

NEW TESTAMENT

- “The New Testament is in the Old Testament Concealed/Contained;
The Old Testament is in the New Testament Revealed/Explained”
- The Old Testament time period lasted until the coming of John the Baptist (Luke 16:16)
- A number of English Bible translations had a material impact as the integrity of Scripture was maintained to modern English translations.

| English Bible Translations | |
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| 7th Century Venerable Bede Aldhelm | John Wycliff is often credited with the first translation of the Bible into English, there were, in fact, many translations of large parts of the Bible centuries before Wycliff's work. Toward the end of the seventh century, the Venerable Bede began a translation of Scripture into Old English (also called Anglo-Saxon). Aldhelm (AD 640–709), likewise, translated the complete Book of Psalms and large portions of other scriptures into Old English. |
| 1000AD Abbot Ælfric | In the 11th century, Abbot Ælfric (Aelfric of Abingdon/Aelfric of Wessex) translated much of the Old Testament into Old English. |
| 1384 AD John Wycliff | Wycliff's English Translation from Latin to English was the chief cause of the Lollard movement, a pre-Reformation movement that rejected many of the distinctive teachings of the Roman Catholic Church |
| 1530 AD William Tyndale | William Tyndale made the first English Translation from Greek. Tyndale did not have copies of "original" Hebrew texts. In fact, the quality of the Hebrew documents was poor, since no original Hebrew sources earlier than the 10th century had survived. For the New Testament he was able to use recent scholarly editions of the Greek text. He did not hesitate to consult the Vulgate and other translations, e.g., into German. Tyndale may be considered the father of the King James Version (KJV) since much of his work was transferred to the KJV. |
| 1539 AD The Cromwell, Cranmer, or Great Bible | The Great Bible (named because of its large size) was the first authorized edition of the Bible in English, authorized by King Henry VIII of England to be read aloud in the church services of the Church of England. The Great Bible was prepared by Myles Coverdale, working under commission of Sir Thomas Cromwell. It includes, with very slight revision, the New Testament and the Old Testament portions that had been translated by William Tyndale. The remaining books of the Old Testament had been translated by Coverdale, who used mostly the Latin Vulgate and German translations as sources rather than working from the original Greek and Hebrew texts. |
| 1560 AD Geneva Bible | The Geneva Bible is notable for being the first Bible divided into verses; authored by English Protestant leaders who fled Queen Mary I (who was working under Roman Catholic policy), and established an English-speaking Protestant colony at Geneva. This translation, which first appeared in 1560, was a revision of Tyndale's and the Great Bible, which was furnished copiously with Protestant annotations and references which were the main drivers for having a King James Version. The only active part King James took in the translation was lifting the death penalty attached to translating the Bible and setting some guidelines for the translation process, such as prohibiting partisan scholarship and footnotes as was portrayed in the Geneva Bible. |
| 1611 AD King James Version | Different editions of the King James Version were produced in 1611, 1629, 1638, 1762, and 1769 (the 1769 edition being the most commonly cited as the King James Version). The New Testament was translated from the Textus Receptus (Received Text) edition of the Greek texts, so called because most extant texts of the time were in agreement with it. The Old Testament was translated from the Masoretic Hebrew text. A further revision of the King James Version was completed in 1982, this version called the New King James Version (NKJV). |
| Modern Day | Much like early English Bibles, which were based on Greek texts or Latin translations, modern English translations of the Bible are based on the best-available original texts. The translators put much scholarly effort into cross-checking the various sources such as the Pentateuch, |

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| | Septuagint, Textus Receptus, and Masoretic Text. Relatively recent discoveries such as the Dead Sea scrolls provide additional reference information. |
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- The New Testament begins with the first incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ as He was crucified to pay the price for sin and then resurrected in victory over death.
- The four gospel books were framed towards four different audiences from four different perspectives which align to the creatures around the throne of God.

| Follows Order of Throne of God in Isaiah 6, Ezekiel 1:4-10, 10:14, Rev 4:6-7 (as well as Layout for Tribes in Numbers 2) | | | | |
|---|--------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| Gospel | Audience | View of Christ | Symbol | Example |
| Matthew | Jew Reference of OT | What He Said | Messiah (Lion) Zechariah 9:9 | - Genealogy through Royal Line (Descending) - Sin Offering |
| Mark | Gentile/Roman Haste/Action | What He Did | Servant (Ox) Isaiah 42:1 | - No Genealogy - Trespass Offering – affects/deeds |
| Luke | Gentile/Greek Philosophical | What He Felt | Son of Man (Man) Zechariah 6:12 | - Genealogy through Blood Line (Ascending) - Peace Offering |
| John | Church | Who He Was | Son of God (Eagle) Isaiah 40:9 | - Genealogy of Pre-existent One - Burnt Offering - Dedication |

- After salvation was established through the Lord Jesus Christ, the Book of Acts tells the story of the “birth of the church.”
- After the church was established, twenty-one epistles were written to individuals and fellowships within the church. An “epistle” is an apostolic letter:
 - Fourteen of the Epistles were written by Paul (Including Hebrews)
 - Seven are General Epistles not addressed to a particular church
 - Two by Brothers of Jesus: James (1st written Book of NT) & Jude
 - Three by John and Two by Peter
- The “Revelation” of the Lord Jesus concludes the New Testament:
 - The Present Glory of the Lord Jesus
 - Epistles to seven churches (chapters 2-3)
 - The End Times with the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Regarding the sequence of the New Testament: There is no definitive timeline for the gospels because the timeline is not explicitly documented in the Bible or elsewhere. Some accepted date possibilities are as follows, from the earliest by conservative, believing scholars to the latest by liberal and sometimes secular scholars:

- Matthew: 37 to 100 A.D.
- Mark: 40 to 73 A.D.
- Luke: 50 to 100 A.D.
- John: 65 to 100 A.D.

The New Testament is divided into sections with no bearing on chronology:

- Gospels
- Acts - Birth of Church

- Pauline Epistles (including Hebrews) - These 14 books are: Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus and Philemon. It is a matter of debate whether Paul is the writer of Hebrews.
- General Epistles (James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John and Jude)
- Revelation

Typically, the length of the book determines its sequence in the collection. The longest books go first and the shortest last. There's a bit of a hiccup in the pattern with Ephesians coming after Galatians, but size is still the overall criterion.

Below are the number of words that Paul's epistles contain in the Greek New Testament:

- Romans: 7,111
- 1 Corinthians: 6,829
- 2 Corinthians: 4,477
- Galatians: 2,230
- Ephesians: 2,422
- Philippians: 1,629
- Colossians: 1,582
- 1 Thessalonians: 1,481
- 2 Thessalonians: 823

The same principle of longest to shortest applies to the epistles written to individuals:

- 1 Timothy: 1,591
- 2 Timothy: 1,238
- Titus: 659
- Philemon: 335

MATTHEW


- **Matthew quotes more from Old Testament than all other Gospels combined. Matthew is focused primarily on the audience of the Jews by first establishing the lineage of Jesus and growing to the Lordship of Jesus (Mt 28:18).**
- **From Matthew chapter 5 through chapter 27 are five pairs of discourses (ending at 7:28, 11:1, 13:53, 19:1, 26:1) followed by narratives (chapters 8&9, 11-13, 14-17, 19-23, 26-27)**
- **Matthew, Mark and Luke are called the "Synoptic Gospels" which means in Greek (synoptikós) to "see together." Matthew and Luke use Mark's chronology with additional information added.**

1 Matthew 1

- **Matthew’s genealogy is a continuation of an earlier genealogy found in Genesis 10-11. This can be compared to Mary’s genealogy (Luke 3) and the Divine genealogy (John 1).**
- **Five women are listed in Matthew’s genealogy; four of the women of “questionable” character:**
 - **Tamar (acted as prostitute – Genesis 38);**
 - **Rahab (owner of brothel – Judges 2);**
 - **Ruth (Moabite – Ruth 1);**
 - **Uriah’s Wife (Bathsheba’s adultery – 2 Samuel 11).**
 - **The fifth woman, Mary, was a faithful virgin.**
- **The meanings of the forty names listed in the genealogy of Jesus relay a high-level story of God’s intervention with the divine giving of Jesus.**
- **The number forty often symbolizes a time of testing and trials.**

| Matthew’s Forty Person Genealogy before Christ is a continuation of Genesis 10-11 (Matthew 1:2-16) | | |
|---|-------------|------------------------------|
| 1. | Abraham | “Father of many nations” |
| 2. | Isaac | “To Laugh” |
| 3. | Jacob | “Take by the heel, Supplant” |
| 4. | Judah | “Praise God” |
| 5. | Perez | “Breach, Break Through” |
| 6. | Hezron | “Surrounded by a Wall” |
| 7. | Aram | “Palace, Citadel” |
| 8. | Aminadab | “One of the Prince’s People” |
| 9. | Nahshon | “Diviner, Enchanter” |
| 10. | Salmon | “Covering, Garment” |
| 11. | Boaz | “By Strength” |
| 12. | Obed | “Work, Serve” |
| 13. | Jesse | “Gift” |
| 14. | David | “Beloved” |
| 15. | Solomon | “Peace” |
| 16. | Rehoboam | “He Enlarges the People” |
| 17. | Abijah | “My Father is God” |
| 18. | Asa | “Physician” |
| 19. | Jehoshaphat | “God has Judged” |
| 20. | Joram | “Whom God has Exalted” |
| 21. | Uzziah | “My Power is God” |
| 22. | Jotham | “God is Upright” |
| 23. | Ahaz | “Possessor” |
| 24. | Hezekiah | “God Strengthens” |
| 25. | Manasseh | “Causing to Forget” |
| 26. | Amon | “The Hidden One” |
| 27. | Josiah | “God Supports” |
| 28. | Jeconiah | “Whom God Establishes” |

*The Father of many nations
joyfully
takes by the heel and displaces.
Praise God
as He penetrates
the confinement
of the stronghold,
for one of the royal subjects
who is a spiritual one
to cover
with strength
and serve
in the gift
of His beloved
peace.
As He enlarges His people
with Him as the Father
And healer
God has judged
And exalted
by His power
and righteousness.
God is the possessor
Who strengthens
and causes to forget
the buried one
As God supports
Who He establishes*

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|---|------------|-----------------------|---|
| 29. | Salathiel | “I Have Asked of God” | <p><i>His people have asked Although they were born in this world that the Father of Praise would rise and help the righteous that He establishes in His grandeur. God has helped with a gift to supplant and He will continue to add</i></p> |
| 30. | Zerubbabel | “Born at Babel” | |
| 31. | Abiud | “Father of Praise” | |
| 32. | Eliakim | “God Rises” | |
| 33. | Azor | “A Helper” | |
| 34. | Zadok | “Righteous” | |
| 35. | Achim | “He will Establish” | |
| 36. | Eliud | “God is Grandeur” | |
| 37. | Eleazar | “My God has Helped” | |
| 38. | Matthan | “Gift” | |
| 39. | Jacob | “Supplanter, Usurper” | |
| 40. | Joseph | “He will Add” | |
|  Jesus Christ | | | |
| <p>Forty represents a time of testing (as Israel waited for the Messiah), and after the testing, Jesus Christ was born.</p> | | | |

Read Matthew 1:1-6 ... The Genealogy of Jesus from Abraham to David

1:1 The New Testament begins with three names (Matthew 1:17): 1. Jesus Christ (Savior)
2. David (King) 3. Abraham (Priest-Heb 7:9-11)

- This genealogy revealed that Jesus was from the seed of David as He fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah.

1:2 Beyond Judah, his brothers (the other tribes of Israel) are also alluded to.

- Since the audience of Matthew are the Jews, his genealogy begins with Abraham, the father of the Jewish nation.

| Old Testament Prophecies of the Lineage of the Messiah | |
|---|----------------|
| “Seed of a Woman” | Genesis 3:15 |
| “Seed of Abraham” | Genesis 22:18 |
| “Seed of Judah” | Genesis 49:10 |
| “Seed of David” | 2 Samuel 14:12 |

- The Greek term for “fathered/begat” (egennēsen ἐγέννησεν) literally means “the depositing of seed,” and the word is missing in verse 16 in relation to Jesus.

1:3 Zerah is the only male that is mentioned who is not in the ancestry of Jesus.

- Zerah (meaning “a rising” or “the brightness of sunrise”) broke out first, and a scarlet thread was tied to his hand (representing God’s payment on the cross), but he would have to wait for Perez to be born (Gen 38:27-30).
- Hezron (““Surrounded by a Wall”) moved to Egypt with the 70 Israelites in the family of Jacob/Israel.
- Aram was the middle (second) son of Hezron (2 Chronicles 2:9).

1:4 Amminadab (“One of the Prince’s People”) had a daughter, Elisheba, who married Aaron, the brother of Moses (Exodus 6:23).

- Nahshon was called the “*leader of the people of Judah.*” (Numbers 2:3) who camped on the east side of the Temple in the wilderness.

1:5 Salmon (Śalmāh σαλμων) married Rahab who was the harlot of Jericho (Joshua 2:1-21; 6:17, 22-25; Hebrews 11:31).

- Boaz married the Moabite, Ruth. The story of the way he courted Ruth makes up most of the Book of Ruth (Ruth 2-4).
 - Obed was loved by Naomi (Ruth's mother-in-law) and possibly named by the neighbors. (Ruth 4:13-17) Obed is also recorded in the Book of Ruth as the grandfather of David. (Ruth 4:21-22)
- 1:6 The only time that "King" is designated in the lineage is this verse with "King" David. Bathsheba is not mentioned by name, but instead she is referenced as "Uriah's wife." (2 Samuel 11:2-3).

Read Matthew 1:7-11 ... The Genealogy of Jesus from David to the Babylonian Exile

- 1:7 Israel was divided into two kingdoms under the reign of Rehoboam (1 Kings 12).
- Abijah reigned for three years over Judah, but God routed Israel's army when Abijah called out to Him. (2 Chronicles 13). Abijah "*was not completely devoted to the Lord his God.*" (1 Kings 15:3)
- 1:8 Asa was a good king of Judah who led a revival in the Spirit of the Lord (2 Chronicles 15). "*Asa did what was good and right in the sight of the Lord his God. He removed the pagan altars and the high places.*" (2 Chronicles 14:2-3). Asa eventually was chastised for making a treaty with Syria and trusting them for protection (2 Chronicles 16)
- "*Now the Lord was with Jehoshaphat because he walked in the former ways of his father David. He did not seek the Baals, but sought the God of his father and walked by His command.*" (2 Chronicles 17:3-4)
 - Jehoshaphat eventually married Ahab's daughter in an alliance with Israel (2 Chronicles 18:1)
 - Joram "*walked in the way of the kings of Israel, as the house of Ahab had done, for Ahab's daughter was his wife. He did what was evil in the Lord's sight.*" (2 Chronicles 21:6)
- 1:9 Four rulers of Judah are skipped between Joram and Uzziah (skipping Ahaziah, Athaliah, Joash/Jehoash and Amaziah). Uzziah "*did what was right in the Lord's sight as his father Amaziah had done.*" (2 Chronicles 26:4)
- Jotham "*did what was right in the Lord's sight as his father Uzziah had done.*" (2 Chronicles 27:2)
 - Ahaz "*did not do what was right in the Lord's sight like his ancestor David, for he walked in the ways of the kings of Israel and made cast images of the Baals.*" (2 Chronicles 28:1-2).
- 1:10 Hezekiah was a good king of Judah who has a relationship with Isaiah as he ruled for 29 years. "*Hezekiah trusted in the Lord God of Israel; not one of the kings of Judah was like him, either before him or after him.*" (2 Kings 18:5).
- Manasseh was the most wicked King of Judah (2 Chronicles 33:1-9), but he is also the longest reigning King of Judah (55 years) because he repented in the end (2 Chronicles 33:10-17)
 - Amon was a wicked king like his father had been, and he only reigned two years over Judah before being killed by his own servants. (2 Chronicles 33:21-24)
- 1:11 Josiah was a good king as he led a revival over the land of Judah, and he rediscovered God's law during his renovation of the Temple (2 Chronicles 34).
- Josiah had three sons become king over Judah:

- Jehoahaz/Shallum was taken into Egypt
- Jehoiakim/Eliakim died during the Babylon siege and replaced by his son (Jehoiachin/Jeconiah/Coniah) who was taken into Babylon
- Zedekiah who was taken into Babylon when they annihilated Jerusalem.
- Jehoiachin/Jeconiah/Coniah was restored to the royal king's table in Babylon (Jeremiah 52:31-34).
- Since Jeconiah was cut off from the King's genealogy (Jeremiah 22:28-30), Mary's genealogy though King David conveyed Jesus' rights (Num 27, 36; Joshua 17; Luke 3:23-38).

Read Matthew 1:12-17 ... The Genealogy of Jesus from Babylonian Exile to the Messiah

1:12 After the name of "David," the names of "Shealtiel" and "Zerubbabel" appear in both Matthew and Luke genealogies.

- Zerubbabel is identified as the son of Shealtiel in Ezra 3:2, 8; 5:2, Nehemiah 12:1, Matthew 1:12, and Luke 3:27 in the genealogy of Jesus.
- Zerubbabel was also identified as the son of Shealtiel's brother, so he may have been adopted within the family (1 Chronicles 3:19)

1:13-15 This is the only place in Scripture where the remaining individuals are mentioned.

1:16 It is interesting that Jacob's favorite son was Joseph (Genesis 37:3) although these are different individuals.

1:17 The three (Abraham, David, Jesus) people are repeated (Matthew 1:1) with the milestone of the Babylonian captivity. Three ("resurrection/revelation") periods of fourteen (7x2 or "complete witnesses") generations.

Read Matthew 1:18-25 ... Joseph Foretold of Immanuel's Coming in a Dream

1:18 The Holy Spirit was significant in the act of creating (Genesis 1:2).

- Joseph may have been older than Mary in that he is not mentioned during the adulthood of Jesus.
- During the time of betrothal, the man would prepare the home for his fiancé. A time frame of a year was set for Jewish couples to ensure that the woman was pure and not pregnant. "*Mary was found to be pregnant...*"
- It is interesting that God did not reveal the plan with Mary before Joseph had to go through the difficulty.

1:19 Joseph was counted as righteous and did not punish Mary for pregnancy outside of marriage (Deuteronomy 22:20-21).

- Joseph demonstrated mercy and chose to divorce Mary secretly before ever knowing how she had gotten pregnant (Deuteronomy 24:1).
- In those days, a marriage betrothal was more binding than modern engagement. During the betrothal, they would refer to each other as husband and wife, so it would take a divorce to annul the engagement.
- It would have been difficult to initiate a divorce secretly because a divorce included a written declaration in front of 2-3 witnesses.
- In spite of Joseph believing that he had been betrayed, and Mary was an adulterer, Joseph chose a noble response (in spite of certainly being emotionally hurt).

- Godly men do not take revenge or hurt in response to being hurt; Joseph even protected the one who had hurt him.
 - The Greek term for “righteous” (dikaios δίκαιος) is used in the phrase “the righteous will live by faith” (Romans 1:17; Galatians 3:11; Hebrews 10:38)
- 1:20 Joseph is the only person in Matthew (other than Jesus) to be called the Son of David emphasizing the royal lineage.
- Joseph was considering the correct response instead of reacting out of emotion; Joseph was not ruled by his emotions.
 - The first use of “Don’t be afraid” in the New Testament is in regards to Joseph getting married.
 - Joseph’s hesitation for taking Mary as his wife may have been fear. (Proverbs 29:20; James 1:19)
 - God may continue to tell believers not to be afraid of responsibility.
 - An angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in dreams three times (Matthew 1:20; 2:13; 2:19).
- 1:21 Joseph was directed to name the child “Jesus” which means “God will save” or “Deliverer.” Joseph was told beforehand (one of the first) that Jesus was the Messiah.
- 1:22 Isaiah’s statement is attributed to the Lord speaking through His prophet.
- 1:23 Seven hundred years before Christ, Isaiah foretold His virgin birth (Isaiah 7:14). Jesus was fully deity and man; the name “Immanuel” means “God with us” (Isaiah 8:8, 10); the book of Matthew concludes with this same thought (Mt 28:20).
- 1:24 Each time, Joseph submissively obeyed the direction of the Lord.
- If Joseph had divorced Mary, it would appear that he had not been a partner in the iniquity; however, when Joseph married his pregnant fiancé, his reputation would have certainly been tarnished.
- 1:25 Joseph, the carpenter, honored Mary’s virginity until after the birth of Jesus. Jesus had at least six siblings (Matthew 13:55; Mark 6:3). Jesus was the first fruits and would make seven in their family.
- Depending on when Joseph died and the age of Jesus’ siblings, as the eldest son, Jesus would have become “the man of the house” who was responsible to care for the needs of his family. (Jon 19:25-27)

2 Matthew 2

Read Matthew 2:1-8 ... The Wise Men Visit Herod to Inquire of the Coming King

The account of the wise men is only in Matthew

In the Old Testament, the coming Messiah was said to come from Bethlehem (Micah 5:2), Egypt (Hosea 11:1), Nazareth (Jeremiah 31:15), Jesus met all of these criteria.

2:1 These wise men were Magi who possibly descended from Daniel’s time in Persia (Jer 39:3).

- Wise men have always followed Jesus Who is the light of the world (Jn 8:12; 1 Jn 1:7). The wise men should have kept their eyes on the heavenly instead of pursuing guidance from this world (Herod).
- Bethlehem means (“House of Bread”), and Judea must be specified because there was a second Bethlehem in Zebulun in the north.

- Bethlehem was so small that Judah did not even draft soldiers from this town (Micah 5:2).
 - Bethlehem was the location where Ruth and Boaz married (Ruth 1:1-2, 19, 22; 2:4; 4:11). David, the great grandson of Ruth and Boaz, would continue to live and shepherd in the fields of Bethlehem (1 Samuel 16:1, 4, 18; 17:12, 15, 58; 20:6)
 - The term “wise men” were actually “magi” (magoi μάγοι) from Persia in the east (modern day Iran). The men of the east (Babylonians and Persians) were well-versed in astronomy and struggled with astral worship of the heavenlies; these Magi must have been familiar with the ancient text “*A star will come from Jacob, and a scepter will arise from Israel.*” (Numbers 24:17).
 - These wise men followed either Judaism or Zoroastrianism which have several similar characteristics. Zoroastrianism taught five core beliefs:
 - There is only one supreme God: Ahura Mazda
 - Ahura Mazda is completely good
 - His eternal opponent (Angra Mainyu) is completely evil
 - Goodness is made apparent through good thoughts, good words, and good deeds
 - Everyone has a free will to choose between good and evil
 - There was a large Jewish population in that region from the exiles, and Daniel started this group of “wise men.” The historian Herodotus documented that these men were in the “Median Priest” class that grew out of the Chaldeans.
 - “*Those who are wise will shine like the bright expanse of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.*” (Daniel 12:3)
- 2:2 The star that the wise men followed may be referenced in the Old Testament (Isaiah 19:11) as was the town of Bethlehem which means “House of Bread” (Micah 5:2).
- The number (e.g., three kings) in the caravan is not given while the focus was astronomy, not astrology (Dt 4:19, 17:2-5; Is 47:13-14). The star was also uniquely supernatural to have guided to the manger.
- 2:3 Herod the Idumean/Edomite had been appointed by Rome as King, so Herod was unnerved by wise men seeking the King of the Jews (Mt 27:37). Herod the Great is only mentioned in Matthew (not the other Gospels).
- Although the Gentile wise men were excited about the Messiah, the Jerusalem Jews were unnerved by the fear of possible tumult by Herod the Great.
 - Herod claimed the title “basileus,” or king, for himself in 36BC, and he was well known for his cruel paranoia.
 - Herod the Great was born in 72BC in Idumea. His father, Antipater, was high ranking official under the king of Judea, Hyrcanus II. Antipater later used his influence with Hyrcanus to have Herod named governor of Galilee.
 - Herod strengthened his relationship with Hyrcanus and the Romans by banishing his current wife, Doris and their son, Antipater in order to marry Hyrcanus’ granddaughter, Mariamne.

- Because of suspicion of conspiracy, Herod ordered the executions of Mariamne, her grandfather, her mother, her brother, the two sons of his marriage to Mariamne.
- Following her murder, King Herod had the beautiful body of his ex-wife, Mariamne, preserved in honey in his bedroom for seven years.
- Following Mariamne’s death, Herod invited Antipater back to Judea to name him heir to his kingdom before Herod executed him.
- Herod suffered from paranoid delusions, rage, and arteriosclerosis, but doctors have been unable to identify the excruciating illness that caused his death (the sickness was so agonizing that Herod even attempted suicide to escape it).
- The historian, Josephus, documented that Herod was so concerned that no one would mourn his death, that he commanded a large group of distinguished Jewish men to come to Jericho, and he gave an order that they should be killed at the time of his death. Herod’s son and sister released the men upon Herod’s death.
- Beside killing the seventy members of the ruling Jewish council and three hundred court officials, power hungry Herod had also killed his beloved wife (Mariamne) and several sons (Antipater, Alexander, Aristobulus) over the power to be “King of the Jews.”
 - At the crucifixion of Jesus, these would be the exact words over Jesus on the cross as ‘*King of the Jews*’ (John 19:19)
- The Roman Emperor had an adage that it was safer to be Herod’s pig than his son (the two Greek words are very similar – hus and huios).

| The “Herodian” Line | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| Herod the Great | Matthew 2:16-18 | An Idumean known for his construction and paranoia. He began the construction of the Temple that took 46 years to build; he also massacred infants in Bethlehem. |
| Herod Archelaus (the Ethnarch) | Matthew 2:13-23 | Controlled Judah when Herod the Great died, so Joseph returned from Egypt to Nazareth. |
| Herod Antipas (the Tetrarch) | Matthew 14:6-10 Luke 23:8-12 | Ordered John the Baptist to be beheaded; Trial of Jesus |
| Herod Philip I | Mark 6:17 | The husband of Herodias and father of Salome, who left him for his half-brother Herod Antipas. |
| Herod Philip II | Luke 3:1 | He married his younger relative, Salome, whose dance led to John’s beheading. |
| Herod Agrippa I | Acts 12:21-23 | Martyred James, and death as he was eaten by worms in Tyre |
| Herod Agrippa 2 | Acts 25:13 | The Trial of Paul who was married to Berenice |

2:4 Herod asked the priests (from the Levitical order) and the scribes (scholars from various tribes) concerning the birthplace of the Messiah.

2:5 It appears common knowledge that the Messiah was to be born in Bethlehem. The chief priests and scribes under Herod clearly understood Micah’s prophecy (Micah 5:2) to be clear about the location of the Messiah’s birth.

- It does not appear that Herod’s chief priests and scribes joined the Magi in seeking the coming king although they understood Scripture foretold His coming.
- Micah was a contemporary of Isaiah seven centuries before Jesus was born.

- There are two Old Testament quotes of Micah 5:2 and 2 Samuel 5:2 combined in a single quote. *“The Lord also said to you, ‘You will shepherd My people Israel and be ruler over Israel.’”* (2 Samuel 5:2)
- 2:6 While Bethlehem was the correct location, the verse goes on to say that the Messiah’s origin was eternally prior to creation (Micah 5:2). It would be absurd for prideful man (Herod) to attempt to circumvent Jesus’ coming.
- 2:7 A desire for secrecy often betrays wrong motives. It appears that Herod wanted to keep his intentions hidden from the priests and scribes.
- 2:8 Even today, sincere seekers can be distinguished from those who have ulterior motives.

Read Matthew 2:9-12 ... The Wise Men Worship Jesus as a Child

- 2:9-10 The wise men did not follow the King’s directions to Bethlehem, but instead followed the star once again. The star must have disappeared during the inquiry of Jerusalem, but now the star (symbolizing spiritual enlightenment) was joyfully re-established.
- The house (Mt 2:11) could have been in Nazareth (Lk 2:39), but other passages support Joseph had moved his family from Nazareth to Bethlehem (Mt 2:13-16, 22).
- 2:11 The gifts of the wise men were threefold (Isaiah 60:6): 1. Gold (royalty - King) 2. Frankincense (deity - Priest) 3. Myrrh (burial - Prophet). These gifts financially enabled a poor carpenter (Joseph) to flee to Egypt for several years.
- The Greek word for “child” is “paidion” (παῖδιον) which is the word for toddler instead of baby (brephos βρέφος) or infant (nérios νηπίος)
 - There is no way of knowing the number of Magi, and the number “three” is assumed based on the number of gifts.
- 2:12 God interacted with the Magi in different ways (e.g., the star, the dream). The most important point was obedience to the Lord’s direction.

Read Matthew 2:13-15 ... Joseph, Mary & Jesus Flee to Egypt

- 2:13 After the departure of the Magi, another dream was used to communicate to Joseph about escape.
- 2:14 The obedience of Joseph was immediate. The night often represents the darkness of life when difficulties arise, but the Lord provides escape.
- 2:15 Matthew references Hosea (Hosea 11:1) who was a contemporary of Isaiah and Micah both of which have also been referenced by Matthew.
- The immediate context in Hosea is clearly in relation to the nation of Israel (i.e., exodus from captivity), but this use reveals another application to Jesus as well.
- 2:16 Herod’s slaughter is likened to Pharaoh’s cruelty (Ex 1:16). The age shows that the wise men had been following the star for less than two years (Jesus was probably just several months old); two also represents “witness” as in “witness to the atrocity.”

