). **A denarius a day:** The denarius was about a day’s wage. **3,4 Third hour:** 9:00^{am} Jewish time. Application is to those who have been servants for a great deal of time before the conclusion of their ministry. **5 Sixth and the ninth hour:** 12:00 noon and 3:00^{pm}. Different ages of people become subjects of the kingdom at different times in their lives. Therefore, those who have worked longer have accomplished more work. **6,7 Eleventh hour:** 5:00^{pm}. These are older people who became obedient subjects of the kingdom. **8-10 They each received a denarius:** The reward for faithful service in the kingdom of God is the same for all. Those who have worked longer in the kingdom may appreciate the rest of heaven more, but they will still receive the same as those who have become subjects for only a short time. **11,12 They murmured:** The complaint was based on their reasoning that more work should have deserved more pay. The ones who were hired first thought that it was unfair that they should receive the same reward as those who were hired last. In reference to kingdom matters, this reasoning is erroneous and arrogant. There is no possible means by which one can do kingdom work on earth in order to put God in debt to give us eternal heaven. Paul even says that one cannot suffer enough throughout a lifetime in order to put God in debt to give heaven as fair payment (Rm 8:18). What the Christian will receive is beyond his ability to earn. Therefore, there is no room among Christians for competition in relation to the glory they shall receive for their labors on earth. This would also apply in answer to Peter’s question in 19:27. One cannot live long enough in order to earn the glory that shall be revealed to us. How can one possibly reason that he can

13 “But he answered one of them, and said, ‘Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius?’

14 “Take *what is yours* and go your way. I want to give to this last even as to you.

15 ‘Is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with my own? Is your eye evil because I am good?’

16 “So the last will be first and the first last.”

17 ¶ Now, going up to Jerusalem, Jesus took the twelve disciples aside on the road. And He said to them,

18 “Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes. And they will condemn Him to death.

19 “And they will deliver Him to the Gentiles to mock and to scourge and to crucify. And the third day He will rise again.”

20 ¶ Then the mother of Zebedee’s sons came to Him with her sons, bowing down and asking something of Him.

21 And He said to her, “What do you desire?” She said to Him, “Grant that these two sons of mine may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on the left in Your kingdom.”

22 But Jesus answered and said, “You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink of the cup that I am about to drink, and be immersed with the immersion with which I am immersed?” They said to Him, “We are able.”

work twenty or fifty years on earth in service to God, and then, exchange such service in a fair deal for the eternity of heavenly glory? **13,14** All who agree to submit to the Lord, and thus, take on the responsibility of kingdom service, must also agree that they will all receive the same reward of eternal glory, which reward will be far greater than what any laborer would deserve to be paid. **15** If it is lawful for a landowner of this world to so deal with laborers as Jesus explained in this parable, then certainly it is lawful for God to deal as He wishes with that which pertains to heavenly matters (Compare Rm 9:20,21). **16** See 19:30; 22:14. Those who think they are religiously right will be last, but those who humbly seek God as a servant will be considered first. **Many are called, but few chosen:** Many have the opportunity to hear the gospel (28:19; Mk 16:15). However, few there are who obey the gospel (7:13,14).

JESUS FORETELLS HIS DEATH

(Mk 10:32-34; Lk 18:31-34)

17-19 Mark records that the disciples were both amazed and afraid concerning Jesus’ journey toward Jerusalem. Their fears were justified because this was Jesus’ last trip to the city of people who would nail Him to the cross. **Betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes:** It would be the religious leaders of Israel who would crucify Jesus by the instrumentality of the Roman government. Jesus did not fit into their system of religion, and thus, their envious feelings led to their execution of this wicked deed. **Death:** See the prophecy of Is 53. **Delivered:** Jesus knew all of the events that would transpire concerning His death (See 16:21; 17:22,23). He would be delivered first to the Jewish Sanhedrin (26:15), and then, to the Romans in order to be crucified (27:2; At 2:23; 3:13-15; 4:27; 21:11). **Mock ... scourge ... crucify:** Jesus would suffer all the humiliation of a common criminal. The scourge was a whip of broken bones or sharp stones that were tied at the end of a binding of numerous strips of leather. This whip was used to beat individuals who were to be punished for some crime. Though innocent of any crime, Jesus would be scourged. **He will rise again:** Talk concerning His death saddened the disciples (16:21-28; Lk 9:22; 18:31; 24:46). However, what would first

demoralize the disciples would turn into the most glorious event of history. The accepted King would die in order to be victorious over sin, but He would rise again to be victorious over death. At this time in the ministry of Jesus, the foundation for the gospel event is in the process of being laid (See comments 1 Co 15:1-5).

ASKING FOR POSITIONS

(Mk 10:35-45)

Since Jesus has just discussed His death and departure, there arises again the subject of positions among the disciples. James and John are taking a private advantage of the occasion in order to privately ask Jesus for special positions in what they believe will be a physical kingdom reign of Jesus (See At 1:6). **20,21** See comments Mk 10:35-45. James and John (Mk 10:35) apparently ask their mother, Salome (Mk 15:40; 16:1), the wife of Zebedee (Mt 4:21; 10:2), to approach Jesus about special positions of power in the kingdom. Mark credits James and John for making the request. **May sit:** They were asking for positions of power and influence, not work and slavehood. **22 You do not know what you ask:** They knew what they were asking in respect to a physical kingdom. They did not in reference to the kingdom reign Jesus was about to establish (See Lk 17:20,21; Jn 18:36). **Are you able to drink the cup:** Jesus wants to know if they are able to accept the portion of responsibility that comes with the position of leadership (See Ps 11:6; 75:8; Is 51:17; Jr 25:15). **And be immersed with the immersion:** The Greek word *baptizo* is here used in reference to the definition “to overwhelm” or “to bury.” In leadership in the kingdom they would be overwhelmed with or buried in the burden of leadership that would include great sorrow and suffering. **We are able:** We cannot but admire the bravery of these two disciples. Their erroneous concept of a physical kingdom would demand that the Romans be driven from the land of Palestine. Here they accept what they believe would be a great struggle to do such. Though their understanding of the kingdom is wrong, their determination to pay the price must be admired. **23 You will indeed drink My cup and be baptized:** It would indeed be necessary for the disciples to have the same amount of dedication and courage that is neces-

23 And He said to them, "You will indeed drink of My cup and be immersed with the immersion with which I am immersed. But to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give. But *it is* for those for whom it has been prepared by My Father."

24 And when the ten heard *it*, they were greatly indignant with the two brothers.

25 But Jesus called them and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them.

26 "But it will not be so among you. But whoever desires to be great among you, let him be your servant.

27 "And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your bondservant,

28 "just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

29 ¶ And as they departed from Jericho, a

great multitude followed Him.

30 And behold, two blind men sitting by the road, when hearing that Jesus was passing by, cried out, saying, "Have mercy on us, O Lord, Son of David."

31 And the multitude rebuked them that they should hold their peace. But they cried the more, saying, "Have mercy on us, O Lord, Son of David."

32 And Jesus stood still and called them, and said, "What do you want Me to do for you?"

33 They said to Him, "Lord, that our eyes may be opened."

34 So Jesus had compassion and touched their eyes. And immediately their eyes received sight and they followed Him.

Chapter 21

1 ¶ And when they drew near to Jerusalem, and had come to Bethphage, to the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples,

sary for a leader to lead an army into battle in order to lead in the spiritual kingdom of Jesus. They would suffer (Jn 15:18,19; 21:18,19). James would even be the first apostle to be killed for the faith (At 12:1,2), though John his younger brother would be the last to die (Rv 1:9). **24 Moved with indignation:** Their indignation was not the result of their feeling that James and John were wrong to ask for the special privileges. They thought that each one of them should also be considered for the positions of sitting at the right and left hand of Jesus in the supposed physical kingdom (Mk 9:34; 10:31; Lk 22:24). **25-28** In rebuking both the ambitions of James and John, and the jealous indignation of the others, Jesus teaches again that greatness in the kingdom He will establish will be through servanthood (See 18:1-4; 23:11; Mk 9:35; 10:43-45). **The Gentiles lord it over them:** Whatever concept one has of the lordship leadership among the Gentiles in the secular world, would not be the manner by which the disciples will lead in the church. **Yet it shall not be so among you:** Leaders in the church must not bring into the church lordship leadership in order to deal with the church in the same manner they deal with the world outside the church (See 1 Pt 5:3). God's people are not to be dealt with as men deal with the business world. **Let him be your slave:** Leaders in the church are slaves to the needs of the membership. **Just as:** Jesus came to be a servant to the spiritual needs of humanity. As He made tremendous sacrifices to pay our debt, so we should work to serve the needs of others (26:28; see comments Jn 13:1-17). **Ransom:** Jesus ransomed His rights on behalf of the church (Is 53:10,11; Dn 9:24-26; Jn 11:51,52; Rm 5:15,19; 1 Tm 2:5,6; Ti 2:14; 1 Pt 1:19). Leaders should do likewise on behalf of the church. Slaves sacrifice the right of choice in order to accommodate the needs of the church. Their desire is not to please themselves, but to please those they serve. Such is the heart of a true slave.

HEALING TWO BLIND MEN

(Mk 10:46-52; Lk 18:35-43)

29,30 Of the two men, Bartimaeus was the more outspoken. He thus was mentioned in the record of Mark (Mk 10:46). **Son of David:** They proclaimed their belief in Jesus as the Messiah of the Jews. They, as well as all Israel, knew that the Messiah would be born of the seed of David (Lk 1:31,32). He would come to deliver them from their oppression. **31 Multitude warned them:** It was the disciples who earlier rebuked some for bringing the children to Jesus (19:13). They may have been doing the same here with the multitude who are more interested in other things than compassion on two blind men. **32-34 Jesus had compassion:** Though Jesus did not heal everyone of His day, He did heal those whose faith moved them to plead for His healing. Mark records that the faith of these two men resulted in their healing (Mk 10:52). Faith was not a condition for their healing. It was their faith that moved them to cry out to Jesus for help. **Immediately their eyes received sight:** Here again the explanation of a miracle is revealed. The healing took place instantaneously. There were no ceremonies performed or potions made. The healing was visible to all and no one could deny it. Here again the purpose of miracles to confirm the messengers of God is accomplished (Jn 3:2; 20:30,31; Mk 16:20).

Chapter 21

THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY

(Mk 11:1-11; Lk 19:29-44; Jn 12:12-19)

1-7 These are now the last days of the ministry of Jesus. Jesus has just spent the night in the house of Lazarus whom He raised from the dead. Lazarus also lived in Bethany which was about a kilometer east of Jerusalem (Jn 12:9). It is about five days before the Passover feast (Ex 12:3; see prophecy of Ne 8:15; Zc

2 saying to them, "Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with it. Untie *them* and bring *them* to Me.

3 "And if anyone says anything to you, you will say, 'The Lord has need of them,' and immediately he will send them."

4 This was done so that it might be fulfilled that was spoken by the prophet, saying,

5 "*Tell the daughter of Zion, 'Behold, your King comes to you, gentle, and sitting upon a donkey, even on a colt, the foal of a donkey.'*"

6 ¶ And the disciples went and did as Jesus commanded them.

7 And they brought the donkey and the colt, and put on them their garments, and He sat on them.

8 And a great multitude spread their garments on the road. Others cut down branches from the trees and spread *them* on the road.

9 The multitudes that went before and that followed, cried, saying, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed *is* He who comes in the

name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!"

10 And when He had entered Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, "Who is this?"

11 And the multitude said, "This is Jesus, the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee."

12 And Jesus went into the temple and cast out all those who sold and bought in the temple. And He overthrew the tables of the moneychangers and the seats of those who sold doves.

13 And He said to them, "It is written, '*My house will be called the house of prayer,*' but you have made it a den of thieves."

14 And the blind and the lame came to Him in the temple, and He healed them.

15 And when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that He did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying, "Hosanna to the Son of David," they became indignant.

16 And they said to Him, "Do You hear what these are saying?" And Jesus said to them, "Yes. Have you never read, '*Out of the mouth*

14:4). **A colt:** Kings rode on a colt as a symbol of royalty (See Gn 49:11; 2 Kg 9:13; Is 63:1-3). The events that take place here are the fulfillment of Is 62:11 and Zc 9:9. **Laid their clothes on them:** After the donkey was brought, the disciples laid their garments over the donkey to make a saddle upon which Jesus could comfortably ride (Lk 19:35; compare 2 Kg 9:13). **8 Garments ... branches ... on the road:** They gave Jesus the royal procession of a king (Compare Ps 118:25,26; Lv 23:40). Unfortunately, at this time the multitudes, including the disciples, still considered Him to be an earthly king (See Jn 12:19; At 1:6). If it were Jesus' intention to establish an earthly kingdom reign at this time, then certainly the opportunity had now presented itself to do so. But such was not His intention (See Jn 18:36-38). **9 Hosanna to the Son of David:** See Ps 118:25,26. Hosanna means "save us now." Therefore, the cry of the people was that Jesus be their deliverer from the oppression of the Roman government (See 2 Sm 14:4). Those in the multitude here were accepting Jesus as the Messiah who would deliver them by establishing an earthly kingdom (Mk 11:10). Unfortunately, the multitudes were driven by the common Jewish belief that the Messiah would deliver them by reinstating the power of the Jewish nation. **10,11 Who is this:** At this time there were multitudes of foreign people who were in Jerusalem for the Jewish Passover and Pentecost feasts. They had traveled from many regions of the Roman Empire in order to keep these annual feasts (See At 2:9-11). Many of these did not know who Jesus was. **This is Jesus:** The local people informed the visitors to Jerusalem who Jesus was. **The prophet:** See Jn 1:21,25; 6:14; 7:40; 9:17; At 3:22ff; 7:37. Jesus was certainly a prophet, but He was more than a prophet.

He was the Messiah, and being such included the fulfillment of all that prophecy revealed the Messiah to be. But He was not only the Messiah, He was the Son of God who had come into the world.

12,13 Drove out: This was actually Jesus' second cleansing of the temple (See Jn 2:13-16). **Money changers:** The Levitical shekel or half-shekel was the authorized money to be used for the temple tax (See Ex 30:13-16). However, the money changers possessed most of the shekels. Foreigners had to exchange money they brought for the shekels used in the temple service. The money changers were thus giving the people an unfair exchange rate for their money (See Ex 30:13). **Those who sold doves:** Sacrifices were also to be made during the Passover and Pentecost feasts (Lv 1:14; 5:7; 12:8; 14:22; Lk 2:24). Instead of the foreigners bringing their sacrifices with them, they simply waited until they arrived in Jerusalem to buy an animal for sacrifice. Those who sold the sacrifices were selling them at a great profit (See Mk 11:15,16). **Den of thieves:** The money changers and merchants were thieves in the sense that they were being unfair in their business operations. They were unfair with those who were obligated to deal with them in order to carry out the required sacrifices at the temple for the Passover and Pentecost feast. See Is 56:7; Jr 7:11. **14,15 He healed them:** These were the final confirming miracles that Jesus worked. In doing such in the temple area, He brought great attention to who He was. **They were indignant:** Many of the religious leaders cared nothing for those who were healed. They were extremely jealous because Jesus had attracted the attention of the people. He had thus undercut their accepted leadership position among the people. **16,17 Out of the mouth of babes:** Com-

of babes and nursing infants You have perfected praise'?"

17 And He left them and went out of the city to Bethany. And He lodged there.

18 Now in the morning as He returned to the city, He became hungry.

19 And when He saw a fig tree by the road, He came to it and found nothing thereon, but leaves only. And He said to it, "Let no fruit grow on you ever again." And immediately the fig tree withered away.

20 ¶ And when the disciples saw it, they marveled, saying, "How did the fig tree wither away so quickly?"

21 Jesus answered and said to them, "Truly I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but also if you will say to this mountain, 'Be removed and cast into the sea,' it will be done.

22 "And all things you ask in prayer, believ-

ing, you will receive."

23 ¶ And when He came into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to Him as He was teaching, and said, "By what authority do You do these things? And who gave You this authority?"

24 And Jesus answered and said to them, "I will also ask you one thing, which if you tell Me, I likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things.

25 "The immersion of John, from where was it, from heaven or from men?" And they reasoned among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' He will say to us, 'Why then did you not believe him?'"

26 "But if we say, 'From men,' we fear the people, for all regard John as a prophet."

27 And they answered Jesus, and said, "We do not know." And He said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.

pare Ps 8:2 (Lk 19:40). The chief priests and scribes were indignant because Jesus allowed the people to exalt Him to the status of king. It is at this time that Jesus begins to increase the antagonism of the Jewish religious leaders in order to take Himself to the cross. Over three years of ministry had now brought Him to these final days of His work. These were the days in which the religious leaders would take Him to the cross. **Bethany:** He probably went to stay with Lazarus, Martha and Mary (Jn 11:1,18; 12:1).

THE BARREN FIG TREE

(Mk 11:12-14,20-26; Lk 19:45-48)

18,19 A fig tree: This variety of fig tree puts forth its leaves, and then, its fruit. However, the leaves were present but there was no fruit. Jesus does not curse the tree simply because there was no fruit. He makes a visual illustration of the state of religious Israel. Israel had produced an outward show of righteousness which they had created for themselves. However, the religious leaders did not produce fruit by accepting Him as the Messiah. Herein is a prophecy of the future of the nation. She would no longer produce fruit. She had rejected the Son of God, and thus, God rejected her. The Jews' rejection has thus pronounced the doom of the nation. Jerusalem and the Jewish State would come to an end in A.D. 70 (See comments ch 24). **20** Mark indicates that on the following day the disciples noticed that the fig tree had withered (Mk 11:20). **21 If you have faith:** Their faith would not be the source of their power. It would be their trust in God who is the source (17:20; see Js 1:6; 5:16). Jesus knew that over the next few days they would need to have their faith increased as they go through the great turmoil of what was about to happen. **22 Whatever you ask in prayer:** See 7:7-11; Mk 11:24; Lk 11:9; Js 5:16. **Believing:** When one

prays in faith, it is the rule that God answers prayer. Though He may not answer in the manner we deem correct or at the time we feel we need an answer, He still answers our prayers.

JESUS' AUTHORITY CHALLENGED

(Mk 11:27 - 12:12; Lk 20:1-19)

23 By what authority: See 7:28,29. The chief priests had received their authority because they were born into the priesthood. But Jesus had not been born into the Levitical priesthood, though He cleansed the temple of those the priests knew were unfair merchants and money changers (vs 25). The One who created the very stones from which the temple was constructed was in their midst (Cl 1:16). It was because of who He was that gave Him the authority to do what He did. It is this One upon whom all belief must be founded (Jn 12:48; 1 Pt 4:11). **24-27** Knowing the chief priests' and elders' desire to ensnare Him, Jesus conditions His answer to their question on their answer to His questions concerning John, whom they had rejected as a prophet. John had confessed that Jesus was the Son of God (Jn 1:34), and thus, was greater than he was (3:11-15). The chief priests and elders knew that John had made this confession. They also knew that many of the people had accepted Jesus at least as a great prophet. Therefore, if they said that they believed John, then they would have to confess that Jesus was greater than the prophet John. **We do not know:** They realized the dilemma in which Jesus had put them. They thus could give no answer before the people, before whom this confrontation took place. They were embarrassed by the confrontation, and thus, Jesus begins His direct agitation of the religious leaders in order to stir their envious hearts to generate a plan to eliminate Him. He is taking Himself to the cross.

28 ¶ “But what do you think? A *certain* man had two sons. And he came to the first and said, ‘Son, go work today in my vineyard.’

29 “He answered and said, ‘I will not,’ but afterward he repented and went.

30 “And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, ‘I *will go*, sir,’ and did not go.

31 “Which of the two did the will of *his* father?” They said to Him, “The first.” Jesus said to them, “Truly I say to you, that the tax collectors and the prostitutes will enter the kingdom of God before you.

32 “For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him. But the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him. And you, after seeing *this*, did not repent and believe him.

33 ¶ “Hear another parable. There was a certain landowner who planted a vineyard and put a wall around it. And he dug a winepress in it and built a tower. And he leased it out to vinedressers and went into a far country.

34 “And when the time of the harvest drew near, he sent his bondservants to the vinedressers so that they might receive his fruits.

35 “And the vinedressers took his bondservants and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another.

36 “Again he sent other bondservants, more than the first. And they did likewise to them.

37 “But last of all he sent to them his son, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’

38 “But when the vinedressers saw the son, they said among themselves, ‘This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and seize his inheritance.’

39 “And they caught him and cast *him* out of the vineyard and killed *him*.

40 “Therefore, when the lord of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vinedressers?”

41 They said to Him, “He will bring those wretched men to a wretched end, and lease out *his* vineyard to other vinedressers who will give him the fruits in their seasons.”

42 Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the Scriptures, ‘*The stone that the builders rejected, the same became the cornerstone. This is the Lord’s doing and it is marvelous in our eyes*’?”

43 “Therefore, I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a

PARABLE OF THE TWO SONS

28-30 Jesus is not finished with the chief priests and elders from the preceding confrontation. He thus begins here with a series of parables that deal with the unrighteous hearts of those who oppose Him, and thus, have rejected Him as the Son of God. **A man had two sons:** In this first parable, the first son (the publicans, harlots, poor, etc. of Jesus’ generation) later repented and obeyed after first saying that he would not go into the field. The second son (the scribes, Pharisees, and chief priests) would not repent of their hypocritical religiosity. **31,32 Enter the kingdom:** The humble in heart submitted to the kingdom of Jesus before the religious leaders. It was only after the kingdom reign was announced in At 2 that some of the religious leaders finally recognized who Jesus was, and thus, submitted to Him as king (See At 6:7). **John came to you:** John lived after the strictness of the Old Testament law, and yet, these self righteous religious leaders did not accept Him. They were more concerned with maintaining their religious institutions after their traditions than listening to John (See comments 15:1-9; Mk 7:1-9).

PARABLE OF THE WICKED HUSBANDMAN

(Mk 12:1-12; Lk 20:9-19)

33-39 A certain landowner: God owned the vineyard of national Israel. **Vineyard:** God took Israel from Egyptian captivity and established a covenant with her at Mount Sinai. Thus, the vineyard (nation) was planted.

Hedge ... winepress ... tower: God took care of Israel throughout 1,400 years of their national struggle unto the time of Jesus’ coming. Jesus (the Son) had now come to reap the fruit of the vineyard. **Vinedressers:** Until the time Jesus came, God assigned the spiritual guidance of the nation of Israel to the religious leaders. **Took his servants:** The misguided religious leaders who had followed after false religion, persecuted the true prophets of God (1 Kg 19:20; Jr 37:15; Hb 11:36,37; see Mt 5:12; 23:34-37; At 7:52). **He sent his son to them:** God’s messenger of law to Israel was His Son who was the heir of the vineyard (28:18; Jn 13:3; 17:2; Hb 1:2). However, they rejected Him (Jn 1:11; 3:16) and crucified Him outside the city (See 1 Co 2:8; Hb 13:12,13). **What will he do to those vinedressers:** Jesus here asked the chief priests and elders to pronounce their own judgment. **40,41 He will destroy those wicked men:** And such God did to rebellious religious leaders who died in the destruction of the Jewish State which culminated in the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 (Lk 21:24). **And lease his vineyard to other vinedressers:** Responsibility for God’s people was taken from the religious leaders whom Jesus had addressed and given to others who recognized that the kingdom was of God and not man (See Lk 20:16; At 8:11ff; 13:46). **42,43** See Psalm 118:22,23 from which this quotation is taken. **The stone which the builders rejected:** Jesus was the very foundation upon which all God’s scheme of redemption was built. Nevertheless,

people bringing forth the fruits of it.

44 “And whoever will fall on this stone will be broken. But on whomever it will fall, it will grind him to powder.”

45 ¶ And when the chief priests and Pharisees heard His parables, they perceived that He was speaking of them.

46 But when they sought to lay hands on Him, they feared the multitude, because they took Him for a prophet.

Chapter 22

1 ¶ And Jesus answered and spoke to them again in parables and said,

2 “The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who prepared a marriage for his son.

3 “And he sent forth his bondservants to call those who were invited to the wedding. And

they would not come.

4 “Again, he sent forth other bondservants, saying, “Behold, I have prepared my dinner. My oxen and *my* fattened cattle are killed and all things *are* ready. Come to the wedding feast.””

5 “But they made light of *it* and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his business.

6 And the rest seized his bondservants, and treated *them* spitefully, and killed *them*.

7 “But when the king heard *of this*, he was furious. And he sent forth his armies and destroyed those murderers and burned their city.

8 “Then he said to his bondservants, ‘The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy.