Read Matthew 2:16-18 ... Herod Massacres Young Children Around Bethlehem

- 2:17 Jeremiah is called “the weeping Prophet” and the “local application” was in regards to Nebuchadnezzar’s sacking of Jerusalem.

2:18 Rachel was the mother of two critical tribes (Joseph and Benjamin) that included the city Jerusalem, and Rachel's burial tomb was in Bethlehem (Gen 35:19, 48:7).

- Ramah was located approximately five miles north of Jerusalem.
- During the exile of Israel by Assyria, the captives were assembled in Ramah prior to being deported to other lands.
- Medieval Christians in England memorialized the "Massacre of the Innocents" by recognizing "Childermas Day," or "Holy Innocents Day" on December 28.
 - Childermas was widely considered a day of bad luck and as part of the Childermas festivities, English parents would beat their children to "remind them of the cruelty of King Herod."

Read Matthew 2:19-23 ... Joseph, Mary & Jesus Return to Nazareth

2:19 Herod died in the Spring of 4BC.

- This would be the third and final documented dream of Joseph.
- Later in His life, the "spiritually dead" would also desire the Lord's crucifixion (Rom 6:13; Eph 2:1)

2:20 Joseph was entrusted with the care of the child first and then His mother.

- The point of reference was Jesus' mother as it was infinitely more important than the relationship of being Joseph's wife. Every person is eternally defined by their relationship to Jesus.
- The Greek word translated as "life" (psychēn ψυχῆν) can also be translated as "soul." (Matthew 16:26)

2:21 Characteristically, Joseph obeyed the direction of the Lord.

2:22 Archelaus (a son of Herod and a Samaritan woman) was known to be a tyrant; the complaints against Archelaus resulted in him being deposed in 6AD and banished to Vienne.

- Galilee was under the rule of Archelaus' brother, Herod Antipas. After Antipas' involvement in the deaths of John the Baptist and Jesus, Antipas was also banished to Gaul.
- The land of Israel west of the Jordan was divided into three provinces: 1. Northern Israel - Galilee 2. Central Israel - Samaria 3. Southern Israel - Judea

2:23 In the Old Testament, the Messiah (Jesus) is called the Branch or "Netzer" (Isaiah 11:1, 53:3; Jeremiah 23:5, 33:15; Zechariah 3:8, 6:12).

- A "Netzer" is correlated to being a Nazarene. Jesus was raised in Nazareth and based His ministry in Capernaum; both locations were in the poor Galilee region of Israel while the wealthier upper class lived in and around Jerusalem in the southern region of Judea.
- Not only had Micah accurately foretold the birthplace being Bethlehem (Micah 5:2), but Isaiah had also accurately foretold the location of Jesus' ministry.
- Zebulun and Naphtali had been the very first tribal allotments exiled by Assyria in 722BC.
- *"He humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the future, He will bring honor to the Way of the Sea, to the land east of the Jordan, and to Galilee of the nations."* (Isaiah 9:1)

Read Matthew 3:1-6 ... The Ministry of John the Baptist

Shared Account of John the Baptist: Mk 1:4-8; Mt 3:1-12; Lk 3:1-20; Jn 1:19-28

3:1 In Scripture, a “wilderness” often reflects spiritual “dryness” (a land without water or spiritual truths) where the wild beasts (evil spirits – Mk 1:12-13) inhabit freely.

- Judea, the land of God’s people and Christ, had much spiritual wilderness to which John the Baptist attended.
- The wilderness wandering during the time of the Exodus were a close walk with the Lord as they relied on His provision and prepared for a new day/ministry in the Promised Land.
- Since the Book of Matthew was directed primarily towards the Jewish community who refrained from using the term “God”, the “Kingdom of God” was called the “Kingdom of Heaven.”
- A “Kingdom” requires a “King” to whom His subjects submit; God is the King of believers to submit and follow His laws while pleasing and praising Him.

3:2 The first word by John the Baptist in scripture is “repent.” Repentance is more than turning away from sin, but it includes turning towards the Lord.

- Repentance is a change of the mind/heart that is followed by a change of lifestyle.
- Repentance should not be confused with sadness (although there may be some of that), but repentance is a purposeful decision to follow God in every situation (regardless of what others around you do).
- John calls his listeners to recognize the closeness of God’s kingdom.
- The Kingdom of God was “near” in that it represented the Messianic Age following Jesus victory over death in His resurrection.

3:3 A straight path infers one without distractions and obstacles that enables a more direct route to the destination; the Old Testament reference were the Babylonian exiles returning to the Promised Land (Is 40:3).

- The covenantal name of Yahweh is used in the Old Testament (as shown by the word “LORD” being in all capital letters) while being applied to Jesus in the New Testament to affirm Christ’s deity.
- This was also a way of proclaiming a royal visit of the coming King; heralds might walk before the royalty as they shouted to clear the way of his progression (Isaiah 57:14; Malachi 3:1)
- John the Baptist heralded the repentance of sin and the coming Messiah.

3:4 As a camel will store his own water, so the wealthy tend to rely on their own efforts. The garment would not be camel kin, but instead a garment woven from the hair of the camel. The poor would have worn these garments.

- Leather comes from spilled blood (salvation) as the belt (Eph 6:14; Is 11:5) bound together the covering. The clothing of John the Baptist is an allusion to the clothing of Elijah (2 Kings 1:8).
- Wild honey represented pleasures while locusts represented plague and condemnation; John consumed (or did away) with both worldly pleasures and the ensuing plague judgment.
- The Mosaic Law allowed the eating of locusts (Leviticus 11:22).

3:5 Baptism originated with ritual cleansing (Ex 30:20; Num 19:20-22; Lev 15:13);

- Jewish cleansings consisted of mildew on walls (Lev 14:33-53), after child birth (Lev 12:1-8), leprosy (Lev 13:1-36; 14:1-32).
 - The Jews required proselytes to Judaism to be baptized; the Talmud (collection of writings of civil and religious law) defines this baptism as a total immersion. It may have been embarrassing and humbling for Jews to be baptized because the practice was meant for proselyte Gentiles.
 - The people “flocked” as a herd of sheep to the message (Acts 1:8). The message of John the Baptist was well received by many which would get the attention of the Jewish leadership.
- 3:6 The Jordan literally means “out of Dan” as Dan was the northern most tribe, and one that was cursed for having introduced idolatry (1 Kings 12:25-32; 2 Kings 10:29). As the water came out of Dan, so too, were the Israelites repenting and coming out of their old fleshly pursuits as they confessed their sins (Rom 6:4; Eph 4:5; Col 2:12; 1 Pet 3:21).
- Public confession of sin serves multiple purposes in being a hindrance to future sin while humbling the confessor. (Acts 19:18; James 5:16)

Read Matthew 3:7-12 ... John the Baptist Chastises the Pharisees

- 3:7 As the serpent was the most cunning of creature, this “brood of vipers” represents the religious leaders misleading mankind (Gen 3:15).
- This is the first of three times that this expression (“brood of vipers”) is used in Matthew’s account (Mt 12:34; 23:33; Lk 3:7). The teachings of the religious leaders were deadly and empowered by the “old serpent” Satan. (Genesis 3:1; Revelation 12:9; 20:2)
 - Many Pharisees and Sadducees came out of curiosity, but there was no sincere repentance in their hearts. These religious leaders followed rituals without a relationship with God. (Deuteronomy 10:12, 16; Romans 2:28-29)
 - Pharisees (“the separated ones”) evolved during the Maccabean period and held to the whole Old Testament law as well as oral conditions (Talmud) of purity.
 - The Sadducees were powerful aristocrats that primarily held to the Pentateuch and were more focused on ethics than theology. The Sadducees were the elites who controlled the priesthood and the Temple.
- 3:8 The fruit of one’s life gives insight into one’s spiritual walk (Gal 5:22-23; Matthew 7:15-20).
- 3:9 It is thought that John the Baptist baptized where Joshua had crossed the Jordan and made a stone memorial (Joshua 4:3).
- The warning is to have a first-hand walk with God instead of relying on worldly affiliations (e.g., church, parents, Abraham) to somehow substantiate that relationship. (John 8:33-40)
- 3:10 As the basis of the hearer’s religiosity was their Judaism, the very root (Isaiah 10:33-34) would be cut as Jerusalem would be utterly destroyed in 70AD. Eternal hell awaits those who put faith in anyone other than Jesus Christ alone (Is 66:24; Mal 4:1; Mt 13:42, 25:41, 46; Mk 9:43-48; Lk 16:24; Rev 20:13-15, 21:8).

- 3:11 The lowest servants would assist with the removal of sandals, carry them to a storage bin, and then wash the feet. Symbolically, this world pollutes the feet with which it interacts more than any other part of the body.
- The Word of God represents the laver used in cleansing God's people. (Psalm 119:9; Ephesians 5:26)
 - The Holy Spirit is the refining fire in every Believer that continually convicts of sin and impurities (Exodus 3:2; Ezekiel 22:18-21; Acts 2:1-4; 1 Peter 1:6-7; 1 Corinthians 3:12-15).
- 3:12 Wheat (valuable) and tares (valueless) cannot be differentiated until they are fully grown (Matthew 13:24-30). The difference then is that the wheat, heavy with good fruit, bows its head as if in humility. The tare, a lightweight, keeps its head rigidly raised. Humility is the difference between wheat and tares.
- The sown tare was literally "darnel" which closely resembles wheat as a false Christian might resemble a true believer; let them mature together and God's judgment will discern between them (Mt 13:24-30; Lk 3:17).
 - The metaphor of the wheat and the chaff involves the grains being crushed by animals pulling a weighted flat sled to separate out the kernels from the husks; the remaining husks would be thrown into the air with the light chaff to be blown away while the heavier grain fell back down. (Luke 3:16-17)
 - The fire (hell) will be eternal (Matthew 18:8; 24:41; Mark 9:48; Jude 1:7).

Read Matthew 3:13-17 ... The Baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist

Shared Account of Jesus Baptism: Mt 3:13-17; Mk 1:9-11; Lk 3:21-22; Jn 1:29-34

- 3:13 Jesus was raised in Nazareth of Galilee (Mt 2:23; Mk 1:9), and He was coming to begin a ministry of suffering (Mk 10:38; Lk 12:50).
- 3:14 Upon understanding Who Jesus Christ is, sinful man is motivated to die to self and sin while being born again as a new creation (2 Cor 5:17).
- 3:15 John demonstrates obedience without understanding while Jesus obeyed the Father's will in complete righteousness. The phrase "for us to fulfill" demonstrates that John was invited to join Jesus in the way of righteousness.
- After the point of salvation, believers are expected to follow the example of being baptized (Mt 28:19), not for salvation (Lk 23:42-43), but in obedience.
- 3:16 The movement of the Spirit begins every ministry of God. God's Spirit was the identifying factor that Jesus would baptize by the Holy Spirit (John 1:33) as He was now anointed with the power of God (Acts 10:38).
- John the Baptist witnessed the Spirit descend on Jesus as He was departing the water (Mk 1:10).
- 3:17 God declares His love for Jesus. God stated a similar phrase at the Transfiguration (Mt 17:5; Mk 9:7; Lk 9:35).
- The Son of God was baptized; the Spirit of God descended on Him; God the Father spoke about His delight in His Son. The trinity is active at the baptism of Jesus.
 - To the Rabbi's the symbol of Israel was a dove, and Jesus symbolized the ideal Israelite. The dove is repeatedly a symbol of the Spirit (Psalms 55:6, 68:13; Jn 1:32-33)

- Jewish Scribes believed that God would speak at times without physical representation which they called “Bath Kol” (which means “the daughter of the voice”).
 - Examples include words of God to Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 4:31), the Baptism of Jesus (Matthew 3:17), the Transfiguration (Matthew 17:5; Mark 9:7; Luke 9:35), in the Garden of Gethsemane (John 12:28), the conversion of Paul (Acts 9:4, 22:7, 26:14) and instruction to Peter about clean and unclean (Acts 10:13, 15).
- This statement of love was affirming Jesus to those around Him (“This is My Son” – John 1:33-34) as well as encouraging Jesus (“You are My Son” – Mark 1:11; Luke 3:22)
- God’s statement seems to link a Royal Davidic Psalm (Psalm 2:7) with the Suffering Servant (Isaiah 42:1); Jesus is the Lord and Christ; He is divine and man. (Matthew 17:5)

4 Matthew 4

Read Matthew 4:1-11 ... Satan Attempts to Tempt Jesus During Forty Day Fast

Shared Account of the Temptation of Jesus: Mt 4:1-11; Mk 1:12-13; Lk 4:1-13

4:1 The Spirit purposefully leads Jesus into the (spiritual) wilderness to be tempted. The Spirit moves and sinful temptation is overcome before ministry.

- God’s ministers get away by themselves prior to service (Moses-Ex 3:1, David-1 Sam 17:34, Elijah-1 Kings 17:3, Paul-Gal 1:17).
- A purpose of testing is to strengthen (1 Peter 1:7), and God will never allow believers to be tempted beyond what they are able to bear (1 Corinthians 10:13).
- Jesus was tempted in every way, but remained perfect without sin (Hebrews 4:15)
- The Spirit drove Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted (Mark 1:12); although it was the Devil that tempted Jesus – not God the Father or the Spirit because they do not tempt anyone (James 1:13). The Lord’s prayer asks God not to “lead us into temptation” (Matthew 6:13); however, the temptation is from the Devil or man’s own desires (James 1:14).

| There are Various Greek Words for “Tempt” | | |
|--|--|---|
| Peirazei (πειράζει) | To tempt with the purpose of destruction | James 1:13; Mark 1:13; Luke 4:2; Hebrews 11:17; James 1:13 |
| Peirasthēnai (πειρασθῆναι) | To tempt to make stronger | Matthew 4:1; 1 Corinthians 10:13 |
| Peirasmon (πειρασμόν) | To tempt to test | Matthew 6:13, 26:41; Mark 14:38; Luke 4:13, 11:4, 22:40, 22:46; Galatians 4:14; 1 Timothy 6:9, James 1:12, 1 Peter 4:12 |
| <i>Someone might “tempt” another without the other being “tempted.”</i> | | |

- The Greek word for “Devil” (diabolou διαβόλου) consists of two roots. “Dia” means “through,” and “Ballo” means “to throw/cast.” The concept is to “throw across” as a slanderer; to sling an accusation.

- The temptations of the Devil were focused on looking at this world (look down at the rocks and make bread; throw yourself down; look at the kingdoms of the world and “fall down”). Jesus responded by looking “up” to the Father.
- 4:2 The three individuals at the Mt. of Transfiguration (Matthew 17:3) each went through 40 (testing) days of fasting.
- Moses was on Mt Sinai 40 days (Exodus 34:28; Deuteronomy 9:9), and Elijah was in the cave 40 days (1 Kings 19:8).
 - Jesus was feeling the physical impact of a fast with a hunger for food.
- 4:3 Just three verses prior, God the Father has declared Jesus as His Son (Matthew 3:17), but Satan attempts to undermine the clear word of God the Father; although Adam fell to Satan and ate (Genesis 3:1), Jesus rejected the food and failing.
- The devil is identified as “the tempter” (Hebrews 2:18, 4:15).
 - Two of the temptations began with “if you are the Son of God,” but God responds to faith and not juvenile dares.
 - Twice in Jesus’ ministry He multiplied food (several loaves and fish to many-Mark 6:35-44, 8:1-21), but He would not turn stone to bread for His pleasure.
 - Jesus would eventually perform each one of these in His own righteousness:
 - He fed His believers with physical and spiritual bread;
 - He would be reign in the Kingdom of Heaven as well as the millennial kingdom on earth;
 - He would have authority over the angels as they served Jesus after He overcame the temptations of the Devil (Matthew 4:11). They also ministered to Him in Gethsemane (Matthew 4:11; Luke 22:43) and served as His messengers at His resurrection (Matthew 28:1-6).

| Three Categories of Sin | | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|--|-----------------------|
| | <u>1 John 2:16</u> | <u>Temptation</u> | <u>Offense</u> |
| 1. | Lust of the Flesh | Stone to Bread (Mt 4:3-4; Lk 4:3-4) | Indulgence |
| 2. | Lust of the Eyes | Kingdoms of the World (Mt 4:8-10; 4:5-8) | Position |
| 3. | Pride of Life | Influence over Angels (Mt 4:5-6; Lk 4:9-12) | Power |

- 4:4 Jesus overcame temptation by recounting the Word of God (Psalm 119:11).
- Believers might be tempted to test God’s word to meet very real physical (worldly, fleshly) needs instead of focusing on the spiritual sustenance. Some men have traded spiritual nourishment for fleshly (worldly) satisfaction.
 - Jesus quoted Deuteronomy 8:3 out of the Septuagint, and the Devil never rebuffed the verses that Jesus quoted showing that they both believed in the inspired Word of God.
 - Jesus would quote from Deuteronomy to challenge each of the Devil’s temptations.
- 4:5 Twice the Devil took Jesus to a different location – both places were on the heights.
- The “holy city” was Jerusalem as explicitly stated in Luke’s account (Luke 4:9).
 - The Temple had two “wings” (Matthew 4:5; Luke 4:9); the southeastern corner was over 300 feet (~28 stories) above the Kidron Valley where James, the brother

of Jesus (Matthew 13:55), was thrown to his death (according to Clement and Hegesippus).

- James “the Just” was also called “Camel Knees” because of the time that he spent on his knees in prayer. He led the church at Jerusalem until his death in 62AD.

- The pinnacle of the Temple would be the location for spiritual temptation; Satan would challenge the veracity of God’s Word concerning the angels.

4:6 Satan deceives with the Word, but is rebuffed each time by a passage from Deuteronomy.

- This passage (Psalm 91:11-12) could be expanded to include the temptations to never get ill or to handle snakes without getting bitten (Psalm 91:9-13). These actions test the Lord instead of living by faith (Romans 14:23).
- Believers should not be tempted to test the Lord concerning any of these health issues.

4:7 Believers may be tempted to live recklessly (even in worldly lifestyles) as they expect that God will care for them in spite of their imprudence.

- This Old Testament passage (Deuteronomy 6:16) was directed at Israel’s complaint at Massah (Deuteronomy 6:16) that God prove His presence.
- Believers should understand the Bible is a single book (Exodus 17:7), and the Old Testament is relevant to believers throughout the ages.

4:8 In Scripture, “mountains” represent earthly authorities and governments.

- This high mountain would be a spiritual location (to see all of the kingdoms of the earth) to tempt Jesus with worldly authority.
- This has been the downfall of politicians, celebrities, and preachers, who have compromised righteousness for popularity and success.

4:9 Satan is pledging authority to Jesus as long as Jesus recognizes Satan’s authority, but Jesus refused to “fall down” before Satan.

- The entire world is under the wicked power of “the evil one.” (Luke 4:6; 1 John 5:19)
- Each one of the temptations was a way to win men as followers without the gospel message of Christ’s death and resurrection. Jesus chose the way of pain and suffering.

4:10 Beyond quoting Scripture, the only words that Jesus uses with Satan is expulsion.

- Jesus tells Satan to be gone which is broader than the later command by Jesus for Peter to “get thee behind me” (Luke 4:8; Matthew 16:23; Mark 8:33).
- The term “Satan” (Satana Σατανᾶ) means “adversary.”
- This is a loose quote from Deuteronomy 6:13 which is not an explicit Septuagint or Masoretic translation.
- Every believer should serve only God instead of the worldly masters (Matthew 6:24).

4:11 Angels worship Jesus as well (Hebrews 1:6). Immediately after overcoming Satan’s temptations (Mk 1:13), the angels served Jesus as they would later do in Gethsemane (Lk 22:43).

- Paul was also served by an angel (Acts 27:3).
- The act of “service” is often used in relation to providing food (Matthew 8:15; 25:44; 27:55; Acts 6:2)

- The Devil would return to Jesus again (Luke 4:13).

Read Matthew 4:12-17 ... Jesus Begins His Ministry in Capernaum

Shared Account of the Beginning of Jesus Ministry in Galilee: Mt 4:12-25; Mk 1:16-20; Lk 5:1-11, 6:14-15

4:12 It is assumed that at least a year passes prior to the imprisonment of John (Mt 14:1-12; Mk 6:14-29; Lk 3:19-20). At this dark hour, the light of the world makes a greater appearance in preaching in the void left by John. (Isaiah 9:1)

- John the Baptist was arrested because he spoke against Herod Antipas stealing the wife (Herodias) from his brother Philip and marrying her (Matthew 14:3). This was forbidden in the Mosaic Law (Leviticus 20:21).
- Herod Antipas knew Herodias as a cousin since childhood as she was the daughter of one of his older brothers, Aristobulus.
- Herodias wanted to kill John the Baptist for some time, but Herod was fearful of John (Mark 16:19-20).

4:13 Jesus ministry was headquartered in Capernaum (“Village of Nahum”) fulfilling prophecy (Gen 49:13, 21).

- Nahum condemned Nineveh for their downfall one century after Jonah; they had the opportunity to hear follow the one, true God, but they had not. Nahum’s judgment on Nineveh was similar to Jesus’ condemnation of Israel. Both Nineveh and Israel fell ~40 years of these condemning sermons.
- Jesus left Nazareth because of their unbelief. (Luke 4:16-21)
- Zebulun (Genesis 49:13) and Naphtali (Genesis 49:21) were on the western and northern coasts of Galilee. Every disciple was a native of Zebulun except Judas (Iscariot means “from Kerioth” in Judea).

4:14 Over fifteen times in Matthew, the Scripture is said to be fulfilled with Jesus as the Messiah. Eight of these are associated with Isaiah (Mt 1:23, 2:23, 3:3, 4:14, 8:17, 12:17, 13:14, 21:4).

4:15 The “sea” usually refers to the Mediterranean Sea, but in this case, “sea” probably refers to the Sea of Galilee. In Scripture, the “sea” often represents the chaos of the world system, but the Lord provides a way through (John 14:4).

- The phrase “Galilee of the Nations” means that there were mostly Gentiles domiciled in that area. (Isaiah 9:1-2)

4:16 In Scripture, the word “light” is usually associated with “enlightenment.” Jesus brought spiritual enlightenment to even the Gentiles (John 8:12, 9:5).

- The term “shadowland of death” means that their safety and security is challenged; they live in great danger (Psalm 22:4).

4:17 Jesus’ message was the exact same thrust as John the Baptist: “*Repent because the Kingdom of God has come near!*” (Matthew 3:2; 20:28).

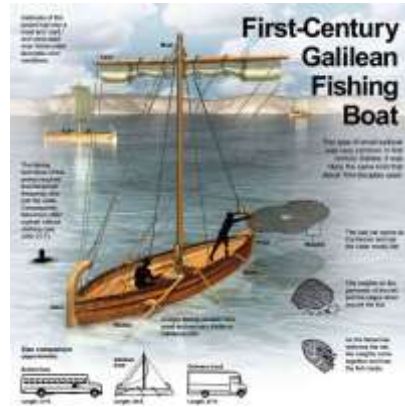
Read Matthew 4:18-20 ... Jesus Calls Peter and Andrew to be His Disciples

4:18 A more protracted account shows that they had met prior (John 1:35-42), and that Jesus had encouraged Peter to cast his net for fish (Luke 5:1-11).

- Peter means “stone/pebble” in Greek (as Cephas means “rock” in Aramaic); Simon means “he has heard.”

- Peter had been introduced to Jesus by his brother on a prior occasion. (John 1:35-51)
- Scripture references the Sea of Galilee by several other names including the “Sea of Chinnereth” (Numbers 34:11), “Lake Gennesaret” (Luke 5:1), and the “Sea of Tiberias” (John 6:1)

4:19 Believers are often represented fish (Mt 13:47-50; Mk 1:17). The “Icthus” symbol was used to relay brotherhood during times of persecution.



4:20 Those who God calls are expected to leave everything immediately for His will (Mt 8:22; Mk 1:18; Lk 9:60).

Read Matthew 4:21-22 ... Jesus Calls James and John to be His Disciples

4:21 James and John were partners who were amazed at the catch of fish that the Lord had enabled for Peter (Lk 5:9-10). These sons of Zebedee (“gift of God”) were thought to be wealthy due to the help of hired men; they were possibly also acquaintances of the high priest (John 18:15-16). Zebedee is only mentioned at the calling of his sons while his wife, Salome (“perfect”), was at the crucifixion (Mt 27:56; Mk 15:40-41; 16:1)

4:22 Just and Peter and Andrew immediately left their work (Matthew 4:20), James and John also left their work immediately.

- In the various lists of apostles (Mt 10:2-4; Mk 3:16-19, Lk 6, Acts 1), each listing contains the identical first four names (1-4), second four names (5-8), and third four names (9-12). Each tier begins with the same person each time (Peter, Philip, James) who are thought to be the “tier leaders”.

| The Four Lists of the Twelve Apostles | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| | Matthew 10:2-4 | Mark 3:16-19 | Luke 6:12-19 | Acts 1:13 |
| 1. | Simon | Simon | Simon | Peter |
| 2. | Andrew | James | Andrew | James |
| 3. | James | John | James | John |
| 4. | John | Andrew | John | Andrew |
| 5. | Philip | Philip | Philip | Philip |
| 6. | Bartholomew | Bartholomew | Bartholomew | Thomas |
| 7. | Thomas | Matthew | Matthew | Bartholomew |
| 8. | Matthew | Thomas | Thomas | Matthew |
| 9. | James (son of Alpheus) | James (son of Alpheus) | James (son of Alpheus) | James (son of Alpheus) |

| | | | | |
|-----|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| 10. | Thaddeus | Thaddeus | Simon (the Zealot) | Simon (the Zealot) |
| 11. | Simon (the Zealot) | Simon (the Zealot) | Judas (son of James) | Judas (son of James) |
| 12. | Judas Iscariot | Judas Iscariot | Judas Iscariot | |

Read Matthew 4:23-25 ... Jesus Teaches and Heals the Sick

4:23 In listing the activities of Jesus, teaching was listed first followed by the preaching and finally the healing to confirm the teaching and preaching; however, the crowds were excited about the healing, but may not have listened to the message.

- The teaching in their synagogues may have been lessons from the Tanakh (Jewish Old Testament) while the good news may have been preached in public.

| Jesus' Threefold Galilean Ministry (Matthew 4:23) | |
|---|--|
| 1. | Teaching in their synagogues |
| 2. | Preaching the good news of the Kingdom |
| 3. | Healing every disease and sickness |

4:24 Although Jesus ministered in Galilee (“my wheel; revolution”), neighboring lands with a history enmity towards Israel would be attracted to His ministry.

- It may have been unsafe for the crowds to gather with all of the different ailments and demon possession, but the crowds seemed to grow.

| Jesus Healed All Types of Illness (Matthew 4:24) | |
|--|--|
| 1. | All the sick Mt 8:13, 9:29-30, 20:34; Mk 2:30, 8:23-25, 10:51-52; Lk 8:51-55, 13:11-13; Jn 9:7 |
| 2. | Afflicted by disease Mt 8:3; Lk 17:12-14 |
| 3. | Afflicted by pain Mt 9:20-22; 12:13 |
| 4. | Oppressed by Demons Mt 8:16, 9:32; Mk 1:23; Lk 9:37 |
| 5. | Epileptics Mt 17:15-18 |
| 6. | Paralytics Mt 8:6, 9:2; Jn 5:8-9 |

4:25 Jesus amassed a great following of people from His local region (Galilee), multiple cities (Decapolis), the capital city (Jerusalem), the chief Jewish region (Judea) as well as the areas beyond Jordan – to the uttermost (Acts 1:8).

5 Matthew 5:1-26

- **The Sermon on the Mount is the longest sermon in the Gospels (Matthew 5-7).**
- **Just as the Mosaic Law was meant to reveal man’s sinfulness and need for a Savior (Galatians 3:19-26; Romans 3:19-26), the ideal is unreachable by weak human efforts, so Christ is needed. No man is “good enough;” there is no moral unbeliever.**
- **The sermon moves the focus from the literal law to the attitude and motive of the individual. The sermon condemns an individual who adheres to religious rituals through rote activities, but has no relationship with God.**
- **As with Zechariah’s eight visions (Zechariah 1-6), the Sermon on the Mount reveals a spiritual world that is truer than the physical world.**

- **The Sermon on the Mount may have been a type of “ordination” for the twelve disciples (Luke 6:12-42). The act of ordination is the process of setting someone apart (consecrating, dedicating) for a ministry.**

Read Matthew 5:1-2... The Sermon on the Mount

- **Chapter 5 is the first section of the Sermon on the Mount which discusses the importance of the heart and attitude in relation to one’s purity.**

Similar Account of The Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5:1-7:29) with The Sermon on the Plain (Lk 6:17-49)

5:1 The crowds were drawn to Jesus for healing, but Jesus enjoyed time away especially for the purpose of teaching His disciples.

- Beyond purely physical healing, Jesus was the “Great Physician” for the spiritual illness of sin (Psalms 147:3; Matthew 9:12; Mark 2:17; Luke 5:31; 4:23; Jeremiah 17:14)
- The custom of Jewish synagogues in ancient times was to stand to read the scriptures and sit to preach. The act of sitting down was the demarcation between Scripture being read and the Rabbi’s teaching.
- In those days, Scripture was written on scrolls rather than in codex form (a book). Scrolls were handwritten on parchment or vellum (specially prepared animal skin) and were very expensive to produce. Scrolls would have been more easily handled while standing as well as showing reverence for the written word.
 - The word codex comes from the Latin term “caudex” which means "trunk of a tree" or “block of wood”. The Codex was invented around the time of Jesus Christ’s birth (3BC-4BC) out of necessity for less expensive scrolls. Pergamum had been the capital of the Roman province of Asia for two centuries while being a juggernaut of cultural and intellectual life of the "Hellenistic" world.
 - The libraries in Pergamum and Alexandria competed to publish scrolls, so Egypt suspended papyrus exports for scroll production. Pergamum began making parchment from sheepskin which was much more expensive to produce, so Pergamum utilized both sides of the page. The codex was an immediate success, and by the fifth century even Egypt’s literature in the form of codex outnumbered scroll production 10-to-1.
 - Scripture refers to Pergamum as “Satan’s throne” (Revelation 2:12-13)

5:2 The concept is that Jesus “took the podium” or prepared to speak with authority. This is along the lines of “ex cathedra” in speaking with the full authority of the office.

- “Ex cathedra” to a catholic speaks to their belief in the infallibility of the pope.
- Jesus may have used the same teaching examples throughout His ministry as these same truths are dispersed through the book of Luke.

Read Matthew 5:3-12 ... The Beatitudes; Those Who Are Blessed

Shared Account of the Beatitudes: Mt 5:3-12; Lk 6:20-23

5:3-10 The Eight Beatitudes with 1-4 being Private and 5-8 being Public.

- The eight beatitudes are in contrast to the eight woes in Matthew 23

- The Greek term for blessed (makarios μακάριος) means “happy.”
- 5:3 In the maturation of the gospel in a person, the beginning point is that every man is spiritual “bankrupt.” The good news comes only after realizing the bad news that man cannot meet the moral standard set by God under his own power. (2 Corinthians 12:9)
- In reference to poor versus rich, it’s not that money (in itself) is wrong, but the “love of money” creates (“is the root of”) many kinds of evil. (1 Timothy 6:10).
 - Since the Book of Matthew was directed primarily towards the Jewish community who refrained from using the term “God”, the “Kingdom of God” was called the “Kingdom of Heaven.”
- 5:4 This is a paradoxical expression that those who are “unhappy” will be “happy” (blessed). The Greek word for “mourn” (penthountes πενθοῦντες) is a strong, deep, sincere grieving about their state as a fallen man. This person will be fully forgiven and accepted in his unhappy humility.
- 5:5 In the Greek language, the word “meek” (praeis πραεῖς) inferred a negative connotation of cowering and weak. The concept of meek was a domesticated strength where a mighty animal might be controlled and utilized by the master. (Matthew 11:29)
- The people of God do not live out of greed and covetousness which is idolatry (Colossians 3:5; Ephesians 5:5). Instead, God’s people defer to others and accept their humble state in humanity. They are not power grabbing and competitive for status.
- 5:6 In the same fashion that man pursues food and drink, he should desire righteousness (Psalms 42:1). There should be a longing to know God and walk with Him relationally above all else.
- In 1943, Abraham Maslow authored a paper called “A Theory of Human Motivation” where he prioritized the foundational needs to the self-serving desires (Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs). The physiological needs of food and water were of the very basic desires. The need-to-know God is also a fundamental need just as food and water (“hunger and thirst”).
 - The Greek word for “satisfy/filled” (chortasthēsontai χορτασθήσονται) meant to gorge which related to fattening cattle.
- 5:7 Mercy is a characteristic of those who have been shown mercy (Matthew 6:12, 14-15; 18:21-25; Luke 6:38; James 2:13)
- 5:8 Those who are searching with a pure, unpolluted motive and undistracted heart will find God as He reveals Himself to them.
- 5:9 Those who bring peace will be testimonies to the world and recognized by the world to be associated with God. To be a peacemaker requires action in the midst of turmoil. (Isaiah 9:6; Ephesians 2:14)
- A witness of the gospel is a peacemaker between the recipient and the Lord (Colossians 1:20; Romans 5:10)
 - God does not call the world to be at peace with their sinful lifestyles (Matthew 10:34); however, man can have peace with God through Christ Jesus, and then live at peace in the tumult of a sinful world. (Luke 2:14; John 14:27)
 - The phrase “Sons of God” speaks to the common characteristics between God and His family (1 Peter 1:16) as well as the ability of the son to draw on the

supernatural strength of the Father. God saved His people for a Christ-like ministry to others. (Ephesians 2:10)

5:10 Suffering and persecution is the natural/normal condition of those who walk with God in a wicked and fallen world. (Romans 8:17; Philippians 1:29; 2 Timothy 3:12; 1 Peter 4:12-19)

| The Beatitudes | | | | |
|-----------------------|--|--------------------------------------|--|---|
| Verse | Blessed are... | Because... | Gift | Jesus |
| Mt 5:3 | The poor in spirit <i>(Impoverished)</i> | They will receive the Kingdom of God | Deprived given joys of empire | Humility (Hebrews 2:9; Philippians 2:5-8) |
| Mt 5:4 | Those who mourn <i>(Sad)</i> | They will be comforted | Need satisfied (Grief) | Sorrow (Isaiah 53:3; Luke 19:41; John 11:35) |
| Mt 5:5 | The gentle <i>(Tender)</i> | They will inherit the earth | Plunder without conquest | Gentleness (Matthew 11:29; 2 Corinthians 10:1) |
| Mt 5:6 | Those who hunger & thirst for righteousness <i>(Virtuous)</i> | They will be filled | Need satisfied (Yearning appetite) | Righteousness (Romans 5:17; 2 Peter 1:1; 1 John 2:1) |
| Mt 5:7 | The merciful <i>(Forgiving)</i> | They will be shown mercy | Identical reward | Merciful (Jude 1:21) |
| Mt 5:8 | The pure in heart <i>(Clean)</i> | They will see God | Glorious reward | Pure; Holy (Acts 4:27, 30) |
| Mt 5:9 | The peacemakers <i>(Peaceful)</i> | They will be called Sons of God | Reputation & identity of God's gift of peace | Peace (Philippians 4:7; 1 Peter 5:14) |
| Mt 5:10 | Those who are persecuted <i>(Mistreated)</i> | They will receive the Kingdom of God | Molested given joys of empire | Persecuted (Isaiah 52:13-53:12; John 5:16) |

5:11 Every believer should expect persecution by the world (2 Tim 3:12; 2 Cor 12:10).

- Beyond simply being mocked, the early church was accused of wicked acts like cannibalism in regards to communion; accusations of incest because of the command to love each other; accusations of treason with Jesus elevated as king; even accused of being atheistic because there was no physical representation of God.
- It is estimated that over 70 million martyrs have died throughout the ages for the Christian faith. Christians are the most persecuted religious group in the world with the deaths of several hundred to 10,000 deaths each month.
- It is estimated that over 100 million Christians are being persecuted for their beliefs at any given moment.

5:12 Believers who are persecuted are likened to the Prophets; the implication is that heavenly rewards are greater for those who are persecuted. (Acts 5:41, 16:25)

- The most impactful testimonies are when difficulties and challenges arise – not when things are going well.

Read Matthew 5:13 ... Believers are the Salt of the Earth

5:13 Believers are to reflect the will of God (e.g., sharing the good news of Jesus). There were two ways for Israel to harvest salt:

- Pour sea water into pits. As the water evaporated, a residue of salt would be left.
- Collect the salt from the Dead (Salt) Sea, but the salt was mixed with sand which often diminished the taste of salt. Unethical commercial practices included mixing valuable salt with worthless sand before selling as “pure salt.”
- The word “salary” originated during the Roman times when soldiers were frequently paid with handfuls of salt. The use of salt as a form of payment spread across the Roman Empire which was one of the reasons that Romans constructed their networks of roads.
 - As an example, one of the main roads through Italy was named the “Via Salaria” (the “Road of Salt”) which was used to move salt.
- The expression “worth its weight in salt” infers value.

| Characteristics of Salt Represent the Believer’s Responsibility (Matthew 5:13) | | |
|---|---|---|
| Flavor | Col 4:6; Mk 9:49; Job 6:6; Jn 10:10 | Impact; extracts the essence of life’s savor (abundant life). |
| Preservative | Ps 86:2, 121:7; Jer 50:20; 2 Tim 4:18; Jude 1:1 | Extends the life and usefulness of the Believer |
| Antiseptic; Disinfectant | Ez 16:4; 2 Ki 2:20-21 | Heals and restores the broken and hurting |
| Causes Thirst for Water | Jn 4:13-14 | Intensifies the desire for living water (Jesus and His Word) |
| Additive to Sacrifices | Lev 2:13; Ezra 7:20-22; Ezekiel 43:24; Rom 12:1 | Pleasing in God’s Sight |
| Sanction of Covenants | Num 18:19; 2 Chron 13:5 | Incorruptible, imperishable and unchanging commitment. |
| Currency Medium; Value of Exchange | Ez 7:22; Mt 10:31; 12:12; 1 Cor 6:20, 7:23 | The Latin word for salt and the Latin word for salary are the same word; salt was used as value and payment as in “worth your salt” |

Read Matthew 5:14-16 ... Believers are the Light of the World

5:14 Light reveals the truth and enables better decisions with understanding. The light of Jesus shines through His Believers to illumine the truth (John 9:5, 14:20; 1 Jn 1:5-7). When the Believer is elevated above the chaotic “trappings” of the world, the light of Jesus is easily witnessed in that person’s life.

5:15 The basket may be used to carry or elevate the light, but the basket should not conceal and suppress the light. The elements of this world (e.g., job, relationships, and hobbies) should be used to heighten the light instead of obstructing the spiritual truth.

5:16 The Believer is not to shine a personal light; instead, the Believer should let (allow) His light shine through behaviors (works) resulting in glory to God (not the Believer himself). A cleaner container can shine a brighter light (polluted windows cloud and cover the light).

Read Matthew 5:17-20 ... Jesus Came to Fulfill the Law

5:17 The “Law” is literally the “Torah” (Rom 3:31; Gal 4:4).

- The Jews referenced the entire Tanakh (Old Testament) as the Law and the Prophets. (Matthew 7:12; 11:13, 22:40; Luke 16:16, 24:44; Acts 13:15, 24:14, 28:23; Romans 3:21)
- The Old Testament directs the reader to the coming Messiah of Jesus Christ.
- Jesus revealed the requirements of the “law” to be stricter and additionally holy.

5:18 This concept is mentioned twice (witness) by Jesus (Mt 24:35), that the age of this sinful world will come to an end, but in regards to the law, every “dotting of an i or crossing of a t” will remain (Lk 16:17).

- Jot/Yod: smallest Greek and Hebrew letter (shown over Psalms 119:73)
- Tittle: minute detail; compare the Vav (Ps 119:41) with the Zayin (Ps 119:49) or the He (Ps 119:33) with the Heth/Khet (Ps 119:57)

5:19 Even the followers of Jesus will be judged by their actions (Lk 16:19-31; 2 Cor 5:10; 1 Pet 1:17, 4:5; Prov 5:21, 24:12; Eccl. 9:10, 12:14). Rewards will vary for Believers based on His revelation to them and their obedience to Him.

5:20 Beyond merit (as the scribes and Pharisees were outwardly well behaved) it is only through the righteousness of Jesus Christ payment for sin that a person can enter the kingdom of heaven.

- Even Paul kept the Jewish Law (Philippians 3:5) but broke God’s Law (Romans 3:10:23).
- God calls His people to an intimate relationship with Him instead of religious rituals. (Philippians 3:8-9; Romans 10:3-4)

| Six times Jesus states: “You Have Heard It Said...But I Tell You...” (Mt 5:21, 27, 31, 33, 38, 43) | | |
|---|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1. | Murder | Matthew 5:21-26 |
| 2. | Adultery/Intent | Matthew 5:27-30 |
| 3. | Divorce | Matthew 5:31-32 |
| 4. | Honesty | Matthew 5:33-37 |
| 5. | Revenge/Charity | Matthew 5:38-42 |
| 6. | Love | Matthew 5:43-47 |

Read Matthew 5:21-26 ... Murder Begins in the Heart

5:21 Israel’s ancestors were explicitly quoted twice: 1. Murder 2. Oath/Commitment (Mt 5:33)

5:22 The Aramaic term “raca” means “empty headed – not capable of life” as a “good for nothing” (used only in this instance in all of the New Testament)

- The point was that love and kindness are critical to God’s people. It requires a change of heart where attitudes and motives are meaningful.

- In the first two instances, treatment of the brethren is emphasized while here is no mention of “brothers,” so the focus in the third instance is most likely focused on unbelievers.
 - Unbelievers who are filled with arrogance and pride are indeed in danger of eternal hell. Unbelievers have rejected the gospel as they define their own truths while judging Christians as ignorant.
 - Believers are to be unified as the house of God through encouragement of the spiritual brothers (Eph 2:19; 1 Pet 2:5). Believers would be held accountable by the ruling religious council.
 - The Greek term for “fool” (μόρος μωρός) might not be the intent; instead, it might be closer to the Hebrew term for “apostate; to be cut off” (meshubah מְשֻׁבָּה).
 - Possibly saying that those who consign others to hell will themselves be consigned to hell.
 - Jesus called the Pharisees “fool” (Matthew 23:17)
 - The Greek term for “hell” (γεένναν γέενναν) referred to the garbage dump south of Jerusalem.
 - Gehenna originates from “Ge” - “valley and “Hinnom.” The valley of Hinnom was the location that children sacrifices were made to Molech (Deuteronomy 12:31; Leviticus 20:2-5; 2 Kings 16:3, 17:17, 21:6, 23:10; 2 Chronicles 28:3, 33:6; Jeremiah 7:31, 19:4-5, 32:35; Ezekiel 16:20-21, 20:26, 23:37; Psalm 106:35-38)
 - Scripture is abundantly clear that child sacrifices were wrong (Leviticus 18:21; Deuteronomy 18:10)
 - As the town trash dump, Gehenna smoldered with fire day and night. (2 Thessalonians 1:9; Revelation 14:11)
 - There is only one time (outside of the Words of Jesus) where the term “hell” (Gehenna) is used (James 3:6).
 - Of the 1,944 verses that contain Jesus’ words throughout the four gospels, nearly 60 verses (3%) directly or indirectly refer to hell while 192 verses (10%) reference “heaven,” “eternal life” and His coming “kingdom.”
- 5:23-24 Believers who have offended a brother (fellow Believer) should repent and reconcile prior to sacrificing to God.
- This is not directed at believers who have been offended, but at believers who have offended others.
 - The Lord desires unity in His church which requires humility and sensitivity to fellow believers.

Shared Guidance on Settling Legal Matters: Mt 5:25-26; Lk 12:57-59

5:25-26 Just as the unrepentant are called to immediate reconciliation with the Lord, believers are called to urgently come to terms with those whom are owed.

- Believers are intended to be a testimony of love to the world which is the reason that they should not take each other to court. Regardless of whether they win the court case, the act of taking a Christian brother to court is already a loss. (1 Corinthians 6:1-11)

Read Matthew 5:27-30 ... Adultery Begins in the Heart

- **The command against adultery is sequenced after the command not to murder as they both are selfish seeking and result in annihilation of another person.**

5:27-28 Intentions reveal sin of the heart. Believers should not gratify sinful inclinations nor feed and encourage polluted minds. It is wrong to pursue lust to any degree.

- Jesus intensified the commands of God by revealing them as attitudes and motives of the heart.

5:29 “Cut off/stop/terminate” sin early. Jewish teaching instructed Kal-ve-chomer meaning to “nip sin in the bud” before sin moves to a deeper (graver) stage.

- Those turning from the old self to a new life in Christ must purge their life of the old entanglements (e.g., relationships, hobbies, etc.) for a cleansed life in Christ (Dt 7:1-6, 20:16; James 1:27; Heb 12:1, 4).

5:30 As “the eye” represents input into one’s heart, so “the hand” represents the actions of what a person does. It is better to go without than to go without God (Prov 15:16-17, 16:8). Momentary fulfillment of the flesh is not to be compared with the eternal judgment of hell (Mt 3:12, 25:41).

Read Matthew 5:31-32 ... The Ills of Divorce

- **The “ills” of divorce is sequenced immediately after the commands against adultery as one may lead to the other.**

5:31-32 Marriage reflects the relationship between the Believer and God; often the struggles of the marriage parallel an individual’s struggle with God. The Lord hates divorce (Mal 2:16; Mt 19:6).

- Although Israel was given a process to go through the process of divorce (Deuteronomy 24:1-4), when a man divorced his wife, other may have construed that she was unfaithful.

Read Matthew 5:33-37 ... The Ills of Vows & Oaths

- **The failure of vows immediately follows the prevalence of divorce; man’s word is not to be trusted as he is morally frail and has little control of circumstances.**

5:33 The integrity of a man’s word is to be treated with the utmost significance. (Deuteronomy 23:21-23)

- Modern society devalues the gravity of lying and breaking one’s word, but this reveals the extent of the unfaithful man.

5:34-35 The things of God should not be brought into the instability of men. Each of the listed items should be viewed as God’s possession instead of man’s control to be vowed upon.

| The Misperception of Man’s Vows | |
|--|----------------------------|
| Man’s View | Reality |
| Heaven | God’s Throne |
| Earth | God’s Footstool |
| Jerusalem | The city of the great King |

5:36 Breaking an oath is so serious that believers should avoid taking oaths altogether (James 5:12) because so much is outside of man's control (James 4:13-16).

- God's sovereignty indicates His influence over heaven and earth beyond any other power; believers should allow for any plan to be interrupted by His will.
- Believers should be characterized by their honesty.

Read Matthew 5:38-42 ... The Charity of the Believer

5:38-41 All that a Believer possesses is from God and should be readily surrendered for the purpose of testifying to Him. This world is not the home of the Believer; while personal rights belong to those of this world, His people yield to His care and blessing. Jesus submitted Himself to the evil of this world without struggle.

5:42 *"Give to the one who asks you, and don't turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you."*

Read Matthew 5:43-47 ... The Believer is to Love Their Enemies

5:43 The concept of Jews loving their "neighbors" was limited to only Jews (Leviticus 19:18) while possibly hating others around them.

5:44 Believers are called to love, bless, do good, and pray for enemies instead of nagging, bickering and correcting those in disagreement. The Lord changes hearts as He wills.

5:45 Believers are to reflect the characteristics of the Father in Heaven, and as He blesses the worldly as well as His people, so too should the family of God display His love to everyone irrespectively.

5:46-47 Unfortunately, believers habitually reflect the philosophies and activities of the world instead of living uniquely for Him.

Read Matthew 5:48 ... Believers Are to be Perfect and Meet God's Perfect Standard

5:48 Believers are to be perfect (2 Samuel 22:33, 1 John 3:3) and holy (Leviticus 11:44, 1 Peter 1:15) in the Lord.

- The crescendo of this chapter is that no one should think of themselves as being a "good person." God's standard is His own perfection that no man can achieve outside of Christ's imputed righteousness. However, as the Spirit of God works in and through the believer, the individual can be sensitive to his own failures while loving others in spite of their shortcomings. (1 John 1:7)
- The attitudes and motives of believers are the causes of outward sin. Believers should be "love" oriented instead of "rule" oriented.

7 Matthew 6

- **Chapter 6 is the next section of the Sermon on the Mount that focuses on the motive behind good works being to please God instead of others.**

| Three Representative Acts Performed Ostentatiously with the Wrong Motive | |
|---|-----------------|
| Alms Giving | Matthew 6:1-4 |
| Prayer | Matthew 6:5-13 |
| Fasting | Matthew 6:16-18 |

“For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.”

Matthew 5:20

Read Matthew 6:1-4 ... The Way to Give

6:1 “Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of people, to be seen by them. Otherwise, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.”

- The beginning words “be careful” or “take care” are based on the Greek word “Prosechete” (Προσέχετε) which means to “beware.” This is the first use of “beware” in the New Testament.

| Areas Where the New Testament Warns to “Beware” (Prosechete Προσέχετε) | |
|---|---|
| Matthew 6:1 | <i>“Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of people, to be seen by them.”</i> |
| Matthew 7:15 | <i>“Beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep’s clothing but inwardly are ravaging wolves.”</i> |
| Matthew 10:17 | <i>“Because people will hand you over to Sanhedrin and flog you in their synagogues, beware of them.”</i> |
| Matthew 16:6 | <i>“Jesus told them, “Watch out and beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees.”</i> |
| Matthew 16:11 | <i>“Why is it you don’t understand that when I told you, ‘Beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees,’ it wasn’t about bread?”</i> |
| Luke 12:1 | <i>“Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.”</i> |
| Luke 17:3 | <i>“Be on your guard. If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him.”</i> |
| Luke 20:46 | <i>“Beware of the scribes, who want to go around in long robes and who love greetings in the marketplaces, the front seats in the synagogues, and the places of honor at banquets.”</i> |
| Luke 21:34 | <i>“Be on your guard, so that your minds are not dulled from carousing, drunkenness, and worries of life, or that day will come on you unexpectedly.”</i> |
| Acts 5:34-35 | <i>“A Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law who was respected by all the people, stood up in the Sanhedrin and ordered the men to be taken outside for a little while. He said to them, “Men of Israel, be careful about what you’re going to do to these men.”</i> |
| Acts 20:28 | <i>“Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock that the Holy Spirit has appointed you to as overseers, to shepherd the church of God, which He purchased with His own blood.”</i> |

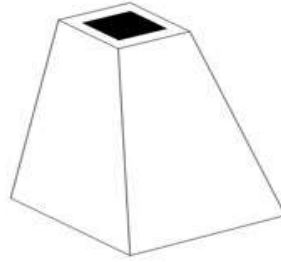
- The Jews esteemed “alms giving” to such an importance that the act was called “doing righteousness” (zedakah, also translated justice or charity). (Proverbs 19:17)
- Some Rabbi’s taught that alms giving was a prerequisite for heaven.
- The phrase “to be seen by others” (theathēnai θεαθῆναι) is used twice in Scripture to warn about performing good works pretentiously and ostentatiously (Matthew 6:1, 23:5)
- The Jews were hesitant to mention “God” (Yahweh), so Matthew uses “Father in Heaven.”

6:2 In the women’s court of the Temple, there were 13 collection boxes for offerings.

When a large number of coins were dropped in the collection box, it was referred to as “Sounding the Trumpet” (Mk 12:41-44)

Collection Boxes of the Temple

Wide Bottom
with a
Narrow Top



Shaped like a
Trumpet

- This is similar to the adage “Don’t toot your own horn.”
- This is the first use of the term “hypocrite” in the New Testament, and this term was only used by Jesus in the New Testament.
- The Greek term for “hypocrite” (hypokritai ὑποκριταί) continues the theatrical theme of not doing good works to be seen by men. (Matthew 6:5, 16, 7:5, 15:7, 22:18, 23:13-15, 23, 25, 27, 29; 24:51; Mark 7:6; Luke 6:42, 12:56, 13:15)
 - In the 1st century BC, actors were called hypocrites.
 - Believers should not compete to be in the spotlight as many preachers and worship leaders do.
 - The root of the word “hypocrite” is a compound noun based on two Greek words: hypo (“under”) and krínō (judge). In ancient times, actors wore masks, so the intent is to judge the person under the mask.



- The Greek term for “truly” or “I assure you” is the transliterated word from Hebrew “Amen” (Hebrew: אָמֵן Greek: ἀμήν). Transliteration means that the same word is in one language as another without being changed to translate.
 - The word “Amen” is meant to be firm or certain; it means “so be it”, “I affirm” or “I agree.” The word “amen” is also used for the word “faith” (Habakkuk 2:4)
 - Jesus is the only one in Scripture that begins a sentence with the word “Amen” which He used to express that He had something significant to say. (Matthew 11:11; 16:28; 25:45)
- 6:3 The right hand is one of power, and as a man allocates His strength in charity, the spiritually weak side of the Believer is not to evaluate and capitalize on the act of generosity.
- The meaning of this verse is to act in obedience to God for His glory and not our own.
- 6:4 Believers will be rewarded to varying degrees (2 Cor 5:10, Lk 14:14, Mt 16:27, Rev 22:12). This is the first of three times that Jesus states that the Father will reward His people (Mt 6:6, 18).

Read Matthew 6:5-8 ... The Way to Pray

6:5 The focus of praying for the believer should be the Lord instead of anything else (1 Tim 2:8).

- The standard Jewish prayer was standing with hands and head lifted to the heavens. Jesus is not criticizing the position, but instead, He is reproaching the desire to stand in a public place when the hour of prayer arrives, so others can watch you pray.
- The Jews had scheduled a morning (9:00am) and evening (3:00pm) sacrifice where a lamb was sacrificed in the Temple. The Jews also added noon (12:00pm), so at those three times, the Jews would turn and face the Temple to pray.
 - The ostentatious individuals would ensure that they were in a public place (i.e., marketplace) at those three places, so everyone can witness them praying.

6:6 The thought is to dedicate an inner/private room for prayers to the Lord, so that distractions would not distract from the time of talking with God.

- Jesus continues to emphasize a personal faith instead of a public, ritualistic religion.

6:7 Prayers should not be meaningless babbling or repeated chants (1 Kings 8:26; Acts 19:34); instead, prayers should be a meaningful time of sharing one's heart with the Lord.

- Most conversations seem to work best when statements are brief and frequent.

6:8 Believers do not need to elaborate and explain the situation to God because God already understands the needs of His people before they realize their own needs.

Read Matthew 6:9-13 ... The Model Prayer

Shared Account of the "Model Prayer": Mt 6:9-13; Lk 11:1-4

- **This "Lord's Prayer" was a model for the disciples (unlike the "Lord's Prayer" of John 17).**
- **Although the Lord's prayer begins and ends with praise, thanksgiving isn't explicitly mentioned due to the fact that gratitude should be perpetual (1 Thessalonians 5:18; Eph 5:20).**
- **The Outline of the Lord's Prayer follows the structure of the 10 Commandments from a focus on God, His provision of needs, and treatment of others (Exodus 20:1-17; Deuteronomy 5:1-21)**

| Seven Step Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13) | |
|---|---|
| 1. | Our Father, Who art in Heaven |
| 2. | Hallowed be Thy Name |
| 3. | Thy Kingdom Come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. |
| 4. | Give us this day our daily bread |
| 5. | Forgive our debts as we forgive our debtors |
| 6. | Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil |
| 7. | For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever |

6:9 The term “Father” (Greek: Pater Πάτερ) highlights an intimacy of care and provision; the term “Father” was also used in the Old Testament (Isaiah 63:16; Psalm 103:13; Malachi 3:17). Jesus uses a different Aramaic word “Abba” that is not used in this verse.

- The communal fatherhood is emphasized by the word “our.”
- God is exalted in the heavens emphasizing the vast separation between His ways and man’s. God’s name should be revered as holy (Hagiasthētō Ἁγιασθήτω).
 - The name represents the character of the person (Psalm 9:10).
 - The phrase “in Jesus name” is frequently used to conclude prayers, but the inference is that believers are praying in the Spirit and character of Jesus.
- The holiness of God again speaks to His immeasurable separation in goodness which is far beyond what man can ever be or comprehend.

6:10 The kingdom of God refers to His sovereignty as the King.

- His divine will is obediently followed in heaven, and His earthly creation should also completely submit to His purposes.
- God presently reigns in men’s hearts, but He will materially reign over all the earth during the millennial kingdom.

| “Your Kingdom Come...” | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| Past | Present | Future |
| Luke 13:28 | Luke 17:21 Matthew 4:17, 12:28 | Matthew 6:10 Luke 11:2 John 18:36 |

6:11 The Lord meets the physical needs (not comforts) of His people (Exodus 16:4; Proverbs 30:8-9), while also meeting their spiritual needs (John 6:58).

- The reliance is completely on the Lord instead of man incorrectly considering himself to be self-sustaining. An example might be manna where God’s people enjoyed provision today and trusted Him for provision tomorrow (Exodus 16:13-21)
- Believers should trust God’s sustenance as we walk by faith.
- In Scripture, the bread can represent God’s body given for His people (Luke 22:19) as well as the daily time with Him in His Word (John 6:27 -51; Isaiah 55:2)

6:12 Believers should reflect God’s forgiveness through the forgiveness of others.

- Rabbi’s treated the word “debt” (opheilēmata ὀφειλήματα) and “sin” (hamartias ἁμαρτίας) as synonymous.
- Matthew records the word “debt” while Luke 11:4 records the word “sin”

6:13 God does not tempt anyone (James 1:13), but as the Believer grows increasingly closer to Him, the Believer may be accosted by myriad temptations that can entangle.

- The prayer is to escape Satan’s efforts under God’s protection and power (Job 1:8, 2:3). The Lord’s kingdom is eternal (Dan 7:18).