9 ‘Therefore, go into the highways, and as

Jesus was rejected by the religious leadership of Israel (Jn 1:11; At 4:10,11; 1 Pt 2:4-10; see Rm 9:33). **The kingdom of God will be taken from you:** The religious leaders would no longer be acceptable subjects of the kingdom reign of God that had existed from the beginning. It would be given to others simply because others who had a humble heart (see vs 32) would submit to the King who was in their presence. The church which was about to be established would thus manifest on earth the kingdom reign of Jesus from heaven (See comments 6:9,10; Lk 17:20,21). These rebellious religious leaders of Israel would no longer be the representation on earth of God's kingdom reign from heaven (8:12). **44 Will be broken:** The religious leaders of national Israel stumbled over Jesus who was the stone (See Is 8:14,15; 28:16; Dn 2:44ff; Zc 12:3; Lk 20:18; Rm 9:33; 1 Pt 2:8). In falling, they sealed the destruction of national Israel that would take place in A.D. 70. **On whomever it falls:** Jesus was the stone of Daniel 2 that broke in pieces and consumed all the power that was exerted by world kingdoms (See Dn 2:24,25,44,45). He did such by being placed by the Father as King of kings and Lord of lords over all things that exist (28:18; Ep 1:20-22; 1 Tm 6:15; 1 Pt 3:22). **45,46 Heard His parables:** This parable speaks directly to the Jewish religious leadership problem. The word “parables” is plural, and thus, even the chief priests and Pharisees understood that the other parables also spoke of them and the religious problem that prevailed in Israel because of their wicked leadership. They understood that Jesus was speaking of them, though the impact of the parables did not have a positive effect on their lives. They continued to reject the teaching of Jesus because their hearts were hardened against Him. **They sought to lay hands on Him:** They could not because of the people (21:11). The humble of Israel whom the religious leaders rejected, accepted the One they rejected. At this time it was the humble hearted of Israel who protected Jesus from their own religious leaders. Therefore, not all of Israel accepted the hypocritical religious leadership of the priests, scribes and Pharisees.

Chapter 22

PARABLE OF THE MARRIAGE FEAST

1,2 Servants ... invited to the wedding: The kingdom reign of Deity from heaven – after the ascension it was the kingdom reign of Jesus – is manifested from heaven, and thus, offers an invitation to all to submit to the King (Compare 11:11,28,29; Rv 3:21). See a similar thought in the parable of Lk 14:16-24. **3,4 Bondservants:** The Greek word (*doulos*) here is “bondservants” or “slaves.” These were slaves who were born into slavery. In the parable, these represented the submissive messengers of God who were sent forth to Israel in order to call the submissive into servitude to the kingdom reign of God that was at hand (See Mk 1:1-4). **Other servants:** This seems to be a reference to the messengers of God of Jesus' generation who also went forth to offer the invitation to the Jews to come to the kingdom reign of Jesus that was soon to be established. After the kingdom was established and announced, the submissive responded, thus establishing the church. The church then carried on throughout the world with the same plea to all men to submit to the King of kings (28:19,20; Mk 16:15; Rm 10:14,15; 1 Th 2:14). **5 Made light of it:** The Jews rejected the message of the kingdom reign of Jesus (Jn 1:11). Those religious leaders who should have responded had already seized upon the kingdom, and thus, stolen the vineyard from God (See 21:38,39). **6,7 Destroyed those murderers and burned up their city:** Jesus seems to go beyond His present ministry to the time of the ministry of the apostles and prophets prior to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. The religious leaders continued to reject and persecute the messengers of the kingdom (See At 7:59; 8:1-4). When the rejection was complete, God providentially moved the Roman army under the command of Titus to destroy and burn the city of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 (See comments ch 24). **8-10 Not worthy:** The rebellious Jews judged themselves unworthy by their rejection of the King of kings. Therefore, it was needful that the message of the king-

many as you find, invite to the wedding feast.’

10 “So those bondservants went out into the highways and gathered together all they found, both bad and good. And the wedding was filled with guests.

11 “And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment.

12 “And he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?’ And he was speechless.

13 “Then the king said to the servants, ‘Bind him hand and foot and cast *him* into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

14 “For many are called, but few *are* chosen.”

15 ¶ Then the Pharisees went and took coun-

sel how they might trap Him in what He said. **16** And they sent to Him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, “Teacher, we know that you are true and teach the way of God in truth, nor are You swayed by anyone, for You are not partial to anyone.

17 “Therefore, tell us what You think? Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?”

18 But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, “Why do you tempt Me, *you* hypocrites?”

19 “Show Me the tax money.” And they brought to Him a denarius.

20 And He said to them, “Whose likeness and inscription is this?”

21 They said to Him, “Caesar’s.” Then He said to them, “Therefore, render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.”

dom reign be preached unto them in order that they have their chance for obedience (See At 13:46-48; 18:6). **They found both good and bad:** The message of the king had to go to all (28:19,20; Mk 16:15). Of those to whom it was preached, all sorts responded for various reasons (See 13:3-9,36-43; 47,48). Into the church, therefore, came some who later fell away. **11 Did not have on a wedding garment:** Some of those who first responded to the kingdom reign came in to spy out the liberty that the disciples received in Christ (See comments At 15:1,2; Gl 2:4). They were not clothed with the righteousness that is from God, but their own righteousness. **12,13 Cast him out:** See comments 8:12; Gl 4:30. Jesus is emphasizing again His message of 21:43. The rebellious of His generation would be cast out because they would not choose to accept Him as their king. **Weeping and gnashing of teeth:** This metaphor emphasizes the terror and remorse over the loss of something that one eventually comes to realize he needs or wants (See 8:12; 25:30). **14 Few are chosen:** See 20:16. Many have the opportunity to hear the announcement of the kingdom of the King, but few there are who obey, and thus, spiritually prepare themselves for the banquet. Though this parable referred specifically to Jesus’ generation in reference to the establishment of His kingdom reign, the lesson certainly illustrates the final coming of Jesus when the obedient move into the heavenly kingdom. All must accept the present message of the gospel in order to prepare for the King who is coming again for judgment (See 25:31-33,46; 2 Co 6:10; Ep 4:24; Cl 3:10-12; 1 Pt 4:17; Rv 3:4; 16:15; 19:8; Rv 17:14).

JESUS TEMPTED ABOUT PAYING TAXES

(Mk 12:13-17; Lk 20:20-26)

15 By this time, the raising of Lazarus from the dead had already occurred (Jn 11:43,48-53). **The Pharisees ... plotted how they might entangle Him:** Because the preceding parables had enraged the religious leaders (See 21:45), they now seek to openly cause Jesus to be humiliated in His teaching before the people.

In order to uphold their own credibility, they believe they must cause Jesus to fall. **16** In order to set the trap for Jesus, the Pharisees here with deceit and hypocrisy, flatter Jesus. **Herodians:** See Mk 3:6; 12:13. These are Jews who promoted the reign of the Herods as they were sanctioned by the government of Rome. They also agreed with the Roman occupation of the Jewish nation. They taught that taxes must be paid to Rome. **You care about nothing:** Because they were often the victim of Jesus’ straight talk, they realized that Jesus spoke the truth concerning hypocritical religious leadership regardless of who it might offend. The Herodians were not necessarily religious people, for they opposed the Pharisees. But on this occasion, the Pharisees are willing to include their own enemies in order to destroy the influence of Jesus (See Mk 8:15). **17 Pay taxes to Caesar:** See 17:25. They were asking on the basis of the law of Moses. “Did the law of Moses, the Old Testament law, teach that one should pay taxes to a foreign state?” They supposed that if Jesus said not to pay the taxes, He would be in violation of Roman law because Israel at the time was under the rule of Rome. But if Jesus said to pay the taxes, then they supposed that He would be in violation of Old Testament law as Dt 17:14,15. **18-21 Jesus perceived their wickedness:** Matthew defines their motives as wicked. Religious leaders who work to scheme against other religious leaders are wicked in their hypocritical hearts (See Jn 2:24,25). **Image:** The image on the denarius was Tiberius. The second commandment of the ten commandments forbade the Jews from making any graven image in order to symbolize worship of gods in an idolatrous manner (Ex 20:4). The image on the coin they presented to Jesus was Caesar’s. Since the Jews were not to pay homage to images as that on the Roman coin, then they entrapped themselves concerning paying taxes to a foreign government. **Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s:** In other words, pay the taxes regardless of whose image is on the coin. The money belongs to Caesar, therefore pay to him that which is his (Mk 12:17; Lk 20:25; see Rm 13:7). **To God the**

22 When they had heard *these words*, they marveled and left Him and went their way.

23 ¶ On that day the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to Jesus and questioned Him,

24 saying, "Teacher, Moses said that if a man die, having no children, his brother will marry his wife and raise up seed to his brother.

25 "Now there were with us seven brethren. The first died after he had married, and having no children, left his wife to his brother.

26 "Likewise the second also, and the third, down to the seventh.

27 "And last of all, the woman also died.

28 "Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife of the seven will she be, for they all had her?"

29 Jesus answered and said to them, "You are in error, not knowing the Scriptures nor

the power of God.

30 "For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like the angels in heaven.

31 "But regarding the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God, saying,

32 '*I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob*'? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living."

33 And when the multitude heard *this*, they were astonished at His teaching.

34 ¶ But when the Pharisees heard that He had put the Sadducees to silence, they gathered themselves together.

35 Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him *a question*, testing Him, and saying,

36 "Teacher, which *is* the great commandment in the law?"

things that are God's: Paying taxes does not mean that one worships Caesar. All things belong to God, therefore, one's life is given to God who created all men in His image (Gn 1:26,27). Give one's life to God and the taxes to Caesar. **22 Went their way:** The Pharisees were now answered. They left Jesus, and then the Sadducees came in order to trap Him with their questions.

QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE RESURRECTION

(Mk 12:18-27; Lk 20:27-40)

23 Sadducees: These aristocratic Jews were in opposition to the Pharisees. Theologically, they did not believe in spirits, the soul or the resurrection from the dead and the afterlife (At 23:7,8). Neither did they believe in afterlife rewards and retributions, angels and demons. It was their belief that when one died, he ceased to exist. **24-28 Moses said:** See Dt 25:5-10. The Old Testament law said that if the older brother, who had a legal right to continue the family name and the birthright, died leaving his wife without children, his brother must raise up children by the dead brother's wife. The law, which is referred to as the levirate law, was based on the principle that the family name of the dead brother be carried on throughout history (See Gn 38:8). This was the law that was illustrated by Boaz taking Ruth as his wife (Rt 4:5,6). **29 You are mistaken:** They did not know the Old Testament scriptures that teach the resurrection (See Dn 12:2; Jb 19:25-27; Is 26:19; compare Jn 20:9). Neither could they know of relationships that would exist in the new heavens and earth that are yet to be revealed. **30 Are like angels of God:** On earth marriage is necessary for the purpose of procreation. However, in the new heavens and earth there will be no need for procreation, and thus, the need for marriage. Death will not exist in heaven (Lk 20:35,36; 1 Co 15:26; Rv 20:13,14). Thus marriage, the medium through which life is continued, will be needed no more in the heavenly state of existence. Earthly relationships will be superseded by a state wherein we will be like

angels who now exist (See Lk 20:36; 1 Jn 3:2). The Scriptures speak little of the nature of this state of being. **31,32 God ... of the living:** Jesus used the Greek present progressive tense here, thus emphasizing the fact that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were still living at the time God made this statement and at the time Jesus refers to it (See Gn 17:2; 26:24; 28:21; Ex 3:6,15). When one dies, therefore, God does not cease to be his God. The fact that God does not cease being our God emphasizes the fact that we do not cease to exist. Therefore, contrary to the beliefs of the Sadducees (vs 23), the spirits of all men are kept by God until the resurrection and embodiment for eternal dwelling in the new heavens and earth (Jn 5:28,29; 1 Th 4:13-17). **33 Astonished at His teaching:** See 7:28. The scribes, Pharisees and Sadducees had evidently intimidated the multitudes by giving the pretense that they knew the Scriptures, and thus, their beliefs were not to be questioned. But here a carpenter's son from Galilee has rebutted their attempts to trap Him by reference to the Scriptures they should have known. The multitudes were thus astonished at the teaching of Jesus who could answer the presumptuous legal theology of the scribes, Pharisees and Sadducees.

PHARISEES AGAIN ASK DECEIVING QUESTIONS

(Mk 12:28-34)

34-36 Silenced the Sadducees: Jesus had truly refuted the false reasoning of the Sadducees concerning their understanding of the Scriptures. Now the Pharisees are back and they are trying again to trap Jesus with the inconsistencies of their legal theology. **A lawyer:** See Lk 7:30; 10:25. This was a scribe. Scribes were lawyers of the Old Testament law and Jewish religious traditions (Mk 12:28-34). In this case, the Pharisees evidently sought out a sincere scribe and urged him to ask Jesus this question. Jesus said that this scribe was not far from the kingdom (See Mk 12:34). **37,38 You shall love the Lord your God:** The principle by which one must live life is summed up in the

37 Jesus said to him, “*You will love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.*”

38 “This is the first and great commandment.

39 “And the second *is* like it, ‘*You will love your neighbor as yourself.*’

40 “On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”

41 ¶ While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them,

42 saying, “What do you think of the Christ? Whose Son is He?” They said to Him, “*The Son of David.*”

43 He said to them, “How then does David

in spirit call Him Lord, saying,

44 ‘*The Lord said to My Lord, “Sit at My right hand until I make Your enemies Your footstool?”*’

45 “If David then calls Him Lord, how is He his Son?”

46 And no man was able to answer Him a word, nor did anyone from that day on ask Him any more *questions.*

Chapter 23

1 ¶ Then Jesus spoke to the multitude and to His disciples,

2 saying, “The scribes and the Pharisees sit

statement Jesus here makes. With such love one establishes a correct relationship with God by obedience to His will (See Dt 6:4-6; Ec 12:13). If one loves God, obedience to His word will be the natural part of his life (Jn 14:15; 1 Jn 5:1-3). **All your heart:** Our affections and feelings must be directed toward what God would have us do in our lives. **All your soul:** The character of the individual must focus on God. **All your mind:** All the intellectual capabilities of the individual must also be focused on knowing God and His will. Mark adds that Jesus also said, “All your strength.” All the physical abilities of man must also be directed toward serving God. This is the first and great commandment because once one establishes God as the one who should reign in his heart, then everything else will follow (See 6:33). **39,40 Love your neighbor as yourself:** Establishment of this principle in one's life determines our relationship with our fellow man. Love of our neighbor is the foundation upon which our behavior toward our fellow man is directed (19:19; Lv 19:18; see comments Gl 5:14,22,23). **On these two commandments:** Love is the motivation by which law is put into action in our lives (See comments Rm 3:31). In our relationship with God, we keep His commandments because we love Him (1 Jn 14:15). In relation to our behavior toward our neighbor, we deal justly because we love our fellow man as ourselves.

JESUS AND DAVID

(Mk 12:35-37; Lk 20:41-44)

41 Jesus asked them: Jesus now takes the initiative. The Pharisees had earlier been silenced, and thus, they dealt with Him indirectly through the scribe of the previous discourse. However, Jesus is not finished with them because He knows that He must stir them to anger in order that they initiate the plot to kill Him. **42 Whose Son is He:** The Pharisees knew that the Old Testament Scriptures taught that the Messiah would be a descendant of David (Ps 132:11; see Mt 1:1; 21:9). Jesus thus sets them up in order to place them in a dilemma as to what they should think of Him. **43,44 David ... call Him Lord:** See Ps 110:1. The dilemma is how could David, speaking by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, call one of his descendants Lord, when according to Jewish practice the descendant king should refer to his father or ancestor king as lord. Jesus' question is how could David refer to one of his descendants as Lord.

What Jesus effectively argued is that Psalm 110:1 is a prophecy by David of the Christ. David did not make the statement concerning himself (See At 2:34; Hb 1:13). As the descendant of David, Jesus is the Lord who has ascended to the right hand of God in order to reign over all things (Ep 1:20-22; Hb 10:13; 1 Pt 3:22). **45** In order to answer this question, the Pharisees would have to confess that the Messiah would be human in that He would be a descendant of David. However, He would have to be divine since David acknowledged Him as Lord. If Jesus were the Messiah, then He was also divine. **46** See Mk 12:34; Lk 14:6; 20:40. As far as the Pharisees and Sadducees were concerned, the time for their public humiliation in reference to debating Jesus was over. Their next approach to eliminate Jesus' influence was to resort to violence. Such is the action of those who cannot with reason win the day over those they envy.

Chapter 23

DENUNCIATION OF RELIGIOUS LEADERS

(Mk 12:38-40; Lk 20:45-47)

Jesus now turns to a direct and public attack against the legalistic and hypocritical leadership of the religious leaders of Israel. We must keep in mind that the underlying purpose for the sharp denunciation He makes of these leaders in this chapter is for the purpose of moving them to take Himself to the cross. He also wants the multitudes to understand the conflict between His teaching of grace and truth as opposed to the hypocritical theology of the scribes and Pharisees.

By the time the Son of God was incarnate, the religious leadership of the nation of Israel was in the hands of religious leaders who had stolen the vineyard of God (See Mt 21:33-45). In the text of Mt 23, therefore, Jesus addressed these leaders who were “*the scribes and the Pharisees*” (vs 2). In the context of similar pronouncements of judgment in Lk 11, Jesus used the term “lawyers” in reference to the scribes. Mt 23:11 indicates that Jesus was directly addressing the multitudes and His disciples about the problem of the scribes (lawyers) and Pharisees. We would assume, therefore, that in the multitudes there were scribes and Pharisees who represented the religious institutionalism that they upheld by their leadership. In this denunciation, Jesus delivers a stern rebuke to the

in Moses' seat.

3 "Therefore, all that they tell you, *that* observe and do. But do not do according to their works, for they say and do not.

4 "For they bind up heavy burdens and lay *them* on men's shoulders. But they *themselves* will not move them with one of their fingers.

5 "But all their works they do to be seen by men. They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their garments.

6 "They love the best places at feasts and the chief seats in the synagogues,

7 "and greetings in the markets, and to be called by men, 'Rabbi.'

religious leadership of Israel concerning their misguided style and standard of leadership of the people.

Keep in mind that the historical context of this chapter is the time just before the crucifixion. Jesus is at this time in His ministry stirring up the hatred of the religious leaders in order to take Himself to the cross. We do not believe for one moment that Jesus was accidentally nailed on the cross by the hands of an uncontrollable mob. He had the power to lay down His life and to take it up again (Jn 10:17,18). By agitating the ungodly hearts of the jealous religious leaders of Israel, Jesus took Himself to the cross. The context of Mt 23, therefore, is Jesus' sermon to stir up that which He knew was in the hearts of those who would in a few hours from the time of these statements lead in the cry to crucify Him.

JUDGMENT OF THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS

In verses 2-7 Jesus talks about the scribes and Pharisees, but directs His discussion to the disciples. However, in verses 13-36 Jesus directs His pronouncements directly to the scribes and Pharisees. Between these two discussions, Jesus addresses the disciples in verses 8-12.

Jesus' pronouncements give us divine principles concerning the error of those who would wrongly lead God's people. In this sense, therefore, the leadership style of the scribes and Pharisees is a style of leadership we would not seek to follow. Our study is thus directed toward understanding what God does not desire in the life of those in whose hands He has entrusted His flock. Jesus condemns the scribes and Pharisees as ungodly leaders. They are leaders that have stolen the vineyard of God. They have pompously led the flock of God after their own desires. For this reason, Jesus sternly condemns them.

1,2 The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: They just sit there, enjoying the position of pomp. Those who would seek to lord over the flock of God desire a position as "Moses' seat" from which they can give out commands to the flock. Their concept of leadership is to lead by command, not by humble service. They do not picture themselves in service to the flock, but the flock in service to them. Lordship leaders would ask Jesus for positions as did James and John in the time of their worldly thinking concerning leadership in the kingdom. James and John requested, "*Grant us that we may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on Your left, in Your glory*" (Mk 10:37). The position of sitting is reminiscent of those who would seek to hand down orders, not lead by example of service. **3,4 They say, and do not do:** Those who would seek to reign over the people often fall into the sin of hypocrisy. They do not practice what they preach. Jesus admonishes the disciples,

"*Whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do*" **Do not do according to their works:** Jesus classifies the scribes' and Pharisees' actions as an evil work. By their works they were not doing what they preached. They believed that as long as they preached the message they could behave as the world. Such is the deception of legalistic religion. The legalist believes that as long as he maintains the correct doctrine in his mind, he can maintain ungodly attitudes in his heart. He trusts in his doctrinal beliefs to cover his unholy attitudes. But Jesus obligates the disciples to obey the pronouncements of the scribes and Pharisees in the sense that they should obey the Old Testament law. However, to this law the religious leaders had added a tremendous burden of traditions that became to them legal statutes that must be kept in order to become righteous (Mk 7:1-9). Though the religious leaders did not practice what they taught, at least the disciples should seek to be submissive to the will of God. **They bind heavy burdens:** The scribes' and Pharisees' burden of religious tradition was heavy (See At 15:10). Neither the disciples at this time nor the religious leaders could bear the burden of the Jews' religious traditions. They could not obey all the traditional interpretations and customs that the scribes and Pharisees had made religious law. And because they could not keep all these traditions, they never felt justified before God. In reference to the context of what Jesus says here, there is a profound lesson concerning our relations with law in reference to salvation. The religious leaders most assuredly knew that they could not perfectly keep all the inspired laws and their added traditions in order to be justified before God. Nevertheless, that did not keep them from binding their traditions on the people. Legalistic leaders find it easy to pronounce burdens on the backs of people, when at the same time they know that one cannot perfectly keep all such laws in order to be saved. In the text, Jesus flatly stated that they did not keep all the laws. Their hypocrisy is that they did not preach "justice, mercy and faith" (vs 23). They kept binding non-essential burdens on the people that could not be perfectly obeyed in order to accomplish justification before God. The problem with the scribes' and Pharisees' concept of religion was not the Old Testament law. The problem was in their traditions and view of justification by law keeping. One could not keep God's law perfectly in order to be saved, for in works of the law no one can be justified (See Rm 3:20; Gl 2:16). But in conjunction with law, the scribes and Pharisees added their host of traditions. There was certainly no possible way for one to stand justified before God on the basis of perfect law keeping in conjunction with tradition keeping. **5-7 To be seen by men:** The works that they do, Jesus said, they do for recognition. As Diotrefes, some religious leaders

8 “But do not be called ‘Rabbi’, for One is your Teacher, and all of you are brothers.
9 “And call no *one* your father on the earth,

for One is your Father, He who is in heaven.
10 “Do not be called masters, for one is your Master, the Christ.

love to have preeminence among the brethren (See comments 3 Jn 9,10). **Make their phylacteries broad:** Phylacteries were small leather boxes that contained scriptures. The small boxes were strapped to the forehead. That which God meant to be only a token on the foreheads of the priests – the phylacteries (Ex 13:16; Dt 6:8; 11:18) – was broadened by the scribes and Pharisees to be filled with a host of scriptures in order that they be better noticed by the people. They wanted to be considered more obedient. They enlarged the borders of their garments in order to be considered more righteous among the people. Their emphasis in religion was on the outward appearance and performance of ceremonies of the institutional religion that they had created after their own traditions. Jesus pronounced the following concerning such leaders who love to be seen of men. **They love the best places at feasts:** These presumptuous leaders liked to be placed on the front seats of the assemblies. They wanted to be there not only to be seen but also to have their position of leadership reaffirmed before the people. Those “in front” were considered by the culture to be the leaders. Because of their love for position, these leaders wanted to be placed where they could be seen to be leaders. Instead of being seen as servants and slaves who were actively engaged in service to the people of God, they wanted to be in symbolic positions of leadership in public places. The lesson from this problem of these leaders is most clear. Leaders should not do those things that would present or exalt their work or position. It seems that Jesus is here cautioning us not to make a show of our accomplishments or position in order to exalt ourselves above our brother. **They love ... greetings in the market places:** The scribes and Pharisees loved to have public notice of who they were. **Love to be called ... Rabbi, Rabbi:** They loved the titles that would separate them from the common people. They separated themselves from and exalted themselves over those they intimidated into following them. While the followers admired their broad phylacteries and enlarged garment borders, the leaders hypocritically laid burdens on the hearts of the innocent flock. We must not miss the problem Jesus here addresses. When respect for leaders turns to exaltation, the opinions of the leaders are also exalted. Some leaders recognize this. Ungodly leaders take advantage of this over-exaltation of their word. They thus feel that their opinions are to be exalted above the voice of others. In this way, the scribes and Pharisees held the people captive to their dictates. They led the people to believe that since they had studied the law for so long, they could not possibly be wrong. But wrong they were, for they made the traditions of men the doctrine of God.