Read Matthew 6:14-15 ... The Necessity of Forgiveness

6:14-15 The forgiveness of God corresponds to the forgiveness of His Believers (Mt 18:21-35; Mk 11:25-26, Lk 6:37; Col 3:13)

- This is the spiritual principle that believers will act out the state of their heart.

- Because believers have experienced the forgiveness of God, believers will forgive others. (Luke 7:43, 47) However, if a person has not received forgiveness, they cannot forgive others (Matthew 5:7, 18:35; Mark 11:23; Luke 6:36-37; James 2:13, 5:9). An intimate walk with Jesus changes a believer's life.

Read Matthew 6:16-18 ... The Way to Fast

6:16 That fasting is expected of Believers can be seen through the use of "when you fast" instead of "if you fast" (Mt 9:15; Mk 2:20; Lk 5:35).

- True fasting is a heartfelt change in activity (Isaiah 58); fasting is an act of self-denial replaced by communication with God.
- God's provision (food) is for His glory and not for selfish hoarding or fleshly gorging.
- Throughout Old Testament times, once a year Israel fasted together as a nation on Yom Kippur (Leviticus 23:27-32).
 - The Rabbi's multiplied the fast to two times each week; the first fast was on Thursday when they believe that Moses ascended Mt Sinai, and then on Monday when they believed Moses descended from Mt Sinai.
 - Most Rabbis (especially Pharisees) would make a noticeable exhibition of these fast days.
 - Rabbi's wouldn't comb their hair or beards on these days, and some wore make-up to appear haggard.
- The Greek term for "truly" or "I assure you" is the transliterated word from Hebrew "Amen" (Hebrew: אָמֵן Greek: ἀμήν). Transliteration means that the same word is in one language as another without being changed to translate.
 - The word "Amen" is meant to be firm or certain; it means "so be it", "I affirm" or "I agree." The word "amen" is also used for the word "faith" (Habakkuk 2:4)

6:17 This is the third instance in this passage of God rewarding private actions (Mt 6:4, 6). A personal, private relationship with the Lord is encouraged.

- The emphasis is not on keeping secret and confidential the service to God, but the emphasis is on the attitude of the heart.
- Spiritually, when fasting, the believer is to be filled with the Spirit (anointing of oil) and washed by God's Word (Eph 5:26).

6:18 While worldly men commit all sorts of sin in privacy, godly men are to glorify God in private.

Read Matthew 6:19-21 ... The Treasure to Collect

6:19 Worldly treasures are transient and futile.

- Materialism, greed and covetousness are idolatry (Colossians 3:5; Ephesians 5:5).
- Man cannot be ruled by the desire for money while having the desire for God (Matthew 6:24).
- There is nothing wrong intrinsically with wealth and possessions; however, the desire for money and underlying attitude to gain more can lead to many sins (1 Timothy 6:10)
- The Greek term translated "rust" (brōsis βρῶσις) is actually used for the consumption or spoilage of food. (John 6:55; Romans 14:17)

- The Greeks referred to thieves as “mud-diggers” (toichoruchos υμων) because the houses/huts were made of mud walls and sun-dried bricks where the thief could dig through.

| Temporal Nature of Three Major Forms of Ancient Wealth (Matthew 6:19) | |
|--|------------------------------------|
| Clothing (including ornamental/festival clothes) | Moths |
| Storehouses of Grains/Harvests/Food | Consumption/Spoilage (Rats/Mildew) |
| Metals or Gems/Jewels | Thieves steal |

6:20 Every man stores up treasures or wrath in heaven (Romans 2:5). Man can lose what’s he values on earth (1 John 2:15-17) whereas God protects His people and their eternal rewards (1 Timothy 6:17-19; 1 Peter 1:4-5; Revelation 14:13).

6:21 *“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also”*

- The identity of a man is reflected in his priorities.

Read Matthew 6:22-23 ... Guard Your Sight

6:22 The Jewish culture was that the eyes/ears were the “windows” of the soul.

- The eye was a metaphor to what an individual let into their lives spiritually; the eye is a metaphor the moral/spiritual sensitivity.
- When an eye is clearer, increased light (enlightenment) can shine through.

6:23 Believers should keep themselves from being polluted by their intake (James 1:27; Mt 5:28). “Aiyin Tovah” is a Hebrew term meaning “good eye” which describes someone being generous while the Hebrew term “Aiyin Ra’ah” means “bad eye” identifying someone as selfishly stingy. The Jews talked a great deal of the “evil eye.”

Read Matthew 6:24 ... Do Not Let Money Command You

6:24 A man’s ambition cannot be the will of God and money. A man will either rely on God to meet his needs or the man will proudly pursue self-effort and self-support.

- *“He will hate one and love the other”* is a Hebrew idiom of comparison (Genesis 29:30-33; Malachi 1:2-3; Romans 9:13; Matthew 21:15; Luke 14:26; John 12:25).
 - The term “hate” shows a priority and a relativism to what is to be loved.
 - The Greek word for “riches” or “money” is mamónas (μαμωνᾶς) which has a root of “that which is leaned on” which evolved into “that which is trusted in.” Believers should trust in God instead of money.



Read Matthew 6:25-34 ... God's Provision Alleviates Anxiety

Shared Teaching of Anxiety: Mt 6:25-32; Lk 12:22-32

6:25 Believers should never worry (1 Peter 5:7; Philippians 4:6). This worrying leads to self-effort and pursuit of wealth.

- The planning for the future is not the issue, but instead the priority of resources dedicated to this world or the hereafter.

6:26 God takes care of and provides for His helpless creatures.

6:27 Worrying is futility in that man cannot control his own destiny. Man should depend on God instead of the temporal wealth.

6:28-30 God adorned the flowers of the field without their efforts and He does the same for His people.

6:31-32 Worry is demonstrated through questions and human reasoning. Believers should not be like the worldly idolaters who focus on their own efforts instead of having faith in God as the provider.

6:33 *"Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be provided for you."*

6:34 Believers should not worry about the future, but should focus on God in the immediate day.

8 Matthew 7

- **Chapter 7 will conclude the Sermon on the Mount by discussing two poor responses to God's Word: 1. The Zealous Self-Righteous 2. The Falsely Religious (Luke 18:9)**

Read Matthew 7:1-6 ... Correct Yourself Before Judging Others

Shared Account of the "Model Prayer": Mt 6:9-13; Lk 6:37-42, 11:1-4

7:1 The Sermon on the Mount censures the Pharisaical practice of hypocritically holding others to a higher standard than they themselves can attain (Rom 2:1).

- Judgment should not be according to one's own standard or outward appearances (John 7:24), but instead according to Scripture (Lk 12:57-59; 1 Cor 5:12).
- The Greek term for "judge" (krinete κρίνετε) is the root word for "criticize" and "critique"; this Scripture discourages a critical spirit. (Luke 6:36-38, 41-42)
- Those who understand God's truths should not be perpetual critics of others.

7:2 The measures of a man should be fair, equitable and balanced (Dt 25:13-15; Prov 20:22-23).

- This may have been a proverb in the culture during that time, that an individual would be judged to the same degree that they judge others (Matthew 5:7; 6:14-15; 18:35; Mark 11:25; James 2:13, 5:9)
- Believers should reflect on their own sinful state and fallen nature prior to judging.
- All of life is judging (the reader of this sentence is judging the sentence right now); although evaluation is a constant state, believers do have the choice as to the standards by which (and the attitudes of which) we judge and evaluate.

- 7:3 The first question is different than the second; this question involves the reason that someone feels the need to correct a particular sin of a brother without first correcting their own life.
- The answer to “why” might include self-preservation, power grabbing or ego. As long as the focus is someone’s else sin, the personal sin does not get attention.
 - The speck or log is a lifeless derivative of the tree as it symbolizes the living man. Believers should correct the dead shreds of their own spiritual lives before focusing on the correction of others (Lk 6:41-42).
- 7:4 The second question is about effectiveness. “How” can the removal of someone else’s speck be effective when attempting to surgically remove it around your own “log” blocking your sight?
- 7:5 Jesus preached against the religious leaders because of their subjective requirements and judgment of others while failing to live correctly themselves. Believers must first settle themselves with the Lord prior to extending His judgments to others.
- Hypocrite is a form of judging. The root of the word “hypocrite” is a compound noun based on two Greek words: hypo (“under”) and krínō (judge). In ancient times, actors wore masks, so the intent is to judge the person under the mask.
 - In the 1st century BC, the Greek term for “hypocrite” (hypokritai ὑποκριταὶ) was what actors were called.
 - This verse supports the fact that individuals should assist their brothers in removing the “specks” from their eyes, but only after removing the sin from one’s own life first. (Galatians 6:1; Romans 14:7-10; 1 Corinthians 5:12; James 4:11-12)
- 7:6 Once the Believer has repented and sought the Lord, even then the believer should consider the people that are receiving the wisdom. Do not waste the resources (e.g., time, money, effort, etc.) in the futility of “fixing” unbelievers (e.g., by correcting their worldly ways).
- The unbeliever must repent and personally come to the Lord for salvation and correction as a Believer. Without the Spirit, the unbeliever will not understand God’s calling nor truly repent from self-gratification.
 - Pearls may represent the gospel message. (Matthew 13:45-46)
 - “Dogs” and “swine” are never positioned positively in the Word of God, but instead they are representative of the ravenous, greedy things of this world.
 - The term “dogs” in the Old Testament could mean anyone unclean including male prostitutes.
 - “Swine” were also unclean to the Jews in the way they lived and consumed.
 - People should be evaluated with what they will do with the correction including possibly turning on and harming the one who is providing correction and direction.

Read Matthew 7:7-12 ... Keep Asking, Searching & Knocking

- 7:7 The Believer is to perpetually continue to ask, search, and knock to enter into the Lord’s presence in fellowship and communion.
- In the context of this chapter, this could be applied to the relationships of individuals as they get to know (and open up) to each other.

- Individuals can open the door to fellowship with the Lord (Revelation 3:20).
- 7:8 *“For everyone who asks receives, and the one who searches finds, and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.”*
- The life of a believer does not consist of exceptional acts sporadically performed intermittently; instead, the life of a believer is one of continual and persistent faithfulness in following our Master.
- 7:9-10 Believers know how to meet an individual’s needs (physically and spiritually).
- Physically, those who hunger can receive bread. (Matthew 14:13-21; 15:32-39)
 - Spiritually, this entails giving an unbeliever the sustenance of the bread of life (Jesus – Jn 6:49-50,53; Lk 4:3) instead of judgment by a fellow Believer (Rock – 1 Peter 2:5, Lk 3:8, 19:40, Jn 2:6).
- 7:10 Believers should disciple others into fellowship with other followers of Christ (Fish – Mt 13:47-48) instead of leaving fellow believers to the wiles of Satan (Snake – Mt 23:33).
- 7:11 Man is evil. Although society contends in the “goodness of man,” Jesus refers to man as evil. But men (albeit evil) know how to do some good; how much more does God know how to give good gifts to His children.
- The Father will impart the Holy Spirit to provide wisdom and counsel those who are hurting. (Luke 11:13)
- 7:12 A summary statement of the Law and Prophets (Old Testament) is to “do unto others as you would have them do for you.”

Read Matthew 7:13-14 ... The Narrow Gate to Eternal Life

- 7:13 “Narrow” is mentioned seven times in Scripture (Numbers 22:24, 26; Joshua 17:15; Proverbs 23:27) and three times in the New Testament (Matthew 7:14; Lk 13:23-24).
- Although salvation is completely free (Ephesians 2:8-9), the following sanctification will cost all of the old nature (Ephesians 2:10; Luke 9:23, 14:26-27, 33; Matthew 16:24, 25:31-46; Mark 8:34).
 - Man can come to God “just as I am”; however, they cannot remain just as they are. Man cannot come to God by works, but man does not grow in God without works (James 2:14-26). It has been said that coming to the Lord is more than just “decision”, it is also “discipleship.”
 - There are two “ways” – one of God and one of Man. (Deuteronomy 30:15-19; Isaiah 1:19-20; Jeremiah 21:8)
 - The way of man is certain death (Proverbs 14:12, 16:25).
- 7:14 Few find salvation in Jesus (Luke 13:22-24)
- The sheep come to salvation through their Shepherd (John 10:7).
 - The Greek word for “difficult/hard” (tethlimmenē τεθλιμμένη) is associated with the Greek word (thlibomenoi θλιβόμενοι) defined as “afflicted” (2 Corinthians 4:8; 7:5; Hebrews 11:37; 1 Thessalonians 3:4; 2 Thessalonians 1:6-7; 1 Timothy 5:10).
 - It is normal for believers to suffer (1 Peter 7:12-19; 2 Timothy 1:8, 2:3, 4:5; Philippians 1:29; 1 Thessalonians 3:3-4; Matthew 24:9)
 - Scripture encourages individuals to count the cost prior to coming to the Lord (Luke 14:28-30).

Read Matthew 7:15-20 ... Be Wary of False Religious Teachers & Judge by Their Fruit

7:15 False religious teachers resemble believers, but instead of building up the body, they demolish and destroy. A sign of a false religious teacher is a wake of chaos and disunity.

- Jesus repeatedly discussed false religious leaders (Matthew 24:4-5, 11, 23-24; Mark 13:22).

| The Determination of False Religious Leaders Consists of the Truth of Jesus/Gospel & Their Lifestyle | |
|--|---------------------------|
| What is spoken in God's name must come true every time | Deuteronomy 13:1-3, 18:22 |
| The actions of the religious leader are critical | Titus 1:16; 1 John 4:7-11 |
| Theology must be Jesus centered as fully God & Man | 1 John 4:1-3 |

- The shepherd should be focused on feeding the sheep instead of fleecing the sheep. The shepherd should be interested in enriching the sheep's life instead of taking the sheep's life.

7:16 Spiritual fruit (Galatians 5:22) does not originate with painful sinful practices (e.g., thorns; thistles). The words, teaching and lifestyle of the religious leader must be consistent with the word of God.

- Scripture often uses thorns and thistles to represent the consequences of sin (Genesis 3:17-18; Hosea 10:8)

7:17-18 Believers should be able to identify good, spiritual fruit in their lives (Jn 13:35).

7:19 The tree that does not produce good fruit will be destroyed in fire.

- John the Baptist preached the same message to those who would not accept Jesus as Messiah (Matthew 3:10).
- Christless teachers with Christless messages will be thrown into the lake of fire.
- The Greek word for fire (πῦρ πῦρ) is used repeatedly with the Greek terms "eternal" (αἰῶνιον αἰώνιον) and "unquenchable" (ἀσβεστον ἄσβεστον).
 - Eternal Fire: Matthew 18:8; 25:41
 - Unquenchable Fire: Mark 9:43-48
- The Greek term for "hell" (γεένναν γέενναν) referred to the garbage dump south of Jerusalem. (Matthew 5:22, 29-30; Mark 9:43, 45, 47; Luke 12:5)
 - Gehenna originates from "Ge" - "valley and "Hinnom." The valley of Hinnom was the location that children sacrifices were made to Molech (Deuteronomy 12:31; Leviticus 20:2-5; 2 Kings 16:3, 17:17, 21:6, 23:10; 2 Chronicles 28:3, 33:6; Jeremiah 7:31, 19:4-5, 32:35; Ezekiel 16:20-21, 20:26, 23:37; Psalm 106:35-38)
 - Scripture is abundantly clear that child sacrifices were wrong (Leviticus 18:21; Deuteronomy 18:10)
 - As the town trash dump, Gehenna smoldered with fire day and night. (2 Thessalonians 1:9; Revelation 14:11)

7:20 False teachers can be recognized by their teaching/theology (1 John 4:1-3;

Deuteronomy 13:1-3, 18:22) and actions/lifestyles (Luke 3:8-14; John 15:8-10; Ephesians 5:9-12; Colossians 1:10; James 3:17-18; Titus 1:16; 1 John 4:7-11).

Read Matthew 7:21-23 ... God Rejects Those Who Claim Him as Lord but Disobey

7:21 True lordship results in obedience producing fruit (Deuteronomy 20:9-20) instead of paying the gospel "lip service."

- True lordship results in submission to His will as it is defined in His Word.

- The Greek word for “Lord” is “Kyrie” (Κύριε), and the repetition of the calling represents excitement and intensity in the calling.
- The will of God is to know Jesus and the gospel message (1 Timothy 2:4, 2 Peter 3:9; Matthew 18:14; John 6:39-40)

7:22 Many people believe that Jesus is their Savior, but He will reject them because they rejected Him as the true Lord of their lives (Lk 6:46).

- The relationship with Him cannot be replaced with work for Him.
- “Works oriented” focuses on the works that they did instead of the “work” that Jesus completed on the cross.

| |
|---|
| The Spiritual Works Performed in Jesus’ Name, But He Doesn’t “Know” (Matthew 7:22) |
| Prophecy in His Name |
| Drive Out Demons in His Name |
| Performed Many Miracles in His Name |

7:23 The Omniscient Lord Who knows everything (the Lord Jesus) will send the fallen and deceived masses away because He never “knew” them (John 17:6; Galatians 4:9). Each sinner will be held accountable to the law (Matthew 5:17; James 2:10).

- The Lord says that He “never” knew them; it is not that He knew them once, but then forgot them.
- The Greek term for “never” (Oudepote Οὐδέποτε) is also used to say that the animal sacrifices could never take away sins, but Christ did (Hebrews 10:11-12).
 - Love never fails (1 Corinthians 13:8).

Read Matthew 7:24-29 ... The Two Foundations

Shared Parable of Spiritual Foundation: Mt 7:24-27; Lk 6:46-49

7:24 Wise men go beyond simply hearing the words of Jesus to acting on them (James 1:22) and building upon the foundation of Jesus Christ (1 Cor 3:11; Eph 2:20).

- Signs and wonders do not determine a righteous walk with God (2 Thessalonians 2:9-10).

7:25 The various elements of life (rain/blessings; rivers/worldly chaos; winds/spiritual battles) were not detrimental to the spiritual walk rooted and established in Jesus.

7:26 The truth of the Lord lasts forever while the subjective beliefs and opinions of mankind are ever-changing. Those who do not apply God’s truths come to ruin as if built upon shifting sand (e.g., faulty premises).

7:27 The spiritual foundation can be assessed during times of challenge, trial and persecution.

7:28-29 In those days, the teachers would quote the thoughts of elder Rabbi’s, while Jesus spoke from His own understanding of Scripture (Mk 1:22; Lk 4:32). Beyond preaching Jesus also demonstrated an authority over evil spirits (Lk 4:36).

- An intimate relationship with Jesus is the key instead of education on theology.
- Knowing God is a spiritual relationship instead of religious rituals.

Read Matthew 8:1-4 ... Jesus Heals a Man with a Skin Disease

Shared Account of Leper: Mt 8:1-4; Mk 1:40-45; Lk 5:12-16

8:1 Mountains refer to authority, and during the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus had revealed truths which would be confirmed in His miraculous works as He cared for people and healed them. Jesus demonstrated His power through “signs” (semeion σημεῖον) as He called hearers to believe and have faith in His word.

- The term “miracle” is not native to Scripture’s original manuscripts. The term “miracle” has a Latin origin from the 12th century when the word was used to describe the “signs” that the Lord supernaturally performed. A “sign” is a supernatural indication of a truth of God.

8:2 As this man pleads with the Lord from his knees, so too do many believers approach the Lord prayerfully on their knees in the same way.

- The leprous man did not doubt the power of Jesus, but he wanted to ensure that it was the will of Jesus to heal him.
- Leprosy is characteristic of sin as: 1. it starts small 2. it numbs the individual to feeling 3. it causes a separated life 4. it is often hereditary (2 Sam 3:29; 2 Ki 5:27)
 - In the Old Testament, leprosy is defined and symbolized various types of sinful conditions (Leviticus 13). In ancient times, lepers were required to follow a certain protocol (Leviticus 13:45-47):
 - Hair must be left unbound/unkempt
 - Lepers had to wear a mask over their mouth (“cover their upper lip”)
 - Lepers had to cry out unclean.
 - During Covid-19, all of the world covered their mouths with masks as if contaminated with leprosy.
 - Leprosy could be a judgment from God:
 - Miriam, the sister of Moses (Numbers 12:10-15)
 - Gehazi, the servant of Elisha (2 Kings 5:27)
 - Joab’s Family, commander of David (2 Samuel 3:28-29)
 - Leviticus 14 is a ceremonial purification for dealing with leprosy:
- The Greek word for “Lord” is “Kyrie” (Κύριε) which could simply mean “sir” (proper manners) or the fuller authority (submission).
 - This follows shortly after the lesson of Matthew 7:21-22; not everyone who comes to God requesting something is truly a child of God. An intimate relationship with (and submission to) God is calling for every man.

8:3 Jesus doesn’t simply heal the leper, but Jesus touches the man to heal him (1 John 3:3)

8:4 Jesus desired that individuals to fulfill the law requirements as best they could (Leviticus 14:2).

- This witness would have testified of Jesus’ power to the priests. As Jesus taught in synagogues, this would have added credibility to the ministry of Jesus. It was not recorded that the healed leper ever went to the priests.
- Later in Matthew 12:16-17, this is explained that Jesus clearly did this to fulfill Isaiah’s prophecy of the Messiah. Unbelieving pundits continue to theorize on

reasons that Jesus would tell someone to keep silent instead of believing the clear explanation of God's word.

- **Jesus ministered to the socially outcast (Lepers) as well as the racially outcast (Roman Centurion).**

Read Matthew 8:5-13 ... The Servant of a Centurion with Great Faith is Healed

Shared Account of Centurion: Mt 8:5-13; Lk 7:1-10

8:5 Jesus relocated from Nazareth to Capernaum as He worked from there during His ministry (Mt 4:13; Mk 2:1).

- Capernaum ("city of repentance") was thought to be the city of Nahum, the prophet. Just as Jonah had preached salvation to Nineveh, Nahum preached damnation upon them. In the same vein, Capernaum would also reject the teaching of the Lord to their destruction (Lk 10:15-16).

8:6 While many were simply referring to Jesus as "Rabbi" (Teacher – Mt 26:25), this centurion recognizes Jesus as "Lord." Jesus is more than simply a "good man," He is God incarnate.

8:7 Without consideration or assessment of the disease, Jesus is readily willing to go and heal. While some sinners consider their sin to be beyond forgiveness, Jesus will eagerly heal them from their sin (Mk 2:17; James 5:16; 1 Pet 2:24).

8:8-9 Although a man of authority and well respected by elders (Lk 7:4), the centurion considered himself unworthy of the Lord's visit. He understood that Jesus could work throughout creation without having to personally visit any given locale; the word of Jesus transcends geographical boundaries.

8:10 Throughout the miraculous ministry of Jesus, it was only faith that amazed Him (Lk 7:9). Jesus was amazed at the faith of the Gentiles, but He was also amazed at the lack of faith from the Jews (Mk 6:6).

- The act of faith by a Believer is exceptionally pleasing to the Lord.

8:11 Beyond Israelites, Gentiles from all over the world (Lk 13:29) will come to Christ as the spiritual offspring of the Jewish forefathers (Gen 15:5; Lk 19:9; Rom 9:8; Gal 3:28).

8:12 Many in the physical lineage of Abraham will be denied because of their rejection of Christ's gospel (John 8:40; Rom 11:25).

- The Jews believed that they would attend the Messianic banquet because they were descendants of Abraham (Matthew 3:9).
- The outside darkness is a metaphor of spiritual exclusion (Matthew 23:13; 25:30)
- Just because an individual is Jew (or any other lineage or denomination) and a moral person, does not mean that they are right with God. God requires an acceptance of Jesus as our Savior as we recognize our sinful state and repent.

8:13 The centurion's desire was satisfied because He believed in the power of Jesus.

Read Matthew 8:14-17 ... Jesus Heals Peter's Mother-in-Law & Others at Peter's House

Shared Account of the Healing of Peter's Mother-in-Law: Mt 8:14-17; Mk 1:29-34; Lk 4:38-41

- 8:14 Peter and Andrew told Jesus about the mother-in-law immediately. Believers should also be responsive in taking the needs of other before the Lord in intercessory prayer.
- Peter was married and would travel with his believing wife as he followed Jesus (1 Corinthians 9:5).
- 8:15 The touch of Jesus healed Peter's mother-in-law as He rebuked the fever (Luke 4:39). She immediately began to serve after her healing.
- 8:16 In the darkness (spiritual), the demon possessed people were exorcised while the sick were healed. Jesus cast out spirits with a word – with His power, a single word is sufficient (Mt 8:32).
- 8:17 Each “sign” (semeion σημεῖον) affected Jesus (Mark 5:30). The ultimate healing was in Christ's work on the cross.
- Matthew quotes Isaiah 53:4.

Read Matthew 8:18-22 ... The Cost of Following Jesus

Shared Account of the Decision to Follow Jesus: Mt 8:18-22; Lk 9:57-62

8:18 Jesus left the crowds to pursue a higher calling than popularity.

8:19 A scribe claims the desire to follow God, but Jesus emphasizes His life of poverty.

- Scribes were experts in the oral (Mishnah) and written (Tanakh) laws; interpreters and copyists of God's law
- The scribe recognized Jesus as a “Rabbi” (a teacher”) which is always an understatement of who Jesus is. He is more than simply a “good” man that mankind can learn from or emulate. Jesus is Lord of all; He is divine.
- Believers must be ready to deny themselves the things of this world for His purpose. (Matthew 16:24-26)

8:20 The first use in the New Testament of the “Son of Man” contrasted to the last use (Rev 14:14).

- The term “Son of Man” references the humanity of the Messiah as He became part of mankind. The divine transportation of clouds was also used by the “Son of Man” (Daniel 7:13); clouds also describe Jesus' ascension and coming again. (Acts 1:9-11)
 - It is interesting that explicitly, Jesus was not the biological son of Joseph; He was the biological son of a woman.
- From the birth of Jesus through His ministry (Lk 2:7), this world provided “no room” for Jesus (Jn 8:37); many still do not have room for Him in their lives and aspirations.

8:21 “*Let me go and bury my father*” was a common expression to say that a commitment could not be made immediately, but it was possible at some point in the future.

- It is likely that the man's father was not yet dead, but the man was just saying, let me wait until that time.
- Even if the father was dead, the man was putting priority on the dead instead of the living.
- Jesus should be the highest priority over everything else; the greatest commandment is to “*Love the Lord your God with all your heart.*” (Matthew 22:36-38)

8:22 Jesus instructed that believers (those with spiritually life – Rom 6:23, 8:6) should let the spiritually dead (Rom 5:12; James 1:15) focus on and coordinate the things of this world (including the physically dead).

Read Matthew 8:23-27 ... Jesus Amazes Disciples by Calming the Wind & Sea

Shared Account of Jesus Authority over the Storm: Mt 8:23-27; Mk 4:35-41; Lk 8:22-25

8:23 The Bible doesn't record the disciples asking Jesus where they were going, what they were doing or how long they would be there. The disciples followed Jesus by faith.

- The Sea of Galilee is nearly 700 feet below sea level; the average depth is 84 feet with the deepest part measuring 147 feet.
 - Storms on the Sea of Galilee result primarily from the difference in temperatures from the 2000 feet high mountains on the east where the winds descend crashing into the waters 700 feet below sea level.
- The Sea of Galilee extends 7 miles (east to west) and 13 miles (north to south).
- The Sea of Galilee provides Israel's largest source of fresh drinking water meetings approximately 1/3 of the national annual requirement.



8:24 Stormy waters represent the chaos of the world system (Isaiah 57:20, 21).

8:25 Those in the boat with Jesus cried out to Him for salvation in great fear of physical death.

- The Greek term for “save” (sōson σωσον) which is used in Scripture seven times to mean to physically rescue. (Matthew 14:30; 27:40; Mark 15:30; Luke 23:37, 39; John 12:27).

8:26 Believers should live in faith without fear. Once Jesus rebuked the winds and sea, there was serenity – and this peace was great (Acts 10:36).

8:27 The followers of Jesus (with little faith) were amazed at His power over His creation. (Psalm 89:9, 93:4, 107:29)

Read Matthew 8:28-34 ... Jesus Exorcises Two Demonic Men in the Gadarenes

Shared Account of Demons Driven into Pigs: Mt 8:28-34; Mk 5:1-17; Lk 8:26-37

8:28 Gadara (“a fortified place”) was located on the top of a mountain six miles southeast of the Sea of Galilee.

- Two (witness) demon possessed men lived among the dead in the graveyard just as existence in this world is in the midst of the spiritually dead.
 - Scripture speaks of “living death” for those in bondage to sin (Eph 2:5; Col 2:13; 1 Tim 5:6).
- These demon-possessed men made the road (that went through that area) unusable. (Mark 5:2-6; Luke 8:27)

- Unclean spirits (and immoral man) harm those around with violence of thought and expression.
- 8:29 These demons were well aware of the identity of Jesus and their own eventual destruction. They understand that they will be tormented at a specific time - judgment day (Matthew 25:41; Jude 1:6; Revelation 20:10-15).
- The demons believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (James 2:19).
- 8:30-31 Pigs were ceremonially unclean to the Jews (Deuteronomy 14:8), so these pigs were either a transgression or a temptation towards transgression.
- The demons were fearful of being sent to unknown places (e.g., the abyss), and Jesus demonstrated His authority over the demons as they pleaded to even be allowed into an animal. Obviously, animals can be demon possessed as well (Genesis 3:1).
- 8:32 Jesus consented to let the demons inhabit the pigs as evidence of the ultimate end of all evil. As the swine were drowned in the sea, so are many overwhelmed by the cares of the world.
- 8:33 When worldly men witness the power of God, they become fearful when they should become faithful (Mk 4:41).
- 8:34 This worldly community chose their economic welfare over the power of the Lord.
- Many false believers sell out to the world over the Lord (e.g., occupations, political support, hobbies).
 - While miracles can be an encouragement, they often do not bring about saving faith (Luke 16:31). This community witnessed the miracle, but the cost of following Jesus was too high.
 - The demons had begged Jesus not to send them away (Mark 5:10), but now the Lord was being expelled.
 - The men who were exorcised from demons went on to witness to the people of the region, so that the next time Jesus returned, He would feed 4,000. (Mark 7:31-8:10).

10 Matthew 9:1-17

Read Matthew 9:1-8 ... Jesus Forgives & Heals the Paralytic Man

Shared Account of Paralytic Healing: Mt 9:1-8; Mk 2:3-12; Lk 5:15-26

- 9:1 Jesus returned to his home of His ministry headquarters of Capernaum (mentioned only in the gospels) which is considered to have been the home of Nahum the prophet.
- 9:2 The paralytic represents the sinner who is incapable of the spiritual walk, but the intercessory faith of his companions affected His relationship with the Savior.
- This is the only time in the gospels that Jesus refers to an individual as His “son” (Mark 2:5). Jesus encourages courage because of the forgiveness of sin.
 - Jesus “saw” their faith.
- 9:3 The scribes understood that only God can forgive sin (Job 14:4), and their complaint against Jesus was blasphemy (that Jesus acted as God).
- The Jews believed that there was often a connection between sin and sickness (John 5:14, 9:2; James 5:15-16). However, Jesus gave a warning that one cannot assume sin just because they see sickness. (John 9:3; Luke 13:2-3)

9:4 God knows the motives and thoughts of man (Psalm 139:4; Luke 9:47; John 2:24-25, 16:19, 30; Hebrews 4:13).

- Evil thoughts are the product of evil hearts (Matthew 15:19; Mark 7:21; Luke 6:45).
- The first truth of the Sermon on the Mount is to serve God with the innermost mind and heart (Matthew 5).

9:5 Forgiveness is portrayed as healing (Psalm 41:4, Jeremiah 3:22, Acts 9:34; 2 Chronicles 7:14). Believers should care about the spiritual condition of each other more than the physical condition.

- Jesus had performed the superior work of forgiveness, but now he would perform the physical manifestation to confirm the spiritual.
- Jesus blessed those who believed without seeing Him (John 20:29) and He prayed for their unity in Him (John 17:20-24)

9:6 Jesus offers physical healing as a sign for spiritual healing as He directs the paralytic toward three actions: 1. Rise himself 2. Pick up/Raise something else 3. Return home. After forgiveness, Jesus expects the one healed to clean up and bear the consequences of his burden. The forgiven one can return home to rebuild a new life.

- The term “Son of Man” references the humanity of the Messiah as He became part of mankind.
 - The divine transportation of clouds was also used by the “Son of Man” (Daniel 7:13); clouds also describe Jesus’ ascension and coming again. (Acts 1:9-11)
 - Ezekiel utilized this term to represent humanity and mankind.
- The Greek term for “authority” (exousian ἐξουσίαν) was an attraction to the seeking Jews (Matthew 7:29), and Jesus gave authority over unclean spirits and illnesses to His twelve disciples that He sent out (Matthew 10:1).
- However, the chief priests and elders questioned who had given Jesus this authority.
 - This is common today as credentials (seminary and college graduate certificates) as well as memberships are reviewed to ensure the correct indoctrination has occurred.

9:7 The forgiven (healed) paralytic followed God’s command immediately.

9:8 The crowd recognized the power of God, but did not understand the deity of Jesus - the incarnation of God (Jn 5:18, 23, 39-40, 10:33, 20:28; Col 2:8-9; Titus 2:13, 3:4-6; Lk 7:28, 8:39; 1 Tim 3:16).

- The crowd understood the humanity of Jesus, but they may not have understood His unique nature as “fully God” and “fully man” because they were amazed that “such authority” had been given to “men” (plural – anthrōpōis ἀνθρώποις).
 - Although they did not explicitly elevate Jesus, they had witnessed something new as the power of God was observed.

Read Matthew 9:9-13 ... Jesus Calls Matthew to be His Disciple

Shared Account of the Calling of Matthew/Levi: Mt 9:9-13; Mk 2:13-17; Lk 5:27-32

9:9 Jesus saw Matthew (“gift of God”) as He first identifies those He will call. Matthew was sitting at the tax office as sinners languish in sinful conditions before Jesus commanded (contrasted to “invited”) that Matthew should follow.



- In the two other synoptic accounts, “Matthew” is called “Levi” (Mark 2:14; Luke 5:27) which means “Joined/Attached.”
 - Matthew was positioned between Capernaum and the Sea of Galilee, so he may have been collecting on the trade from Herod Philip’s area northeast of the Sea of Galilee into the area ruled by Herod Antipas on the west side of the Sea of Galilee.
 - Beyond the Jewish Tax used to maintain the Temple, Jews also paid taxes to the Romans (often collected by harsh tactics).
 - The Roman tax was comprised of income tax and customs/duties tax (paid in order to do commerce). The customs/duties included a percent of trade as well as tolls to use roads.
 - The tax burden exceeded 40% of what was earned.
 - The Roman Tax Collectors consisted of independent contractors who had bid for the contract. They were usually Jewish who collaborated closely with the Romans and paid a “franchise fee” to collect taxes in the name of Rome.
 - Anything above the agreed value to Rome was pure profit for the collector.
 - The Tax Collector could assess the value arbitrarily without any recourse or appeals process for the one being taxed.
 - Tax Collectors would also manufacture black market and smuggling charges and then threaten to go to the Roman government with the false accusations.
 - Beyond the tax gouging, Tax Collectors were a reminder of foreign oppression who befriended and collaborated.
 - Tax Collectors were viewed as traitors (politically) and as apostates (religiously).
- 9:10 The relationship with Jesus began in Matthew’s house and was testified to Matthew’s sinful friends and peers.
- 9:11 The Pharisees were the religious order who boasted of public deeds of righteousness without the inner purity of thought and heart.
- As a Jew, the act of eating together went beyond food to friendship, collaboration and commitment.
 - Rabbinical traditions around eating that originated with the Pharisees (like the Kosher guidelines) grew to numbering in the hundreds – much related to the separation of clean from unclean.
 - Kosher is not a style of cooking, so any kind of food (Mexican, Italian, Chinese, etc.) can be considered “kosher” if it is prepared in accordance with Jewish law.
- 9:12 Although the Pharisees critically questioned the followers of Jesus, the disciples did not answer, but allowed Jesus to defend His own actions.
- Jesus used a “doctor” as a metaphor to categorize those who recognized their spiritual need of the “Great Physician.”
 - Pharisees had been taught the “healthy” scriptural concepts of a loving God and righteousness while the “sinners” dining with Jesus had no concept of the loving forgiveness of God and purity/cleanliness.

9:13 Jesus references Old Testament scripture (Hosea 6:6) to convey the meaning that God takes pleasure in extending mercy to the undeserving instead of those who strive to offer their own works of sacrifice (merit).

- While the initial response of Jesus would have pacified the Pharisees, who believed themselves to be better than those having dinner with Jesus, He sent them away to learn the truth underlying the religious rituals. Heart attitudes and motives are critically important; the right actions need to be lived with the right attitude and motivation.
- The Lord was calling both tax collector and Pharisee to repentance of their prideful, selfish ways (Luke 5:32).

Read Matthew 9:14-17 ... Jesus Answers the Disciples of John the Baptist about Fasting

Shared Teaching on Fasting: Mt 9:14-17; Mk 2:18-22; Lk 5:33-39

9:14 The disciples of John the Baptist identified a similarity to the Pharisees who fasted (Luke 18:12), but these disciples genuinely questioned Jesus for the reason that His disciples did not fast (Isaiah 58).

- Throughout Old Testament times, Israel fasted together once a year as a nation on Yom Kippur (Leviticus 23:27-32).
 - The Rabbi's multiplied the fast to two times each week; the first fast was on Thursday when they believe that Moses ascended Mt Sinai, and then on Monday when they believed Moses descended from Mt Sinai.

9:15 Jesus stated that His disciples "will" fast when He is gone. This is the first clear sign in Matthew, that Jesus knew that He was going to die. (Mark 10:45)

- Believers should fast (Mt 6:17, Mk 2:20, Lk 5:35, Acts 13:2-3, 14:23). There is a spiritual hunger (Mt 5:6) that can only be satisfied with Jesus (Jn 6:35, 48).
- The wedding is filled with feasting regardless of the struggles that may accompany marriage; Jesus had just begun His ministry with His bride (His followers -Eph 5:25; 2 Cor 11:2; Rom 7:4).

9:16 The righteousness of a man (whether self-righteousness or Christ's righteousness) is often symbolized in the covering/garment (Gen 3:7, 21; Is 61:10, 64:6). There is no mix, but instead His righteousness alone. Believers who hold to the old nature are torn and grieved greatly.

9:17 At salvation rebirth, believers are not simply changed, but made (created) completely new (2 Cor 5:17). New believers are to renounce their old works (and old nature) or else the new life will tear them apart to waste the new joy within them.

- The same was true for the Jews as the old legalistic, ritualistic religion would not contain the freedom that He preached.

11 Matthew 9:18-38

Read Matthew 9:18-26 ... Bleeding Woman Healed as Jesus Goes to Heal Jewish Girl

Shared Account of Twelve-Year Gentile Woman & Jewish Girl: Mt 9:18-26; Mk 5:21-43; Lk 8:40-56

9:18 Jesus was discussing with His disciples about the new life and covenant that He was introducing (Matthew 9:14-17) which would now be allegorized by the events of the

Gentile woman being healed while Jesus was on His way to bring new life to the Jewish girl.

9:19 As Christ was emphasizing the unique importance of His coming, a Jewish leader named Jairus (“my light; he shines”) came to Jesus and fell before Him understanding the redemptive power of the Lord.

- Jairus outlines the three steps of salvation: 1. Fallen state (near death) 2. Intervention of Jesus Christ 3. Life

9:20 One story interrupts the other just as the “age of the church” comes between Israel’s rejection of God in the Old Testament and their calling for Him in the tribulation.

- The bleeding woman must be a Gentile because an Israelite woman would have been an outcast, and would not have been permitted admittance into the general population (Leviticus 15:19-33).
- The Gentile woman touched Jesus as He went to minister to the Jewish girl (Mk 5:22) who was exactly the same age as the Gentile lady’s malady (12 years – Mt 9:20/Mk 5:25 & Mk 5:42).
- Gentiles reached out for Jesus’ righteousness (hem/wing) while He was ministering to the Jews.
- The woman had spent all she had on doctors only to get worse (Mark 5:26); Matthew nor Luke mentioned this (possibly because Luke was a doctor).

9:21 The hem of the robe (or “wings of the robe/tallit” – Malachi 4:2) represented authority (Matthew 14:36).

- The hem of the robe was called the “wing” and represented authority and righteousness. This woman was coming under the “wing” of the Lord (Ruth 3:9; 1 Samuel 24:4-5).
- The tassels of the tallit were meant to be a reminder not to follow one’s own “dreams,” but instead to follow God’s law (Deuteronomy 22:12; Numbers 15:38-39). They were not a reminder to trust the desires of one’s eyes and heart.

9:22 Jesus uses a unique term (that he uses only on this occasion) when He calls the restored woman “Daughter” (Mark 2:5); this woman was the “daughter” of Jesus paralleled to the “daughter” of Jairus (the Jews). Faith in Jesus leads to peace and freedom.

9:23 Much festive ado was being made as if the Jewish daughter were dead. The Mishna states that even the poorest in Israel must not furnish less than two flute players and at least one woman as a wailer.

- The Jewish tradition is that a death begins a weeklong mourning period called a “shiva.”

9:24 When Jesus instructed that the Jewish girl was not dead, those in the ruckus festivities mocked Him.

- This might be a metaphor that the world would abandon the nation of Israel while Jesus seeks its restoration.

| Scripture Records that Jesus Raised Three from the Dead (beyond Himself) | |
|---|---------------------|
| Luke 7:11-17 | Widow of Nain’s Son |
| Luke 8:49-56 | Jairus Daughter |
| John 11:1-44 | Lazarus |

9:25 As the worldly began mocking the Lord, He put them outside (Mt 8:12, 22:13, 25:30), but He touched the Jewish girl and she was restored. One is only safe inside God's will.

9:26 Although Jesus requested that everyone leave the room of the girl (except for Peter, James, John and the parents – Luke 8:51) the testimony of His restorative power was spread by those not in the room.

Read Matthew 9:27-31 ... Jesus Heals Two Blind Men Pleading for Mercy

9:27 These two (witness) blind men (blindness symbolizing lack of spiritual discernment) understood their condition, but they also recognized the position (“son of David”) and power of Jesus. They understood that the mercy of Jesus enabled their healing.

- The term “Son of David” had Messianic implications according to the Davidic Covenant (2 Samuel 7:11-13; 1 Chronicles 17:11-14; 2 Chronicles 6:16).

Matthew repeats this title twice in reference to Jesus (Matthew 15:22, 22:42)

9:28-29 Jesus went in with them (Revelation 3:20) to affirm their faith in Him. The touch of Jesus and His healing was based upon their faith in Him.

9:30 In response to their healing, Jesus gave strict direction not to testify of their healing,

- Jesus was very emphatic about this as the Greek term “enebrimēthē” (ἐνεβριμήθη) is also used for the concept of “snort” as when horses exhale.
- A related Greek word “enebrimēsato” (ἐνεβριμήσατο) means to “groan” (John 11:33).

9:31 The men who had been healed disobeyed Jesus and shared of their healing, so that the whole area knew of it. Believers should only share as the Lord instructs and condones; the purpose of the Believer is to walk obediently with the Lord and witness at His bidding.

Read Matthew 9:32-34 ... Pharisees Attribute Jesus' Power to Exorcise to Demons

9:32 In contrast to the two who testified freely, a demon had caused another man to be mute.

9:33 Jesus freed the man of the demon, and upon hearing the man speak, the crowd recognized that Israel had never witnessed the unique power of Christ before.

9:34 The hearts of the Pharisees were so hard and callous that they condemned anything that Jesus did (Matthew 27:39-41). Since the Pharisees could not deny the power of the “signs” (semeion σημεῖον) performed by Jesus, they called into question the source of His power (Mark 3:22; Luke 11:15; John 7:20)

Read Matthew 9:35-38 ... Jesus Recognizes the Need for Ministers to Lost & Sick Crowds

9:35 Jesus had a threefold ministry: 1. Teaching the Scriptures 2. Preaching the Gospel 3. Healing/Redeeming

- The good news of the kingdom speaks of the Lord reigning in their hearts at the present as in the millennium, He will reign over this earth.

9:36 Jesus had compassion on the fatigued people as if they wandered like sheep without a shepherd (Mt 10:6).

- Many live meandering lives of exhaustion without clear direction from the great Shepherd (Heb 13:20). The Lord had called the religious leaders to shepherd His people (Numbers 27:17; 1 Kings 22:17)

- This is closely related to the Lord taking over as Shepherd at the failure of the Shepherds in Ezekiel 34. *“For this is what the Lord God says: See, I Myself will search for My flock and look for them. As a shepherd looks for his sheep on the day he is among his scattered flock, so I will look for My flock. I will rescue them.”* (Ezekiel 34:11-12)
- 9:37 The Lord selects whom He wants to send (Matthew 9:30). *“The harvest is abundant but the workers are few. Therefore, pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.”*
- Jesus tells His disciples to pray for more workers beyond only praying Himself.

12 Mt 10:1-23

Read Matthew 10:1-4 ... Jesus Commission His Twelve Disciples

10:1 In the prior verses (Mt 9:37), the disciples (“students/learners”) of Jesus prayed for witnesses to be called and now they were to do the work.

- Jesus summoned the 12 as disciples (“mathetes” meaning “learner”), but he sent them as apostles (meaning “to be sent on a mission”).
 - When praying, believers should understand that God might want to use them (themselves) in the answer of the prayer.
 - Jesus gave legal authority (exousian ἐξουσίαν) over both the demons and disease. Although demons can cause disease, a disease does not always infer demonic activity or sin.
- 10:2-4 This is the first time that the word “apostles” is used in the New Testament.
- The Greek term for “apostles” (apostolōn ἀποστόλων) means to “to send with official authority” as Christ’s representatives. Christians continue to be Christ’s representatives; the word “Christian” was first used in the church in Antioch to mean “Little Christ.” (Acts 11:26, 26:28; 1 Peter 4:16)
 - Barnabas and Paul were included as an apostle (Acts 14:14)
 - James - the leader of the Jerusalem church (Galatians 1:19)
 - Apollos (1 Corinthians 4:6-9)
 - Timothy & Silvanus (1 Thessalonians 1:1, 2:6)
 - Andronicus & Junia (Romans 16:7)
 - Some believers have been given the spiritual gifts to be apostles (1 Corinthians 12:29; Revelation 18:20)
 - Several times the Greek term “apostolōn” is translated as “messengers.”
 - Epaphroditus (Philippians 2:25)
 - Two unnamed apostles (2 Corinthians 8:23)
 - Jesus is also called an apostle (Hebrews 3:1)
 - This is the first of four listings of the twelve disciples/apostles (Mk 3:16-19, Lk 6, Acts 1).
 - The disciples were always listed in three tiers of four men with the “Tier Leaders” consistently being Peter, Philip, and James (Mt 10, Lk 6, and Acts 1)
 - This is the first of four listings of the twelve disciples/apostles (Mt 10, Lk 6, Acts 1).
 - Each listing contains identical first four names (1-4), second four names (5-8), and third four names (9-12).

- Each tier beginning with a consistent person (Peter, Philip, James) who are thought to be the “tier leaders”. Paul’s ministry tends towards Gentiles while the 12 apostles are primarily associated with the 12 tribes of Israel (Mt 19:20, Rev 21:12-14).

| The Four Lists of the Twelve Apostles | | | |
|--|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Matthew 10:2-4 | Mark 3:16-19 | Luke 6:12-19 | Acts 1:13 |
| 1. Simon | Simon | Simon | Peter |
| 2. Andrew | James | Andrew | James |
| 3. James | John | James | John |
| 4. John | Andrew | John | Andrew |
| 5. Philip | Philip | Philip | Philip |
| 6. Bartholomew | Bartholomew | Bartholomew | Thomas |
| 7. Thomas | Matthew | Matthew | Bartholomew |
| 8. Matthew | Thomas | Thomas | Matthew |
| 9. James (son of Alphaeus) | James (son of Alphaeus) | James (son of Alphaeus) | James (son of Alphaeus) |
| 10. Thaddeus | Thaddeus | Simon (the Zealot) | Simon (the Zealot) |
| 11. Simon (the Zealot) | Simon (the Zealot) | Judas (son of James) | Judas (son of James) |
| 12. Judas Iscariot | Judas Iscariot | Judas Iscariot | |

- Judas Iscariot was always listed last although he was the Treasurer (John 12:6; 13:29).
- Although Simon the Zealot had fervent emotion, he was always listed near the end.
- The names of Thaddeus and Judas, son of James, were listed for the same disciple.

Read Matthew 10:5-10 ... Jesus Teaches the 12 Disciples What Not to Take & What to Do
Shared Account of the Preparation of Ministry: Mt 10:5-10; Mk 6:7-13; Lk 9:1-6 (Luke 22:35-36)

10:5 Jesus did not want His apostles distracted; the focus was the Jewish nation instead of the Samaritans who followed their own form of Judaism.

- Samaritans represented “despised foreigners.” During the Assyrian exile of the northern kingdom of Israel, Assyria replaced Israelites with Gentiles who had also been exiled from their homelands by Assyria. (2 Kings 17:24-41)
- All Gentiles were out of scope for this mission.
- The priority calling of Jesus ministry were the Jewish people of Israel (Matthew 15:24)

10:6 Jesus had compassion on the fatigued people as if they wandered like sheep without a shepherd (Mt 9:36). Many live meandering lives of exhaustion without clear direction from the great Shepherd (Heb 13:20).

10:7 Their seven (complete) word sermons “*The kingdom of God has come near*” (Matthew 6:33) is similar to Jonah’s short calling (Jonah 3:4).

- The kingdom of God denotes submission to the Lord Jesus.
- It is the spiritual reign of God in men’s hearts now, and the physical reign of Jesus over all the earth during the millennium.

- The target audience of Matthew were the Jewish community. Jews were hesitant to use the name “Yahweh” out of respect for His name, so Matthew references “the Kingdom of Heaven” while the other gospels use the name “the Kingdom of God.”

10:8 These apostles who were sent as the first missionaries were directed to minister without pay and to give the message without a fee for the proclamation of the kingdom (3 John 1:7-8).

| Four Actions that Confirmed Proclamation of the Kingdom of Heaven |
|---|
| Heal the Sick Raise the Dead Cleanse Those with Skin Diseases Drive Out Demons |

Shared Instruction to Rely on God not Self-Security: Mt 10:9-15; Mk 6:8-11; Lk 9:3-5, 10:4-12

10:9-10 Consistent with the other synoptic gospels (Mk 6:8, Lk 9:3), Jesus directs the apostles to take one shirt, one pair of sandals, and one walking stick without extra supplies nor back-up.

- Although the apostle was not to ask about compensation for His message, “*the worker is worthy of his food,*” so the recipients of God’s word should take care of the apostle. (1 Timothy 5:17-18)

Read Matthew 10:11-15 ... Jesus Teaches Way to Treat Homes that Accept/Reject Ministry

10:11 Frequently in Scripture, those considered worthy are those willing to suffer for the Lord (Matthew 10:37-38; Acts 5:41; Romans 16:2; Ephesians 4:1; 2 Thessalonians 1:5; 3 John 1:6); these are those who will ultimately be worthy of the eternal kingdom of heaven (Luke 20:35).

10:12-13 The apostles were to impart a blessed salutation from the beginning with expectations of worthiness and blessing without anticipating turmoil. The worthiness of the household was attested by the peace. If an unworthy and objectionable atmosphere, the apostle alone would have peace in the chaos

10:14 Dust represents contact with this world which should not sully the apostle as he testifies of the Lord. The encumbrances and pollution of this world should be shaken off as the Believer looks towards testifying of the Lord again and again.

- The expression to “shake the dust off your feet’ was a cultural idiom as a sign of judgment (Acts 13:51, 18:6).

10:15 Degrees (levels) of punishment exist in eternity (2 Pet 2:17; Jude 13; Jn 19:11); it will be worse for those who reject the message than those who live in sin unaware.

- Degrees of punishment is repeatedly referenced (Matthew 11:22-24, 18:6; Luke 12:48)

Read Matthew 10:16-25 ... Jesus Foretells of Persecution of His Followers

10:16 The purpose of these missionary apostles was to give direction to the “lost sheep” of Israel (Mt 9:36, 10:9), but the apostles were also weak as sheep. Sheep have no protection other than their shepherd, so this is an act of faith in the shepherd.

- While sheep tend towards ignorant and passive, wolves tend towards strategists and violent.
 - However, believers are called to be clever of the wily ways of Satan (the serpent) while living in gentility of the Spirit (the dove). Believers are called to be wise, but innocent (Romans 16:19).
- 10:17 The missionary apostles were advised to be wary/careful of relation with this world because the world hates Jesus (Lk 21:17; Jn 15:18-19; 1 Jn 3:13) and will persecute His ministers (2 Tim 3:12).
- Although synagogues did not evolve until the loss of the Temple during the Babylonian exile, the act of flogging was an ancient Jewish act of punishment (Deuteronomy 25:3).
 - The flogging of the Jews was not as harsh as the scourging of the Romans.
 - The Jews would hit the recipient 1/3 of the 39 lashes on the front, and 2/3 of the 39 lashes on the back.
- 10:18 The purpose for the high-profile trials was to give an opportunity to witness to authority and eventually to all of the nations as the gospel message begins to move to the Gentiles.
- 10:19-20 “...*don't worry about how or what you should speak. For you will be given what to say at that hour, because you are not speaking, but the Spirit of your Father is speaking through you.*”
- The Spirit is also called the “Spirit of Christ” (Romans 8:9) as well as the “Spirit of the Father” (Romans 8:11).
- 10:21 The hatred of the world towards believers is such that the most intimate relationships will be betrayed.
- The corrupt world will martyr believers wherever and whenever possible.
 - In the tribulation, the world will once again attempt to annihilate Israel (as during the Holocaust).

| The Expected Normal Life of the Believer Should Be Persecution |
|---|
| Matthew 5:10-12, 24:9 |
| John 15:15-27 |
| Romans 8:17 |
| Philippians 1:29 |
| 2 Timothy 3:12 |
| 1 Peter 24:12-19 |

- 10:22 This hatred by the world was reflected at Christ’s crucifixion, persevering believers will be delivered from death into eternal communion with Him. Perseverance and a faithful walk are indicators of a valid reception of Christ. (Galatians 6:9; 1 John 2:19).
- Initial response and on-going discipleship are the hallmarks of a Christian faith (Ephesians 2:8-10).
- 10:23 Believers are not to attempt to stir up trouble, but instead, share the Lord elsewhere when there is persecution. This is one way that the Lord guides and expands His message beyond a single “safe” location.
- There are various interpretations of the time frame “before the Son of Man comes.” Prior to all of Israel hearing the gospel, Jesus Christ would climb the Mount of Transfiguration as well as being crucified and resurrected.

- All of Israel would not have heard the gospel prior to the giving of the Holy Spirit which began the “age of the Gentiles.”

13 Matthew 10:24-42

10:24 Jesus would submit to persecution, just as He was forewarning His apostles. (1 Peter 2:21)

- Believers are limited by the teaching that they submit to “sit beneath” and learn. Therefore, every believer should be taught by the Holy Spirit to become like Christ in our nature (Lk 12:12; Jn 14:26).

10:25 The world referred to Jesus as Beelzebul (“Chief of Demons” – Mt 12:24; Mk 3:22; Lk 11:15), and the world would also deride the followers of Jesus.

- Baalzebub was initially the fertility chief of Ekron (2 Kings 1:3, 6); however, the Jews altered the name to Beelzebul which means “lord of the dung” or “lord of the flies.” The Jews did this to many names to make fun of their enemies, conquerors and their false gods.

Read Matthew 10:26-31 ... Do Not Fear Men as All Secrets Will Be Exposed

10:26 This verse is imperative; don’t ever be afraid of the world!

10: 27 Regardless of public persecution of believers (e.g., by the media), the truth of God’s word will continue to spread in this deceitful world. (Luke 12:2-12)

- False accusations will either come to light in this world or at the final judgment (1 Cor 4:5). At the judgment seat, everyone will give an account of the way that they represented and glorified God in a fallen world. (Psalm 56:9, 139:16, Isaiah 65:6, Malachi 3:16)
- Beyond being an elevated place to proclaim announcements, ancient housetops were a place of social gatherings where the gospel could be shared.

10:28 *“Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.”*

- Some pundits reduce the “fear of God” to only “respect,” but this verse shows that God is to be feared in the same way that a man might be feared. The same Greek term for “fear” (phobeisthe φοβεῖσθε) is repeated for both God and man.
- The Greek term for “hell” (geennan γέενναν) referred to the garbage dump south of Jerusalem.
 - Gehenna originates from “Ge” - “valley and “Hinnom.” The valley of Hinnom was the location that children sacrifices were made to Molech (Deuteronomy 12:31; Leviticus 20:2-5; 2 Kings 16:3, 17:17, 21:6, 23:10; 2 Chronicles 28:3, 33:6; Jeremiah 7:31, 19:4-5, 32:35; Ezekiel 16:20-21, 20:26, 23:37; Psalm 106:35-38)
 - Scripture is abundantly clear that child sacrifices were wrong (Leviticus 18:21; Deuteronomy 18:10)
 - As the town trash dump, Gehenna smoldered with fire day and night. (2 Thessalonians 1:9; Revelation 14:11)
- There is only one time (outside of the Words of Jesus) where the term “hell” (Gehenna) is used (James 3:6).

10:29 Even the least of animals that man might consider (e.g., two (witness) sparrows) are directed by God; their fate cannot be affected without the approval of the sovereign God (Rom 8:28).