SERVANTHOOD DISCIPLESHIP

In verses 8-10 Jesus turns in His discourse to exhort the disciples. In these verses He gave three “do nots” to His disciples. He makes a contrast between the religious culture from which they were changing to

the “servanthood” culture of the community of God to which they were headed. He cautions the disciples about bringing concepts of their past religious culture into Christian behavior. **8 Do not be called ‘Rabbi’:** The term “Rabbi” carried with it the connotation that one had leadership privileges over the flock. But Christians have only one Lord and King. They must not exalt any man to the position of lord and king in the church. The apostle Peter would not even dare trespass in this area when he went to the house of Cornelius, and thus, would not allow Cornelius to bow down to him (At 10:25,26). Both Paul and Barnabas also feared accepting such exaltation from the people. When they healed a young man in Lystra, the people cried out that they were gods (At 14:11). They called Barnabas, Zeus and Paul, Hermes. However, both Paul and Barnabas would not allow the people to so consider them such (At 14:14,15). It is in the nature of godly leaders to be fearful of accepting any admiration that would lead to their over-exaltation. The problem with the designation of one as “Rabbi” was the acceptance of his teaching or interpretation of Scripture as more authoritative than a simple understanding of God’s word. Thus Jesus is saying that we should not exalt any teacher’s interpretation of the law to be law. Such leads us to accept the deductions of men over the simple truths of God’s word. Opinions of the “Rabbis” became as authoritative as the plain declarations of God’s word. When this is done, we have made the “doctors” of theology the judge and lawgivers of truth in the church. Jesus carries this thought into the next verse. **9 Do not call anyone on earth your father:** The point Jesus addresses is the fact that the Jewish leaders considered the religious traditions of the fathers to be binding. In fact, Jesus said that they rejected the commandment of God in order to keep the traditions of the fathers (See comments Mk 7:9). Calling on the fathers for authority meant calling on other authority in religion than our Father in heaven. Religious tradition must not be called upon as authoritative. Jesus knew that the keeping of tradition is strong among people. In fact, it is so strong, men will seek to keep religious tradition above the word of God. This is what happened to Israel. It is not wrong to do something traditionally. But if the traditional way of doing something becomes the only way it can be done, then a religious tradition has become a religious law. Once this has happened, we have added to the word of God (Cl 2:20-22). **10 Do not be called teachers:** In the disciples’ society the teacher was considered a leader because of his position (See Js 3:1). What Jesus is here emphasizing is that leaders are not to be followed simply because they are teachers. We must remember that Jesus is our authoritative teacher. The opinions of all other teachers of the word must never be exalted to the authority of Jesus’ teaching.

GREATNESS THROUGH SERVICE

11 He who is great ... shall be your servant: Jesus here repeats what He has maintained

11 “But he who is greatest among you will be your servant.

12 “And whoever will exalt himself will be humbled. And he who will humble himself will be exalted.

13 ¶ “But woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men, for you neither go in *yourselves*, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in.

14 ¶ [Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you devour widows’ houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. Therefore, you will receive greater condemnation.]

15 ¶ “Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel sea and land to make one proselyte. And when he is made, you make him twice as much the son of hell as yourselves.

16 ¶ “Woe to you blind guides who say,

throughout His ministry. Leadership in the community of God is by servanthood (See comments Mk 10:43,44). The scribes and Pharisees ruled by invested authority, that is, because they were “scribes” and “Pharisees” they thought their position gave them superior religious rights over the people. Their teachings, they thought, should be considered above the teachings of all others. After the manner of the world, they thought they could proclaim and the subjects were to obey. However, godly leaders lead by service to the needs of those they seek to lead. The burden of the group’s needs is on the backs of the ones who choose to be great and first in leadership. And “great” and “first” simply mean great in service and first to serve. People follow those who service their needs.

12 Will be humbled: The ones who would exalt themselves over others, Jesus affirms, would be made low in His coming kingdom reign. It was hard for the scribes and Pharisees to accept this reversal of mental attitude in life. Nevertheless, when one came to Jesus, regardless of his position in life, he had to become the servant of all if he would seek to lead the disciples (See 1 Pt 5:5). The nature of the world is to strive to exalt one’s self above his fellow man. However, the nature of Christianity is submission to one’s fellow man. Unless one learns the spirit of submission he has not learned the spirit of Christ.

SEVEN WOES

In the context of verses 13-36 there are seven woes that Jesus pronounces against the religious leaders of Israel. (Some manuscripts do not include the woe of the statements of verse 14 of the KJV.) These woes are Jesus’ judgments as to how these religious leaders failed in their spiritual leadership of Israel. It is interesting to note what Jesus says concerning their failure since their failure is a definition of what God does not accept in the lives of leaders. In studying where the scribes and Pharisees went wrong, we can guard ourselves from falling into the same styles or practices of erroneous leadership. **13,14 You shut up the kingdom:** The scribes (lawyers of the law) became the stumbling blocks over which people fell in coming to God. The scribes were originally students of the Scriptures. However, by the second century B.C. scribes began studying and debating the interpretations of the law. In such debate among themselves, it was easy to develop the attitude that they were the only ones who could correctly interpret the law. The next step was only natural. The ordinary Jew could not so interpret the law as they could. With this thinking came the self-exaltation of the

scribes to be the authoritative interpreters of the law. As an establishment of religious leaders, the scribes were given great respect because they were responsible for maintaining the letter of the law and its application of traditional interpretations. As administrators of the law and members of the Sanhedrin (See 22:35; Mk 14:43,53; Lk 22:66; At 4:5), they stood in the way of those who sought God through the simplicity of love, justice, mercy and faith (See 23:23). They bound their interpretations and opinions on the consciences of the meek and lowly in heart. They made it impossible for one to feel good about serving God. The lesson here is clear. Those who would be self-appointed guards over the flock of God as the scribes, function in no less a capacity than the scribes of Jesus’ day. When tradition and opinion are elevated to the status of “church law,” those who may come from a different background are shut out of the church when they do not submit to the accepted “church law.” Though a simple God-fearing man may seek God through the weightier matters of the law as love, justice, mercy and faith, he is often shut out of the kingdom because he has not conformed to the opinions and traditions of those who have set themselves as guardians of the church. Those who would shut others out of the church today because they do not conform to their traditions or opinions have placed themselves in the same crowd as the Pharisees and scribes. They have also heaped upon themselves the same judgments that Jesus delivered to the scribes and Pharisees in this context. **15 Twice a son of hell as yourselves:** It was not wrong to proselyte someone to the Jewish religion. Old Testament truth was revealed from God. However, by the time of Jesus, the Jews had turned away from the Old Testament law to following after the “tradition of the Fathers” (Mk 7:6-9). The traditions had become the religion of the Jews. Paul referred to this Judaism as the “sect of our religion” (At 26:5; see comments Gl 1:11-14). It was no longer God’s law, but a religion that had been developed after the traditions of the Jewish religious leaders. By the first century, therefore, when one became a proselyte to Israel, he became a part of this system of traditional religion that was foreign to Old Testament truth that had been revealed by God. The scribes and Pharisees were thus proselyting people to their religion and not to God. They were converting Gentiles to their rules and regulations and not to service of God. Therefore, proselytes were first condemned in their former religious beliefs of paganism. The religions from which they came were the invention of men. They were the invention of men

'Whoever will swear by the temple, it is nothing. But whoever will swear by the gold of the temple, he is obligated *to do it.*'

17 "You fools and blind men. Which is more important, the gold or the temple that sanctified the gold?"

18 "And, 'Whoever will swear by the altar, it is nothing. But whoever swears by the gift that is upon it, he is obligated.'

19 "You fools and blind men. Which is more important, the gift or the altar that sanctifies the gift?"

20 "Therefore, whoever swears by the altar, swears by it, and by all things on it.

21 "And whoever swears by the temple,

swears by it and by Him who dwells in it.

22 "And he who will swear by heaven, swears by the throne of God and by Him who sits on it.

23 ¶ "Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithes of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier *matters* of the law, judgment, mercy and faith. These you should have done without neglecting the others.

24 "You blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel.

25 ¶ "Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but inside they are full of

who had created religion after their own desires. When they were proselytized to Judaism, they were still under condemnation. All that had happened was that they switched from one religious invention to another. They were twice a son of hell in this religion because they were led to believe that Judaism – the traditional religion of the Jews – was God's revealed religion from heaven. Actually, it was the invention of the scribes and Pharisees who had created a religion after their traditions (Mk 7:9). **16-22 Woe to you:** In verses 16-22 Jesus refers to these religious leaders, as "blind guides" who are "fools and blind." And rightly so, for they believed that one's oath was binding if he swore by the gold of the temple or gift of the altar. However, the scribes and Pharisees taught that if one swore by the temple or altar, that oath was not binding. **Which is greater, the gold or the temple:** In this condemnation Jesus pointed out the absurd and inconsistent theology of these religious leaders. The temple is much greater than the gold ornaments within it. The altar is of greater significance than the sacrificial gifts laid upon it. These religious leaders reversed the importance of the temple and gold, the altar and gift. To them the gold was greater than the temple and the gift was greater than the altar. They had lost the importance of what was greater. Their priorities were wrong. Such is characteristic of those who digress to arguments over opinions in religion. They lose sight of the weightier matters of the law. This is not to say that the lighter matters are not important. The lighter matters are not opinions, but also the law. Keep in mind that opinions are from man. The weightier and lighter matters of the law are from God. Our difficulty usually comes by not being able to distinguish between what is God's law and what is our personal opinion. Sometimes in the heat of debate this distinction is clouded. And when the fog is thick, it is easy to move opinion into the realm of law. **23,24 Weightier matters of the law:** Jesus said that they should pay tithes of mint and anise and cummin. However, the religious leaders made these things the weightier matters of the law. In doing so they neglected the weightier matters of the law which are justice, mercy and faith. They were thus emphasizing

an outward form of religion without concentrating on holiness of life in the heart. Their high regard for the lesser and legal keeping of the law de-emphasized their dealing with their own unholiness. In this context Jesus emphasizes that there are more important things of the law. In this case, justice, mercy and faith are more important in the law than tithing mint, anise and cummin. The principle is that all truth is good. However, there is some truth that is more important and must be emphasized in our obedience over lesser matters of the law. It is wrong to emphasize the lesser truths of the law to the neglect of the weightier truths. In other words, justice, mercy and faith are more important than tithing mint, anise and cummin. Jesus had earlier illustrated this truth in response to the Pharisees' unjust criticism of His plucking of grain in the cornfields on the Sabbath (12:1-8). The Pharisees argued that the disciples had violated law (12:2). However, Jesus reminded them of what they considered a correct action on the part of David (See 1 Sm 21:1-6). David entered the house of God and ate the showbread that was lawful only for the priests to eat (Lv 24:5-9). David did violate the law. However, there was a greater law to be obeyed in the historical setting of the case. David was fleeing his enemies. It was necessary that David, God's anointed king, and his men be preserved. Therefore, in their starving situation they had to eat the bread in order to survive. This was the higher law that had to be obeyed over the lesser law that permitted only the priests to eat the showbread. Nevertheless, it was hard for the Pharisees, who had a legal understanding of the law, to understand this concept in relation to justice, mercy and faith. **25,26 Full of extortion and self-indulgence:** These religious leaders gave great attention to the ceremonial washing of pots and pans (See Mk 7:1-9). However, by means of extortion they acquired what was in the containers. The manner by which they consumed the contents was self-indulgence. In other words, the ceremonial purification of the containers was more important than how they acquired the contents. They thought they could sinfully acquire and consume the contents, and yet, be justified by cleaning the container. **27,28 You are like**

extortion and self-indulgence.

26 “You blind Pharisee, cleanse first the inside of the cup and platter so that the outside of them may be clean also.

27 ¶ “Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs that indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but within are full of dead *men's* bones and of all uncleanness.

28 “Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

29 ¶ “Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous,

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.’

31 “Therefore, you are witnesses against yourselves, that you are the sons of those who killed the prophets.

32 “Fill you up, then, the measure of your fathers.

33 “You serpents, you generation of vipers,

how can you escape the condemnation of hell?

34 “Therefore, behold, I send to you prophets and wise men and scribes. And *some* of them you will kill and crucify. And *some* of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city,

35 “so that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah son of Berechiah, whom you killed between the temple and the altar.

36 “Truly I say to you, all these things will come on this generation.

37 ¶ “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her. How often I wanted to gather your children together, even as a hen gathers her chicks under *her* wings, and you would not.

38 “Behold, your house is left to you desolate.

39 “For I say to you, you will not see Me from now on until you will say, ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.’”

whitewashed tombs: It was a common practice among the scribes and Pharisees to keep the appearance of tombs in a presentable order. This practice made a suitable illustration for Jesus of the true nature of their character. They appeared as righteous men by “religious behavior” according to their own standards. But inwardly, their hearts were hypocritical and lawless. The deadness of their morals and spirituality was covered by their fine dress and pompous religious behavior. They were preachers in fine suits, but full of hypocrisy and sin. **29-36 Abel:** See Gn 4:8. **Zechariah:** See 2 Ch 24:20,21. **You are sons of those who murdered the prophets:** The scribes and Pharisees gave a pretence to honor the prophets of old who had righteously stood up and preached against the sins of Israel. The religious leaders of Jesus' day gave honor to these martyred prophets by decorating their tombs. However, they were of the same spirit as those who murdered the prophets of God in the Old Testament. They are here in the process of scheming to murder Jesus, which scheme they carried out. In doing such, they proved that they were sons of the murderers of the prophets. Those who had murdered the prophets in the Old Testament were false prophets who had constructed religions after their own liking. They did not know the difference between Baal and Bible. When the true prophets of God stood against these man-made religions, they suffered the persecution of misguided religious leaders. The same was happening to Jesus at the time He was speaking these words. It was not the Roman Empire that was against Jesus. It was the misguided zeal of self-deceived religious leaders who

had constructed a religion after their own desires. **37-39** Jesus saw the future of Jerusalem. He saw the destruction that was coming in A.D. 70. In these final statements to those who had stolen the sheep of God through their misguided religious zeal, He mourned over this city that had been the center of Israel's worship to God throughout the centuries. **Kills the prophets:** It was this city of misguided religious zealots that killed all those who had been sent to her with a message of repentance (See 5:12). As these murderers killed the Old Testament prophets, they were in the process of doing the same to Jesus. **Your house:** It was no longer the house of God. It was their temple which had become the symbol of their unrighteous hearts and institutional religion that had been created after their own traditions (15:1-9; see comments Mk 7:1-9). When men forsake direction through the word of God, God forsakes them. **Desolate:** The temple was desolate of spiritual leadership. For this reason, God had forsaken them (See 1 Kg 9:1ff; Jr 12:7; 22:5). **See Me no more:** See 21:9; Ps 118:26. One sees Jesus and cries “blessed” only when he obediently falls to his knees in humble repentance and mourns over his personal sins (5:4; Js 4:8-10). Jerusalem and her misguided religionists would not repent, and thus, they would not personally see Jesus again. After His resurrection, He would appear only to the disciples. Those who come in the name of the Lord are His evangelists (See At 5:40,41; 3 Jn 7). Those who rejected Jesus in this context would thus see Jesus only through those evangelists who went forth to preach repentance toward God and obedience to the gospel.

Chapter 24

1 ¶ And Jesus went out and departed from the temple. And His disciples came to show Him the buildings of the temple.

2 And Jesus said to them, "Do you not see all these things? Truly I say to you, there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down.

Chapter 24

THE END OF NATIONAL ISRAEL

(Mk 13; Lk 21:5-36)

For many years biblical interpreters placed little emphasis on the destruction of Jerusalem which occurred in A.D. 70. Emphasis was more on the "end of time" coming and final judgment by Jesus rather than the end of the Jewish State by the coming of Jesus in judgment upon Israel in time. As a result of the emphasis on the final coming, biblical interpreters approached texts as Mt 24 with emphasis on the end of time, rather than a historical interpretation that had direct relevance to the ones to whom Jesus first delivered these words.

We must always keep in mind two very important things when interpreting the book of Matthew. First, Jesus' ministry was first to those of His immediate company. He came to the "lost sheep of the house of Israel" in order to call them to repentance (Mt 10:6). He came to choose the twelve apostles and commission them to a worldwide task of preaching the gospel to every creature (Lk 6:13; Mt 28:20). The immediate ministry of Jesus was worldwide and throughout all history until the end of time in the sense that He would continue His ministry and accomplish His task of worldwide evangelism through the global ministry of His disciples. In order to accomplish His goal, Jesus came to work with His immediate Jewish environment.

Second, Matthew is writing to a Jewish audience about Jesus as the Messiah. Matthew's statements, therefore, have direct reference to the Jewish situation. The Jews must accept Jesus as the Messiah. They must do so because God is about to physically bring the Jewish State to a close. Those who would not accept His messiahship would probably be caught up in the destruction and close of national Israel in A.D. 70.

The pronouncements of Jesus in Mt 24 emphasize an imminent coming of Jesus and "end." This imminent coming would be in the lifetime of the disciples to whom He made these statements (See Mt 16:27,28; 23:34-36). The Holy Spirit inspired no New Testament writer to deceive the first century disciples into believing that Jesus would personally return in His final coming in their lifetime. But the context of Mt 24 is talking about a "coming" within the lifetime of the immediate disciples. This "coming" cannot refer to the final coming of Jesus. Therefore, we approach this chapter of the Scriptures from the viewpoint that Jesus is giving information to His immediate disciples about something traumatic that was going to happen in their lifetime. He was going to come in judgment in their lifetime.

Many Bible commentaries in recent years have correctly emphasized the importance of the A.D. 70 destruction of Jerusalem in the New Testament. This has led to a more consistent interpretation of many passages throughout the New Testament. Since the destruction of Jerusalem is the primary emphasis of Jesus in the context, we would conclude that the early disciples took special note of what Jesus said.

Throughout the New Testament, therefore, we would also conclude that the Holy Spirit mentioned these things again about which Jesus spoke here.

While studying the text of Mt 24 one must consult the parallel accounts of Jesus' words on this occasion that are recorded in Mk 13 and Lk 21. Both Mark and Luke record additional thoughts that Jesus gave in the discourse. However, neither Matthew, Mark nor Luke give the complete discourse as it was spoken by Jesus. Each inspired writer only gives that information which emphasizes the theme of his particular book. Matthew, however, gives the most complete information, and for this reason, Matthew is used here as the guideline text for our interpretive comments of this historical event about which Jesus prophesied.

Also keep in mind the dates of writing of each book. Since the impending destruction was in the near future in relation to the dates of writing, we cannot but feel that this destruction in A.D. 70 was one reason that stimulated the writing of certain New Testament books in the first century. At least, certain portions of the New Testament letters concerning the destruction of Jerusalem were included in the New Testament. These portions were included in order to forewarn the Christians of the coming calamity of Israel, and thus to keep them away from Jerusalem.

Mark wrote around A.D. 50-52, Matthew around A.D. 60, and Luke around A.D. 61,62. All three writers sensed in the political atmosphere of the times that something was up. As A.D. 70 drew near, the prophetic elements of Jesus' prophecy concerning national Israel were becoming clear. In order to expedite conversion from Judaism, and also, encourage the converted not to return to the religion that God had set aside, Matthew, Mark and Luke write. Their writings have an air of urgency, a sense of a final call to a generation seeking for hope in a political environment that was in upheaval.

NATIONALISTIC PRIDE OF THE DISCIPLES

1 Jesus had just pronounced judgment on the city of Jerusalem in 23:38. He had also just stated, "Assuredly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation" (Mt 23:36). The disciples were surely stunned by what He had said. In response to Jesus' statements, Peter, James, John and Andrew later came to Jesus privately while He was on the Mount of Olives (vs 3; Mk 13:3). At least these four disciples showed their nationalistic feelings by expressing their pride in the physical structures that Herod the Great had constructed. Surely, they were thinking that these buildings, and especially the temple, could not be destroyed by the will of God. God would not bring an end to Israel. Their nationalistic feelings were struggling against Jesus' prophecy.

IMMINENT DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM

2 *Not one stone shall be left here upon another:* Jesus had prepared the disciples for this final pronouncement of judgment on Israel. The parables of 13:3-9,36-43; 21:33-46; 22:1-14, and the definitive

3 ¶ And as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be? And what *will be* the sign of Your coming and of the end of the age?"

4 And Jesus answered and said to them,

proclamation of 23:29-39, prepared the disciples for what He was going to say in this proclamation. Jesus had earlier prophesied that the end of the Jewish Commonwealth was at hand. The ax was laid at the root (3:10) and was to come with a destructive blow in about forty years from the time Jesus made these pronouncements. All these things of Israel would come to an end. This is the last prophecy of Jesus of the coming destruction of the temple and Jerusalem by Vespasian, Emperor of Rome, through his son Titus. This would be the final fulfillment of Moses' prophetic curse upon a people who had rejected God (Dt 28:15-68). The destruction would be great and final.

Josephus was a Jewish historian who lived during the time of the destruction of Jerusalem. He personally witnessed the war and final fall of the city of Jerusalem. In his *Wars of the Jews* he stated that over 1,100,000 Jews died in the destruction; the few 80,000 or so who were left were sold into captivity. The temple was burned and the city levelled to the ground. The prophecy of Jesus in Lk 19:43,44 was fulfilled in A.D. 70. "For the days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation."

The destruction of the temple would be God's physical manifestation that He was finished with the Jews' religion and national Israel. The use of the pronoun "your" in 23:38 is significant. "See," Jesus said, "your house is left to you desolate." It was no longer God's house. In the mind of God, the Jewish religious leaders had already stolen the inheritance of the vineyard (See Mt 21:38,39). Jesus had said that they had rejected the commandments of God (Mk 7:9; see Mt 15:1-9). God would reject them (Hs 4:6). Paul was certainly correct by calling Judaism the Jews' religion (Gl 1:13). They no longer submitted to the word of God. Once again in their history the curse for rejecting God was coming upon them. Because Israel had rejected God and His commandment through Jesus, judgment was coming upon her.

THE DISCIPLES QUESTION JESUS

3 We can understand the astonishment of the disciples concerning the words of Jesus. They realized that He was talking about a dreadful event that was to befall national Israel. In view of the fact that they still believed that Jesus would establish a physical kingdom (At 1:6), they were having a hard time accepting His statements here concerning the destruction of the temple. **When will these things be:** When we consider the parallel accounts of Mark (13:4) and Luke (21:7), the disciples seem to be asking two questions: (1) When shall the things of 23:36 happen? (2) What will be the sign of Jesus' "coming" (or "presence") and the end of the age. They still remembered Jesus' teaching in the parable of the Sower, that the tares should be left with the wheat until the time of judgment (Mt 13:29). **Your coming:** Jesus answers the above two questions in the context of Mt 24 and 25. He uses the word "coming"

which is from the Greek word *parousia*. A better translation would be "presence." In other words, the disciples are asking what the sign of His presence would be. He discusses two "comings" or "presences." (1) There would be a coming ("presence") in time in judgment upon the nation of Israel. He had earlier referred to this event in 16:27,28. "For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels [messengers], and then He will reward each according to his works. (2) By the end of chapter 25, Jesus has "thrown in" a coming in judgment at the end of time. This would be a final presence, a final judgment upon all the world. The entire context of Mt 24 has reference to the coming of judgment upon the city of Jerusalem and national Israel. Only in chapter 25 does Jesus turn in the discourse to final events. All "comings in judgment" of God in time are symbolic or typical of His final judgment at the end of time. However, we must keep in mind that the disciples at this time did not comprehend or understand Jesus' previous discussions concerning His death, resurrection and kingdom reign. It is not probable here, therefore, that they would be asking questions about a final coming and judgment of Jesus. They did not understand the end of the Jewish Commonwealth, let alone ask questions about the final coming of Jesus and judgment of the world. This does not mean, however, that Jesus did not speak concerning final things while He was with the disciples on earth. He discussed with them many things they did not fully understand. Only when such things were brought to their remembrance with the revelation of all truth, did they understand (See Jn 14:26; 16:13). **End of the age:** Jesus said, "Therefore, as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age" (Mt 13:40). Jesus was talking about His age, not some far off event that was beyond the lifespan of the immediate disciples. The Greek work *aionios* in 13:40 is correctly translated "age" as it is so translated in 28:20. This Greek word was unfortunately translated by the King James translators with the word "world." But in the context, Jesus is primarily emphasizing judgment "in time." A secondary consideration, or application, of these thoughts is judgment at the "end of time." The destruction of Jerusalem in time would only be a figure of what would happen at the unique final coming of Jesus at the end of time.

It is best to understand Mt 24 as a type, or illustration, of the unique destruction of the world at the end of time. Jude quoted Enoch and used the judgment of the flood of Noah's day in reference to the coming judgment upon Jerusalem for "all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him" (Jd 15,16). In the context of Mt 24, Jesus also uses "judgment language" in order to prophesy the destruction of Jerusalem. Such language is also used in other texts in reference to the end of the world.

We are discussing two "ends" in the context of chapters 24 and 25. (1) There is the end of the Jewish State that will happen in the lifetime of the immediate disciples of Jesus (23:36; see Mk 9:1). Reference to "these things" center around this end by destruction (See 23:36; 24:2,8,33,34). (2) There is the end of the

“Take heed that no one deceives you.

5 “For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many.

6 “And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled, for *these things* must come to pass, but the end is not

yet.

7 “For nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines and earthquakes in various places.

8 “All these *are* the beginning of sorrows.

9 “Then they will deliver you up to be af-

world that is illustrated by the judgment and destruction of the flood in Noah's day and the destruction of Jerusalem. In an illustrative way, therefore, the end of national Israel would illustrate the end of the world. As the typical Jew could not comprehend the end of Israel, so men today cannot comprehend the end of the world.