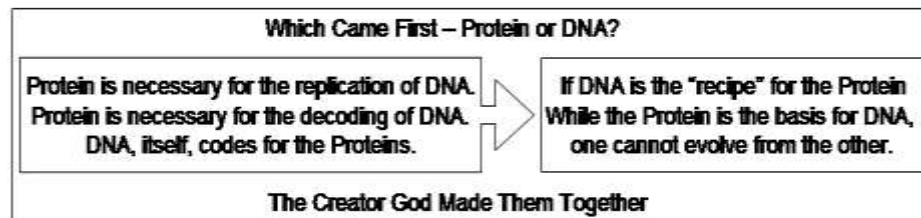
- The monetary term for “cent” or “penny” is actually 1/16 of a denarius (which was the common daily wage), so you can divide your daily wage by 16 to understand the spirit of the verse.
- Nothing can occur in this world without God’s knowledge and consent (Job 1:12, 2:6) although fallen man continually questions the consequences of sin or the good that comes from persecution.

10:30 God knows every detail of creation including the seemingly vain and transient nature as the number of hairs of an individual. Beards can add another 30,000 hairs.

| Number of Hairs can correlate to Hair Color | |
|--|---------|
| Blonde | 150,000 |
| Brown | 110,000 |
| Black | 100,000 |
| Red | 90,000 |

10:31 Elements of creation are valued more greatly than others (Matthew 12:12 - rejects pantheism and concept of common “mother earth”).

- God knows more about the person than a person himself as evidenced even in the logical sequence of a person’s double-helix DNA make-up (Psalms 40:12).
- It is an impossibility that DNA strands would randomly sequence into sensible succession much less that the “information” that they carry would be able to be interpreted without a divine Creator to establish the structure and code (the genetic code is without any biological function unless it is translated).



Read Matthew 10:32-39 ... Jesus Should Be Elevated Above Every Relationship

10:32 It is important that believers testify of Jesus verbally (Lk 6:45; Rom 10:9-10).

- The Greek word for “acknowledge” (homologēsei ὁμολογήσει) means “to say the same thing as.” This means that believers should publicly affirm the truth of God’s Word and our relationship in Jesus Christ.

10:33 Believers must allow the Spirit to shine into the dark world. (Mark 8:38) As with Peter, one can repent of the denial of Christ.

10:34 God’s Word is referenced as a sword that cuts to the heart of the matter (Lk 2:35, 22:36; Eph 6:17; Heb 4:12).

- Jesus is the peace, and without Him there is no peace; peace follows the act of grace. (John 21:15-17)
- In a sinful, fallen world, the coming of the righteous one brings tumult between wickedness and holiness; at His second coming, Jesus will come in a fierce

capacity (Luke 12:49-53). However, the world could experience the peace of God if they were to accept Him as their Savior (John 3:17).

10:35-37 The mentioned relationships do not include spouse (Lk 12:51-53, 14:26; 1 Cor 7:29), but Jesus is to be the ultimate relationship for which all else is sacrificed (Mt 12:49, 23:9).

- This speaks to the prioritization and purpose of God above everything else including life itself.
- God desires a more intimate relationship with His people than any other that they can experience in this world.

| Hebrew Idioms of Comparison | |
|--|-------------------|
| Loves Father/Mother more than Me | Matthew 10:37 |
| Loved Rachel/Hated Leah | Genesis 29:31-33 |
| Loved/Unloved Wives | Deuteronomy 21:15 |
| Loved Jacob / Hates Esau | Malachi 1:2-3 |
| Hates Family/Life | Luke 14:26 |
| Hates His Life | John 12:25 |
| Loved Jacob / Hates Esau | Romans 9:13 |
| <i>This speaks to the prioritization of one over the other..</i> | |

10:38 Christians are called to die daily to Christ (1 Corinthians 15:31; John 12:25). True Christianity translates into a laying down of one's life in any circumstance regardless of the ramifications.

10:39 *"He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it."* (Galatians 2:20; Matthew 16:25; Mark 8:35; Luke 9:24, 17:33; John 12:25)

- If man lives for himself in this age, man will miss the Kingdom of Heaven in the afterlife; however, if man gives/lives his life to God in this age, he will spend eternity with God.
- Man cannot enter the Kingdom of God (Heaven) in the afterlife if he has lived in this age as his own king (the kingdom of self).

Read Matthew 10:40-42 ... Jesus Claims Union with His Followers

10:40 The manner of interaction with a Believer reflects an individual's view and treatment of the Lord Himself (Mt 25:31-46). A believer's love for others is an expression of the believer's love for Jesus.

10:41 Each follower of the Lord (e.g., prophet, righteous person) carries their own blessing from the gifts and abilities that God has given them.

- These blessings will be experienced by those who assist, fellowship, and commune with them. Those who enable ministry will also receive a portion of the eternal reward (1 Cor 3:6; Jn 4:36-38).
- The terms of "Prophet" (Matthew 21:11, 21:46; Luke 7:16, 40; 24:19; John 4:19, 9:17; Mark 6:15; Acts 3:22, 7:37) and "Righteous Man" (Jeremiah 23:5, 33:15-16; Matthew 6:33; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2 Corinthians 5:21) can be descriptions of Jesus. Eternity is dependent on the way that each individual receives Jesus.

10:42 The assistance is material and not simply verbal encouragement (James 2:14-17).

- Special care should be given to fellow believers and those who minister for the Lord (Gal 6:10).

Read Matthew 11:1-6 ... Jesus Assures John the Baptist that He is the One

11:1 Jesus encouraged testimony (Matthew 10) and then He led by example. The focus of Jesus’ ministry was to teach and preach (Matthew 4:23); the healings only confirmed His teaching.

Shared Account of John the Baptist’s Envoy: Mt 11:2-20; Lk 7:18-28

11:2 John had been incarcerated for criticizing the immorality of Herod taking his brother’s wife Herodias (Mark 6:16-29); political leaders rarely have the wisdom to accept moral correction that brings repentance.

- John the Baptist was probably incarcerated in the prison of Herod Antipas located at Machaerus (east of the Dead Sea).
- John the Baptist’s ministry of preaching repentance and baptism is estimated to have been only 18 months.

11:3 John the Baptist was awaiting the Messiah, but may not have recognized the nature of Christ’s work (e.g., the crucifixion).

- John may have been expecting to be released from prison by the new “ruler/Messiah”.
- John may have been puzzled because he had expected Jesus to come in judgment (Matthew 3:7-12)
- Regardless, the answer of Jesus affirmed His position as the Messiah to John’s disciples who had been sent.
- “The One Who is to come” may be a Messianic title (Psalm 118:26; Daniel 7:13; Mark 11:9)
- The Greek term for “another” (heteron ἕτερον) means a different kind – probably someone in judgment instead of comfort.
- John the Baptist had access to his disciples although he was incarcerated. John the Baptist may have had some liberty because of his popularity, and Herod Antipas was afraid of him (Mark 6:20).

11:4 The encouraging confirmation that Jesus sent to John was to be about the miraculous works of the Lord.

- This may have been a reference to the prophecies of Isaiah (Isaiah 29:18-19; 35:5; 61:1) The raising of the dead is not listed in Isaiah.
- John the Baptist had already heard of Jesus’ activities while in prison, so this would either confirm or refute the stories to John (Matthew 11:2).

11:5 While the ailments of each condition are reversed, the poor were not made rich, but instead, they were given the gospel of Jesus resulting in eternal bliss.

| The Six Ailments of Man were Affected by the Messiah (Matthew 11:5) | | | |
|---|------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------|
| | <u>Hardship</u> | <u>Remedy</u> | <u>Spiritual Effect</u> |
| 1. | Blind | Sight | Spiritual Discernment |
| 2. | Lame | Walk | Righteous Walk |
| 3. | Skin Disease | Healed | Elimination of Sin |
| 4. | Deaf | Hear | Spiritual Sensitivity |
| 5. | Dead | Life | Spiritual Rebirth |
| 6. | Poor | Good News | Gospel |

11:6 The fallen world takes offense when identified as sinful and in need of a Savior. If anyone is not offended by Jesus, that person will be blessed.

Read Matthew 11:7-15 ... Jesus Assures John the Baptist that He is the One

11:7 Jesus praises John after John’s disciples left to report their findings.

- The message to John would have been about the Messiah instead of Jesus’ praising of John’s person.
- Those listening to Jesus may have wondered about John’s inquiry, so Jesus affirmed John the Baptist.
 - Jesus may be saying that although the crowds around him had heard that John was doubting, John is really a strong man.

Tale of the Oak and the Reed

There was a first century fable of a mighty oak and flimsy reed planted beside the river. While the powerful roots of the great oak braced it against the stormy winds, it could be fallen. However, the reed survived any storm by perpetually bending (i.e. compromising).

- In John’s weakness, he is strong. John is locked in prison with questions of the Messiah, but Jesus encourages the crowd about John.

| “What did you go out into the wilderness to see?” | | | | |
|--|-----------------------------|---|-----|---|
| (Matthew 11:7-9) | | | | |
| 1. | A reed swaying in the wind? | A weak vessel that is blown about by the environment? | No | John did not waver. |
| 2. | A man in soft clothes? | A man of comfort and leisure? | No | John was not the servant of a worldly king. |
| 3. | A Prophet? | Foretelling the Messiah and the kingdom of God. | Yes | The prophet John was the fulfillment of the prophecy. |

11:10 John the Baptist preached repentance (Matthew 3:2) laying the groundwork for the Messiah. This verse may be in reference to Malachi’s prophecy (Malachi 3:1).

- John the Baptist had been a herald for the coming King. This is similar to a royalty coming into a village with the herald running ahead of them proclaiming that they were coming. (Isaiah 40:7, 57:14, 62:10).
- Jesus would affirm that John the Baptist is the spiritual fulfillment of Malachi’s prophecy concerning Elijah’s return (Malachi 4:5)

11:11 Of natural man “born of a woman”, John the Baptist was the most righteous and worthy, but those in the kingdom of God have come under the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ.

- The new covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-34) would replace the old “Mosaic” covenant. The giving of the Holy Spirit would enable the church to understand and walk in the Lord’s power every day.
- The Greek term for “truly” or “I assure you” is the transliterated word from Hebrew “Amen” (Hebrew: אָמֵן Greek: ἀμήν). Transliteration means that the same word is in one language as another without being changed to translate.

- The word "Amen" is meant to be firm or certain; it means "so be it", "I affirm" or "I agree." The word "amen" is also used for the word "faith" (Habakkuk 2:4)
 - Jesus is the only one in Scripture that begins a sentence with the word "Amen" which He used to express that He had something significant to say. (Matthew 6:2)
- 11:12 The sheep slept in an enclosed rock wall until the shepherd removed the stone gate; the sheep would collide with each other and knock other stones of the gate as they were becoming free (Micah 2:12-13).
- The people of God (the sheep) had followed the (spiritual) shepherd in a physical manner throughout the Old Testament (the merits of righteous living and physical sacrifices), but the kingdom of God consists of those who have received grace and mercy.
 - Many different types of people are flooding into the kingdom of God.
- 11:13 The Old Testament era ended with John the Baptist (Lk 16:16). John the Baptist is the last of the Old Testament prophets (Matthew 13:16-17).
- The phrase "prophets and law" summarizes the whole Old Testament.
- 11:14 Although the Jews had been correct about Elijah preceding Jesus, they had not understood the spiritual aspect of John the Baptist nor the first incarnation of the Messiah before Jesus came to rule in strength at His second coming (Malachi 4:5).
- While not Elijah himself, John fulfilled the role of the prophesied Elijah (John 1:21), but Elijah himself also arrived at the transfiguration of Jesus (Mt 17:3; Mk 9:4; Lk 9:30) and will most likely precede the second coming of Jesus (Rev 11:3-6).
 - Oral tradition suggests that John wore Elijah's mantle (2 Kings 1:8; Zechariah 13:4; Dt 32:13; Rev 9:3-7, 10:9-10).
- 11:15 God often calls on His people who are enlightened to apply themselves and hear the true message (Mk 4:9, 23; 7:16; Lk 8:8, 14:35; Dan 9:23, 10:11).
- Believers are encouraged to be sensitive to the Spirit and listen to the Lord's Word. Before reading Scripture, the believer should pray for the Lord to "open his spiritual eyes," so that the reader is not swayed by personal beliefs or outside propaganda.

Read Matthew 11:16-19 ... The Generations Playing Religion & Critiquing Jesus

Shared Account of Children Playing in the Marketplace: Matthew 11:16-19; Luke 7:31-32

- 11:16-17 Just as the Lord gives word pictures of the Kingdom of God (Lk 13:18), He also gives a comparison for the fallen generation (Lk 7:31) as children who lightheartedly played joyful music to evoke happy responses and then mournful music to pretend sadness. However, the children did not want to play regardless of happy or sad.
- 11:18 John had lived a life of righteous abstinence and had been condemned by the religious establishment to the greatest degree as having a demon.
- John would have been compared to the dirge as he was an ascetic out of the desert.

- Jesus engaged with others in life and met them where they were. Both of these opposite approaches were rejected by the hard-hearted Israelites. There was pre-conceived bias regardless of the way that the Messiah came.
 - Israelites could not deny the supernatural power of Jesus, so they claimed that His power came from demons (Matthew 12:24; John 7:20, 8:48-49, 52, 10:20)
- 11:19 Conversely, Jesus ministered to and mingled with the sinners in their environment, and He was criticized as being one of them (a glutton and drunkard).
- Actions reveal what is truly in the heart; one can claim wisdom (knowledge of the Lord and His ways), but unless this results in following the will of the Lord, there is no tangible evidence of one's heart.
 - Wisdom will be evidenced by the results that it brings (Matthew 7:16)

Read Matthew 11:20-24... Jesus Denounces Those Who Witnessed & Denied His “Signs”

Shared Comparison of Unbelieving Towns: Mt 11:20-24; Lk 10:13-15

11:20 Those towns which witnessed most of the Lord's “signs” (semeion σημεῖον) were to be judged more harshly for their disbelief in Him.

11:21-22 The “signs” (semeion σημεῖον) of Jesus were meant to drive people to humble repentance.

- Chorazin (“the secret mystery”) was only two miles from the headquarters of Jesus ministry at Capernaum.
- Bethsaida (“house of fish”) was the home of Philip, Andrew, and Peter (John 1:44, 12:21).
- Tyre and Sidon were Phoenician (Gentile) commercial centers at that time; although urban cities often represent a concentration of sin and pollution, Tyre and Sidon would have received Christ if given the opportunity of Israel.
- Although any sin (however slight) causes pollution (James 2:10), sins will be judged in varying degrees and bring varied consequences (Matthew 10:15, 23:14-15; Mark 12:40; Luke 12:47-48, 20:46-47; Hebrews 10:29; 2 Peter 2:21).

11:23 Those in Capernaum (“city of comfort”; “field of repentance”) may have thought that they would gain entrance into heaven because of their nearness to Jesus ministry, but they never accepted Him as the Messiah.

- People should not think that they will get to heaven because of their worldly relationships (e.g., son of a preacher) or because they frequent the area of God's work (e.g., attending church).
- The term “Hades” (Sheol/Grave in the Old Testament) was considered by the Jews the holding place for the dead with two divisions: Paradise for God's people (Luke 16:19-31) and Tartarus for those who rebelled against God (2 Peter 2:4).
 - This is different from Gehenna which refers to hell after the judgment.

11:24 People who have access to the Word of God will be judged more harshly than those who unknowingly dwell in sin and fleshly pursuits.

Read Matthew 11:25-30 ... The Lord Blesses the Weak and Needy

Shared Praise for the Lord's Enlightenment: Mt 11:25-27; Lk 10:21-24

11:25 Jesus praises the Father for His decision to enlighten the poor and lowly while leaving the worldly elite in darkness.

- The “wise” approached God through their education of indoctrination and propaganda with sinful biases and false assumptions/conclusions. (Ezekiel 28:12, 16-17))
- The “little children” had faith in Jesus as their Savior from a dire state of sin. (Matthew 18:1-6)

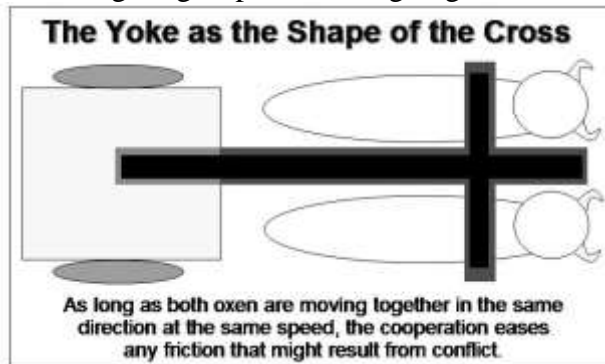
11:26 The choice of humble recipients for God’s gift of insight was His good pleasure.

11:27 Jesus reveals the Father to whomever He chooses. Although the world believes that there are many ways of knowing God the Father, it is only through Jesus that the Father is known (Jn 14:6).

- The Greek term for “know” (ἐπιγινώσκει ἐπιγινώσκει) means to fully, experientially know someone intimately.
- Those who saw Jesus, understood what God is like. Jesus is the image of God in human form (John 1; Colossians 1; Hebrews 1).

11:28 “Come to Me, all of you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”

- Beyond denominations and creeds, Jesus gives a personal invitation to enter into a relationship with Him.
- This giving of peace is on-going and continual (Eccl 2:23).



11:29 As the yoke unites two to a shared task, so too is the Believer bound to Jesus.

- Believers are not excused from work, but given peace with God in work.
- Believers cannot work in a unified way with the prideful worldly (Deuteronomy 22:10; 2 Corinthians 6:14).
- The Lord Jesus, on the other hand, is gentle and humble (Philippians 2:5-8).
- In the days of Jesus, Israel was burdened by the Mosaic Law and the oral traditions of the Pharisees (Acts 15:10; Matthew 23:4)

11:30 “My yoke is easy and My burden is light.” Oxen often represent the mighty servant which is led by the will of the Lord (Hosea 11:4; Jeremiah 28:10-11).

15 Matthew 12:1-21

Read Matthew 12:1-8... Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath

Shared Account of Jesus as Lord of the Sabbath: Mt 12:1-8; Mk 2:23-28; Lk 6:1-5

12:1 The disciples were walking with Jesus (ministering with Him in the fields for the ripe harvests – Mt 9:37), and they satisfied their physical needs. The moral law is more important than ceremony.

- In Jesus' day, the Jewish oral traditions had become a heavy burden for the people of Israel. Jewish oral traditions were written down in the Talmud which consists of two sections:
 - The Mishnah (circa 200AD) was a written collection of the oral Rabbinical traditions.
 - The Gemara (circa 500AD) consisted of Rabbinical commentary of the Mishnah
- Jewish oral traditions had become an object of division and separation instead of unity and love. (Isaiah 29:13; Romans 14:17; 1 Corinthians 4:20).
 - Jewish law stated that an individual could only walk 2,000 steps on the Sabbath.
- God's written Word was called the Tanakh (Old Testament) consisting of three sections called the Torah (The Law), the Nev'im (Prophets), and the Kethuvim (Writings)." The Tanakh is an acronym of the Torah, Nevi'im, and Kethuvim: TaNaKh.

12:2 The disciples were not breaking a Scriptural law (Deuteronomy 23:25), but instead man's tradition (interpretation of the Pharisees).

- Jesus and His followers were found guilty of breaking Jewish oral tradition against harvesting and preparing food on the Sabbath.
- The Pharisees (meaning "separated ones) grew out of the Maccabean age

12:3 Jesus references his ancestor David who received showbread from the priests in the city of Nob. (1 Samuel 21:1-6)

12:4 David (and his colleagues) were hungry, and the priest met their need.

- The showbread had just been removed from the table; there were twelve loaves of showbread that were approximately a pound each (12 pounds of bread).
- Priests were the only ones who could eat the showbread (Leviticus 24:5-9; Exodus 25:30)
- All followers of Jesus are in the priesthood because of their relationship with Jesus (who gives all believers freedom). (1 Peter 2:5, 9)

12:5 Jesus also pointed out that in order to fulfill their priestly duties in the Temple, the priests themselves must violate the law on the Sabbath (as the preacher preaches on and the Sunday School teacher teaches on Sundays), but they remain innocent.

- Although only the Priests were allowed to eat the Temple showbread and work on the Sabbath, every follower of Jesus is a Priest. (1 Peter 2:5, 9)

12:6 Although the Temple represented the dwelling of the Lord, Jesus was greater than the Temple as He was God incarnate. This verse is a Messianic reference to the identity of Jesus.

- The Kingdom of God is more significant than Jewish oral regulations. (Matthew 12:28, 41-42).

12:7 Jesus offers forgiveness and mercy instead of requiring personal merit/works to escape judgment.

- God is concerned about man's attitude before God is concerned about ritual (Hosea 6:6). Although ritual and liturgy can be meaningful, they can also grow to be misused. Love and mercy for fellow men are more important than rote religion practices.
- Believers should be less judgmental as they recall God's mercy for themselves.

12:8 The Sabbath is symbolic of rest (peace), and the only way that man can find true peace is through Jesus (Lev 25:4; Heb 4:9). Jesus is the Lord of all.

- The Son of Man was utilized by Ezekiel to reference all of humanity while Daniel used the phrase to reference deity and humanity (Daniel 7:13).
- God's love for man and desire to meet man's needs are more important than rituals that result in suffering (Mark 2:27).

Read Matthew 12:9-14 ... Jesus Heals the Man with the Paralyzed Hand in the Synagogue

Shared Account of the Man with the Paralyzed Hand: Mt 12:9-14; Mk 3:1-6; Lk 6:6-11

12:9 As with many of the hurting, Jesus finds a distressed man in the synagogue (Mk 1:23, 39).

- In the same way, many who are hurting can be found in religious institutions (e.g., churches) today.

12:10 People have interests in Jesus (and His people) with both good and bad motives. Many people approach the Lord (e.g., read His word; attend church, etc.) with a critical intent revealing their hard hearts.

- The Pharisees were attempting to trap Jesus (Mark 3:2) by making Him choose between His love for people and the Mosaic and oral laws.

12:11 Jesus continues to emphasize that the Spirit of the Sabbath (love instead of tradition) by asking a "practical question" which was allegorical to His actions.

- The legalistic Rabbis were far more concerned with their animals and possessions than they were concerned about their fellow man.
- Jesus showed the hypocrisy of the Pharisees.

12:12 Jesus often likened His people to sheep (Mt 25), but humans are more valuable than animals.

- Evolution has devalued man into a common value of all creation, but man was made in God's image and worth much more than animals (Mt 10:31).

12:13 Jesus did not want to hide the healing from His evil critics.

- The hand represents "doing", so a withered hand reveals that the man's actions were weak and warped.
- As the man exposed his activities (hand) to the Lord, the distorted nature was healed. Jesus spoke to the hurting man to stretch out his hand as if to receive a gift from the Lord.

12:14 The hardness of the Pharisee hearts caused them to be insensitive to suffering and affliction. It also made them blind to the miraculous power of a healing God.

- Upon witnessing the work of Jesus in the synagogue, the Pharisees decided to destroy Jesus instead of reflecting on the miraculous grace that they had seen. (Luke 6:11)

Read Matthew 12:15-21 ... Jesus is the "Servant of the Lord" Fulfilling Isaiah's Prophecy

12:15 Jesus eluded the plot of the Pharisees, but many followed him to be healed. Jesus healed them all (Mt 8:16; Lk 6:19).

- No one ever died in the presence of Jesus, and He did not show favoritism, but instead, He healed everyone who came to Him.

- 12:16 Jesus warned against broad testifying as He cautioned those who were healed not to publicize the healings (Mk 1:44) nor onlookers (Mk 5:43, 7:36, 8:30) nor His apostles (Mk 9:9) nor demons (Mk 1:34).
- Jesus desired people to hear His teachings on the Kingdom of God as evidenced and confirmed through His “signs” (semeion σημεῖον). Miracles were not His primary focus, but only “signs” (semeion σημεῖον) confirming that He was the Messiah.
 - The teachings of Jesus and His love were important as He met the needs of those around Him.
- 12:17 Even this constraint against broadly testifying of the miraculous healings was a fulfillment of Scripture (Isaiah 42:1-4).
- The reason that Jesus told others not to make His “signs” (semeion σημεῖον) known was to fulfill Scripture.
 - Pundits spend a great deal of time theorizing about the underlying motivations of Jesus instead of believing this verse of Scripture that says blatantly and explicitly that Jesus did not want His “signs” (semeion σημεῖον) shared in order to fulfill Scripture.
- 12:18 Jesus served the Father’s will (Mt 26:39; Philippians 2:5-8) in the power of the Father’s Spirit (Mt 3:16; Mk 1:10; Lk 10:21; Jn 1:32-33).
- This is very much like the baptism of Jesus where God the Father spoke from the cloud (Matthew 3:17, 17:5).
 - Beyond the Jews, Jesus was bringing the gospel message to the Gentiles.
- 12:19 Although the Pharisees were against Him, Jesus would not cause a scene nor boisterously argue. Jesus would not be an intimidating, harassing, screaming street preacher. This is different than John the Baptist’s calling and approach (Mt 3:3).
- 12:20 Jesus would be so gentle that he would not even break the weakest vessel until His crucifixion has satisfied the just requirement of sin.
- 12:21 Salvation comes from the name of Jesus (Who He is and what He did) alone.
- Beyond the Jews, Jesus was bringing the gospel message to the Gentiles.

16 Matthew 12:22-50

Read Matthew 12:22-32 ... The Unforgivable Sin of Speaking Against the Holy Spirit

Shared Account of Pharisees Calling Beelzebub: Mt 12:22-32; Mk 3:22-30; Lk 11:14-23

- 12:22 This man seeking healing had multiple infirmities; being demon possessed, the man was blind (spiritually undiscerning) and voiceless (unable to speak).
- Although demons can cause illness, the illness does not exclusively infer demonic possession.
- 12:23 The general public recognized Jesus as being the possible Messiah because of the “signs” (semeion σημεῖον).
- The Davidic covenant promised an eternal kingdom led by a descendant of David. (2 Samuel 7:11-13).
- 12:24 The Pharisees (religious leaders) also recognized the spiritual power, but slanted the perspective in a critical and derogatory manner by ascribing the power of Jesus to Satan. Beelzebub was a name given Satan meaning the “lord of the flies/dung.”

Beelzebub was a Title of Satan

- The title originated in reference to Baal of Ekron (2 Kings 1:2)
- The Jews changed the name to Baalzebul which means “Lord of Dung”
- Latin & Peshitta/Syriac versions have spelling of “Beelzebub”
- Greek manuscripts have “Beelzebul”

- 12:25 Jesus supernaturally understood their thoughts and hearts. The kingdom of God by definition follows the single will of the Lord God alone (Mt 7:21).
- The household of faith is built on the single foundation of Christ alone (Eph 2:17-22)
- 12:26 If Satan’s objective was conquest, it would be a contradictory to surrender what Satan already controlled. It would be a poor strategy for Satan to send oppressors of the evil spirits; a more probable strategy of Satan would be to send these scribes to attack Satan’s enemy, Jesus.
- 12:27 Some Jews had been given power and authority to drive out demons (Mark 9:38).
- The Jews had active exorcism activities that often included chants, names and potions which was unlike the straightforward and simple command of Jesus for the demon to leave a person.
- 12:28 As the Spirit of God had power over the demonic forces, so to was subjection to the kingdom of God expected. Jesus is Lord (has power) over the good and bad in a Believer’s life.
- This is a rare place in the Book of Matthew, that the phrase “Kingdom of God” is used instead of the “Kingdom of Heaven.” This occurs three times in the book (Matthew 19:24; 21:31, 43)
- 12:29 Jesus associates Himself to a thief Who has restricted Satan allowing Jesus to move as He likes (Mt 24:43; Jn 10:10; 1 Thes 5:2; 2 Pet 3:10; Rev 3:3, 16:15).
- As Jesus hung on the cross between the two criminals, He Himself was paying the price of the “spiritual” thief taking those from Satan’s dominion (Mt 27:38; Mk 15:27; Lk 23:32-33; Jn 19:18); of course, those saved rightfully belong to Jesus (Jn 17:2, 6, 9, 11, 12).
- 12:30 There are two categories of people in this world: those who follow Jesus and those who oppose Him (Lk 11:23).
- All other religions (including Atheism) believe that man is or can be “good” apart from Jesus.
 - Those who promote Jesus in various capacities are unified in the one true Savior (Mark 9:40; Luke 9:50). The way that a man receives Jesus will determine his eternal destiny.
- 12:31 *“People will be forgiven every sin and blasphemy, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven.”*
- This is called the unpardonable sin. (compare to Mark 3:28).
- 12:32 The disbelief of the Word of God and the rejection of the Holy Spirit’s invitation is likened to calling God a liar. This is not forgiven because faith in Jesus’ for the gift of salvation has not taken place.

Read Matthew 12:33-37 ... A Tree with Good Fruit and the Tree with Bad Fruit

- 12:33 There is no middle ground. A man (tree) is either good or bad producing either good or bad fruit accordingly (Galatians 5:22-23; Matthew 3:8).
- The fruit of the tree provides insight about the tree (Matthew 7:17-19).

12:34 As the serpent was the most cunning of creature, this “brood of vipers” represents the religious leaders misleading mankind (Gen 3:15).