WARNING AGAINST DECEPTION

4,5 Take heed that no one deceives you: In view of the many modern-day self-proclaimed prophets and seers, it is little wonder that Jesus here makes this statement. He knew that at the end of the Jewish State there would be many self-proclaimed “messiahs” who would lead rebellions against Roman domination. Some had already come and subsequently been killed by Roman authorities (See At 5:36). Such messiahs and their rebellions were what eventually motivated Rome to enact a final solution to the “Jewish problem.” That solution came in A.D. 70. Jesus' message here certainly has a secondary application to Christians of all time. Christians must be warned in every century that there are many who come “in the name of Christ” but are teaching false doctrines in order to lead people astray after traditional religion or religions that are centered around the emotional outburst of misguided feelings (See Jr 29:8; 1 Tm 4:1,2). In verse 24 Jesus said that in the religious environment prior to the end of the Jewish State “*false christs and false prophets will arise and show great signs and wonders, so as to deceive, if possible, even the elect.*” John possibly wrote 1 Jn in the few years before A.D. 70, near the end of national Israel. At least we see in 1 Jn a sense of finality, for John wrote, “*Little children, it is the last hour, and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour*” (1 Jn 2:18). For this reason John warned at that time – his warning is also good for today – that Christians “*not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God ... every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God*” (1 Jn 4:1-4). Simply because one claims to come “in the name of Christ” and cries out “Lord, Lord” does not mean that he is a Christian. Only those who do the will of the Father in heaven should wear the Christian name (Mt 7:21). Only those who are willing to submit to the gospel of Jesus by immersion into His death, burial and resurrection shall inherit eternal life. This would be the condition for salvation, the condition for deliverance from a world of turmoil and sin. Salvation, therefore, is more than simply “believing on Jesus.” One's faith must be manifested in obedience. Through obedience to the will of Jesus one proclaims Jesus as his Lord. It is through this obedience, therefore, that we determine one to be of the spirit of Jesus and a true disciple. Faith is essential, but the nature of the faith that is pleasing to God is the faith that takes action to serve God.

RUMORS OF WARS

6 Wars and rumors of wars: When Rome started her campaign against Palestine, she marched down through Asia Minor with skirmishes here and there in order to eradicate from the Empire the “Jewish scourge.” There were also other wars throughout the Roman Empire that evidenced the political instability of the era. These wars would not be the end of national Israel. They would only indicate the beginning of the end. But such wars would be a warning to Christians who were in Jerusalem to leave the city. **All these things must come to pass:** Jesus is here giving pronouncements of prophecy that would be spoken among the disciples throughout the Roman Empire. Jewish Christians were to take heed to these prophetic utterances. If they did not, they might continue to cling to the traditional Jewish Passover and Pentecost journey to Jerusalem. Subsequently, they might possibly be entrapped in the city when the Roman armies came. One reason Jesus is giving these warnings, therefore, is for the sake of the early Jewish Christians. They must take heed to these warnings and stay away from Jerusalem when the hour approached.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF WAR

7 The internal strife in the Roman Empire only increased its intolerance of any who would cause disorder. In the two year period before the destruction of Jerusalem, Galba, Otho and Vitellius struggled to seize power in order to become Caesars of Rome. Insurrectionist movements occurred throughout the Empire. At one time about 50,000 Jews were killed in an insurrectionist movement in Seleucia. Another similar movement led to the death of about 20,000 Jews in Caesarea. **There will be famines:** Famines occurred throughout the Empire prior to A.D. 70. Agabus had prophesied of one in At 11:28. Paul dealt with another with the “famine contribution” of 1 Co 16:1-3. **Earthquakes:** In conjunction with the famines, earthquakes seemed to have plagued the Mediterranean area in the years prior to A.D. 70. Ancient historians recorded at least eight major earthquakes in the area in the few years before the end of national Israel in A.D. 70. **Pestilence:** Luke records that Jesus also said that pestilence, or disease and plagues, would occur. Such pestilence usually accompanies famines. Pestilence would intensify the trauma of the wars.

THE BEGINNING OF SORROWS

8 Beginning of sorrows: The events of verses 6 and 7 would only be the beginning of the sorrows. Such would not constitute the end. Unfortunately, the disciples would have to live in the midst of these sorrows. They could not escape their environment. Christians must live in a hostile environment that is against that message which they preach. It is hostile simply because Satan is the prince of this world who

flicted and will kill you. And you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake.

10 "And then many will be offended and will

betray one another and will hate one another.

11 "And many false prophets will arise and will deceive many.

has deceived the masses of humanity. Those he has deceived make the world difficult for Christians. Luke also adds that "great signs from heaven" would be seen (Lk 21:11). This would possibly be the unusual occurrence of heavenly phenomena that some would interpret as "signs of the end."

HATED FOR JESUS' NAME

9 Deliver you up to tribulation: Luke is more explanatory in his record. Before the finality of "these things" – the destruction of Jerusalem – he writes, "*they [the enemies of the church] will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and rulers for My name's sake*" (Lk 21:12). The apostles would be tormented in their ministry (Mt 10:17). Jesus is certainly talking about the persecution of the early disciples because of the mention of "synagogues." This is specific and Jewish in context. And this is exactly what happened (See At 4:1-22; 5:17-40; 8:3,4; 12:1-5; 16:23; 21:33-40; 24:23-27; 28:30). It is worthy of note that Mark records that this discourse was delivered privately to Peter, James, John and Andrew (Mk 13:3). James would be the first martyred apostle (At 12:1-5). Peter and the others would suffer extensively at the hands of the persecuting Jews. **Hated:** The disciples were hated by the persecuting Jews. But this hate by the Jews would not match that which would be heaped upon the church by the end of the first century. Rome would eventually unleash its power against the disciples. When Nero was caesar at the beginning of the 60s, he launched in Rome a personal persecution against those who claimed the name of Jesus. But this was only the beginning of Roman persecution against Christians. Such "hate" had been spoken before by the Lord (Jn 15:18,19; see Jn 10:17-19; At 3:4; 7:59; 12:2; 16:23; 18:12; 24:26; 28:22). Persecution of the early church was so prevalent that the early evangelists exhorted and comforted the newly established churches with the teaching that they would suffer (See Jn 16:1-3; At 14:22; 2 Tm 3:12). There were, therefore, two forces that persecuted the early church. The first was Jewish persecution that was first led in the beginning by Saul (At 9:1-3). This persecution eventually extended throughout many places of the Roman Empire. The second persecution was carried out by the head of the Roman Empire. Nero launched this personal vendetta against Christians in the mid 60s. However, all historical evidence indicates that this persecution was localized in and around Rome. It was not until the reign of Domitian that Roman State persecution was launched against the church throughout the Empire. In Rome's early persecutions of Jews, the Roman State did not make much of a distinction between Jews and Christians. Christians were only considered a sect of Judaism. And since Judaism was causing the incessant problems of Palestine, Rome launched reprisals against both Jews and Christians. It is also significant to note from this context and the context of John 16:1-3, that persecution would come from those who are religious, and thus, believed that they were serving God by persecuting the church. Even Rome's persecution was instituted by

religious leaders of Roman religion. Persecution of the church rarely comes from the state alone. It is usually generated by religions that seek to dispel competitive religious beliefs within the state.

THE OFFENDED AND THE BETRAYED

10 Many will be offended: Those of weak faith who were offended, or who were ashamed of the gospel (See Rm 1:16), would succumb to the pressure. They would call Caesar lord at the demand of Roman soldiers who had the power to kill them. They would inform on fellow brothers and sisters who were Christians. But Jesus said, "*Blessed is he who is not offended because of Me*" (Mt 11:6). Luke records the extent to which some would go in their betrayals. "*You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, relatives and friends; and they will send some of you to your death*" (Lk 21:16). Knowing that these first disciples would be in such trial situations, specifically the Christ-sent apostles, Jesus promised that He would through the Holy Spirit reveal to them what to say when under trial (Lk 21:14,15). There is a practical principle here we must not overlook. Those who would take a stand for truth will be persecuted by the deceived. One might say that it is a natural happening in evangelism. When one preaches truth, Satan will not be silent. He will not stand easy as his kingdom is ravaged by the truth of the gospel. The evangelist who goes forth and finds it surprising that there are those religiously misguided people who oppose him, has much to learn about the conflict between good and evil in this world.

FALSE PREACHERS

11 Deceive many: Here again Jesus emphasizes the concept of deception. Jesus knew of man's fickle desire to follow after man. He knew the "sheep nature" of people to seek for a shepherd (Mk 6:34). This urge to seek for a shepherd is so strong that innocent, if not gullible, men would follow after any self-proclaimed prophet who might show some religious inclinations and leadership. Jesus knew that there would be those who would take advantage of the innocence of the sheep. Therefore, He warned the sheep that false prophets would come. Jesus warned, "*Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves*" (Mt 7:15). These imposters would often "practice sorcery," "astonish the people" and claim that they were "someone great" (At 8:9-11). Paul warned that from the elders of the church "*men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves*" (At 20:30). But he warned, "*For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, masquerading themselves as apostles of Christ*" (2 Co 11:13; see 2 Pt 2:1,2; Gl 1:6-9; 1 Tm 4:1-4; 2 Tm 3:1-9; 1 Jn 4:1; Jd 11,16). The fact that both Jesus and the inspired writers warned of false teachers is enough to alert us to always be on guard against such. The only way to be on guard is to know well that which protects us against erroneous teachings. We must know the Bible. Biblically ignorant people do not guard against false teachers. They only persecute those who preach the truth.

12 “And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold.

13 “But he who will endure to the end, the same will be saved.

14 “And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world for a witness to all nations, and then will the end come.

15 ¶ “Therefore, when you see the abomina-

LAWLESSNESS AND LOVELESSNESS

12 Lawlessness will abound: When men do not submit to the laws of either God or man, human relationships digress to animal instincts. There is no love of one's neighbors in a state of anarchy. For this reason God ordained governmental law (Rm 13:1,2). And this is exactly what rebellious Jews would bring upon themselves in A.D. 70. Because the Jews continually fought against Roman occupation of Palestine, Rome unleashed her judgment upon the anarchists. **The love of many will grow cold:** In times of trial and persecution it is easy for some to fall from the love of the brethren (Compare 1 Tm 1:8,9; Rv 2:4,5). When men refuse to submit to God they will not submit to one another. Submission to one's fellow man begins with a humble submission to the will of God.

ENDURE TO THE END

13 He who endures: Those who remain faithful while in the midst of persecution, apostasy and tribulation will be delivered from the end of national Israel (See Rv 2:10). They will be spared (Mt 10:22). Jesus even promised, “*But not a hair of your head shall be lost*” in the destruction (Lk 21:18). However, the condition to not fall victim to the calamity that was coming was to heed Jesus' warning (See Lk 21:36). We can now see why Jesus was giving these immediate disciples the information of this chapter. Those who believed these pronouncements would not fall victim to the certain destruction of Jerusalem. The faithful would save their lives if they heeded these warnings. Those Jewish Christians who were still clinging to Judaism had to make a decision. They had to relinquish loyalty to Jerusalem and the temple and cling to Jesus. We can see in the contexts here why Jerusalem and the temple had to go. There was too much Jewish sentimentality connected to both the city and the temple. By A.D. 70 God would have been patient with Israel for forty years. It would be time then to cut the emotional umbilical cord. Jewish Christians had to move on, on to a Christianity that was neither culturally nor nationalistically linked to Judaism or held up by an attachment to physical structure (See comments Jn 4:20-26).

PREACHING TO THE EMPIRE

14 This gospel ... will be preached: The good news of Jesus' death and resurrection would be preached to all parts of the Roman Empire before the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. **All the world:** “All the world” is here certainly a reference to the Roman Empire as the phrase is so used in Lk 2:1. “*And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that a census be taken of all the world.*” This was not a registration of inhabitants of the entire world. The idiomatic expression “all the world” had reference only to those who were under Roman jurisdiction. This same meaning is in Rm 1:8. “*I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world*” (See Rm 10:18; 15:19,24-28; Ph 1:13; Cl 1:6,23). The Roman

Christians' faith was certainly not spoken of throughout the rest of the geographical world. Reference to “the whole world” is again to the perimeters or jurisdiction of the Roman Empire. In Rm 10:18 Paul does use the phrase “all the earth,” or “ends of the world,” to refer to the complete world. Keep in mind, however, that Rm 10:18 was a quotation from Psalm 19:4. In prophetic language it is stated in the past tense. Paul quoted it in the past tense as it was written by David. This does not mean, therefore, that at the time Paul quoted Psalm 19 in Rm 10 that it had been completely fulfilled. In Rm 15:29,24-28 Paul desired to go to Spain and preach the gospel. The gospel had evidently not yet gone to Spain. Therefore, when he made the statement of Rm 10:18, the gospel at the time of his writing the letter of Romans had not yet literally gone to “all the earth” or “ends of the world.” In the context of Mt 24, therefore, we would contend that the meaning of “all the world” refers to the extent of the Roman Empire. The practical reason for the preaching of the gospel to the Roman Empire before the destruction of Jerusalem is obvious. During Passover and Pentecost, Jews of the Roman Empire would make the long journey to Jerusalem to celebrate these two great Jewish feasts. On the particular Passover and Pentecost of the A.D. 70 events, there were Jews in Jerusalem from the eastern extent of the Roman Empire, that is, Parthia and Media. There were Jews from the southern extent of the Roman Empire in North Africa. There were Jews from all Asia and Italy. This journey to Jerusalem on Passover and Pentecost was a very precious thing in the lives of devout Jews. In the context of Mt 24, therefore, Jesus is giving a warning to the disciples of the Roman Empire in order to save their lives. When the gospel was preached to the Jewish inhabitants of the Roman Empire, they gave up the Old Testament law that stated that Jewish males must be in Jerusalem on Passover and Pentecost (Ex 12; 23; Nm 9). Those Jews who obeyed the gospel would be taught the prophecy of Mt 24. They would thus stay away from Jerusalem. When the Roman army did come to Jerusalem in A.D. 70, they came on Passover and Pentecost. Those Jewish Christians who lived outside Judea believed the message of Mt 24, and thus, were not there.

THE ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION

15-18 Abomination of desolation: The abomination of desolation would be the pagan Roman army in Judea. The army would be there to desecrate the temple. The presence of Rome's army would be an abomination to the Jews. However, it would be the will of God who was by proxy bringing judgment on Israel by the power of the Roman armies. Luke records, “*But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near*” (Lk 21:20). Daniel had prophesied of this event in Daniel 9 & 11. Jesus is saying, therefore, that we must understand that the A.D. 70 event is the fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy (See Mk 13:14). Daniel said, “*And the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The*

tion of desolation that was spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place – whoever reads, let him understand –

16 “then let those who are in Judea flee into the mountains.

17 “Let him who is on the housetop not come down to take anything out of his house.

18 “Nor let him who is in the field go back to get his clothes.

19 “And woe to those who are with child and to those who are nursing infants in those

days.

20 “But pray that your flight not be in the winter or on the Sabbath.

21 “For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world to this time, nor ever will.

22 “And except those days were shortened, no life would be saved. But for the elect’s sake, those days will be shortened.

23 “Then if anyone says to you, ‘Lo, here *is* Christ,’ or ‘There,’ do not believe *it*.

*end of it will be with a flood, and until the end of the war desolations are determined” (Dn 9:26,27). Forces “will defile the sanctuary fortress. Then they will take away the daily sacrifices and place there the abomination of desolation” (Dn 11:31). “And there will be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation ...” (Dn 12:1; see 12:11). **Flee to the mountains:** At the beginning of this time of destruction, the resident Christians of Judea must flee. They must heed Jesus’ warnings in order to perceive that the end of national Israel was near. The urgency by which they must flee is here revealed. In the ancient cities one could actually go from house to house on the roof tops of the houses. The houses were joined together so that one could simply go from one roof to another. Jesus says that they must not take the time to return to their houses for coveted possessions when they see the chance to escape the city. They must flee with what they have in hand. Jesus also warned that no one is to go to Judea during these days (Lk 21:21). This warning was possibly to those who might travel to Jerusalem and be caught in the war that was to rage throughout Judea. Jesus’ warning, therefore, is to save lives, the lives of those Jewish Christians who might still follow after Jewish feasts. The Roman army of Titus was under the command of Cestius Gallus. For some reason during the battle, he removed his encircling army from the city for a brief period of time. This gave all resident Christians of Jerusalem time to flee. This was possibly the time Jesus said that they must not come down from their roof tops. They must take the window of opportunity and flee from the city.*

PRAY FOR FLIGHT

19,20 Pray: It would be difficult for pregnant women to flee during the war. Those with small nursing babies would also have difficulty in the flight from Judea. The prayers of the saints evidently had some determining factor as to when this destruction would occur, for Jesus asked them to pray that such not happen in winter when the journey of flight would be difficult. They must also pray that their flight not begin on the Sabbath, for fanatical Jews would close the city gates on the Sabbath and hinder any from making preparations to leave.

GREAT TRIBULATION

21 There will be great tribulation: Daniel prophesied that no nation from the beginning of time would have suffered as Israel was about to suffer at the

hand of the Roman army. He wrote, “*And there will be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation*” (Dn 12:1; see Dn 9:26). The siege occurred during Passover and Pentecost, the time when the most “faithful,” or at least fanatical Jews were in Jerusalem. These Jews were trapped in the city. Over one million perished. The rest were sold into slavery. It was a time that the Jewish nation suffered more in just a few months than any nation before them. In fact, it was a time when national Israel died.

WAR SHORTENED FOR CHRISTIANS’ SAKE

22 No flesh would be saved: God would shorten those days of the war. If the rate of killing the Jews continued as it did during the battle, the slaughter of all Jews throughout the Roman Empire would have resulted in their annihilation. The killing would have spilled over into the community of Christian Jews. But for the sake of the Christian Jews, God would not allow the killing to continue past the destruction of Jerusalem. Therefore, the destruction was contained in Judea. **For the elect’s sake:** Titus expedited the battle against Jerusalem in order to hurry back to Rome. However, the battle continued for about five months. Josephus records that the Roman army crucified about 30,000 Jews outside the city walls. Titus did such in order to discourage the Jews, and thus, expedite their surrender. But the Jews persisted until both the city and temple were destroyed.

FALSE PROCLAMATIONS

23 Do not believe it: Jesus again emphasized the concept that believers not be led astray by the deceptions of false messiahs. In time of national trauma He knew that the people would seek for a national savior. There would be those self-proclaimed deliverers who would seek to lead the nation in rebellion against Rome. Jesus tells the disciples not to follow such false guides. When the disciples later asked in At 1:6, “*Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel,*” Jesus knew that they still retained nationalistic hopes. In the context of Mt 24, therefore, He gives teachings upon which they can reflect when the countdown starts toward A.D. 70. They can reflect on what Jesus said in this discussion and know that His intention was not to establish a physical kingdom reign here on earth. It was never His intention. It will not be His intention to do so when He comes again. Jesus’ kingdom reign was always planned to be from heaven, not from this earth.

24 “For there will arise false christs and false prophets. And they will show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.

25 “Behold, I have told you in advance.

26 ¶ “Therefore, if they say to you, ‘Behold, He is in the desert,’ do not go out; *or*, ‘Behold, *He is* in the secret chambers,’ do not

believe *it*.

27 “For as the lightning comes from the east and shines even to the west, so also will be the coming of the Son of Man.

28 “For wherever the carcass is, there will the vultures be gathered together.

29 ¶ “Immediately after the tribulation of

FALSE MESSIAHS AND PREACHERS

24 False christs and false prophets: False christs and prophets would arise in the time of calamity in order to call people after futile causes. They would show great signs and wonders. These magical tricks of wonder would be so good that even believers might by chance believe they were true. **Show great signs and wonders:** These “signs and wonders” could not be real miracles simply because Jesus says here that the elect might be deceived into believing them. The point is that they would not be deceived if the supposed miracles were true. One is not deceived when he believes that which is true and real. This context is similar to Paul’s warning in 2 Th 2:9. “*The presence of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan with all deceiving power and signs and wonders.*” In the 2 Th text the word “lying” would modify power, signs and wonders. All supposed miracles of Satan are false. Those who work deceptive powers, signs and wonders, are the instruments of deception. But Paul warns that “*such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ*” (2 Co 11:13). They are not deceivers because they work real miracles. They are deceivers because they claim that what they do is the miraculous work of God. Jesus says, “Be not deceived.” **The elect:** All Christians are elect of God (1 Pt 1:2; 2:6; 1 Pt 1:10), for in the end they will be elected out of the world for eternal salvation.

FOREWARNING

25 I have told you: Jesus has told the disciples these things beforehand in order to prepare them to believe in Him when it all happens. He made a similar statement in John 13:18 after quoting Psalm 41:9 in reference to the betrayal of Judas (See comments Jn 18:19). The false workers about whom Jesus speaks existed in the times preceding the destruction of Jerusalem. Such false religious workers have prevailed throughout history. Christians, therefore, who would be disciples of Jesus must heed His warnings concerning such things (See 2 Pt 3:1-4). Peter stated, “*This is now, beloved, the second letter I write to you in which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder, so that you may be mindful of the words that were spoken before by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through us your apostles. Knowing this first, that scoffers will come in the last days, walking after their own lusts, and saying, “Where is the promise of His coming?”*” (2 Pt 3:1-4). It seems that Peter personally remembered the words of Jesus in Mt 24. He stirred to remembrance his audience by reminding them that they were in the last days. He wrote the letter of 2 Pt between A.D. 65 and 67. This was only a short time before the destruction was to begin. Jesus “*was manifest in these last times for you*” (1 Pt 1:20). God “*has in these last days spoken to us by His Son*” (Hb 1:2). This was the

“fullness of the time,” (Gl 4:4), the “end of the age” (Ep 1:10). It was in these last times of national Israel that God sent forth His Son. The last days does not refer to a dispensation, but to a time of end, the end of national Israel. It was the “last times,” the last times of national Israel. Jude and James also wrote just a few years before the fall of Jerusalem (See Jd 17). The few years preceding A.D. 70 were the last times. These were the last days of national Israel. God was bringing judgment upon the wicked vinedressers (the Jewish religious leadership) who attempted to steal the fruit and inheritance of the vineyard (See Mt 21:33-45). National Israel had rejected God, and thus, God was rejecting national Israel. National Israel’s persecution of the “Israel by faith” was coming to an end. James wrote to suffering Jewish Christians of the Roman Empire around A.D. 62 or 63. He comforted the persecuted “Israel by faith” (the church) by saying that the coming of the Lord was at hand (Js 5:7,8). James was not talking about a “coming of the Lord” at the end of time. Discussion concerning a coming at the end of time would not have been an encouragement to his immediate readers. The “coming” in the context here is about judgment in time upon the nation of Israel. National Israel was the primary persecutor of Christians before A.D. 70. Jesus’ “coming in judgment” upon Israel was at hand, that is, it was near unto happening. In Mt 24 Jesus is “telling beforehand” of this national calamity that would come forty years after the establishment of the church in A.D. 30.

MANIFESTED COMING

26,27 Do not believe it: Before the end of national Israel there were those false christs (messiahs) who led gullible Jews into the wilderness in hope of deliverance from Rome. Jesus is here warning the disciples not to accept anyone who would lead them into believing that the Christ would come in time in a manner that would be characteristic of His final coming. When Jesus comes at the end of time it will not be a happening that would have to be communicated by people to people. It will be a happening that will be at the sound of the last trumpet, with the voice of an archangel (1 Th 4:15,16). In other words, Jesus says that if they are told that “the Christ” has come, they should not believe it, for the next personal coming of Jesus will be worldwide and heavenly announced.

CONSUMPTION OF THE CARCASS

28 Carcass ... eagles: The carcass is the Jewish nation. The gathered eagles (Gr., “vultures”) is the Roman army that came to consume the nation. When the disciples started seeing the gathering of the Roman army into Palestine as vultures gather over a dead carcass, they would know that the destruction of the spiritually dead Israel was about to happen.

those days, the sun will be darkened and the moon will not give her light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

30 “And then will appear the sign of the Son

of Man in heaven. And then will all the tribes of the earth mourn. And they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

31 “And He will send His messengers with a

DOWNFALL OF NATIONAL ISRAEL

29 Immediately after ... those days: The great tribulation of verse 21 would precede the final destruction of the city. Therefore, immediately after the tribulation of those days, the splendor of the Jewish nation would fall by the destruction of Israel's pride, the city of Jerusalem and the temple. **Sun will be darkened:** Jesus uses apocalyptic judgment language from the Old Testament to portray the fall of the nation. Such language was commonly used by inspired writers in the Old Testament to symbolize the fall of nations (See Is 13:6-18; 14:12; 24:23; 34:4; Jr 4:23,24; Ez 32:7,8; Dn 8:10; Jl 2:30-32). The sun usually represented the king or monarch of the nation. The heavenly bodies represented the rest of the government leaders. We must not allow ourselves to become inconsistent in understanding Jesus' use of this figurative language by affirming this to be a literal falling of the sun, moon and stars. We consistently interpret such language as it was used in the Old Testament. Such language referred to the fall of an earthly kingdom. **Powers of the heavens will be shaken:** When God shakes the heavens, there is great change on earth among the nations. This is the meaning of the figure in Haggai 2:6,7 from which Jesus draws the figure, “shaking the powers of the heavens.” God was going “to shake” heaven and earth in order to sift out of national Israel those who could not be shaken because they had submitted to the kingdom reign of Jesus in their hearts. This is precisely what the Hebrew writer stated when he wrote a few years before A.D. 70, “... *He has promised, saying, ‘Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven.’ And this word, ‘Yet once more,’ signifies the removal of those things that can be shaken, as of things that are created, so that those things that cannot be shaken may remain.*” (Hb 12:26,27). National Israel was being physically removed in order to allow the “Israel by faith” to shine forth. The Hebrew writer continued, “*Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear*” (Hb 12:28).

THE SIGN OF THE SON

30 Sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven:

Jesus had earlier spoken to His disciples on the subject of His coming judgment. He had said that this coming (presence) would be “*in the glory of His Father with His angels [messengers]*” (Mt 16:27). Jesus had said in chapter 16 that some of His immediate disciples would experience this coming (16:28; Mk 9:1). So the sign here in verse 30 is discussing what Jesus had previously prophesied. When the Roman army eventually came, such would be God's final signal that we believe in Jesus who made this prophecy. The fulfillment would be God's last proof of Jesus as the Messiah. **See:** The word “see” (*horaō*) could be translated “perceive” or “discern.” When all these things happen, men would perceive the

judgment of Jesus on Jerusalem. **Son of Man coming on the clouds:** “Coming on the clouds” is judgment language from the Old Testament (Is 19:1; Jr 4:13; Ez 30:3; Dn 7:13). When Jesus brings this judgment through the Roman army, then people will perceive the judgment power of the Son. The disciples would thus witness the fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy. They would understand that Daniel 7:13,14 had been fulfilled. Daniel 7:13,14 speaks of the ascension of Jesus, for Jesus ascended unto the Ancient of Days who is the Father. However, before Jesus ascended to heaven, all authority in heaven and earth had been given unto Him (Mt 28:18; Jn 13:3; 17:2). Many would not realize this until the physical fulfillment of the prophecy Jesus was making here in Mt 24. When Jesus came in judgment on Jerusalem, then men realized that Jesus was exalted as King of kings and reigning over all things (Ep 1:21; 1 Tm 6:15; see Ph 2:9-11). Jesus was Lord of lords and King of kings before A.D. 70 (1 Tm 6:15). However, true Israel by faith did not “*shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father*” (Mt 13:43) until after national Israel was shaken. When national Israel was taken away, the true Israel (the church), that could not be shaken, shined forth in the kingdom. This was a marvel, “a sign,” that the disciples would experience in their lifetime. If reference in this verse is not to the ascension of Jesus to the Father by the coming in the clouds, then the figure is to coming in judgment. It is a figure from the Old Testament that signified God's coming in judgment upon the unrighteous (Is 19:1; Jr 4:13; Ez 30:3). This could possibly be what Jesus is here signifying. He indicates this same thought during His trial when He stated to the high priest, “*Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the power, and coming on the clouds of heaven*” (Mt 26:64). Of course the high priest would not literally see Jesus at the right hand of the Father with all authority. However, he would see this power manifested by proxy in the judgment through the Roman army upon Israel. Those Jews who experienced the destruction of Jerusalem certainly wondered why God was judging them. The disciples before A.D. 70 recognized the kingdom reign of Jesus. This kingdom reign would be manifested after A.D. 70 by the fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy here in Mt 24. The destruction possibly encouraged many disheartened Jews to turn to Jesus. This is possibly what Paul referred to when he said in the context of Rm 9-11, “*For I do not want, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own minds, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved ...*” (Rm 11:25,26). Israel would be saved in the same manner as the Gentiles, through obedience to the gospel. However, because of the stubborn nature of some Jews, they had to experience the destruction of their prize, Jerusalem and the temple, before they could understand that God was

great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

32 ¶ “Now learn the parable of the fig tree. When its branch is yet tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer *is* near.

33 “So likewise, when you see all these

things, know that it is near, *even* at the doors.

34 “Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things are fulfilled.

35 “Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away.

36 ¶ “But of that day and hour no one knows,

finished with national Israel. The Messiah had come and Israel must accept the new King and kingdom of the Messiah.

SENDING FORTH OF EVANGELISTS

31 He will send His angels with a great sound:

The Greek word *angelos*, here translated “angels,” should be translated “messengers” in this text. It is so translated in Mt 11:10, “Behold, I send My messenger [“angelos”] before Your face” It is so translated in Lk 7:24, “When the messengers [“angelos”] of John had departed” Also, Jesus “sent messengers [“angelos”] before His face” to Jerusalem (Lk 9:52; see 2 Co 12:7; Js 2:25). Because some translators have believed that Mt 24 referred to the end of time, they translated the word *angelos* to refer to heavenly angels. But the context does not warrant this translation. Jesus is not historically jumping in the text from A.D. 70 to some time at least over nineteen hundred years later. **They will gather together:** Jesus did send His messengers forth (28:19; Mk 16,15,20). The disciples were dispersed from Jerusalem in At 8:4 in order to take the message of the gospel throughout the world. Those who would believe were gathered together into the church community. Those who recognized that all things were fulfilled (Mt 5:18) came to Jesus. They converted from Jewish nationalism to spiritual revivalism. They realized, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bondservant nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed and heirs according to the promise” (Gl 3:28,29). **Sound of a trumpet:** The messengers (evangelists) went forth with the sound of a trumpet. This is symbolic language from the Old Testament. The trumpet was sounded as a warning of impending danger (Nm 10:2; Jl 2:1ff; Is 27:13). The disciples went forth not only with the message of hope in the gospel, but also the message of Mt 24. Those Jews who did not obey the gospel would possibly suffer their own physical destruction in the calamity of A.D. 70. If those who did not obey the gospel did not suffer the destruction of A.D. 70, they would in final judgment face another destruction (2 Th 1:7-9).

PARABLE OF THE FIG TREE

32,33 When you see all these things: The meaning of the parable from the fig tree is the nearness of the destruction as indicated by Jesus’ statements of verses 5-29. The fig tree puts forth her tender branches and leaves in the spring. Such indicates that summer is coming. The happening of the events of verses 5-29 would indicate the nearness of the destruction of Jerusalem. The disciples would understand that the coming of the Lord in judgment in time was at hand (Js 5:9).

FULFILLMENT IN “THIS GENERATION”

34 This generation: Some of those of Jesus’ generation, the generation to whom Jesus was speaking, would not die before all that He had just said occurred. This verse is certainly parallel with what Jesus had said in 16:27,28. Thus the disciples would go from city to city in Israel, preaching the gospel of the kingdom. This would be their message of hope. However, the messengers would also have on their lips a message of doom for national Israel. In their preaching, the unbelieving Jews would persecute them from city to city (10:23). Because of the Jews’ persecution of the church, God would bring judgment upon national Israel. Before Jesus arrived at this context of His message to the disciples in Mt 24, He had stated, “Assuredly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation” (Mt 23:36). **All these things are fulfilled:** “These things” refer to the events of the coming destruction. These things would “come upon this generation.” God would bring the punishment of judgment upon the generation to whom Jesus personally ministered because they had personally rejected Jesus (See Mt 12:41,42). Jesus’ generation would receive a more harsh judgment because they had personally witnessed the presence of the Son of God. The destruction of Jerusalem, therefore, was not only God’s intended time to terminate a dispensation of work through Israel, it was His judgment upon a generation that personally rejected His Son.

THE WORD ENDURES FOREVER

35 My words will by no means pass away: Jesus seems to comfort the disciples at this point in this most terrifying proclamation. No matter what the national calamity might be, they must trust in the word of God which endures forever. Peter possibly reflected on the thought of this statement of Jesus when he wrote just a few years before Jerusalem’s destruction that the word of God endures forever (1 Pt 1:24,25). It is doubtful that nationalistic thinking Peter realized this when Jesus was making the pronouncements of Mt 24 in his presence. Nevertheless, he, as well as the other disciples at hand, would soon realize that they could not put their faith in any nation, even though it had been ordained by God some 1,400 years before. The only thing that would permeate the destruction of all things would be the word of God. Eventually, the present heaven and earth would pass away (2 Pt 3:10,11). But the word of the Lord endures forever. Therefore, Jesus assumes that they will whole heartedly trust in His word.

THE TIME OF DESTRUCTION

36 That day and hour no one knows: “That day” is here a generic term as “the Sabbath” is in verse 20. In other words, this is “that time of destruction.” The

not even the angels of heaven nor the Son, but My Father only.

37 “But as the days of Noah *were*, so also will be the coming of the Son of Man.

38 “For as in the days that were before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until that day *when* Noah entered the ark.

39 “And they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away. So also will be the coming of the Son of Man.

40 “Then will two men be in the field, the one will be taken and the other left.

41 “Two *women will be grinding at the mill*, one will be taken and the other left.

42 “Therefore, watch, for you do not know

indication is not in reference to a specific 24-hour day, but to the time when the destruction would occur. While on earth, Jesus did not know this time. Neither did the angels know. At the time Jesus was making these pronouncements, it was not necessary that either He or angels be aware of the actual time of the destruction. Luke's account of Jesus' statement helps us to better understand the flow of the text in order to understand “that day” to refer to the context of the destruction of Jerusalem. Luke recorded, “*Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away. And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts are weighed down with dissipation drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that day come on you unexpectedly. For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. Therefore, watch ...*” (Lk 21:33-36). Those Jews who were consumed in the affairs of the world would certainly not believe in Jesus or His prophecy, let alone expect the coming judgment upon Jerusalem. In fact, Peter stated that they would be mocking this belief of Christians (2 Pt 3:3,4). Of course, the scoffers had forgotten the flood of Noah's day. They had forgotten Sodom and Gomorrah. Regardless of their forgetfulness, however, God would bring this judgment upon Jerusalem. The key word here is “watch.” Mark records more information that Jesus gave at this point in the discourse. “*Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is. It is like a man going on a journey, who left his house and gave authority to his bondservants and to each one his work, and commanded the doorkeeper to watch. Therefore, you watch, for you do not know when the master of the house comes, in the evening, at midnight, or at the cock crow, or in the morning – lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say to you I say to all, Watch!*” (Mk 13:33-37).

WICKED TAKEN AWAY

37-39 Coming: The “coming” that Jesus is talking about – the destruction of Jerusalem – is “as” the days of Noah. Both the flood of Noah's day and the destruction of Jerusalem were “comings” of the Lord in judgment in time. However, the final coming of Jesus in judgment at the end of time will be different. The flood and destruction of Jerusalem may be typical of the final coming. However, we must understand that nothing has ever happened in the history of man that will fully explain what will happen at the end of time. Therefore, all illustrations to the “end of time” judgment must be understood in a way that cannot be fully comprehended by comparing happenings of time with end of time events. The New Testament writers took that which was literal, and had actually happened in history, to illustrate that which will happen at the end of time. We must keep

in mind, however, that these historical events that are metaphorically used to illustrate final judgment do not fully explain what will happen when Jesus comes again.

Days of Noah: Jerusalem's destruction, though, will be as it was in the days of Noah (See Gn 7:6-23). God sent the flood because of the wickedness of man. “*Every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually*” (Gn 6:5). Such wickedness would be characteristic of the unbelieving Jews who crucified the Son of God. They were hardened to repentance, though they personally experienced the miraculous confirmation of God directly from heaven. Men were more concerned about the material aspects of existence than spiritual matters. The Pharisees consumed on their own lusts that financial help the children were to give to their parents (Mk 7:9-13). The rich Sadducean Jews had “lived on the earth in pleasure and luxury” (See Js 5:1-6). They had cheated in the wages that were due to their laborers (Js 5:4). As it was in the days of Noah, so it was in the days of Israel before A.D. 70. **Eating and drinking:** In verses 37-40 Jesus is saying that people will be living in their own normal wicked and materialistic manner prior to “that day” of destruction. It was this way in the days of Noah. It would be the same in the destruction of national Israel. And, it will be the same at the end of time. Those who reject the pronouncements of the word of God see only those things of this world. They refuse to submit to the “coming of the Lord” in judgment.

THE RIGHTEOUS ARE LEFT

40,41 One will be taken and the other left: Here is another similarity between the times of Noah and the destruction of Jerusalem. When the flood came, righteous Noah and his family entered the ark. The flood then came and took away the wicked. Only the righteous were left safely in the ark. So it would be in the destruction of Jerusalem. The wicked would be taken and the righteous would be left. Jesus said that two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. Some have taught that when Jesus comes at the end of time the righteous will be taken from the earth and the wicked will be left. In their attempt to force this passage to have reference to the end of time, they twist the Scriptures to their own destruction (See 2 Pt 3:15,16). Simply keep in mind that Jesus' use of the flood of Noah's day to illustrate the events of the destruction of Jerusalem is to show that in the destruction “*the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father*” (Mt 13:43). The wicked would be taken. The righteous would be left. At the end of time when Jesus comes, He will take the righteous from the earth (1 Th 4:17). In the context of Mt 24, however, it is the wicked who are taken. For this reason, we would affirm that Jesus is talking about the destruction of Jerusalem

what day your Lord is coming.

43 “But know this, that if the head of the house had known in what watch the thief was coming, he would have watched and would not have allowed his house to be broken into.

44 “Therefore, you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not expect *Him*.

45 ¶ “Who then is a faithful and wise bondservant whom his lord has made ruler over his household, to give them food at the proper time?

46 “Blessed *is* that bondservant whom his master finds so doing when he comes.

47 “Truly I say to you, that he will make him ruler over all his goods.

48 “But if that evil bondservant will say in his heart, ‘My master delays,’

49 “and begins to beat *his* fellow bondservants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards,

50 “the master of that bondservant will come in a day when he is not looking for *him* and in an hour that he does not know.

51 “And he will cut him in pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

in Mt 24 and not the final coming. Though the destruction of Jerusalem illustrates the coming of Christ in judgment at the end of time, the context here clearly shows that the end of time is not under consideration.

WATCH

42 Watch: The term “hour” is here used with a generic meaning. It is not a specific 60-minute hour, as “the day” of verse 36 was not a specific 24-hour solar day. Reference is to a time when all this would take place. Emphasis is on the fact that there would be a specific time in history when all this would happen, though the time of the destruction of national Israel would occur over a period of days and weeks. The point is that believers in what Jesus is saying must continually watch lest they become caught up in the affairs of this world. And such is a general exhortation to all disciples. Involved in the affairs of this world will always lead to one being distracted from the fact that Jesus is coming again.

UNEXPECTED COMING

43,44 In this context Jesus has given “generic signs” from which they should deduct the end of the Jewish State and the fall of Jerusalem. No specific details were given. No names were stated. No calendars were distributed to the disciples. He gave just enough information to generate “watching” on the part of those who accepted what He said. Those who believe would need no more information. After the establishment of the church in A.D. 30, the apostles evidently stayed in Jerusalem for as long as ten years. The reason for this was obvious. Jerusalem was where devout Jews came to offer sacrifices at the altar every year on Passover and Pentecost. It was the prime opportunity to evangelize the lost sheep of the house of Israel. In A.D. 58 or 59 Paul made a last trip there in order to make a final plea to Jews who might obey the gospel (At 21). Their vehement rejection of the gospel and attempted murder of Paul was evidence that at this time (A.D. 58,59), the Jerusalem Jews were ready for the judgment of God. What Jesus had pronounced in 23:34-36 was ready to happen. The “righteous blood” of all innocent prophets of God was about to be brought on this generation of defiant Jews. **You also be ready:** In Jesus’ pronouncements of Mt 24 He wants to give the

faithful adequate indications of when to stay away from Jerusalem and Judea. They must not become trapped in the “traditions of the fathers” nor in the materialistic vanities of Jewish economics. It would be best that they sell “their possessions and goods” and divide them among all believers, as anyone had need (At 2:45; see At 4:32-37). Residents of Jerusalem were going to lose their possessions anyway in the coming destruction.

THE FAITHFUL AND WISE SERVANT

45-47 Faithful and wise servant: The faithful and wise servant understands the responsibility of his relationship to the master’s household. So it is with those disciples who remain faithful and wisely understand their duties to serve the Lord. They will not be diverted to the cares of this world, nor drawn away by the politics of nationalistic Israelites. Their citizenship in heaven will be stronger than their connection to the physical “seed of Abraham.” Therefore, they take heed and watch for the coming of the master of the household.

THE EVIL SERVANT

48-51 Evil servant: The evil servant will not be spiritually awakened by the imminent coming of the Lord in his lifetime. He puts the thought out of his mind and carries on with the ordinary things of life. In Jesus’ personal conversation here with His disciples He is emphasizing the fact that this coming of the Lord will happen “in this generation” (See 23:36; 16:28). Jesus was not leading them to believe that the final coming and end of the world would be in their lifetime. The New Testament does not teach the imminent final return of Jesus. That is, the Holy Spirit did not inspire New Testament writers to believe that the final coming of Jesus would happen in the lifetime of the first century disciples. However, Jesus and the inspired writers did teach the imminent coming of Jesus in time in judgment upon Jerusalem (See Js 5:7,8). Therefore, Jesus urges His disciples to look for this coming. Those who do not heed these warnings of Mt 24 will suffer the weeping and gnashing of teeth in the destruction of their prized city Jerusalem. They will realize that they lost out on something great. What they lost out on was obedience to the Creator of all things, the only begotten of the Son of God.

Chapter 25

- 1 ¶ “Then will the kingdom of heaven be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom.
 2 “And five of them were wise and five were foolish.
 3 “Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them.
 4 “But the wise took oil in their jars with their lamps.
 5 “While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.
 6 “And at midnight there was a cry made, ‘Behold, the bridegroom! Go out to meet him.’
 7 “Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps.
 8 “And the foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us

- some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’
 9 “But the wise answered, saying, ‘No, lest there not be enough for us and you. But go instead to those who sell and buy for yourselves.’
 10 “And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came. And they who were ready went in with him to the marriage. And the door was shut.
 11 “Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, ‘Lord, Lord, open to us!’
 12 “But he answered and said, ‘Truly I say to you, I do not know you.’
 13 “Therefore, watch, for you know neither the day nor the hour.
 14 ¶ “For *it is* like a man traveling to a far country, *who* called his own bondservants and delivered to them his goods.

Chapter 25

PARABLE OF THE TEN VIRGINS

There have been differences of opinion among Bible students concerning the specific application of the parables of this chapter. It is difficult to determine whether Jesus has turned in the context from the destruction of national Israel to His final coming or if He is continuing the discussion of chapter 24. Both events are major teachings in reference to God's work. Both involve a great separation of the righteous from the unrighteous. Both manifest the separation from good and evil. **1-13 Then:** The Greek word here is *tote* and can be translated “at that time.” Therefore, emphasis could be on Jesus' continuation of the subject of chapter 24. In other words, at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem the righteous (the church) will be delivered from the destruction. Nevertheless, the three parables of this chapter speak of the redemption of the church in general, but especially its redemption from this world at the end of time. **Kingdom of heaven:** In this context, Jesus speaks of the effect of the reign of Deity from heaven and its impact on the hearts of men who respond to the call of God (Lk 17:21). **Ten virgins:** Those who have responded to the kingdom reign of God. **Went out to meet the bridegroom:** Jesus is the bridegroom of the righteous (See 9:15; Ep 5:29,30; Rv 19:7; 21:2,9). **Five of them were wise:** When considering the eternal consequences that are involved in what happens in reference to God's work among men, it is certainly wise to respond to God in our lives (7:24; 10:16; 24:45). The consequences of being unprepared for the bridegroom will manifest the foolishness of the unrighteous. **The bridegroom was delayed:** The Father delayed the coming of Jesus in judgment until He had accomplished all His work among men. **They all slumbered and slept:** Believers who become indifferent to the work of God, will become entangled in the affairs of this life to the point of losing sight of their original purpose as sons of God. They thus become spiritually dead (See Rm 13:11; 1 Th 5:6). One must be prepared with spiritual oil for

the coming of the bridegroom. **At midnight a cry was heard:** The announcement came suddenly and without warning. The parable here does not seem to have application to the end of time and coming of Jesus, but to His coming in time, for a cry went out. At the end of time, the coming of the Lord will occur suddenly and without any duration of time for the “cry” (1 Co 15:51,52; 1 Th 4:16). Here the indication seems to be on a “cry” that extends over a period of time. Such happened in the time before the destruction of Jerusalem. After the establishment of the church in At 2, the disciples went forth and preached everywhere (Mk 16:20). Their cry was that the coming of the Lord in judgment on Israel was at hand; it was soon to happen (Js 5:7,8). **Trimmed their lamps:** They prepared their lamps for the bridegroom (See 5:16; Lk 12:35). **Lord, Lord, open to us:** Once God's judgment has begun, there is no hope for those who have not prepared themselves. Such was the case in the destruction of Jerusalem. Once Rome unleashed her fury against national Israel, it was too late for Israel to change course. **I do not know you:** God does not claim the unrighteous (See Hk 1:13). On the other hand, God does know the righteous (Gl 4:9). **Those who were ready went in with him:** Jesus teaches that negligence or idleness on the part of any will result in their not being delivered at the time of judgment. Those Jews who were indifferent to Jesus in the first century suffered the judgment of the destruction of the Jewish State. In the end of time, the same will occur. Those who slumber in relation to being prepared in spiritual things will also be shut out of the new heavens and earth. **Watch:** Reference is to being prepared, not to watching out for “signs of the times,” for no one knows the hour or day in which God rains down the judgments He has revealed to man (See 24:36,42; Mk 13:35).

PARABLE OF THE TALENTS

14,15 Compare Lk 19:11-28. **Man traveling to a far country:** Jesus left this earth after the conclusion of His ministry and ascended to the right hand of God (Dn 7:13,14; Jn 14:1-3; At 1:8-11; Ep 2:20-22, Hb 9:23-

15 “And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to everyone according to his own ability. And immediately he went on his journey.

16 “Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with the same and made another five talents.

17 “And likewise he who *had received* two gained two more.

18 “But he who had received one went and dug in the earth and hid his master’s money.

19 “After a long time the master of those bondservants came and settled accounts with them.

20 “And so he who had received five talents came and brought five more talents, saying, ‘Master, you delivered to me five talents. Behold, I have gained beside them five more talents.’

21 “His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful bondservant. You were faithful over a few things. I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your master.’

22 “He also who had received two talents came and said, ‘Lord, you delivered to me two talents. Behold, I have gained two other talents beside them.’

23 “His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful bondservant. You were faithful over a few things. I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’

24 “Then he who had received the one talent came and said, ‘Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed.

25 “And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the earth. See, *here* you have *what is* yours.’

26 “His master answered and said to him, ‘*You* wicked and lazy bondservant. You knew that I reap where I did not sow and gather where I have scattered no *seed*.

27 ‘Therefore, you should have put my money in the bank, and *then* at my coming I would have received my own with interest.

28 ‘Therefore, take the talent from him and

28). **His own servants:** Jesus called those He claimed, for they had identified themselves by their submission to His will in order to be His servants (See 21:33). **He gave ... talents:** Compare 18:24; Lk 19:13. One talent was worth about 6,000 denarii. In this context, Jesus uses this monetary unit to refer to the abilities that one has that he can use to the glory of God. To every man God has given ability and opportunity and the responsibility that abilities should be used to take advantage of opportunities for the glory of God (See Rm 12:6; Ep 4:11). In the context of Jesus’ audience, specific reference would be to those religious leaders who had been given responsibility to spiritually lead Israel in order to produce fruit in the vineyard for God (See comments 21:23-44). Jesus indicates that responsibility was given in variation. The talents were given according to the capability of the individual to perform in its use. Thus God expects the receivers of the abilities or opportunities to exercise use of what they can do, not what they cannot do. What is important is that God expects one to give himself in His service according to what he can do. **16 And made another five talents:** God expected that everyone be held accountable for the talents that were delivered to them. In other words, inactivity in the kingdom is not accepted. When the kingdom reign of Jesus is in the hearts of those who have accepted Him as their king (6:9,20; Lk 17:20,21), then they are moved into action for the king (See 1 Jn 4:19). Inactivity is thus evidence that the king is not reigning in the hearts of men. **17-19** When one accepts the responsibility of servanthood as a subject of the kingdom, then he must respond to the wishes of the king (See comments 1 Co 15:10). Even those who are “one talent” servants must

do what they can for the king. Emphasis is not on how much one does, for the amount one accomplishes is determined by his personal gifts from God. Emphasis here is on doing (See comments Gl 5:6; Ep 2:10; 1 Th 1:3; Js 2:14-26). **20-23 I have gained ... more talents:** The five-talent and two-talent servants were commended on the basis of their faithfulness and stewardship to carry out in their lives the will of the king (See vss 34,36; 24:47; Lk 12:44). If one determines to serve God, then God will give the increase, for it is God’s grace that works in our hearts to bring forth fruit to God (See comments 1Co 15:10; Ph 2:12,13). **Well done, good and faithful servant:** What greater words could ever be heard from God? Christians should be motivated to work for God in order to hear these words from God. It is not that one works in order to earn his salvation. It is that one works in response to the grace of God (See comments 1 Co 15:10; Ep 2:10; Gl 5:6). **24** The excuses of the one-talent servant actually insult the integrity of the master. It manifests the fact that he did not know the master, and thus, did not know what the master expected. He is rejected on this basis, not because he lacked performance. His inactivity manifested his lack of concern and response to the will of the master. The will of the master is not burdensome to the one who responds to the love and grace of a loving Father (1 Jn 4:19; 5:3). **¶25-27** The sin of the one-talent servant resulted from his ungrateful response to the master who had given him so much (See Rm 12:11; 1 Th 5:6). **28-30 Take the talent from him:** The neglected use of one’s gift will result in him losing everything. If one refuses to respond to God’s grace, he cannot expect to receive anything as a result of his lazy ingratitude. **More will be**

give *it* to him who has ten talents.