- This is the second of three times that this expression (“brood of vipers”) is used in Matthew’s account (Mt 3:7; 12:34; 23:33; Lk 3:7). John the Baptist had used the same term when the religious leaders visited his baptisms. The teachings of the religious leaders were deadly and empowered by the “old serpent” Satan. (Genesis 3:1; Revelation 12:9; 20:2)
- This is the first of three times that this expression is used in Matthew’s account (Mt 3:7; 23:33; Lk 3:7). *“For the mouth speaks from the overflow of the heart.”*
 - A man’s speech gives insight into the nature of his heart (e.g., perversion, anger, doubt, fear, etc.) (Matthew 7:17-23).

12:35 A man becomes the product of the Spirit and godly influences or the product of worldly pollution (Eph 4:29; Col 3:8; James 3:10). A man can only give from his storehouse (e.g., character) of good or bad.

12:36 *“I tell you that on the day of judgment people will have to account for every careless word they speak.”*

- While a man may pretend to be spiritual at religious gatherings, his words in private with his peers and family reveal his heart.

12:37 A man will be acquitted or condemned by the words that evidence his heart (Matthew 15:11; Luke 6:45; Romans 10:8-9).

Read Matthew 12:38-42 ... Jesus is Greater than Jonah and Solomon

Shared Account of the Sign of Jonah: Mt 12:38-42; Lk 11:29-32

12:38 The “signs” (semeion σημεῖον) of God are evidence of existing faith; the scribes and Pharisees would have doubted any sign because of their hardened hearts. (Matthew 16:1)

- The Pharisees had already seen the miraculous, but they had credited it to demons. (Matthew 12:24)
- In the last days, the demonic will be performing the miraculous as well (Matthew 24:24)

12:39 Jesus answered the Pharisees by referencing both a Prophet (Jonah) and a King (Solomon) just as He fulfills both roles.

- The description of “adulterous” represents the attitude of unfaithfulness (James 4:4); these religious people claimed to know God, but their lives showed that they didn’t know Him.

12:40 The Jews considered the “heart of the earth” as Jerusalem. Three nights would pass from the night of His arrest in the garden until His resurrection.

- The Romans named the Mediterranean Sea because the Latin name means “Middle of the Earth. The Latin word is composed of “medius” (meaning “middle”) and “terra” (meaning “earth”).

12:41 The Gentiles (Assyrians) in Nineveh would condemn the Jewish generation who rejected the Messiah.

- The Gentiles had believed the sermon of Jonah; Jesus was greater than Jonah.
- Nineveh had believed a very simple message while the Pharisees had the Law and the Prophets, and yet they did not believe.

12:42 The Gentile (Queen of Sheba) would condemn the Jewish generation who rejected the Messiah. The Gentiles had believed the wisdom of Solomon; Jesus was greater than Solomon.

Read Matthew 12:43-45 ... The Return of the Unclean Spirit

Shared Account of Demons Returning after Exorcism: Mt 12:43-45; Lk 11:24-26

12:43 As Jesus offers the “living water” (John 4:10; Revelation 7:17), demons must haunt places without Him. The primary point is not to cast out demons but to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

- This may reference the exorcisms of the Jews that cast out demons, but did not replace it with a walk with the Lord and His Spirit (Matthew 12:27).
 - In the same way, someone might give up one sin for another instead of turning to Christ.
- This might also describe the nation of Israel that had turned away from idolatry during the time of exile, but now they had embraced and were entrenched in an even more rigorous ritualistic religiosity without love.
- This could also apply to those who had accepted the message of repentance by John the Baptist, but they did not accept the love of Christ and His work on the cross.

12:44 The demon decides on its own where it will frequent, and although a person has cleaned his life in the demon’s absence, the demon still has access (e.g., a key) for entry.

12:45 There are various degrees of evil demons; one can be worse than another. Seven reflects the complete fullness of the demon possession, but God can still cleanse one’s life (Mk 16:9; Lk 8:2).

Read Matthew 12:46-50 ... Spiritual Relationships Over Worldly Relations

Shared Account of the Family of Jesus: Mt 12:46-50; Mk 3:31-35; Lk 8:19-21

12:46 The mother and brothers of Jesus (Mk 6:3) did not “enter in” (Mk 4:11) to see the truth (John 7:5).

- After the resurrection, Jesus’ family became committed followers to His claims (Acts 1:14; Gal 1:19); two brothers, James and Juda, actually penned books of the Bible.

12:47 A crowd was sitting inside listening to Jesus speak contrasted to those pursuing healing. These people informed Jesus that His physical family (including sisters) was outside and requesting Him to come to them.

- Some versions of the Bible exclude this verse because it is not found in certain source documents (Codex Sinaiticus, Vaticanus, Peshitta/Syriac, Vulgate).
- This verse is included in the source documents for Mark and Luke

12:48 Jesus corrected their assumption that the physical family carried greater value than the spiritual (Mt 23:9).

- Even today (in prayers to her), people falsely believe that Mary has special influence over Jesus, but He clearly states that she does not.

12:49 Jesus identifies those in the circle around Him as His spiritual family – mother and brothers. This spiritual relationship is infinitely more important than the physical association (Lk 2:49-50).

12:50 Submission and obedience to the will of God (instead of self-seeking pursuits, pleasures, and lifestyle) indicate those who are actually in the family of God.

17 Matthew 13:1-32

Read Matthew 13:1-9 ... The Parable of the Sower

Similar to Luke 15 in that it is a series of seven parables in the chapter.

13:1 Jesus ministered in Galilee and this was located at the Sea of Galilee.

- The sea represents the chaotic world system of the Gentiles which Jesus approached and spoke over after leaving the house (the house of Israel).
- In ancient days, the Rabbi would sit as he was teaching; the Rabbi would stand to preach, proclaim or read Scripture. (Sit to teach; Stand to Preach)

13:2 The numerous masses came near to Him, so He preached to them from a boat to impose a distance, so that they would listen. As with Rabbinical customs, Jesus sat in the boat while the crowds stood on the shore.

- The adage “I can’t stand anymore” comes from the practice of pupils standing as they heard amounts of teaching that outlasted their ability or desire to stand.
- Believers should approach the Lord according to His plan instead of having a personal agenda.
- The crowds would nearly crush Jesus unless he stepped into a small boat offshore (Mark 3:9).
- The acoustics for the message would have been better over water. Sound is amplified as the sound waves flow over water for several reasons:
 - The air above the water’s surface is cooler. In 1845, George Gabriel Stokes developed “Stoke’s Law of Sound Attenuation” which states that the frictional/drag force is less over water than land. The viscosity of air is material because air tends to stick to objects it flows around increasing viscosity while reducing fluidity.
 - Objects on the ground (grass, rocks, hills, trees) can become impediments to sound waves which retain their coherence longer over calm water.

13:3 The Jews believed that the Messiah would come to physically triumph as the victorious King (Lk 17:20-21), and this would only occur in the Lord Jesus’ second coming (Zechariah 14).

- In Scripture, the Greek word for parables (parabolais παραβολαῖς) is mentioned twelve times.
- The root of the word parable is a compound noun consisting of “para” (meaning “alongside”) and “bole” (which means “to cast”). The application is “to cast alongside” a spiritual truth, a cultural picture of daily life that illumines the underlying spiritual truth.
- Jesus spoke in parables to give insight into the actual kingdom of God for those who were blessed.

| | |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| Seven Parables of the Kingdom Corresponding to the Seven Revelation Churches | |
| (Four Outside; Three Inside) | |
| Seven Parables on the Kingdom | Seven Representative Churches |
| Matthew 13:3-9 Sower with | Rev 2:1-7 Letter to Ephesus |

| | |
|---|--|
| different ground | Rev 2:4 First Love |
| Mt 13:24-30 Reaping wheat and weeds at harvest | Rev 2:8-11 Letter to Smyrna Rev 2:10 Don't Fear Suffering |
| Mt 13:31-32 Large Tree with birds in branches | Rev 2:12-17 Letter to Pergamum Rev 2:15 Accepted Nicolaitans - It is a symbolic name of a party that represents the <u>hierarchy of a ruling class</u> over the rest of the people, developing a pecking order of fleshly leadership. The Nicolaitans disobeyed the command issued to the Gentile churches, by the apostolic council held at Jerusalem in 49-50 AD, that they should refrain from the eating of "things sacrificed to idols" (Acts 15:29). Lead lives of unrestrained indulgence |
| Mt 13: 33 Should not mix | Rev 2:18-29 Thyatira Rev 2:20 Tolerate sexual immorality |
| Mt 13:44 Finds Treasure & Reburies then sells everything for prize in field | Rev 3:1-6 Sardis Rev 3:2 Reputation for life but really dead; works are not complete before God |
| Mt 13:45-46 Merchant & Fine Pearls | Rev 3:7-13 Philadelphia Persecuted and blessed |
| Mt 13:47-50 Throw out the worthless fish | Rev 3:14-22 Laodicea Luke warm/tepid |

Shared Account of the Parable of the Seed: Mt 13:1-9; Mk 4:1-9; Lk 8:4-8

13:4 Birds are likened to deceit (by Satan and demons) often altering the initial message of the gospel (Jeremiah 5:27).

- Jesus spread the Word of God indiscriminately across various grounds. The path represents the hardened hearts that have been trampled by those of the world.

13:5-6 This ground did not give access to much water (e.g., Word of God revealed by His Spirit) so the trials (e.g., heat, fire) withered the plant without fruit.

- The movement of the Holy Spirit and the application of the word of God bring nourishment and life.

13:7 Other ground enabled growth, but the cares of the world overwhelmed the plant prohibiting fruit.

- Thorns represent the consequences of sin as they entangle the believer in the things of this world.
- This act of self-seeking distracts from producing additional "crops" for the Lord.

13:8 All seed on the good ground reflected degrees of harvest; the size of the crop varies as does faith and righteousness of those who receive the seed (Gal 5:22-23; Mt 9:37-38).

| Parable of the Seed (Matthew 13:3-9; Luke 8:11-15) | | | | |
|--|--------------|-------------|-----------------|---------------|
| 1. | Path | No Growth | No Fruit | Understand |
| 2. | Rocky | Some Growth | No Fruit | Persevere |
| 3. | Fertile Soil | Full Growth | No Mature Fruit | Prioritize |
| 1. | Good Soil | Full Growth | Fruit | Be Productive |

Some believe the seed to be the Gospel message, but the Seed is instead described as the Word of God. Each Heart has areas that are hardened or fertile depending on the message. Believers can be hardened to the Word of God and produce no fruit according to the seed while at the same time, receiving God's Word and being fruitful in other areas. Every Believer should attend to the areas in their heart that are impeding the Word of God to bear fruit in that area.

13:9 Those who have spiritual enlightenment must still make the conscious effort to hear (Mt 11:15, 13:43). There is a spiritual quality (the active power and revelation of the Holy Spirit) necessary to understand spiritual truths.

Read Matthew 13:10-17 ... The Reason Jesus Used Parables

13:10 The disciples came to Jesus to ask about His method of teaching using parables.

13:11 The reason for parables is to mask truth; Scripture likens parables to riddles (Prov 1:6). Parables have a covering effect as well as an illuminating effect. (Mark 4:10,12, 33-34; Luke 8:9-10). Parables simultaneously reveal and conceal.

- The term "Kingdom of Heaven" is used in Matthew where the other gospels use "Kingdom of God" because Matthew's audience consists of Jews. Jews were hesitant to use the name of God; throughout the Old Testament, Jews would use the term Adonai for "Lord" instead of the covenant name of "Yahweh." (Exodus 3:14)
- The "Kingdom of Heaven" was a frequent topic of Jesus, and it involves a King (the Lord) ruling over His dominion (His people). The Kingdom of Heaven is currently in the hearts of believers, but in the millennium, it will be a physical rule of Jesus over the earth.

13:12 As the Spirit moves within a believer and opens the eyes of that individual, even more truths are disclosed.

- When a person has no knowledge or interest in the word of God, even the little he knows is lost. The more that truth is rejected, the less of an impact it has when it is heard again. The heart hardens to truth and becomes numb to repeated sin.

13:13 Parables hide the truth as judgment of sin, but are a blessing of understanding and enlightenment to those who walk obediently ((Prov 1:6; Deuteronomy 28:1-4; Ezekiel 12:2; Jeremiah 5:21).

13:14-15 The judgment of the Lord includes spiritual insensitivity and blindness; the parables were also a judgment on fallen Israel (Is 5:24-25). Callousness is a process of friction, and Israel had been in friction with the Lord for millennia.

- The prophecy of Isaiah 6:9-10 is repeated (John 12:40; Acts 28:25, 27). This Word from the Lord had been given to Isaiah in the midst of Isaiah's call that he would preach God's Word which would be summarily rejected by men.

13:16 Spiritual insight and discernment is a blessing from the Lord.

13:17 The prophets and righteous individuals did not have certainties fulfilled; but their longings were towards seeing the Lord Jesus. Believers should also anticipate expectantly seeing the Lord; heaven has many beauties, but God Himself will outshine everything else.

- Believers have seen the Old Testament prophecies fulfilled, and believers should build on these seeds of faith.

- The Greek term for “truly” or “I assure you” is the transliterated word from Hebrew “Amen” (Hebrew: אָמֵן Greek: ἀμήν). Transliteration means that the same word is in one language as another without being changed to translate.
 - The word “Amen” is meant to be firm or certain; it means “so be it”, “I affirm” or “I agree.” The word “amen” is also used for the word “faith” (Habakkuk 2:4)
 - Jesus is the only one in Scripture that begins a sentence with the word “Amen” which He used to express that He had something significant to say. (Matthew 11:11)

Read Matthew 13:18-23 ... The Parable of the Sower Explained

- 13:18 Jesus re-emphasizes that His followers should pay attention to the Word of God that they have read.
- 13:19 A lack of understanding gives Satan an opportunity to remove the message, so that the Word of God is no longer available to the person (e.g., forgetting the Word).
- Although Satan is not omnipresent, he and his minion are extremely active in fighting against the influence of God’s Word.
 - The wicked/evil one is repeatedly referenced in these parables. (Mark 4:15; Matthew 13:25, 28, 39). The wicked/evil one will attempt to steal the gospel or twist its truth.
 - The Greek term for “hear” (akouontos ἀκούοντος) carries the connotation to “apprehend” or to “own.” The Greek word for “possess” is katécho (κατέχω).
- 13:20-21 Often new truths bring joy to the recipients (e.g., new Believers); however, the truths of God’s Word also bring persecution from this fallen world. The pressure may cause the believer to sin by omission or commission (1 Pet 2:8).
- Sometimes, people emotionally respond to the good news of Jesus Christ, but it does not impact their daily lives faithfully over time (1 John 2:19). Salvation is reflected in a lifestyle faith to the end.
 - This individual does not make time for the living water – for daily Bible reading, devotion and prayer. (John 7:37-39)
- 13:22 The eternal rewards of following the truth of God are often denied in the immediate circumstances by those who become distracted with cares, ambitions and pleasures of this sinful world (Lk 21:34).
- The allocation of personal resources (e.g., time, effort) are frequently misappropriated to the things of this world.
 - The poor worry about how debt will be paid while the rich are distracted with their next acquisition.
 - Wealth and riches (in themselves) will not bring joy. The Greek term for “deceit” (apatē ἀπάτη) is used to describe Satan’s deception (2 Thessalonians 2:9-10); Scripture urges Spiritual brothers to encourage and support each other daily, so that brothers will not be deceived by sin (Hebrews 3:13).
- 13:23 The world will be able to witness the fruit of the Spirit to varying degrees. (Galatians 5:22-23).

| The Three Achievements of the “Good” Soil (Matthew 13:23) | | |
|---|------|-----------------------|
| 1. | Hear | Rom 10:17; Mt 15:10 |
| | | Make time to hear God |

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| 2. Understand | Lk 24:45; 1 Cor 14:20; 2 Tim 2:7; 1 Jn 5:20; Eph 1:18, 3:4, 5:17 | Make an effort to consider and reflect on His Word while asking God to enlighten |
| 3. Bear Fruit | Gal 5:22-23; 1 Cor 14:14 | Act on Understanding |
| It is imperative that Believers strive for each of these three productive acts. | | |

| “Fruit” Defined by Scripture Fruit: (karpos καρπός) | |
|---|--|
| “The Fruit of the Spirit” | |
| Galatians 5:22-23 | “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, gentleness, self-control.” |
| “The Fruit of the Light” | |
| Ephesians 5:8-10 | “For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light— for the fruit of the light results in all goodness, righteousness, and truth -- discerning what is pleasing to the Lord.” |
| “The Fruit of Righteousness” | |
| Philippians 1:10-11 | “You can approve the things that are superior and can be pure and blameless in the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God.” |
| “Fruit in Every Good Work” | |
| Colossians 1:10 | “Walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to Him, bearing fruit in every good work and growing in the knowledge of God.” |
| “Fruit of Peace & Righteousness” | |
| Hebrews 12:11 | “The fruit of peace and righteousness” |
| “Fruit of Our Lips” | |
| Hebrews 13:15 | “Let us continually offer up to God a sacrifice of praise, that is, the fruit of our lips that confess His name.” |

Read Matthew 13:24-30 ... The Parable of the Wheat and the Weeds/Tares

13:24-25 The Word of God (the good seed) is proactively spread by the Sower, but the believer is called to be awake and attentive to God’s Word (Eph 5:13-14; 1 Thessalonians 5:6). If the fellowship is not attentive, Satan and his minions will sow unproductive weeds among them that take resources (e.g., water) from the productive plants.

- Wheat (valuable) and tares (valueless) cannot be differentiated until they are fully grown (Matthew 3:12). The difference then is that the wheat, heavy with good fruit, bows its head as if in humility. The tare, a lightweight, keeps its head rigidly raised. Humility is the difference between wheat and tares.
 - The sown tare was literally “darnel” which closely resembles wheat as a false Christian might resemble a true believer; let them mature together and God’s judgment will discern between them (Mt 13:24-30; Lk 3:17).
 - The metaphor of the wheat and the chaff involves the grains being crushed by animals pulling a weighted flat sled to separate out the kernels from the husks; the remaining husks would be thrown into the air with the light

chaff to be blown away while the heavier grain fell back down. (Luke 3:16-17)

13:26 The sown tare was literally “darnel” which closely resembles wheat as a false believer might resemble a true Christian; let them mature together and God’s judgment will discern between them

- Some individuals are religious, but they are not followers of Christ (Matthew 7:21-23).
- Darnel is not good to consume as it is an intoxicant causing dizziness and nausea when people eat its seeds. The official name for darnel is “L. temulentum” which comes from a Latin word meaning “intoxicated.”
 - In classical Greece, darnel was known as the “plant of frenzy” in ancient Greece, and later utilized in Europe as a medicinal plant as an anesthetic. However, it was most frequently brewed into beer or baked into “dazed bread.”

13:27-28 The harvesters are the angels, and the field is the world. Jesus identifies Satan (the “diabolos” meaning enemy/adversary) to His angels as Satan has spread the weed seed (Gen 3:15) in this world.

13:29 The evil weeds (“sons of Satan”) are left, so that the good wheat (“sons of the Kingdom”) will not be harmed.

- God has left the true believers and false believers in the world together until the end times.
- Believers should not judge and condemn the “tares” either because some of them may actually be wheat (Mt 15:13-14). Believers are called to love each other while deferring to the Lord as the Judge.

13:30 The reapers/harvesters will bind and burn (Matthew 13:42, 50) those who are not in the kingdom of God (2 Pet 2:4-11; Rev 20:15) while those in the Kingdom of God will await eternal joy and fellowship with Him.

- The fire (hell) will be eternal (Matthew 18:8; 24:41; Mark 9:48; Jude 1:7).

Read Matthew 13:31-32 ... The Parable of the Mustard Seed

Shared Account of the Parable of the Mustard Seed: Mt 13:31-32; Mk 4:30-32; Lk 13:18-19

13:31 A seed has the capacity to reproduce the life form (whether a tree, a human or God Himself) from which it originated if given adequate water (living water, Spirit, Word of God).

13:32 The mustard seed was the smallest seed of the Jews (approximately 2 mm in diameter), and mustard plants in the Mideast frequently grow to nine feet high and can reach 15 feet. (Matthew 17:20)

- The seed contains 33-50% of its weight in oil which is extracted by crushing the seed (Lk 17:6). Often the Spirit (oil) is most evident in the trials (crushing) of His people. Birds can symbolize spiritual truth or deceit (Jeremiah 5:27).
- Consistent with the previous kingdom parable (Mt 13:19; Mk 4:15), the birds represent evil. Some places of fellowship can harbor deceit (e.g., false teachings; traditions).

18 Matthew 13:33-58

| Kingdom Parables Advising Believers about the World's Evil | | | |
|---|------------------------|---|------------|
| Mt 13:29 | Wheat/Tares | Do not judge and condemn the world | Grace |
| Mt 13:32 | Birds on Mustard Plant | Be wary of those roosting in high positions | Prudence |
| Mt 13:33 | Yeast in Dough | Do not mix too closely with the world | Separation |

Read Matthew 13:33 ... The Parable of the Yeast

13:33 Leaven represents sin (pride that “puffs up” – 1 Corinthians 5:8), so unleavened bread (Genesis 18:6; Leviticus 14:10) represents purity (without sin – Exodus 12:15, 34:25).

- Similar to the purpose of the bird on the mustard plant, believers should be careful not to mix (blend/socialize) too closely with the fallen world.
- A woman (Revelation 17:3) applies the yeast (sin) to the pure dough (God’s people).
- Just as in the prior parable where faith began small and grew to a great size, in this parable, sin also begins small and grows.

Read Matthew 13:34-35 ... The Use of Parables Fulfills Prophecy to Keep Things Secret

13:34 Jesus used only parables to talk to the masses as a judgment against the hardened hearts of Israel (Mt 13:10-11; Romans 11:7).

13:35 Asaph the musician is referenced as a Prophet (Psalm 78:2). Mysteries that have been kept secret from the world (and Israel) since creation, Jesus enlightened for the church age.

Read Matthew 13:36-43 ... Jesus Interprets Parable of the Wheat & Weeds to His Disciples

13:36 After the parables, Jesus returned to the house (“house of Israel”), and His disciples requested from Him enlightenment to His Word.

| Comparisons of the Symbolism (Expositional Consistency) | | | |
|--|------------------------------|---|---|
| Parable of the Sower (Mt 13:18-23) | | Parable of the Weeds (Mt 13:36-43) | |
| Sower | <i>Not Mentioned</i> | Son of Man | Jesus conveys His Word |
| Seed/Good Seed | Word about the Kingdom | Sons of the Kingdom | The Sons of the Kingdom carry His Word as Testimony |
| Soil/Field | <i>Varied</i> | World | |
| Weeds | Worries, Seduction, Ambition | Sons of the Evil One | The Sons of the Evil One convey worldly pressures |
| Harvesters | <i>Not Mentioned</i> | Angels | |

13:38 The field (the world) may include the Gentiles (Ezekiel 17:3, 31:6; Daniel 4:12)

13:39 The Jews believe in two ages: the current age dominated by sin, and the coming age where God’s righteousness prevails.

- The coming of Jesus' incarnate was the beginning of the latter days, and during the millennium rule, Jesus will reign in righteousness over all of the earth.
- 13:40-41 The reapers/harvesters will bind and burn everything that causes sin as well as the lawless (2 Pet 2:4-11; Rev 20:15).
- 13:42 Hell will not destroy, but instead it will bring perpetual grief (Dan 12:2; 2 Thessalonians 1:9).
- 13:43 The righteous will shine like the sun (Dan 12:3; 1 Jn 1:7) reflecting the light of Christ (Mt 17:2; Rev 22:5). The heat of the sun will not affect those in God's kingdom, but will be enlightenment to all around.
- The surface (photosphere) of the sun is approximately 10,000° Fahrenheit (5,500° Celsius) while the center of the sun is estimated to be even hotter at approximately 27,000,000° Fahrenheit (15,000,000° Celsius).
 - This is the third time in Matthew in which Jesus emphasizes that those with the Spirit of understanding should apply that insight and listen (Mt 11:15, 13:9).

Read Matthew 13:44 ... The Parable of the Hidden Treasure

This Hidden Treasure is often equated to the Jewish People (Psalm 135:4)

13:44 In each of the other parables, Jesus is the man (e.g., sower), and with that consistent interpretation, Jesus paid the price for His followers (1 Cor 6:20, 7:23; Philippians 2:5-8).

- Scripture refers to Israel as the Lord's treasure (Psalm 135:4).
 - Daniel was "treasured" by God (Daniel 10:11, 19).
 - The "fear of the Lord" is Israel's treasure (Isaiah 33:6).
- Another interpretation is that the believer must sacrifice everything for the treasure of Jesus' salvation (Mt 10:38, 19:21).
 - God's Word should be a "treasure" to the believer (Psalm 119:11; Proverbs 2:4, 7:1, 20:15; Colossians 2:3).

Read Matthew 13:45-46 ... The Parable of the Priceless Pearl

This Priceless Pearl is often equated to the Gentiles (Revelation 21:21)

13:45-46 With the consistent application as Jesus being referenced as the man in these parables, the buried treasure (Mt 13:44) could represent Israel (being reburied until His second coming – Ex 19:5; Dt 7:6; Mal 3:17) while the pearl represents the Gentiles.

- The pearl is the only gem made by a living organism in response to irritant (trials/pressures). Pearls are formed within oysters which are not "kosher" to Israelites (Lev 11:10-12).
 - The size of the pearl is directly related to the size of the irritant.
- As the pearl is removed from the natural setting, so too will God's people be raptured to Himself (Jn 14:1-3; 1 Thessalonians 4:16).

Read Matthew 13:47-50 ... The Parable of the Net with Good & Worthless Fish

This net is often equated to post-millennial judgment of those who grew up during the Millennium where the Lord rules on the earth.

13:47 The sea represents the chaotic world system of the Gentiles (Mt 4:19; Mk 1:17). At the end of this age, mankind will be gathered in and sifted.

13:48-50 Those deemed worthy will be given a pre-established place (container – John 14:2-3) while others are thrown out (Mt 8:11-12; 25:31).

- Some liken this parable to the separation of sheep and goats that treated Israel certain ways during the Great Tribulation (Mt 25:31-46).

Read Matthew 13:51-53 ... The Storeroom of New & Old Truths from Scripture

13:51 Jesus verified that His followers understood His words. The followers of Jesus affirmed that they had understood the truth behind the parables that had hidden truth from the wicked.

| Story Line from the Seven Parables of the Kingdom (Matthew 13) | |
|---|---|
| Seven Parables of the Kingdom | Story Line |
| Mt 13:3-9 Sower with different ground | God’s Word Shared to the World |
| Mt 13:24-30 Reaping wheat and weeds at harvest | Satan works to pollute God’s family |
| Mt 13:31-32 Large Tree with Birds in Branches | Leaders safely perch to consume fruit |
| Mt 13: 33 Should not mix | Socialization of God’s people with polluted world |
| Mt 13:44 Finds Treasure & Reburies then sells everything for prize in field | Jews purchased |
| Mt 13:45-46 Merchant & Fine Pearls | Gentiles purchased |
| Mt 13:47-50 Throw out the worthless fish | Separation of God’s people from the worldly |

13:52 Every student of Scripture (scribe – Mt 23:34) brings the blessings of truth from the storeroom of the Old and New Testaments.

- The New Testament was yet to be recorded; however, Jesus brought the new covenant with His incarnation, death and resurrection.
- The disciples were encouraged to apply these newly defined truths to their former understanding of the law subsequently teaching and sharing.

Shared Account of Jesus in Nazareth: Mt 13:54-58; Mk 6:1-6; Lk 4:16-30

13:52 The title of “scribe” references someone who understands the Lord’s teachings. There is truth contained in both the old and the new covenant that is all inspired (Matthew 5:17-18).

- Believers who grasp the treasure of the old and new covenants will understand that Jesus is the fulfillment of the law.

13:53 Upon ensuring an understanding of the parables, Jesus left Capernaum to return to Nazareth.

Read Matthew 13:54-58 ... Jesus Rejected in His Hometown of Nazareth

13:54 The people in His local place of worship (the synagogue) were astonished at Jesus’ wisdom and miraculous power.

- Believers should continue to walk in “wisdom and works.” It’s not enough to know a lot; believers should actively apply the wisdom that the Lord gives to them.

13:55 In Greek the phrase “the carpenter” (tou tektonos - τοῦ τέκτονος) is singular which might mean that Joseph was the primary (or only) carpenter of Nazareth.

- The Greek term for a carpenter was “tekton.” In those days, a Tekton would work with rock as much as they would work with wood; the Tekton would have been a mason, engineer and builder.

13:56 Mary gave birth to at least seven children. "Adelphos" is the Greek word for "brother" (not "cousin" as some Catholics interpret).

- Two of Jesus' brothers, James and Judas (Jude), penned books of the Bible.
- Mary is described as the mother of James and Joseph at the crucifixion. (Matthew 27:56; Mark 15:40; John 19:25)
 - James, the man who would lead the Jerusalem church, was the second born.
 - In each listing of the disciples, Judas is listed last, and the same name is also listed last among the brothers of Jesus.
- When people (e.g., believers) get offended, it typically represents arrogance and pride.
- Often liberals attack the messenger without listening to the truth of the message; in this instance, the message and messenger were one in the same, but these locals denied the message of Christ (Rom 10:17).