29 'For to everyone who has, *more* will be given, and he will have abundance. But from him who does not have, even what he does have will be taken away.

30 'Cast the unprofitable bondservant into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

31 ¶ "When the Son of Man will come in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory.

32 "And before Him will be gathered all nations. And He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides *his* sheep from the goats.

33 "And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left.

34 "Then the King will say to those on His

right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

35 'For I was hungry and you gave Me food. I was thirsty and you gave Me drink. I was a stranger and you took Me in.

36 'I was naked and you clothed Me. I was sick and you visited Me. I was in prison and you came to Me.'

37 "Then will the righteous answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed *You*, or thirsty, and give *You something* to drink?'

38 'When did we see You a stranger and take *You* in, or naked, and clothe *You*?'

39 'Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to *You*?'

40 "And the King will answer and say to

given: In the final end of all things, the glories that will be given to the Christian will far outweigh that which he has accomplished on earth (See comments Rm 8:18). He will receive more than what he can earn by works on this earth. It will be by God's grace that we will receive a payment that is far greater than what we may have supposed to earn. **Unprofitable bondservant:** In reference to the Jewish religious leaders of Jesus' day, they were unprofitable because they did not respond to God's grace by focusing their work on God. They concentrated on themselves by creating a religion after their own traditions (See 15:1-9; Mk 7:1-19; comments Gl 1:13,14). Men have done the same throughout history. Even to this day religious leaders have misguided those to whom talents have been given. The world is filled with those who have buried their talents in the deceptions of their own religions that have been created after the traditions of men.

JUDGMENT

31 When the Son of Man comes in His glory: Jesus begins here to give a vivid description of the Messiah's coming in all His majesty to execute judgment (2 Th 1:7-9). The picture here is Jesus' coming to sit on His throne in order to execute judgment. Keep in mind that this could also refer to Jesus' coming unto the Father as prophesied in Daniel 7:13,14 to sit and reign with kingdom authority after His ascension. Jesus spoke earlier of this "coming" (presence) in 19:28. The coming with angels or "holy ones" is judgment language that is also used throughout the Bible (See Zc 14:5; Jl 3:11,12; Is 13:13; Jd 13,14). In fact, Zechariah 14:5 and Joel 3:11,12 are prophecies that refer to the establishment of the church. Therefore, the coming of Jesus with His holy ones here should not be interpreted to refer exclusively to the final coming of Jesus at the end of time. **Angels:** Compare Zc 14:5; Jl 3:11,12; Ps 103:20; Is 13:3; Jd 14,15. **32 He will separate them one from another:** God will judge the world at the end of time through Jesus (See Ez 20:38; Jn 12:48; At 17:31; 2 Co 5:10). However, when the church was established in At 2 there was also a judgment. One judged himself in

reference to his acceptance or rejection of the gospel (See comments Jn 12:48; At 13:46). **33** Separation between the righteous and the wicked occurred when the church was established. There will also be a final separation at the end of time (vss 4-11; Jn 5:28,29). **34 The kingdom prepared for you:** The purpose for which God created the world was to bring obedient people into heavenly dwelling. In order to do this, those who would go into eternal dwelling must first submit to the kingdom reign of Jesus that was conceived in the mind of God before the creation of the world. Therefore, when men respond to the kingdom reign of Jesus, they are the church of God on earth that is in preparation for the new heavens and earth that is yet to come (Compare Lk 12:32; 1 Co 2:7; 6:9; 15:50; Gl 5:21; Js 2:5). In the new heavens and earth, Christians will realize their hopes in a place of rest in the arms of God (Rv 14:13), which is a place of joy (Lk 15:7,10), righteousness (2 Pt 3:13), reward (5:11,12), inheritance (25:34; Gl 3:26-29; Cl 1:12; 1 Pt 1:4), glory (Rm 8:18; Cl 3:4), no physical death or pain (Rv 21:4), immortality (1 Co 15:42,50), no wickedness (1 Pt 1:4), no sorrow (Rv 7:17), and eternal worship (Rv 4:10,11; 7:15; 15:2,3). Those who will go to heaven are the saved (Jn 3:5,18,21), righteous (13:43; 25:34,37), persevering (Rv 2:10), obedient (7:21; Jn 5:29), humble in spirit (5:3), persecuted (5:11,12), and those who have been enrolled by their obedience to the gospel (Lk 10:20; Hb 12:23). They are the ones who have their names in the Lamb's book of life (Rv 20:15). It is to these that God will give a place of eternal dwelling (25:46; Mk 10:29,30) which is a city for the righteous (Hb 13:14; Rv 21:20-27). **35-39** Jesus here lists six physical conditions of life that represent all aspects of our human service to one another. These are services the righteous render to others because God has extended mercy and grace to them. Therefore, humble service to the needs of our fellow man is the manifestation of our inward appreciation of the grace of God (1 Co 15:10; Gl 5:6; 6:9,10; Ep 2:10). **40 My brethren:** These would be those who have humbly become servants of Jesus. Christians have a special responsibility to one another (Gl 6:10). **You did it to Me:** These

them, 'Truly I say to you, inasmuch as you did *it* to one of the least of these My brothers, you have done *it* to Me.'

41 "Then He will say also to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me you cursed into everlasting fire *that is* prepared for the devil and his angels.

42 'For I was hungry and you gave Me no food. I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink.

43 'I was a stranger and you did not take Me in. I *was* naked and you did not clothe Me; sick and in prison, and you did not visit Me.'

44 "Then they will also answer, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister to You?'

45 "Then He will answer them, saying, 'Truly I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do *it* to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.

46 "And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

Chapter 26

1 ¶ And it came to pass when Jesus had finished all these sayings, He said to His disciples,

2 "You know that after two days is the Passover, and the Son of Man is *to be* handed over to be crucified."

3 ¶ Then the chief priests and the elders of the people gathered together at the palace of

humble servants had shown true obedient faith that had worked through their love of others (Gl 5:6; Js 2:14). They loved because the King had first loved them (1 Jn 4:19; compare Pv 19:17; Hb 6:10; 1 Jn 2:7-II; 3:13-23).

41 *Depart from Me, you cursed:* These would be the worst words one could ever hear (7:23). The King will show no mercy to those who have shown no mercy in service to His disciples (18:21-35; Js 2:13). *Into the everlasting fire:* Here is the fire that consumes Satan, his angels and all the wicked. The word *aiōnios* (everlasting) is used here after a common meaning that makes the fire sure and certain with effects that are unending. It will consume the wicked, and the results of the consumption will never be changed. The destruction of soul and body will be complete after severe punishment has been dealt to the wicked (See comments 10:28; 2 Th 1:9; see 5:22,29,30; 18:9; 23:15,33; Mk 9:43-47; Lk 12:5; Js 3:6). This is the gehenna of final punishment (vs 46), destruction (10:28; 2 Th 1:8,9), consuming fire (Rv 14:10; 19:20; 20:10,14,15; 21:8), torment (Rv 14:11), damnation (23:33; Jn 5:29), outer darkness (8:12; 25:30; Jd 13), and unquenchable fire (3:12; Mk 9:47). *Prepared for the devil and his angels:* The torment and destruction of hell (gehenna) is specifically prepared for the devil and his angels. It is also prepared for those who behave in their lives after the desires of Satan. These are those who do not obey the gospel (2 Th 1:7-9), and thus, remain in their wickedness (7:21-23; Rv 21:8), ungodliness (1 Pt 4:17,18) and disobedience (Rm 2:8,9). It is also for apostate Christians (vss 14-30; 22:18; 2 Pt 2:20-22). **42-45** One's eternal destiny in heaven is determined by his relationship with his fellow Christian (See vss 34-40; compare 1 Jn 2:7-11; 3:13-23). One is destined to hell if he does not have a benevolent relationship with his fellow brothers and sisters in Christ as a response to the grace of God (See Gl 6:10). If one does not respond to the love by which God loved him, then he is condemned because of what he did not do to show his thanksgiving to God (Js 4:17). Salvation, therefore, is based on one's deeds in the sense that deeds manifest our appreciation to God for His saving grace (See comments 1 Co 15:10). **46** *Everlasting punishment:* Both the righteous and

unrighteous will be raised at the end of time (Jn 5:28,29; At 24:15). Before the unrighteous is the certainty of a punishment that will be according to their deeds (See comments Lk 12:41-48). The unrighteous will be raised to suffer just punishment. *Eternal life:* The Greek work here is *aiōnios*. Reference is to life that is at one time granted to those who come into the presence of God, and thus, continue unendingly as a result of continuing in the presence of God. Those who are cast from the presence of God will not have life. They will suffer the destruction of soul and body (See comments 10:28; 2 Th 1:8,9). The consequence of their destruction will have no end.

Chapter 26

THE PLOT TO MURDER JESUS

(Mk 14:1,2; Lk 22:1,2)

1 *Finished these sayings:* Jesus has now concluded the discourses of chapters 24 and 25. He now begins in His instructions to prepare the disciples for the traumatic events that are about to happen in their lives concerning His trial and crucifixion. **2** *Passover:* This is also called the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Lk 22:1). Two days after the discourses of chapters 24 and 25, the greatest Jewish feast of the year occurred (See Ex 12; Nm 28:16-25; Jn 11:55; 13:1). Thousands of Jews came from all over the Roman Empire to be present in Jerusalem for this feast (See At 2:9,10). **3,4** *Chief priests:* These were the priests who served according to appointment in the temple work. All of these priests were to be present for the Passover (Jn 11:47). Joseph Caiaphas, who had been appointed by Valerius Gratus, was at this time the high priest. *Plotted to take Jesus:* All public arguments had failed to discredit Jesus before the multitudes. Therefore, the Jewish religious leadership now in frustration have deceived themselves into committing murder in the name of religion. However, God is allowing Satan to work through them in order to turn Satan's work into accomplishing what God had planned before the creation of the world (Jn 10:18; At 2:23; 4:25-28). If Satan had known what was about to happen on the cross, surely he would have deterred

the high priest, who was called Caiaphas.

4 And they plotted to take Jesus by stealth and kill *Him*.

5 But they said, "Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar among the people."

6 ¶ Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper,

7 there came to Him a woman having an alabaster vial of very precious ointment. And she poured it on His head as He sat *at the table*.

8 But when His disciples saw *it*, they were indignant, saying, "Why this waste?"

9 "For this fragrant oil might have been sold for much and given to the poor."

10 When Jesus was aware of this, He said to them, "Why do you trouble the woman, for she has done a good deed to Me?"

11 "For you have the poor always with you, but you do not always have Me.

12 "For when she poured this ointment on My body, she did *it* for My burial.

13 "Truly I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told in memory of her."

14 Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests

15 And he said *to them*, "What will you give

the plan to have Jesus crucified. **By trickery:** Under Roman law the Jews did not have the official right to kill Jesus without the consent of the Roman governor, who was at this time Pilate. Therefore, it is evident that at this time they were planning a murder plot against Jesus.

5 Not during the feast: A public murder of Jesus would have caused a riot among the people, for they accepted Jesus as a prophet (21:46). However, God would not allow Jesus to be secretly murdered on some dark street of Jerusalem. The crucifixion had to be public, and thus, manifested before the entire world.

FEAST IN SIMON'S HOUSE

(Mk 14:3-9; Jn 12:2-8)

6 Jesus was in Bethany: Matthew places an event here that actually occurred three days before. His reason for doing this is to give further explanation to his readers concerning the events that led up to the betrayal of Jesus. **Simon:** Simon was a leper who had earlier been healed by Jesus. Some believe that this may have been the father of Lazarus who was raised from the dead (See Jn 12:1-8). **7 A woman came to him:** This was Mary, the sister of Lazarus and Martha (Jn 12:2,3). **Alabaster flask of very costly fragrant oil:** This was a marble or gypsum vessel that was used to contain precious ointments. The fragrant oil was spikenard which is often simply called "nard." It was extracted from the dried root and stems of the spikenard plant. It was a very costly perfume that was worth three hundred denarii (Jn 12:5). **Poured it on his head:** At least Mary knows that something significant is about to happen. Her gesture here manifests her deep respect and acceptance of Jesus as the Christ and Son of God. She gave that which was her best in order to show her worship of Jesus. **8,9 They were indignant:** Judas Iscariot (Jn 12:4) was the leader of this group of disciples that judged the actions of Mary to be a waste of precious ointment. He and others seem to have been more concerned with the value of material things than the significance of what was about to happen. John records that Judas cared not for the poor, but was a thief (Jn 12:4-6). **10 She has done a good work for Me:** When it came to honoring Jesus, Mary did not consider the cost of the ointment. She was more concerned about expressing her love for Jesus. When one realizes the love of God that was manifested through Jesus (Jn 3:16), no mate-

rial thing on earth is too great to be sacrificed for God.

11 Have the poor with you always: There will always be the poor, and thus, they would always have opportunity to be benevolent to the poor (See Dt 15:11; Mk 14:7; Jn 12:8; Gl 2:10). However, the Bridegroom would not always be in the physical presence of the disciples. The occasion, therefore, justified the use of the precious ointment. **12 She did it for My burial:** The twelve had been with Jesus for over three and a half years. And yet, this woman, Mary, seems to understand the seriousness of the moment more than the disciples. In these very last hours of Jesus' earthly ministry, the disciples had rivalry among themselves as to who was the greatest (See comments Mk 10:35-45; Lk 22:24; Jn 13). While men concentrate on facts and figures, it is often necessary for godly women to bring into the moment of the hour the emotion with which we must sense the seriousness of matters. **13 Told as a memorial to her:** The humble act of servitude that Mary performed would become the memorial of her love for Jesus (Compare Hb 11:4). Her correct spiritual priorities to exalt one's love of Jesus above any physical thing of this world would be an example to Christians throughout the history of the world.

THE END BEGINS

(Mk 14:10,11; Lk 22:3-6)

14-16 Judas Iscariot went to the chief priest: The rebuke of the preceding incident concerning Mary and the precious ointment was evidently enough to send Judas off to carrying into action his misguided motives. His heart is now fertile soil for Satan to carry out his desire to betray Jesus (See Lk 22:3; 1 Co 5:8). **What are you willing to give me:** Judas initiates the betrayal scheme, and thus, must be held accountable for the consequences. It is difficult to determine his true motives. He was greedy (Jn 12:6), but he surely had other motives that would lead him to this betrayal scheme. Possibly, he was seeking to force the situation that Jesus be made a king here on earth over a physical kingdom, for such thinking was in the minds of all the disciples. **Thirty pieces of silver:** This was the price of a common slave (Ex 21:32). The priests knew the prophecy of Zechariah 11:12,13. However, their anger toward Jesus clouded any objectivity they had in applying the prophecy to what they were actually doing.

me and I will deliver Him to you?" And they weighed out to him thirty pieces of silver.

16 Then from that time he sought opportunity to betray Him.

17 ¶ Now on the first *day* of the Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying to Him, "Where do You want us to prepare for You to eat the Passover?"

18 And He said, "Go into the city to a certain man, and say to him, 'The Teacher says, "My time is at hand. I will keep the Passover at your house with My disciples."'"

19 ¶ So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them. And they prepared the Passover.

20 Now when the evening came, He sat down with the twelve.

21 And as they were eating, He said, "Truly I say to you, that one of you will betray Me."

22 And they were exceedingly sorrowful, and each one of them began to say to Him, "Lord, is it I?"

23 And He answered and said, "He who dipped *his* hand with Me in the dish, the same will betray Me.

24 "The Son of Man goes just as it is written of Him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that man if he had not been born."

25 Then Judas, who was betraying Him, answered and said, "Teacher, is it I?" He said to him, "You have said *it*."

26 ¶ And as they were eating, Jesus took bread and blessed *it*. And He broke *it* and gave *it* to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat. This is My body."

27 And He took the cup and gave thanks,

He sought opportunity to betray Him: The multitudes were constantly in Jesus' presence. Therefore, because he was possibly ashamed of the deed he was about to do, Judas sought for a time when he could secretly betray Jesus before the priests. However, such was not in the plan of God because the injustices against Jesus would be made known before the world.

THE PASSOVER MEAL WITH THE DISCIPLES

(Mk 14:12-17; Lk 22:7-13)

17 First day of the Feast of the Unleavened

Bread: This was the thirteenth of Nisan, Thursday, the day before the preparation for the Passover. Combined with the Passover, the feast of Unleavened Bread lasted eight days (Ex 12:18-20). **Prepare for You to eat the**

Passover: The disciples suggested that they prepare for the Passover by finding a place to have the meal together (Lk 22:15). **18,19 My time is at hand:** Jesus says the time of the cross is at hand (Lk 9:51). **Keep the Passover:** Jesus possibly ate a meal in preparation for the Passover before the actual Passover meal was eaten. No indication is given here that they ate a prepared lamb, the eating of which was customary at the meal of the Passover. Jesus was the Passover Lamb on this particular Passover (See comments Lk 22:7-13). Therefore, in this context, Jesus would be using the term "Passover" to refer to all that He would do in fellowship with His disciples during these last hours with them. However, in the minds of the disciples, they are going to eat the traditional Jewish Passover.

INSTITUTION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

(Mk 14:18-21; Lk 22:21-23; Jn 13:30)

20 See comments Jn 13:1-20. **Evening:** In this context Jesus is instituting a most significant memorial that Christians now do on Sundays in order to remember God's grace. This occasion took place in the evening and with the twelve apostles. Judas is still present with the group at this time. **21 Eating:** The disciples and Jesus were reclining at a table (Jn 13:13,23) and eating a supper (Jn 13:2) that had more significance than the

normal Passover meal of the Jews (See Ex 12:11). **Betray Me:** The proceedings of the meal were interrupted by a disturbing announcement of Jesus. **22 They were exceedingly sorrowful:** The announcement that one of them would betray Him astonished the disciples. The meal and occasion were a time of joy in remembering Jewish deliverance from Egyptian captivity. It was a meal of celebration. But here Jesus begins to prepare them for the events that are about to happen. See comments 1 Co 11:23-29. **Lord, is it I:** They understood that the betrayal would come from within their group. Such would be the fulfillment of prophecy (Ps 41:9). **23,24 Dipped his hand with Me:** It was a custom of the East to set bowls of food before guests. One would dip his hand into these bowls in order to take food for eating. By dipping his hand with Jesus into one of these specified bowls, Judas is identified as the betrayer (Jn 13:26). **As it is written:** It was foreordained, and thus, prophesied that Jesus would suffer the death of the cross (Is 53; Ps 22; At 2:23). **Woe:** See Lk 17:1. **If he had not been born:** Reference is to his personal life (Jn 17:12). It is not to the fact that Judas was the one by whom betrayal would lead to the cross, which event was good news for the salvation of mankind. **25 Rabbi:** The other disciples had addressed Jesus as Lord (vs 22). But Judas simply addresses Jesus as "Teacher." He had not yet come to understand that Jesus was greater than a teacher of Israel. Such is the case with many throughout the world. Jesus was more than a teacher. He was the Son of God (See comments Jn 20:30,31). **You have said it:** Judas may have been shocked to know that Jesus realized the intentions of his heart (See Jn 13:31-38). **26** See Mk 14:22-25; Lk 22:19,20; 1 Co 11:23-26. **Bread:** Because unleavened bread was eaten at the Passover, this particular bread was probably a loaf of unleavened bread. At the time of the Passover, all leavened bread was to be cast out of the Jewish houses. **Blessed:** He gave thanks to the Father as He also did for the cup (vs 27). What Jesus was using was simple unleavened bread, which bread He did not turn into something other than bread. No

and gave *it* to them, saying, "All of you drink of it.

28 "For this is My blood of the covenant that is shed for many for the remission of sins.

29 "But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom."

30 And having sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

31 ¶ Then Jesus said to them, "All of you

will fall away because of Me this night, for it is written, '*I will strike the Shepherd and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.*'

32 "But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee."

33 Peter answered and said to Him, "Though all may fall away because of You, I will never fall away."

34 Jesus said to him, "Truly I say to you, that this night, before the cock crow, you will deny Me three times."

miracle was here worked. He was using something of this world to signify something that is above this world.

This is My body: He did not mean that it was His actual body, for He was standing in their presence in His literal body. As in John 10:7, this metaphorical statement was used in order to establish the bread as a memorial of the incarnate body of Jesus that was nailed to the cross. Paul later revealed that Jesus also signified in the bread His spiritual body, the church (1 Co 10:16,17). The phrase "breaking of bread" was later used by the disciples to refer to this instituted memorial supper with Jesus (See At 20:7; 1 Co 10:16-18). **27 He took the cup:** The figure of speech Jesus uses here is a metonymy. In other words, the physical cup is used to refer to something else. That to which reference is made is the contents of the cup. And the contents, the "fruit of the vine" (Mk 14:25), were established as a memorial of Jesus' sacrificial blood. The phrase "fruit of the vine" is used as a statement to define the contents of the cup.

Drink from it, all of you: The emphasis of the Greek text is not on drinking all the contents, but that all of them who are present to drink of it (See Mk 14:23). All of them, not just one, were to partake of both the bread and cup. Such is the case with the Lord's Supper in the early church. All those who assembled, not just one person, partook of the Supper (At 20:7). **28 My blood of the covenant:** A biblical concept is that the blood represents the life of the living (Gn 9:4; Lv 7:26,27; At 15:20). Therefore, Jesus here says that His life is offered for all men (Jn 6:54-56; Cl 1:20; Hb 9:12,14,20; 1 Pt 1:2; 1 Jn 1:7). As the Old Testament covenant with Israel was sealed with the blood of animals (Ex 24:8), so the New Testament covenant that Jesus has with all those who have obeyed the gospel for baptism for remission of sins, is sealed with the blood of Jesus. Christians are in a covenant relationship with Jesus. When they partake of the Lord's Supper they rejoice over this covenant relationship. **For remission of sins:** Jesus' blood was poured out in order that men might have remission of sins. It was not poured out because they had already received remission of sins. The same Greek word Jesus uses here ("for" - *eis*) is also used in At 2:38 where it refers to one being baptized "for" remission of sins. At baptism one contacts the saving blood of Jesus, and thus, receives remission of sins through the blood of Jesus at the point of baptism (See comments Rm 6:3-6; Ep 1:3). **29 In My Father's kingdom:** At the time of this occasion, the Father was reigning as King and head over all things (1 Ch 29:11,12). The Father, however, would give all authority as king and head to

the Son (28:18; Jn 13:3; 17:2; Ep 1:20-22). After the ascension, Jesus sat down at the right hand of the Father to exercise kingdom reign that had been given to Him from the Father. Jesus here attributes such reign to the Father since the Father was reigning at the time of the institution of the Supper and would be the source from which He would receive kingdom reign at the ascension (See Dn 7:13,14). When the Son's kingdom reign was announced, and people submitted to such (the church), then Jesus would eat the Supper anew with them. **30** Jesus spoke many things to the disciples during the last hours of His ministry and the occasion of the Supper (See Jn 14-16). After these events, they sang the customary song and went to the Mount of Olives where the betrayal would take place.

THE PRAYER IN GETHSEMANE

(Mk 14:32-42; Lk 22:39-46; Jn 18:1)

31 You will be made to stumble because of Me: Because of their fear, the disciples would be ashamed to be associated with Jesus on this night of betrayal and trial (See Jn 16:32). **Strike the Shepherd:** The prophecy of Zechariah 13:7 says that God would strike the Shepherd. In fulfillment of this prophecy Jesus went to the cross because of the plan and work of God (See Gn 49:24; Ps 23:1; Is 40:11; 53:7; Rv 13:8). **32 After I have been raised:** The disciples had witnessed the resurrection of Lazarus. Such was proof that what Jesus spoke here could happen, though the disciples still did not understand the crucifixion and resurrection because Jesus had done nothing worthy of the Roman death penalty of the cross. **Before you to Galilee:** See 28:7-10; Mk 14:28. Galilee was the central place of the ministry of Jesus, and thus, a special place far away from the turmoil of Jerusalem where He would be able to be with the disciples (28:7,16; Mk 16:7). **33 I will never be made to stumble:** The impetuous Peter contradicts the Lord's words. However, he is too sure of himself, possibly thinking that he is stronger than the others. However, he will soon learn that he must stand on the power of God and not on his own ability, in order to withstand the onslaught of persecution. **34 Before the rooster crows:** Emphasis is not on a single rooster, but on the numerous roosters of the city that would make the general crow of roosters in the early morning hours (Mk 13:35). Some believe that this was around 3:00am in the morning. **35** The other disciples were stimulated by the boldness of Peter. Therefore, all gave their pledge that they would never deny Jesus. It is easy to give such pledges when one is not in the heat of trials.

35 Peter said to Him, "Though I have to die with You, I will not deny You." Likewise, all the disciples said the same thing.

36 ¶ Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to the disciples, "You sit here while I go and pray over there."

37 And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and distressed.

38 Then He said to them, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death. Remain here, and watch with Me."

39 ¶ And He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me, nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will."

40 ¶ And He came to the disciples and found them asleep. And He said to Peter, "What, could you not watch with Me one hour?"

41 "Watch and pray so that you do not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed *is* willing,

but the flesh *is* weak."

42 ¶ He went away again the second time and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done."

43 And He came and found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy.

44 ¶ And He left them and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words.

45 Then He came to His disciples and said to them, "Are *you* still sleeping and resting? Behold, the hour is at hand and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners.

46 "Rise, let us be going. Behold, the one who betrays Me is at hand."

47 ¶ And while He was still speaking, behold, Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and clubs. *He came* from the chief priests and elders of

36 Gethsemane: See Mk 14:32-35. This was the place of the oil presses east of Jerusalem. Jesus had come to this place for prayer on many other occasions (Lk 22:39; Jn 18:2). For this reason, Judas knew exactly where to find Jesus in order to commit the betrayal act. **37** In the garden, Jesus left the eight other disciples in order to take Peter, James and John to another secluded place in the garden in order to pray (See 4:21; 17:1). **Exceedingly sorrowful:** Matthew records the emotional appearance of Jesus (See Jn 12:27; Hb 5:7). Jesus knew the impending pain of the cross that He was soon to experience. But even greater than the pain of the cross, He knew the burden of the sins of the world He was about to carry. **38** Jesus knew that the mob would soon arrive under the leadership of Judas. He asks Peter, James and John to take guard while He, in great sorrow, poured out His soul in prayer to the Father. **39 O My Father:** His compassionate address to the Father in prayer (6:9) reveals the relationship between the Father and Son while the Son was in a state of incarnation on earth. In this state, Jesus addressed the Father as "My" Father. Thus God the Father was the unique Father of the Son because the Son was the only begotten of the Father (Jn 3:16). **Let this cup pass from Me:** Jesus had accepted the burden of responsibility to die for the sins of mankind (20:22). However, He knew that such could not pass from Him, because as the manifested Son of the Godhead, He had to make the sacrifice for sin. **Not as I will, but as You will:** See Lk 22:42; Jn 6:38. Though the human side of Jesus was very sorrowful, the divine side knew that the plan of God that was foreordained before the world was created, must be carried out. On this occasion, therefore, the human side of incarnate Deity relinquishes to the divine side in order that the sacrifice for sin be accomplished (Hb 5:7). Therefore, the Son becomes obedient unto death (Ph 2:8; Hb 5:8). **40,41 Found them sleep-**

ing: Because of their own sorrow, the disciples slept for relief from their anxiety (Lk 22:45,46). This common psychological relief from anxiety brought them relief during the great period of time Jesus spent in prayer and the time the angels came and comforted Him (Lk 22:43).

Watch and pray: No greater advice could be given to those who find themselves in precarious situations.

Flesh is weak: One may not desire to fall into temptation, but we must never underestimate the power of the lust of the flesh to lead one astray into sin (Gl 5:17; Js 1:13,14). **42 Your will be done:** The only way the cup could pass would be when Jesus drank of it (Mk 10:38,39). Therefore, it was the will of the Father that the cup pass by Jesus' drinking of it (See Is 50:5). **43,44** Luke records that Jesus' sweat became "as" great drops of blood (Lk 22:44). He used a simile by use of the word "as". Therefore, the sweat was not literal blood, but fell from His face as would blood. The intensity of Jesus' prayer affirms that He knows the certainty of what is about to happen. Jesus' foreknowledge of the future is here exemplified in the fact that with great anxiety He sorrows over what He knows for certain will happen.

45,46 The hour is at hand: That hour for which the sins of all humanity have waited was now at hand. This was the time of the betrayal, the trial and crucifixion of the Son of God (Jn 2:4; 12:33). **The Son of Man is being betrayed:** Judas was in the process of leading the religious leaders with their soldiers to Jesus (See vs 21; 20:18).

THE BETRAYAL AND ARREST

(Mk 14:43-52; Lk 22:47-53; Jn 18:2-12)

47 A great multitude with swords and clubs:

The parallel records state that Judas was leading a band of officers, soldiers, Pharisees, chief priests, scribes and elders who came with lanterns, torches, swords and clubs. They came in such a manner because they be-

the people.

48 Now he who betrayed Him gave them a sign, saying, "Whomever I kiss, He is the One. Seize Him."

49 And immediately he went up to Jesus, and said, "Hail, Rabbi!" And he kissed Him.

50 And Jesus said to him, "Friend, why have you come?" Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and took Him.

51 And behold, one of those who were with Jesus stretched out *his* hand and drew his sword. And he struck a bondservant of the high priest and cut off his ear.

52 Then Jesus said to him, "Put up your sword into its place, for all those who take the sword will perish by the sword.

53 "Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me more than twelve legions of angels?

54 "But how then will the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen this way?"

55 ¶ In that same hour Jesus said to the multitudes, "Have you come out as against a thief, with swords and clubs to take Me? I sat daily with you, teaching in the temple, and you did not seize Me.

56 "But all this has taken place so that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled." Then all the disciples forsook Him and fled.

¶ **57** And those who had laid hold on Jesus led *Him* away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled.

58 But Peter followed Him at a distance to the high priest's palace. And he went in and sat with the guards to see the end.

59 ¶ Now the chief priests and all the council sought false testimony against Jesus to put Him to death.

60 But they found none. Even though many false witnesses came, they found none. But at the last, two came

lieved there would be trouble, for people accepted Jesus as a prophet. Among the disciples there were also those who believed that Jesus was to be a king on this earth.

48,49 And kissed Him: The kiss was a customary form of affectionate greeting among the Jews (See 2 Sm 20:9). Judas used such to identify Jesus. John reports that the crowd drew back when Jesus openly and confidently yielded to their requests (Jn 18:6).

50 Friend: The Greek word here means "companion" (See 20:13; 22:12; see Ps 41:9; 55:13). Judas' work of betrayal was coming from himself who was a close companion of Jesus throughout the ministry of Jesus.

51 One of those who were with Jesus: It was impetuous Peter who drew a sword and struck in order to inflict a mortal wound in defense of Jesus (Jn 18:10). However, Malchus dodged the sword except for his ear (Jn 18:10,26).

52 Perish by the sword: It was not the intentions of Jesus to use physical force to promote the kingdom (See Jn 18:36; Rv 13:10). Those who would twist the work of the kingdom in order to use such physical violence have proved that they do not understand the nature of the kingdom nor the work of Jesus.

This fact distinguishes the kingdom reign of Jesus and the response of the church from many religions of the world that are committed to violence in order to promote their misguided views and false religious beliefs. **The sword:** This sword was in the possession of the disciples for defense against a murder plot, not offense (Lk 12:38).

53 Twelve legions of angels: This would be about 36,000 angels. It was presumptuous of Peter to think that Jesus needed any human help by swords and clubs to defend Himself from the mere efforts of man.

Peter, as well as all of us, must understand that Jesus is of His own will giving Himself into the hands of those who would take Him to the cross (See Jn 10:17:18).

54 How then could the Scripture be fulfilled: See Is 50:6; 53:2-11. Emphasis here is not only on the fact that Jesus must

die on the cross, but that all these things must happen in order to fulfill prophecy (See 18:7; Jn 10:35; 1 Co 15:3,4).

55 I sat daily ... teaching in the temple: Jesus' work was to teach. He did such in Jerusalem in the temple every day (See Mk 12:35; 14:49; Lk 4:20; 9:23; 19:47; Jn 7:14,28; 18:20). At the time of His teaching in the temple His enemies could have taken him at any time. But in coming to Him outside Jerusalem and in the middle of the night they manifest their cowardice, for they feared the multitudes (21:46).

56 The disciples forsook Him: Peter and John remained as close as possible to Jesus throughout the turmoil of the trial (See Jn 18:15). We do not know where the other disciples fled. Matthew here records that as one of the disciples, he also fled. This confession of a cowardice moment in his life is surely evidence of the inspiration of this book, for no uninspired writer would have recorded such.

THE TRIALS

(Mk 14:53-65; Lk 22:54,63-65; Jn 18:24)

57 Led Him away to Caiaphas: Jesus was taken to the house of Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas (Lk 22:54-57; Jn 18:13-17). The first denial of Peter took place at this time (26:69,70; Mk 14:66-68; Lk 22:55-57; Jn 18:17). Jesus was questioned. However, because Annas was not at this time the high priest, Jesus refused to answer him (Jn 18:22-24). He was then taken before Caiaphas, where members of the Sanhedrin, the highest Jewish authority, were assembled.

58 Because of his love of Jesus, Peter followed the procession (Jn 18:15,16).

59,60 Sought false testimony against Jesus: When no clear accusations can be found, those who have evil motives against the innocent will generate false testimony in order to promote their cause. Jesus had done nothing that would call for the death penalty under Roman law. But here the evil hearts of

61 and said, "This *man* said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days.'"

62 And the high priest arose and said to Him, "Do You answer nothing? What *is it* these are testifying against You?"

63 But Jesus held His peace. And the high priest answered and said to Him, "I adjure You by the living God that You tell us whether You are the Christ, the Son of God."

64 Jesus said to him, "You have said it. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the power, and coming in the clouds of heaven."

65 Then the high priest tore his clothes, saying, "He has spoken blasphemy! What further need do we have of witnesses? Behold, now you have heard His blasphemy.

66 "What do you think?" They answered and said, "He is deserving of death."

67 Then they spat in His face and beat Him, and others struck *Him* with the palms of their hands,

68 saying, "Prophecy to us, Christ! Who is

the one who hit You?"

69 ¶ Now Peter sat outside in the courtyard. And a servant girl came to him, saying, "You also were with Jesus of Galilee."

70 But he denied before *them* all, saying, "I do not know what you are saying."

71 And when he had gone out to the gateway, another *girl* saw him, and said to those who were there, "This *man* was also with Jesus of Nazareth."

72 And again he denied with an oath, "I do not know the man!"

73 And after a while bystanders came up and said to Peter, "Surely you also are *one* of them, for your speech betrays you."

74 Then he began to curse and to swear, *saying*, "I do not know the man." And immediately a cock crowed.

75 And Peter remembered the word of Jesus who said to him, "Before the cock crow, you will deny Me three times." And he went out and wept bitterly.

Chapter 27

1 ¶ When morning came, all the chief priests

these religious leaders sought to produce such in order to do away with their greatest obstacle, Jesus (See Ps 35:11). **61 Destroy the temple:** The religious leaders sought to destroy the character of Jesus because they could find no one who would give a valid witness against Jesus that would justify His death. They thus incorporated a common practice of those who seek to discredit one's enemy. They twisted Jesus' statements in order to make Him appear evil. **Temple:** See 23:35; 27:5; Mk 14:58; Jn 2:19. **62,63 Do you answer nothing:** Nothing Jesus could have said would have satisfied those who were determined to destroy Him. Evil hearts seek no truth. **I adjure You:** Caiaphas attempted here to submit Jesus to an oath in order to make Him answer (See Lv 5:1). **64 It is as you said:** Jesus reaffirms the statement of Caiaphas, that He is the Christ, the Son of God. **Sitting ... coming:** Many in their presence would realize in A.D. 70 by the destruction of Jerusalem, that Jesus had ascended to the position of judgment in fulfillment of Daniel 7:13,14 and Psalm 110:1 (Ep 1:20-22; Ph 2:9-11). They would see His "coming" (presence) in reference to the destruction of the Jewish state as God makes the final swing of the ax in A.D. 70 (See comments 3:7-10; 16:27,28; 24:27-30). **65 Tore His clothes:** In great frustration, the high priest showed his outrage (See 2 Kg 18:37). **Blasphemy:** According to their misunderstandings, Jesus spoke blasphemy by claiming to be the Christ and Son of God (See Jn 10:30-36). **66-68** All who were present gave their consent that Jesus was guilty of blasphemy, and thus, had committed a sin worthy of death (Lv 24:10-16). **Spat ... beat ... struck Him:** Herein is the extent that misguided re-

ligious leaders will go in their frustrations with truth that contradicts their established religious traditions. Their actions manifest the lengths to which men will go when they cannot answer truth with reason and understanding. **Prophecy to us:** Mark records that vile men blindfolded Jesus while they mocked and struck Him (Mk 14:65). Nevertheless, on this occasion Jesus suffered alone and kept His silence (Hb 12:1,2).

69-75 See Mk 14:54,66-72; Lk 22:54-62; Jn 18:15-18,25-27. There were three trials during which the denials of Peter took place. (1) Jesus was questioned at the house of Annas. (2) Jesus was questioned and mocked before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin. (3) Jesus went before the formal court of Pilate. He was also sent before Herod by Pilate, though one might not consider such to be a formal trial (Lk 23:6-12). It is difficult to determine exactly when the denials of Peter took place during the time of the trials. **Before the cock crow:** See comments 26:34. Peter made his three denials, and then the crowing of the roosters in the early morning took place.

Chapter 27

THE MORNING AFTER THE ARREST

(Mk 15:1-15; Lk 23:1-25; Jn 18:28 - 19:16)

1,2 See Lk 22:67-71. **Chief priests and elders:** The Sanhedrin now planned how they might, according to the strictness of their law, kill an innocent man, and yet, maintain their law. The extent to which people of such religions will go is here manifested in the actions of these religious leaders. Their murder plot had failed,

and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put Him to death.

2 And when they had bound Him, they led Him away and delivered Him to Pilate the governor.

3 ¶ Then when Judas, who had betrayed Him, saw that He had been condemned, he felt remorse and returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders,

4 saying, "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood." And they said, "What is that to us? You see to it!"

5 Then he threw down the pieces of silver in the temple and departed, and went and hanged himself.

6 And the chief priests took the silver pieces, and said, "It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood."

7 And they consulted together and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in.

8 Therefore, that field was called the Field of Blood to this day.

9 Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, "*And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the value of Him whose price had been set, whom they of the children of Israel priced,*

10 *and gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord commanded me.*"

11 ¶ And Jesus stood before the governor. And the governor asked Him, saying, "Are You the King of the Jews?" And Jesus said to him, "It is as you say."

12 And when He was accused by the chief priests and elders, He answered nothing.

13 Then Pilate said to Him, "Do You not hear how many things they testify against You?"

14 And He did not answer him a word, so that the governor marveled greatly.

15 ¶ Now at the feast the governor was accustomed to release to the people a prisoner whom they desired.

16 And they had at that time a notorious prisoner, called Barabbas.

and now, they seek to be legal according to their law to do the wicked deed of killing an innocent man. **They led Him away:** Luke indicates that the religious leaders again asked Jesus concerning His claim that He was the Christ, the Son of God. **Pontius Pilate:** See Lk 3:1; 13:1; At 3:13; 4:27. Pilate was the Roman procurator (governor) of Judea from A.D. 26-37 (vs 2). **3,4 Was remorseful:** Matthew here records that the remorse of Judas took place after the meeting with Pilate. The final condemnation of Jesus took place in Pilate's court. **Thirty pieces of silver:** See 26:15. **I have sinned:** Judas' reason for betraying Jesus must have been for some other reason than the thirty pieces of silver. His actions here indicate that his original reason had gone astray in the sense that Jesus was condemned to death. He possibly thought his efforts to identify Jesus were to speed up a supposed earthly kingdom with Jesus as king in Jerusalem. Whatever the reason, everything has gone wrong according to his plan and Jesus is condemned to death. **What is that to us:** The priests and elders had no sympathy for Judas. They had simply used him to accomplish their evil work to do away with Jesus. **5** See At 1:18,19 (Compare Dt 21:22,23). **6 It is not lawful:** They were in the process of crucifying an innocent person, but at the same time wanted to do things according to law. Such is the hypocrisy of legally oriented religions. **Price of blood:** See 26:15; Zc 11:12. Judas had betrayed the innocent blood of Jesus, but the religious leaders had bought blood with the thirty pieces of silver. **7,8 Field of Blood:** The Aramaic name for this field is Akeldama. This was the potter's field (At 1:19), the field where potter's evidently acquired clay for making pottery. **9,10 Jeremiah:** Reference is to at least the prophecies of both Jeremiah and

Zechariah (See Jr 32:6-9; Zc 11:12,13).

11 It is as you say: Before Pontius Pilate (Jn 18:28-38), Jesus gave this confession (1 Tm 6:13). Jesus affirmed that He is king (2:2; Jr 23:5; 30:9; Lk 19:38; 23:38). On this occasion the Jews brought in the false charge that Jesus did not pay taxes. They did this in order to make it appear that Jesus violated Roman law (Lk 23:2). The making of false charges against one's opposition is an often used tactic of unrighteous men who will use evil means to accomplish their goals. Therefore, when one slanderously makes untrue statements against those with whom he is arguing, he can know that his heart is not righteous before God. **12 He answered nothing:** The religious leaders were continually making the accusations against Jesus (Mk 15:8). However, Jesus wisely refused to give them the satisfaction of having such slanderous accusations answered. He knew that slander cannot be answered because it comes from a heart that is not pure before God. **13,14 The governor marveled greatly:** Pilate knew that the accusations of the Jews were false and produced out of jealous motives. He marveled at Jesus' restraint in not answering such accusations, which if true, would result in a condemnation of death.

15 After the above meeting with Pilate, Pilate sent Jesus to Herod Antipas who was in Jerusalem at the time (Lk 23:6-12). Herod attempted to entice Jesus to work a miracle, for he had heard of the great works of Jesus. He also allowed his soldiers to mock and humiliate Jesus before sending Him back to Pilate. **Feast:** This was the Passover feast of the Jews. **Accustomed to releasing ... one prisoner:** It was a custom of the Roman governor to release a Jewish prisoner to the Jews during this feast in order to gain the favor of the Jews.

17 Therefore, when they had gathered together, Pilate said to them, "Whom do you want me to release to you? Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?"

18 For he knew that because of envy they had delivered Him.

19 When he was sitting down on the judgment seat, his wife sent to him, saying, "Have nothing to do with that just man, for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of Him."

20 But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus.

21 The governor answered and said to them, "Which of the two do you want me to release to you?" They said, "Barabbas."

22 Pilate said to them, "Then what shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?" They all

said, "Let Him be crucified!"

23 And the governor said, "Why, what evil has He done?" But they cried out the more, saying, "Let Him be crucified!"

24 ¶ When Pilate saw that he could not prevail, but rather a riot was starting, he took water and washed *his* hands before the multitude, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this Man. See *to it* yourselves."

25 Then all the people answered and said, "His blood *be* on us and on our children."

26 Then he released Barabbas to them. And when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered *Him* to be crucified.

27 ¶ Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole *Roman* cohort around Him.

28 And they stripped Him and put on Him a scarlet robe.

16-18 Barabbas: See Lk 23:19. **Because of envy they had delivered Him:** Pilate knew that Jesus was innocent. He here asks them to judge themselves by asking which prisoner should be released. **19 Judgment seat:** This was a seat in open court from which the Roman governor would make public judgments. **His wife:** Procula, Pilate's wife, urged Pilate to release Jesus because she had a dream about Jesus being a just man. **20,21 Persuaded the multitudes:** The chief priests and elders sensed that they were losing the favor of Pilate to have Jesus condemned. They thus stirred up the multitudes to cry for Barabbas. It seems that the multitudes would have first asked for Jesus. This seems to be the case since they had to be persuaded to ask for Barabbas (At 3:14). **22 Let Him be crucified:** Those Jews who came to Jerusalem for Passover and Pentecost would have been the most zealous Jews. These Jews would have had little firsthand knowledge of who Jesus was. They had surely heard many false reports concerning what Jesus taught. It is probable, therefore, that it is these Jews that the priests and elders stirred up to call for the crucifixion of Jesus. **23 What evil has He done:** Pilate knew that Jesus was innocent. But he cowardly relinquished to the intimidating cries of a multitude that had been misled by evil religious leaders. The religious leaders cried for Jesus' death because He claimed to be the Son of God (Jn 19:7; see Jn 19:8-15). Pilate's attempt to have Jesus released is thus stopped by the protests of the misled multitudes. Nevertheless, he was guilty of shedding innocent blood because as a civil ruler, he did not exercise his authority to stop the condemnation of an innocent man. **24 Pilate ... could not prevail:** Pilate perceived that the multitudes were becoming uncontrollable. He thus refused to exercise his legal and moral responsibility to release Jesus. **25 His blood be on us:** And so it was. God did bring this generation to answer for their rejection of Jesus by raining down judgment on the Jewish State in A.D. 70 in the destruction of Jerusalem (See comments ch 24; At 5:24).

26 He delivered Him to be crucified: Pilate had turned Jesus over to Herod, hoping that Herod would take care of the situation (Lk 23:7). He had announced that Jesus was innocent, and thus, not worthy of death (Lk 23:15ff). He proposed scourging instead of the death penalty (Lk 23:16). He offered Barabbas instead of Jesus (vss 15-17). He even tried to stimulate pity for Jesus by scourging Him and presenting Him before the multitudes (Jn 19:5,6). Regardless of his efforts to have Jesus released, he here cowardly washes his hands of the matter and turns Jesus over to religious leaders (See Dt 21:6-9). However, he is still guilty. He had the authority to have Jesus released, but did not exercise it.

THE CRUCIFIXION

(Mk 15:16-36; Lk 23:26-43; Jn 19:16-27)

In verses 27-31 Matthew pictures the humiliation the Son of God willingly goes through in order to accomplish the work of the cross (See Ps 22). Those who were created are here bringing great persecution on the One who created them (Cl 1:16). **27-31 Praetorium:** This is the residence of the Roman governor and palace guard of the Roman army that was stationed in Judea (Mk 15:16). This was named after the Praetorium that was Caesar's personal guard in Rome. **Garrison:** This was a cohort of soldiers or a tenth part of a legion. This could have been one hundred to one thousand men, depending on the size of the legion. **Stripped Him:** It was a custom that the soldiers be allowed the opportunity to deal with a condemned man as they pleased. Jesus thus suffered the brutality of those into whose hands He had been delivered. **Scarlet robe:** This was the robe of kings among the Romans. And thus, the soldiers set up Jesus for mockery as the king of Israel. **Crown of thornes:** A branch of a tree similar to the Acacia tree with thorns up to three or four centimeters in length, was twined in a circle in order to make a crown of mockery to place on Jesus' head. **Reed:** The twig of a tree is here placed in Jesus' hand which He willingly

29 And when they had twisted a crown of thorns, they put *it* on His head, and a reed in His right hand. And they bowed the knee before Him and mocked Him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!"

30 And they spit on Him, and took the reed and struck Him on the head again and again.

31 And after they had mocked Him, they took the robe off Him and put His own garments back on Him, and led Him away to crucify Him.

32 ¶ And as they were coming out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name. They compelled him to bear His cross.

33 And when they came to a place called Golgotha, that is to say, Place of a Skull,

34 they gave Him wine to drink mingled with gall. And when He had tasted *it*, He would not drink.

35 And they crucified Him and divided His garments among themselves by casting lots.

36 And sitting down, they kept watch over Him there.

37 And they set above His head the accusation written, **THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.**

38 Then there were two thieves crucified with Him, one on the right hand and another on the left.

39 ¶ And those who passed by blasphemed Him, wagging their heads,

40 and saying, "You who destroy the temple and build *it* in three days, save Yourself! If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross."

41 Likewise the chief priests, with the scribes and elders, were mocking *Him*, saying,

42 "He saved others; Himself He cannot save.

holds. It was to represent the royal scepter that kings carry to manifest their power and position. **They ... mocked Him:** To the unbelieving soldiers Jesus was just another common Jewish criminal that had been delivered into their hands for crucifixion. They set Him up as a supposed Jewish king, and thus, mocked Israel through their mockery of Jesus. **Spat on Him:** The soldiers performed the most humiliating and defiant act that man can perform against man (26:67; Is 50:6). **Struck Him on the head:** This is the Greek imperfect active tense that emphasizes continuous action. They thus continuously struck Jesus on the head where the thorns were driven further into the flesh of Jesus' skull. **Led Him away to be crucified:** Jesus was led outside the gates of the city (Hb 13:11,12) while a mournful multitude of faithful disciples followed (Lk 23:27-31). Such was done because executions were forbidden within the city limits (Nm 15:35; 1 Kg 21:13; At 7:58; Hb 13:12).

32 Cyrene: This is an area of north Africa (Compare At 2:10; 6:9; 11:20; 13:1). The soldiers thus forced this African to carry the cross of Jesus, which cross condemned prisoners were supposed to carry on their own if they were physically able. At this time, Jesus succumbs to the physical torture He had endured by the hands of the Roman soldiers. There were also two thieves who were carrying their crosses with Jesus (Lk 23:32). **33,34 Golgotha:** This is "the place of the skull" (Jn 19:17). The Latin word for this place is "Calvary." **Sour wine mingled with gall:** Such was given to those who were to be executed in order to relieve the pain of crucifixion (Mk 15:23; see Ps 69:21). In order to endure the full pain of the cross, however, Jesus refused to take it. **35,36 Divided His garments:** The numerous prophecies of Jesus continued to be fulfilled even as He was taken to the cross and crucified (Lk 23:34; Ps 22:17,18). It would seem that the scribes, who were the doctors of the law, would begin to realize that the fulfillment of all these prophecies in reference to Jesus was more than coincidental. Their hardness of heart, however, had blinded their objectivity. **Kept watch over Him:** The

soldiers stayed at the foot of the cross, though they were unaware of the fact that it was the Son of God who hung there (Ps 22:17). **¶37** All of the records of the gospel quote a different portion of what was actually placed above Jesus' head on the cross. Taken together the entire statement would be, "This is Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews" (Mk 15:26; Lk 23:38; Jn 19:19). The placing of the statement on the cross with Jesus by the Romans was meant to scorn the Jews. And such it did for the chief priest did not like what was done (Jn 19:19-22). **38 Two robbers were crucified with Him:** The thieves were crucified with Jesus as an added insult. Such was meant to identify Jesus as a common criminal that was being crucified by the State (Is 53:9,12). **39-44 Wagging their heads:** See Jb 16:4; Ps 22:7; 109:25; Mk 15:29. They blasphemed in the sense that the work of God on the cross was ignored by mocking Jesus as a common criminal. Most people are at least sensitive to any man who is at the door of death. But because of their hardness of heart, these people had no mercy on one who was about to die. **Temple:** See Mt 26:61-63. **Save yourself:** They did not actually believe He could. They simply mocked what they believed was a claim that Jesus could work miracles. **Like-wise the chief priests ... scribes and elders:** These who were accepted religious leaders mocked a man who was at the point of death. The callousness of the religious system of the Jews is here manifested in the hearts of those who have created a religion after their own social and political desires. They maintained their religiosity while at the same time showed no sorrow or remorse over a person who was about to die. **He saved others:** For this reason the Son of God was sent into the world (Jn 3:14-16). **King of Israel:** See comments At 2:29-35 (Ps 22:6; 69:9). **He trusted in God:** And such must all do if they would be sons of God after the manner by which Jesus was obedient unto death (Hb 5:8). Jesus here placed Himself at the mercy and control of the Father who would raise Him up and seat Him at His right hand (Ep 1:20-22). Those who would be

He is the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross and we will believe in Him.

43 “He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now, if He will have Him, for He said, ‘I am the Son of God.’”

44 The thieves who were crucified with Him were also insulting Him with the same words.

45 ¶ Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour.

46 And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, “*Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?*” that is to say, “*My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?*”

47 Some of those who stood there, when they heard *this*, said, “This *man* is calling for Elijah.”

48 And immediately one of them ran and took a sponge and filled *it* with vinegar. And he put *it* on a reed and gave Him to drink.

49 The rest said, “Let Him alone. Let us see whether Elijah will come to save Him.”

50 Jesus, when He had cried again with a loud voice, gave up His spirit.

51 And behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from the top to the bottom. And the earth quaked and the rocks split.

52 And the graves were opened. And many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised.

53 And they came out of the graves after His resurrection and went into the holy city and appeared to many.

54 ¶ Now when the centurion and those who

disciples of Jesus must so place their lives in the protecting care of the One who can raise the dead. **Even the robbers ... reviled Him:** Luke also records that both thieves mocked Jesus at first (Lk 23:39-43). However, one thief realized the foolishness of such in view of their own situation, and thus, repented. To this one Jesus said that He would be with Him in Paradise (Lk 23:43). Keep in mind that Jesus had authority on earth to forgive sins, for He was God on earth (9:6). He could thus forgive the sins of the thief on the cross. Both thieves lived under the Old Testament law, and thus, were not subject to the requirements for salvation that were announced in At 2. The new covenant and law had not yet been established (See comments Hb 9:16,17).

THE DEATH

(Mk 15:33-41; Lk 23:44-49; Jn 19:28-30)

45 Sixth hour until the ninth: This was from 12:00 noon until 3:00pm. **Darkness:** This was not a natural phenomenon as an eclipse of the sun. According to the calculations of astronomers today, the moon would have been on the other side of the earth at this time. This darkness was caused by God in order to manifest the eternal implications of this moment in time for which the enactment of the scheme of redemption was being culminated on the cross. What better way could God have drawn attention to what was taking place on a cross outside the city of Jerusalem? **46 Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani:** These are the Aramaic words for “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me.” Psalm 22 is a prophecy of a very vivid picture of Jesus’ death. Many have speculated concerning what Jesus meant in these words. Some have stated that He wanted to draw the attention of all to His fulfillment of the prophecy of Psalm 22. Some have said that because Jesus was bearing the sins of all humanity (1 Pt 2:24), God in His purity could not look on sin, and thus, withdrew from Jesus. However, in view of the omnipresence of the God in whom we live, move and have our being (At 17:28), it seems difficult to believe that God could literally turn away from the presence of Jesus. The former meaning seems to be more plausible since these are the final moments in Jesus’ work to fulfill all prophecy

(Lk 23:44). All that had transpired throughout His short three year to three and a half year ministry could in no possible way have happened by chance. The fact that He was on the cross in fulfillment of even the last prophecies concerning His work, was the final proof that He was not only the Messiah, but also the prophesied Son of God who would be sent forth for the salvation of man.

47,48 Some who stood by did not understand the clear statement that Jesus uttered. They asserted that He was calling for Elijah. **Sour wine:** The great apprehension that had been generated in the hearts of all in the area had at least spurred one person to reach forth to Jesus with a hand of compassion (Jn 19:29). The sour wine mixed with gall was given to ease pain (vs 34; Ps 69:21). **49** Others restrained those who would have mercy. They had heard of the works of Jesus, and here, they possibly wanted to see a miracle in the coming of Elijah. **50 Yielded up His spirit:** See Ps 31:5. Jesus was in control of His own death. He had received authority from the Father to lay down His life (Jn 10:17,18). He thus took His own life away by voluntarily giving His spirit into the hands of the Father. During this time on the cross, He also uttered the words of John 19:30 and Lk 23:46. **51-53** The events of verses 51-53 probably took place on the day of Jesus’ resurrection. At least, those who were resurrected came out of the graves after His resurrection (vs 53). Thus Jesus was in the tomb at the time of the events of verses 50 and 51. **Veil ... rent:** See Ex 26:31-33. The veil of the temple divided the Most Holy Place from the Holy Place. The high priest was the only one who was allowed to enter the Most Holy Place (Lv 16:2). Because of His death and resurrection, Jesus became our High Priest by entering into the Most Holy Place for us once and for all (See Hb 6:18-20; 9:2-10). The tearing of the veil by God was God’s illustration that Jesus made it possible for us to have direct access to God through Him. It is worthy of notice that the veil was torn from the top to the bottom, thus indicating that this was an act of God. **Earth quaked:** An earthquake will disturb the most inner feelings of security in man. Combine this with the great darkness, and certainly, the very soul of everyone was shaken on this most traumatic time of history. **Graves**

were with him guarding Jesus, saw the earthquake and those things that were happening, they feared greatly, saying, "Truly this was the Son of God."

55 ¶ And many women were there looking on from a distance, who followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to Him.

56 Among them was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of Zebedee's children.

57 ¶ When evening had come, there came a rich man of Arimathea named Joseph, who himself was also discipled to Jesus.

58 He went to Pilate and begged for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered *to him*.

59 And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth,

60 and laid it in his own new tomb that he

had cut out in the rock. And he rolled a great stone against the entrance of the tomb and departed.

61 And Mary Magdalene was there, and the other Mary, sitting opposite the tomb.

62 ¶ Now on the next day, the day that followed the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together to Pilate,

63 saying, "Sir, we remember that while He was still alive, that deceiver said, 'After three days I will rise again.'

64 "Therefore, command that the tomb be made secure until the third day, lest His disciples come and steal Him away, and say to the people, 'He is risen from the dead.' So the last deception will be worse than the first."

65 Pilate said to them, "You have a guard. Go your way *and* make *it* as secure as you know how."

were opened: After the resurrection of Jesus, these resurrected saints appeared in the city of Jerusalem. This was God's visual illustration to manifest that the One who was just resurrected had become the firstfruit of the greater resurrection that is to come (See Jn 5:28,29; 1 Co 15:20-22). **54 Truly this was the Son of God:** This Roman soldier of one hundred men was stricken by the events of the time. He manifested the feelings of many who experienced what had happened (See Lk 23:47). **55,56 Many women:** Some of these women were relatives of the disciples who lingered at the cross with John (Lk 8:2,3; 23:49; Jn 19:25). They were there as always, even in this time, ministering to the emotional needs of all.

THE BURIAL

(Mk 15:42-47; Lk 23:50-56; Jn 19:31-42)

57,58 See Jn 19:31-37. The Jews asked that the legs of those on the cross be broken in order that they might die quickly. The Passover feast was coming and they did not want the three on the cross during this time. However, Jesus had already given up His spirit. Pilate was surprised that Jesus died so quickly (Mk 15:44,45). Not one bone in His body was broken (See Ex 12:46; Nm 9:12; Dt 21:22,23; Ps 34:20; Zc 12:10). **Joseph:** Joseph was from Arimathea, or Ramathaim-Zophim (1 Sm 1:19; Mk 15:43; see Lk 23:50,51; Jn 19:38). **Disciple:** The Greek word here is a verb, and thus, Joseph had been discipled to Jesus. **59-61** Joseph came to take the body around 5:00pm. Nicodemus (Jn 3:1) joined Joseph in preparing the customary burial of the body of Jesus (Jn 19:39). Because of the approaching Sabbath, they hastily buried the body. They intended to return early on the first day of the week after the Sabbath in order to complete the burial preparation (Lk 23:56; 24:1). **New tomb:** The tomb was cut out of solid rock, and thus, was a very expensive burial place. It was a tomb in which no one before had been buried. **A large stone:** This stone would have weighed hundreds of

kilos. It was placed in the opening of the tomb in order that no man open the tomb. It seems that in the providence of God, this type of burial place was found for Jesus' body. This type of tomb would have been one of the most secure places of burial, and thus, would guard against any who might want to steal the body of Jesus. **Mary ... Mary:** These two women witnessed the burial and knew exactly where Jesus was buried. There would be no mistake in finding the tomb again when they returned early Sunday morning to complete the burial preparations.

62,63 The Day of Preparation: This was the Friday before the Sabbath of the Passover (Ex 16:22; Jn 19:31). **After three days I will rise:** The chief priests and Pharisees had at least understood what Jesus said about rising from the dead in three days (16:21; 17:23; 20:19; 26:61; Mk 8:31; 10:34). Whether they had second thoughts about such a resurrection we do not know. Nevertheless, they were taking no chances that something happen to continue the teaching of a resurrection (See 12:40; Jn 2:19; 10:15-18). **64 Lest His disciples ... steal Him away:** To prevent the body from being stolen, they asked for the security of a Roman guard and a Roman seal. Some may have been considering the resurrection of Lazarus, whom they wanted to murder because people had witnessed His resurrection (Jn 11). **65,66 Sealing the stone and setting the guard:** The death penalty was imposed on any who would break a Roman seal without Roman authorization (Compare Dn 6:17). Any Roman soldier who was caught sleeping on guard was subject to the death penalty. In the minds of the chief priests and Pharisees, the tomb of Jesus was thoroughly secured against any possible plot to steal the body of Jesus. With the setting of the seal and guard, the religious leaders certainly felt that they had closed the case on Jesus of Nazareth. All of their scheming had been finalized and now they could carry on with their lives and erroneous religious leadership of the nation of Israel. But such was not to be the case.

66 So they went and made the tomb secure, sealing the stone and setting a guard.

Chapter 28

1 ¶ Now after the Sabbath, as the first *day* of the week began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb.

2 And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat upon it.

3 His appearance was like lightning and his garment white as snow.

4 The guards shook because of fear of him and became as dead *men*.

5 And the angel answered and said to the women, "Do not fear, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified.

6 "He is not here, for He is risen as He said.

Come, see the place where He lay.

7 "Now go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead. And behold, He is going before you into Galilee. There you will see Him. Behold, I have told you."

8 Then they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy and ran to bring word to His disciples.

9 ¶ And behold, Jesus met them, saying, "Hello." And they came and held Him by the feet and worshiped Him.

10 Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go tell My brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me."

11 ¶ Now when they were going, behold, some of the guards came into the city and reported to the chief priests all the things that had happened.

12 And when they were assembled with the

Chapter 28

THE RESURRECTION

(Mk 16:1-8; Lk 24:1-8; Jn 20:1-10)

1 *As the first day of the week began to dawn:* It was after the Sabbath that the women proceeded to the tomb. This was early Sunday morning (Mk 16:2; Lk 24:1; Jn 20:1). They had prepared spices to be taken to the tomb (Mk 16:1). It was early on this Sunday morning that Jesus rose from the dead (Mk 16:9).

2,3 *A great earthquake:* It could have been that the earthquake occurred while the women were on their way to the tomb (Mk 16:5). The earthquake happened as the angel rolled away the stone from the entrance of the tomb in order to allow any witness to enter and see that Jesus had risen from the death. *Angel:* There were two angels (See Mk 16:5; Lk 24:4; Jn 20:12).

4 *Shook for fear:* Because of the countenance of one angel, the guards cowered in fear. They were so afraid that they became as dead men. The happenings here emphasize the great power that was at Jesus' disposal. He could have called on twelve legions of angels to deliver Him from death (26:53). In this case, it took only the presence of one angel to immobilize three Roman soldiers with fear. **¶5-7** While on their way to the tomb, the women had been discussing who would roll away the stone (Mk 16:3). When they arrived at the tomb, God had done what no man can do. He rolled away the stone in the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Mary Magdalene immediately returned and informed Peter and the other apostles (Mk 16:3,4,7). The other two women also entered the tomb, but found no body (Lk 24:1-9). After announcing and confirming Jesus' resurrection, the angel instructed the women to inform the other disciples. Jesus had said that He would meet them in Galilee (26:32; Mk 16:7). **¶8** *With fear and great joy:* The women had seen no vision and experienced no hallucination. They trembled with fear from the sight of the angel, but had great joy concerning what the angel had

said. Jesus was raised from the dead (Mk 16:8). The circumstances surrounding the event were certainly overwhelming for people to experience.

THE APPEARANCES

9,10 *Jesus met them:* This is possibly the first of several appearances Jesus made to the disciples before His ascension (See Jn 20:11-18). A chronology of the appearances would be explained in the following texts: (1) Mt 28:9,10, (2) Mk 16:9-11; Jn 20:19-25, (3) Lk 24:34; 1 Co 15:8, (4) Mk 16:12,13; Lk 24:13ff, (5) Jn 20:19-25, (6) Jn 20:26-29; (7) Jn 21:1-13, (8) 1 Co 15:6, (9) 1 Co 15:7, (10) Lk 24:50-52; At 1:3-12. Eleven appearances would be counted if Mt 28:16-20 is considered a separate appearance from the appearances recorded in Mk 16:12,13 and Lk 24:13-27. It was not the purpose of the New Testament writers to record a chronological order of the appearances or the number of appearances. The purpose for recording the appearances was to make a record of the fact that Jesus presented Himself alive after the resurrection in order to prove the resurrection (At 1:3). Therefore, it is difficult to determine both the number of appearances and the chronology by which Jesus appeared unto individuals and groups after His resurrection.

THE COVER UP

11 The attempt to cover up the events that took place at the tomb is evidence that something did happen that the chief priests did not want told by the soldiers. **12** *Gave a large sum of money:* The events at the tomb had been traumatic and undeniable by the guards. It here took a large amount of money to keep them quiet. According to Roman law, the soldiers should have been executed for letting a sealed and guarded tomb be entered. **13** The very fact that this explanation was dreamed up by the chief priests and elders is evidence that what they affirmed – that the body was stolen – did not actually happen. The disciples did not

elders and consulted together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers,

13 saying, "You are to say, 'His disciples came by night and stole Him away while we slept.'"

14 "And if this comes to the governor's ears, we will persuade him and keep you out of trouble."

15 So they took the money and did as they

were told. And this saying is commonly reported among the Jews unto this day.

16 ¶ Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had designated.

17 And when they saw Him, they worshiped Him. But some doubted.

18 And Jesus came near and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me

steal the body of Jesus, and then claim that He was resurrected. **14** The religious leaders reassured the guards that they would explain the situation if they were ever questioned. When the apostles started preaching the resurrection, the governor would certainly have made inquiries and investigated the tomb. On finding that the body of Jesus was gone, there would have been an inquiry. So the religious leaders here promise that they will lie on behalf of the soldiers in order to discourage belief in the resurrection. **15** **Commonly reported:** Not only did the religious leaders promise to lie for the soldiers, they carried out their plan to lie and spread the belief among the Jews that the disciples had actually stolen the body of Jesus in order to preach the resurrection of Jesus. However, the very fact that there was a scheme to cover up the resurrection and the systematic spreading of the lie, is evidence that something did happen at the tomb. The body of Jesus was gone and no one could explain what happened. However, the disciples to whom Jesus appeared proclaimed on the day of Pentecost in At 2, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ" (At 2:36).

THE COMMISSION

16 **The eleven disciples went away into Galilee:** Jesus had promised that He would meet with the disciples at a specific mountain in Galilee, which mountain is not mentioned (26:32; 28:7,10). Before this special meeting occurred, however, Jesus had appeared to the disciples in order to reassure them. **17,18** **But some doubted:** Verse 18 states, "Then Jesus came" The meaning is that Jesus came near to them on this occasion. This explains the doubting of verse 17. When Jesus appeared to them on this occasion, He first appeared to them at a great distance. Some of the disciples recognized Him immediately. However, some did not, and thus, doubted that it was Jesus. The "doubting," therefore, refers to the events at the time of their encounter on the occasion of this appearance, not their belief as to who He was or the fact of His resurrection. The occasion of the disciples, and specifically Thomas' doubting, occurred immediately after the resurrection and in Jerusalem before this appearance (See Mk 16:11; Jn 20:24-29). The meeting at the mountain in Galilee occurred many days later after the disciples had made the long walk from Jerusalem to Galilee. **All authority:** Jesus here makes a proclamation to the disciples which He had known throughout His ministry (Jn 13:3; 17:2). All authority had been given to Him, but He was yet to exercise such at the right hand of the Father as King of kings and Lord of lords (1 Tm 6:15). He was soon to ascend to the throne of God in the heavenly realm in

order to rule over all that exists (See comments Ep 1:20-22; Ph 2:8-10; Cl 2:10; 1 Pt 3:22). All was in fulfillment of the Son of Man receiving priesthood, glory, dominion and kingdom reign over all things (Dn 7:13,14; Zc 6:12,13; Is 9:6). After the ascension, Jesus began to exercise His authority from the throne of David and is there today reigning as King of kings and Lord of lords (1 Tm 6:15). He will so reign until He comes again, at which time, He will return kingdom reign to God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in order that God be all in all (See comments 1 Co 15:24-28). Only because Jesus now has all authority over all things can He give such a global commission as is stated in the following verse.

19 All four records of the gospel mention a commission of Jesus to the disciples to take the good news to the world (28:19,20; Mk 16:15,16; Lk 24:46,47; Jn 20:21-23). Studied together, Jesus commissioned the disciples to (1) preach the good news, and thus, make disciples, (2) preach faith, (3) preach repentance, (4) preach immersion in water, and (5) preach the gospel of His death for our sins and resurrection for our hope in order that men might be saved. **Go:** The Greek verb here is aorist participle that expresses continuous action. It could thus be translated, "having gone." The action of the verb, therefore, is dependent on the action of the main verb "make disciples" which is aorist active. Jesus knew that the disciples now had good news, and thus, were going. He did not need to command them to go. The command is in making disciples ("teach"). In their going into all the world they must disciple people to Him.

All the nations: The Greek *ta ethne* refers to every ethnic group. Jesus is not discussing governmental nations, but cultural ethnic groups that are scattered throughout the world. He wants them to make disciples in every ethnic group of the world (Mk 16:15; Jn 20:21).

Immersing them: They were to immerse all those they had disciplined to Him (Mk 16:16). Therefore, one must be committed to follow Jesus before being immersed into a covenant relationship with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **In the name:** The Greek word *eis* means that they were immersed "unto" or "into" a relationship with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In Acts when one was immersed "in" the name of Jesus, the Greek word is different (At 2:38; 10:48; 19:5). It is the Greek word "en" and has reference to one's being immersed in reference to the authority of the name of Jesus. Two things, therefore, occur when one is immersed. When one is immersed in conjunction with the authority of Jesus (in His name), he is subsequently immersed into a covenant relationship with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **The name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit:** This is not something that Jesus is commanding to be said at the time one is immersed. It is

in heaven and on earth.

19 "Going, therefore, disciple all the nations, immersing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

20 "teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you. And, lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age."

something that happens. When one is baptized, what happens is that he comes into a covenant relationship with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In teaching one to be a disciple, the prospect should be taught this before coming to the point of immersion. He must be taught that this is what will happen in the heavenly realm when he is immersed in the name of Jesus. **20 Teaching them to observe all things:** The love of the disciples must move them to respond to obedience of the commandments of Jesus (Jn 14:15; 1 Jn 4:19). Therefore, the teachings of Jesus have been perpetuated throughout history by disciples teaching disciples the commandments of Jesus (See comments 2 Tm 2:2). One of the principal teachings that the disciples were to teach is exactly what Jesus is teaching them on this occasion, that they go into all the world and make disciples of every ethnic group. **I am with you:** Jesus knew that they would go through tremendous persecution, even to the loss of life (At 12:1,2; see Mt 18:20; At 18:10). They must be confident, therefore, that they serve a God in whom they live, move and have their being (At 17:28). They will never be outside His presence. **To the end of the age:** The Greek word *aionios* which is used here and is translated "age" has reference to a predetermined period of time. It does not refer to that which is of substance, as "world." The disciples were coming to the consummation of the Jewish age (*aionios*), at the end

of which, God would terminate national Israel (See comments 13:39,40; 24:3). Their specific mission, therefore, was to preach the gospel to every creature in view of the fact that the end of national Israel was coming. This end would come in A.D. 70 when Jerusalem and the temple would be destroyed, thus marking the end of national Israel (See comments ch 24). In reference to the broader context of the disciples' teaching all things that Jesus taught them on this occasion, the end of the age would have a secondary reference to the end of our dispensation of time in which we now live. There is coming a time when the preaching of the gospel will not take place because there will be no need for such in the new heavens and earth that are to come after the final coming of Jesus (2 Pt 3:13). Therefore, until Jesus comes again, His commission is, "*Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature*" (Mk 16:16). The apostles were not personally and physically able to accomplish this commission in their lifetime. Therefore, it was through those they taught who went into all the world in their generation. It is our responsibility today to carry on with the great commission of Jesus. The world can be evangelized in every generation of the existence of the church if disciples will arise to the occasion to assume individual responsibility to preach the gospel. God did not give the church in any generation and impossible task.

The Gospel According To Mark

Author

John Mark, the cousin of Barnabas, was the inspired writer of this New Testament document. John was his Jewish name and Mark was his Roman or Gentile name. He was possibly the son of Mary who was the sister of Barnabas (At 12:12; Cl 4:10). Barnabas, therefore, would have been his uncle. This may have been the young man who fled naked at the time of Jesus' trials (14:51,52).

John Mark journeyed with Paul and Barnabas on Paul's first missionary journey (At 12:25 - 13:1-13). However, for some unknown reason he did not continue with the work of the mission trip, and thus, turned back (At 13:13; 15:37,38). Nevertheless, eleven years later when Paul was in a Roman prison, he called for Mark who was then profitable to him for the ministry (2 Tm 4:11). He was with Paul at some time during Paul's imprisonment (Cl 4:10; Pl 24). He may have also been with Peter in Babylon (1 Pt 5:13).

Date

As the books of Matthew and Luke, Mark was written before the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. It was possibly written somewhere between A.D. 65 and 70.

Theme

Mark concentrates on the person and work of Jesus as God's Son who came into the world for the redemption of man (1:1). In order to focus on this theme, Mark concentrates on writing a brief narrative of some of the principal works of Jesus.

Purpose

In writing primarily to Gentiles, Mark focuses on the principal activities and teachings of Jesus. In