13:57 The casual relationship with those who God has chosen for important ministries often blinds the families and friends of God's special calling. Spouses, children and friends often devalue each other without understanding God's perspective.

13:58 Jesus restrained His miraculous works because of the lack of faith. Those without faith do not seek healing from Him because they doubt His power to restore.

- Miraculous works are a reward for faith – not a mechanism to induce faith. Jesus couldn't perform any works because there was no faith to remunerate. (Mark 6:5; Psalm 78:41). The Christian adage is "without Him, I can't...without me, He won't."

19 Matthew 14:1-21

Read Matthew 14:1-12 ... John the Baptist Beheaded

Shared Account of Death of John the Baptist: Mt 14:1-12; Mk 6:14-29; Lk 9:7-9

14:1 Herod the tetrarch was the son of Herod the Great (who ruled at Jesus' birth).

- After the death of Herod, the Great, the Palestine area was divided into four regions: 1. Archelaus ruled Judea 2. Philip ruled Iturea 3. Lysanias ruled Abilene 4. Herod ruled Galilee.
- Tetrarch is defined as having a "fourth" of the governmental authority ("ruler of a quarter").
- While Jesus was doubted by His own town of Nazareth, the liberal government found Him credible.
- The father of Herod Antipas was Herod the Great while his mother was a Samaritan.
- Herod's wife, Herodias, had wanted to kill John the Baptist for some time, but Herod Antipas would not because he feared John the Baptist (Mark 6:19-20).

14:2 Herod hears what the public (Mk 8:28) reported about Jesus (Lk 23:6-12; Acts 4:25-28).

- The rumor of John the Baptist's resurrection foreshadowed the resurrection of Jesus.
- Herod believed in the resurrection of John the Baptist, but he should have had faith in Jesus' resurrection.

- 14:3 Herod's first wife had been the daughter of the King of Arabia (Gal 1:17, 4:25). Herodias was first married to her eldest uncle (her father's half-brother) Philip. However, Philip had been disinherited, and Herodias turned to her other uncle Herod Antipas.
- 14:4 John the Baptist was intrepid in identifying the sins of the rulers. Some use this verse to encourage political activism.
- 14:5 Just as the crowds would intimidate the Roman Governor, Pilate, into crucifying Jesus, this Roman mob had a positive influence that extended the life of John the Baptist.
- John the Baptist was incarcerated at Machaerus (which was a military fortress on the northeast side of the Dead Sea) established by Herod the Great to safeguard the Transjordan area.
- 14:6 The celebration of Herod's birth was the day of John's death. This erotic dance was said to have typically been performed by prostitutes. Salome's name is never mentioned in the Bible as she was a pawn of her conniving mother.
- The historian Josephus writes a great deal about the Herod family.
- 14:7 Herod is so overcome by lust that he publicly swore that he would fulfill Salome's desire. So many men mindlessly lose their most valuable possessions (e.g., family; material life; spiritual life) because of the fleeting lust of a moment.
- 14:8 Advice from any authority, including parents, should not be obeyed without first comparing the guidance with Scripture (Lk 14:26).
- 14:9 Filled with regret, Herod amassed sin upon sin as his lust and pride drove him to fulfill his sinful course.
- Bad decisions often occur at parties with music, dancing, women and intoxication.
 - There is a difference between regret and repentance. Although Herod had regret, he did not repent from killing John the Baptist.
- 14:10 John the Baptist seemed to believe that Jesus would free him from prison (Mt 11:1-19), but the executioner beheaded John in the prison. God holds a special position of honor for those who die for Him (Rev 20:4).
- 14:11 The head of John the Baptist went from the executioner to the girl to the mother. This speaks to the influence of strong, ungodly wives (Prov 31:26).
- Herodias would ultimately be the undoing of Herod Antipas. Herod Agrippa was made King; Herodias told Herod Antipas that he should purchase the crown from Rome for himself. Herod Agrippa forewarned Emperor Caligula of the intent of Antipas. When Antipas made the offer to Caligula, Antipas and Herodias were banned from Palestine and exiled to live out their days in Gaul.
- 14:12 John's disciples honorably reclaimed buried his body. A number of John's disciples had followed Jesus during his incarceration (Mt 4:12; Jn 1:35-42, 3:22-30).

Read Matthew 14:13-21 ... Jesus Feeds 5,000 With Five Loaves & Two Fish

Shared Account of the Feeding of the 5000: Mt 14:13-21; Mk 6:30-44; Lk 9:10-17; Jn 6:1-15

- 14:13 Jesus encouraged quiet times away from ministry to replenish and nourish one's self instead of continually dealing with the needs of others (Mk 3:20). The boat continued to be Jesus' way to separate Himself from the world and go to other places of ministry.

- 14:14 After John was killed, Jesus healed the crowds from compassion. The Greek term for compassion (splagchnizomai σπλαγχνίζομαι) had the meaning of feeling deeply (within one's bowels). In those days, the bowels represented the core of emotion as the "heart" is in modern times.
- John the Baptist had been killed immediately before Passover (Jn 6:4) which is similar to the crucifixion of Christ (Mt 26:17).
 - Jesus performed a number of healings (Matthew 4:23, 8:16, 9:15, 14:14, 15:30, 19:2, 21:14)
- 14:15 The disciples saw the darkness approaching and the wilderness without water or life. Although the disciples understood the need, but they expected the congregants to find food for themselves.
- At times, Jews referenced two "evenings" for a single day. The "early evening" began around 3:00pm (Matthew 14:15) and a later "evening" after twilight/sunset (Matthew 14:23).
- 14:16 Jesus is the great shepherd (Ps 23; Mt 2:6, 26:31; Jn 10:11-16; Heb 13:20; 1 Pet 2:25, 5:4; Rev 7:17) who cares for and feeds His sheep. Jesus tests the disciples (John 6:6) by telling His disciples to nourish the flock.
- It would have costed a good amount to feed the crowds (Mark 6:37), but instead the disciples used a little boy's lunch (John 6:9).
- 14:17 Five ("grace") pieces of bread ("body") and two ("witness") fish ("believer") were used to convey that God can multiply the grace of an individual while strengthening the witness of a Believer. The traditional fish caught at that time were sardines, barbells, and musht ("St. Peter's Fish"); the two "small" fish could have been sardines.
- 14:18 The offering (e.g., capabilities, effort, skills, etc.), no matter how small, gains in influence as it is brought before Christ.
- 14:19 The crowd was told to trust and obey the words of the Lord. Jesus cared for the people as a shepherd (Ps 23:1-2).
- The crowd needed to obey Jesus by sitting in the grass (stop searching for food, but rely on Jesus) as they sat in groups of 50 to 100 people. (Mark 6:39-40)
 - Jesus often offered prayers before eating (Mk 14:22; Lk 24:30). Jesus may have recited the "HaMotzi" (The Blessing Over the Bread). *"Blessed are You, Adonai our God, ruler of the universe, who brings forth bread from the earth."*
 - The normal Jewish stance for prayer is to lift the hands and eyes to heaven as one prays.
- 14:20 The provisions of God are enough to nourish and satisfy everyone completely.
- After the meal, twelve baskets remained just as after the rapture of the church, the grace and witness of the Lord will reach the nation of Israel. Israel will ultimately call on the Lord at the end of the tribulation.
 - Jesus Himself emphasizes the meaning of the numbers (Mk 8:19-20).
- 14:21 The "sign" (semeion σημεῖον) of feeding the five thousand men (with another possible 5,000 -10,000 wives and children) is the only "sign" in each of the four gospels.

Read Matthew 14:22-33 ... Jesus Walked on the Water

Shared Account of Jesus Walking on the Water: Mt 14:22-33; Mk 6:45-52; Jn 6:16-21

14:22 Jesus directed the disciples and the crowd as to when they should depart.

- Once the Lord had fed the people, they realized that He was the Messiah and were inclined to make Him King by force. (John 6:14-15)
- At His first incarnation, Jesus came to share of the Kingdom of Heaven, to die and resurrect. Although His second coming will bring an earthly kingdom, it was not time for Jesus to be declared King.

14:23 Jesus had endeavored to be alone after hearing of John's death (Mt 14:13), but the crowds had sought Him. As darkness came, Jesus was alone on the mountain (usually representative of authority). Jesus sought quiet time with the Father (Mt 14:13, 23; Mk 1:35, 6:31; Lk 5:16, 6:12, 9:18; Jn 6:15).

14:24 The Sea of Galilee is seven miles wide, so little headway had been made against the winds. The Syria-African Rift extends 4,500 miles that includes the Sea of Galilee, the Jordan River and the Dead Sea.

14:25 Jesus allowed His people to struggle the entire night (until the fourth watch after 3:00am) before bringing relief from the turbulent conditions.

- The Jews of the Old Testament divided their nights into three watches (Judges 7:19; Lamentations 2:19), but the Romans had introduced four watches by this time (Mark 13:35). Jesus came walking on the water between 3:00am-6:00am.
- The sea often represents the chaos of the world system (Ps 93:3-4; Is 57:20-21; Eph 4:14-15), and Jesus walked above the chaos.

14:26 The disciples mistook Jesus as a ghost (Lk 24:39) and became more fearful.

- Jesus came to His disciples on what they feared the most.

14:27 Jesus emphasizes twice for His followers to have courage because of Who Jesus is – the Creator and Lord who gives salvation. Jesus reveals Himself to calm the fears of His people.

- The Greek term for “take courage” (Tharseite *Θαρσεῖτε*) is only used three times in Scripture. This account and the shared account in Mark 6:50; the other time is in John 16:33 – *“I have told you these things so that in Me you may have peace. You will have suffering in this world. **Be courageous!** I have conquered the world.”*

| Three Statements of Jesus at Greeting (Matthew 14:27) |
|--|
| 1. “Be of Good Cheer” or “Take Courage” |
| 2. “It is Me” |
| 3. “Do not be afraid” |

- Jesus repeatedly told His disciples to stop being afraid (Matthew 17:7; 28:10; Luke 5:10; 12:32; Mark 6:50; John 6:20).

14:28 Peter refers to Jesus as “Lord” and then asks for a sign.

14:29 The Lord bids all who are tired from struggling in this world to come (Mt 11:28).

14:30 When Peter took his eyes off of Jesus and became focused on the raging sea (this world's chaos); Peter feared the “wind” and began to sink.

- Believers must complete what they have begun in the Lord; although Peter obeyed by leaving the boat, he became distracted (2 Cor 8:11; 2 Tim 4:7; James 1:4).
- 14:31 Immediately, Jesus reached down and saved His follower before Peter could be overwhelmed by the world.
- Jesus identifies the “little faith” repeatedly (seven times) in Scripture (Matthew 6:30, 8:26, 16:8).
- 14:32-33 Once Jesus had returned Peter to the boat and calmed the storm, others worshipped Him.
- The testimony of one who has been tried (like Peter) can bring glory to the Lord.
 - Jesus accepted their worship as they recognized Him as the Son of God (Matthew 27:54). The Son of God is used repeatedly (Matthew 16:16; 26:63; 27:40, 43, 54)

Read Matthew 14:34-36 ... Witness of Gennesaret Healings

- 14:34 Jesus and the disciples have now crossed from the area controlled by Herod Antipas to the area controlled by Herod’s brother Philip.
- This is a different brother Philip than Herodias’ ex-husband who was domiciled in Rome.
 - Gennesaret means “garden of riches”
- 14:35 Unlike His disciples in the throes of the sea, the people on land immediately recognized Jesus and flocked to Him for relief.
- 14:36 The tassel represented a man’s righteousness, and the hem of his prayer shawl (tallith/tallis) was called his “wing” (Num 15:37-40).
- Just as Peter had asked the Lord to let him come from the boat, so too, did many beg the Lord to let them come, and everyone who touched the hem of Jesus’ garment were healed (Ruth 3:9) as if coming under His wing of provision.
 - The term “tallith/tallis” means “tent” as it was a representation of the Temple; whenever, the Jewish man pulled the prayer shawl over his head (never covering the face), it symbolized his going to prayer in the tent (Tabernacle).
 - Each of the four corners of the tallit contained a tzitzit (תצית) which is literally defined as a “fringe.”
 - Hebrew is an alphanumeric language where each letter also represents a numerical value. The Hebraic spelling of the word “tzitzit” is 600. Each of the fringes contains 8 threads and 5 knots which totals 613; this corresponds to the 613 commandments contained in the Torah/Pentateuch.

21 Matthew 15:1-20

Read Matthew 15:1-9 ... Gift to Temple Instead of Caring for Parents

Shared Account of Inner Purity: Mt 15:1-20; Mk 7:1-23

15:1 The principal Pharisees and scribes were 70 miles away from the ministry of Jesus, but they traveled to hear and see firsthand.

- The Pharisees (meaning “separated ones”) had evolved out of the Maccabean time period and were legalistic by design. The Pharisees believed all of the Tanakh (Old Testament) as well as the oral traditions that would be codified (written) in the Mishnah between ~70AD-~200AD.

- The scribes (lawyers) were the scholars responsible for interpreting the oral and written traditions into daily life. Most scribes were of the sect of the Pharisees.
- The Pharisees would survive the destruction of Jerusalem while the Sadducees did not. The Sadducees were abolished in 70AD with the destruction of the Temple.

15:2 The Pharisees are referencing oral tradition that would later become the Mishnah. The oral tradition had begun with pure motives in applying God’s word (the Tanakh) in practical ways, but the oral law had devolved to separating Jews from God through ritualistic religion instead of bringing them closer to God through the application of His Word.

- The religious rituals had become a burden to the people of Israel.
- These pseudo-religious leaders were always scrutinizing the followers of Jesus to detect failings.
- As Jesus is the bread of life, no man can be washed from pollution before accepting Him; self-effort for salvation is never acceptable because only God can make a man holy.
- There were many oral traditions around eating which were of great importance. Rabbi’s had been excommunicated because they broke the oral traditions. The Greek word “Tum’a” (“impurity” הטומא) comes from the Hebrew word “Atum” (“blocked” ’otêm אטם), and Jews believe spiritual forces are blocked when there is uncleanness. The “Mikvah” (המקוה) is a bath used for ritual immersion/cleansing and ritual purity; although this might be a bath inside a building, the water has to be natural (rain, well, etc.).
 - The “halacha” is the Jewish law that supplements the scriptural law in the Talmud. The halacha (Jewish law) contains a great deal about hand washing as Jews extrapolated laws beyond their original intent – if a law was beneficial for a priest, it was good for everyone; if washing hands before a meal was beneficial, then washing hands after a meal would be beneficial.

| Occasions Jews Must Wash Hands For Ceremonial Purity |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When they awake (shacharit) • Before & After Eating • Between Courses of Meals • After using the bathroom • After touching head/scalp • After getting a hair cut • After cutting nails • After touching footwear • After donating blood • Upon leaving a cemetery |

- If only one hand touches anything unclean, then only that one hand needs to be washed. The traditional Jewish washing cup has two handles.



- The handwashing traditions had originally begun with the priests washing before they ministered in the Temple (Exodus 30:19; Leviticus 15:11).
- Hands were washed by filling a container with water and then pouring the water over the hand while rotating the wrist until it drips off the elbow.
- Jewish hygienic traditions kept the Jewish community from being seriously impacted in the 14th century Black Plague that killed 25 million – a third of the European population.
- Some traditions prohibited eating meat and dairy together; some prohibited cooking meat and fish together.
- The term “kosher” is utilized to describe food preparation that complies with strict Jewish dietary standards.
 - The “Kashrut” (תַּכְּשָׁרִית) is the Jewish law detailing what foods can/cannot be prepared or eaten.
 - Kosher food is divided into three categories: meat, dairy, and pareve (הַפָּרֵוֶה). Pareve means to be prepared without milk or meat, so “pareve” foods are considered neutral and can be eaten with either milk or meat dishes. The Kashrut (Jewish dietary law) prohibits mixing milk dishes with meat.

15:3, 6 These Pharisaical traditions were pragmatic in that cleanliness is logical, but men had exalted these rituals and customs over following the Lord.

- God alone purifies common instruments for His purpose (Zechariah 14:20-21).
- Fallen and sinful men have a tendency to esteem their traditions higher than God’s Word/commandments.

15:4 The first of the ten commandments directed at human relations is focused on the honor (respect) of the parents (Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 5:16).

- Parents (family, fellow Christians in need) should be given money prior to giving to the Temple (to the church) – 1 Timothy 5:4, 8.
- The Mosaic Law required the death penalty for disrespecting one’s parents (Exodus 21:17; Leviticus 20:9).

15:5 Believers should prayerfully give an offering “to God” instead of mindlessly giving “to an organization.”

- There are so many Believers in need around the world (Acts 11:29-30; 24:17). Of course, God may lead giving to the church or to some other ministry.
- The Bible encourages support ministries that “spiritually feed” the giver (1 Tim 5:17-18; 1 Cor 9:9-11).
- The Jews followed the Law of Korban (Hebrew: qorban קָרְבָּן; Greek: korban κορβᾶν) where they renounced ownership of something and dedicated it fully to the church. (Matthew 7:11)

- One “trick” was to claim Korban on something that the individual wanted to use for themselves; the scribes were often paid (as lawyers today) to show Jewish individuals various techniques to get around God’s law without breaking it.
- 15:7 The term “hypocrite” is from the Greek term “hypokritai” meaning pretender/actor.
- The Greek term for “hypocrite” (hypokritai ὑποκριται) continues the theatrical theme of not doing good works to be seen by men. (Matthew 6:5, 16, 7:5, 15:7, 22:18, 23:13-15, 23, 25, 27, 29; 24:51; Mark 7:6; Luke 6:42, 12:56, 13:15)
 - In the 1st century BC, actors were called hypocrites.
 - The root of the word “hypocrite” is a compound noun based on two Greek words: hypo (“under”) and krínō (judge). In ancient times, actors wore masks, so the intent is to judge the person under the mask.
 - The world judges the church for being hypocrites while it exalts Hollywood’s quite literal hypocrites/actors.
- 15:8-9 True spirituality is a relationship with the Lord as one submits to His will and guidance (Isaiah 29:13).
- Modern religion reduces a divine relationship to a list of acceptable behaviors instead of walking with the sovereign Lord.
 - Often denomination traditions are esteemed as stringently as Pharisaical oral traditions. “In essentials – unity; In non-essentials – liberty; In all things – love.” (Romans 14)
 - Others in modern times, pretend to have a walk with the Lord on their own terms without any adherence to His Word. The world creates idols like themselves without reference to the way God describes Himself in His Word.

Read Matthew 15:10-20 ... Defilement is from The Heart

Jesus publicly denounces the legalism of the Pharisees

- 15:10 Three-step process to wisdom is given: 1. Come to Jesus 2. Hear His word 3. Understand
- 15:11 Cursing, sexual innuendo’s, etc. seem to be more “tolerated” in the modern religious setting, but these words bring debasement (James 3:9-10; Matthew 12:34).
- Men had wrongly considered “things” as evil when in reality, it is men’s hearts that are evil as God’s good creation is perverted and warped because of sinful hearts.
- 15:12 The religious leaders (Pharisees) were offended at Jesus’ correction, but they will pay the price for trusting themselves instead of God, and their blind followers will also pay the price for choosing the word of these religious leaders over God’s Word.
- The essence of religion is a heart attitude of love towards God. (Matthew 22:36-40)
 - The Pharisees’ pride was offended instead of having soft hearts to change (Matthew 11:6).
 - In saying this, Jesus was declaring that all foods were clean to eat (Mark 7:19).
- 15:13 Jesus references the parable of the weeds (Mt 13:24-30) as the religious leaders (Pharisees and scribes) had been planted by the evil one (Mt 13:38-40).
- It is possible to be viewed as a religious leader while not being right with God and enjoying a personal relationship with Him.

- 15:14 The followers of Jesus were advised to leave the sinful religious leaders alone. False religious leaders have no spiritual sight (insight, discernment) and the pit where they end is eternal (Ezekiel 31:14).
- The blind were leading the blind (Romans 2:17-29)
- 15:15 In privacy, Peter and the disciples (Mk 7:17) asked for clarification concerning the parable by Jesus (Mk 4:10). Only God can provide spiritual enlightenment of His word.
- 15:16 Jesus appears disappointed at the lack of spiritual insight of His followers (Mk 4:13). Believers should strive to increasingly understand and apply the word of God.
- 15:17 Jesus discerns between the external factors (fleshly, worldly, physical) which impacts the life of the believer, but cannot taint him in contrast to the depraved state of man (attitude, motive, sinful nature) that produces the works of the flesh.
- 15:18 A man's words reveal his heart (Mt 12:34). That evil, which originates in the heart and mind of the believer, results in sin which will lead to their demise (1 Cor 3:16-17).
- As a man speaks, so is he (Matthew 12:35); man reveals himself through his words just as God revealed Himself through His Word. (John 1:1-5; 14:9-10)
- 15:19 Seven evil articles are listed as originating from a polluted heart. The number seven is representative of complete (complete evil).
- The first evil to be listed is evil thoughts which lead to other sins.
 - The Greek word for "sexual immorality" (porneiai πορνείαι) is the root word for pornography. (Mark 7:21)
 - The Greek word for "theft" (klopai κλοπαί) is the root word for kleptomania. (Mark 7:21)
 - The Greek word for "slander" or "irreverent" (blasphēmiai βλασφημῖαι) is the root word for blasphemous. (Mark 3:28; 1 Timothy 6:4)
- 15:20 Mankind is more concerned about the physical than the spiritual, but it is the spiritual defilement that needs to be avoided.
- God's creation is good until wicked men pervert God's good creation (Romans 14:13-23; 1 Corinthians 10:31; 1 Timothy 4:4; Titus 1:15)

22 Matthew 15:21-39

Read Matthew 15:21-28 ... The Faith of A Canaanite (Gentile) Woman in Tyre

Shared Account of Gentile Mother: Mt 15:21-28; Mk 7:24-30

- 15:21 Tyre ("rock") and Sidon ("fishing") were two metropolises in the region of Phoenicia ("palm trees").
- The focus of Jesus' ministry was sharing the gospel with the Jews, but the crowds would distract to their own, worldly agenda.
 - The word "Canaanite" (meaning "trader" or "merchant") emphasizes Israel's ancient pagan neighbors. This Greek woman was a "Syrophoenician" meaning an inhabitant of Phoenicia in the province of Syria (Mark 7:24).
- 15:22 "Canaanite" was a term used for those sinful people who inhabited the promised land prior to God giving the land to Israel. The daughter (offspring) of the Gentiles (Mk 5:23) had an unclean spirit, but this Gentile woman fell at the feet of Jesus.

- This Gentile from Syria understood that her daughter needed to be freed from an unclean spirit.
 - By referencing Jesus as the “Son of David,” the Gentile lady showed she understood Jesus was the awaited Messiah as He fulfilled the Davidic covenant (2 Samuel 7:11-13).
- 15:23 Jesus does not communicate with the Gentile woman, but He is urged by His disciples to send her away because she was noisily following them. (Acts 16:17-18)
- One reason that Jesus may have waited to engage and help the Gentile woman would have been to teach the disciples; he may have wanted to break down their racial prejudices.
- 15:24 Jesus calls the people of Israel “lost sheep” which He was sent to save.
- In Mark’s parallel account to the Romans, he left this statement out; however, the Jewish audience of Matthew would have appreciated being the target ministry for Jesus.
 - The Jews had a nationalistic bias towards Israel, so if the Gentiles had accepted Jesus, the Jews of Israel may have rejected Him outright because of pride.
- 15:25 Just as believers fall to their knees in prayer, this Gentile woman kneels in front of Jesus pleading for help.
- 15:26 Just as Jesus had referenced Israel as sheep, He now references the Gentiles as dogs.
- In Scripture, dogs always symbolized someone who was ravenous and evil – often to the detriment of the sheep (1 Kings 21:19; 2 Kings 8:13; Job 30:1; Prov 26:11; Mt 7:6; Philippians 3:2; Rev 22:15).
 - The gospel came to the Jews first, and then to the Gentiles (Lk 24:47; Rom 1:2, 16).
- 15:27 The woman does not take offense or promote her value (2 Sam 9:8), but instead, she accepts her lowly condition and asks for any surplus scrap (grace).
- She understands that, no matter how large the massive crowd, there are always abundant leftovers (Mk 8:17-21).
 - In ancient times before napkins existed, a diner would take a piece of bread from a plate on the table and use their bread to wipe their hands before eating it. The wiping of hands on the bread caused crumbs to fall on the floor.
 - The first napkin was a lump of dough that the Spartans called “apomagdalie.”
 - A sinful person must approach the Lord in humility (Mt 18:4, 23:12; James 4:6, 10)
- 15:28 Jesus rewarded the woman for her great faith in Him by allowing her desires to come to fruition.
- This is the second time that Matthew documents that Jesus states, “*Great is your faith!*” The first time was to a Gentile centurion (Matthew 8:5-13).
 - As with the centurion, the woman did not require that Jesus see her daughter, but instead the Gentile woman accepted the power of Jesus’ word that the daughter was healed.
 - It was to the Jews that Jesus admonished their little faith. (Matthew 6:30; 8:26; 14:31; 16:8; 17:20). The term “little faith” is used one other time (Luke 12:28) in Scripture which means that “little faith” is repeated six times in the Bible.

Read Matthew 15:29-31 ... Jesus Heals Many on A Mountaintop by the Sea of Galilee

15:29 Jesus sat on a mountaintop (symbolic of power/authority) as crowds came to Him for healing.

- The crowds had various ailments, so it would have taken courage to approach Jesus in the fear of catching a disease. Only the sick would have wanted to come to the “Great Physician” for a healing. (Mark 2:15-17)

| Physical Ailments represent Spiritual Healings as well (Matthew 15:30-31) | |
|---|-------------------------------|
| <u>Physical Deformity</u> | <u>Spiritual Healing</u> |
| 1. Lame, Crippled | Spiritual Walk |
| 2. Blind | Spiritual Discernment/Insight |
| 3. Deformed, Maimed | Straight, Natural |
| 4. Mute, Unable to Speak | Ability to Testify |

Read Matthew 15:32-39 ... Jesus Feeds 4,000 With Seven Loaves & A Few Small Fish

Shared Account of the Feeding of the 4,000: Mt 15:32-39; Mk 8:1-10

15:32 Jesus has compassion on His faithful followers as this large crowd had followed the Lord at the expense of satisfying basic worldly necessities.

- The number “three” represents revelation as all would view Him as the provider. Beyond the literal meaning, Jesus also walked with Israel for three years in ministry before the crucifixion as the “bread of life” (Jn 6:35).
- The followers of Jesus were sustained with Him, but would collapse apart from Him. They could not make it home on their own power nor can any man arrive safely at his spiritual home without the aid of the Lord (2 Cor 5:8; Heb 11:14).
- This “sign” (semeion σημεῖον) was in the location of the Decapolis which is a heavily Gentile area; this may have been an extension of the lesson for the disciples from the Tyre and Sidon woman. (Matthew 15:21-28)

15:33 The world is a desolate place which could never satisfy the spiritual needs of man.

15:34 The number “seven” represents “full satisfaction” and “complete fulfillment.”

- The few fish (“Believers”) were used to convey that God can multiply the grace of an individual while strengthening the witness of a Believer.
- The traditional fish caught at that time were sardines, barbells, and musht (“St. Peter’s Fish”); the few “small” fish could have been sardines.

15:35 The followers must obey Jesus and rest to let Him nourish them and meet their needs.

15:36 Jesus did not pray for abundance, but showed gratitude for what was in His possession. The disciples served the Lord in sharing His sustenance with the masses, but Jesus continued to give and never ran out of bread.

15:37 All of those who had followed Jesus were filled and there was much remaining after everyone was completely satisfied. “Seven” represents “complete satisfaction.”

- In the feeding of the 4,000, the Greek term for the type of “basket” (spyridas σπυρίδας) describes a flat mat (braided platter) with handles. (Matthew 15:37, 16:10; Mark 8:8).

- When feeding the 5,000, the Greek term for “hand-baskets” (kophinous κοφίνους) describes a large, sturdy wicker basket (Matthew 14:20, 16:9; Mark 8:19; John 6:13)



- The 5,000 people fed were Jewish, and the baskets had walls which could represent borders of a select group (Israel). However, the 4,000 people were fed in an area that was largely populated by Gentiles and the basket was open without borders as the bread would be available to the nations to the four corners of the world.

15:38 With 4,000 men listed, the actual number of the crowd may have been two or three times that amount.

- “Four” represents “testing/trial” such as going three days without eating.

| Cultural & Social Barriers Eliminated By Jesus | |
|---|---------------------------|
| Sick & Demon Possessed | Matthew 15:30-31 |
| Gentiles | Matthew 8:5-13 |
| Samaritan | John 4:1-26 |
| Women | Matthew 9:20-22; 15:21-28 |
| Children | Matthew 9:23-26; 19:14 |

15:39 Magdala (“tower/greatness”) was the birthplace of Mary Magdalene (Mk 8:10).

- Magdala was a city at the most western point of the Sea of Galilee where the Sea of Galilee is at its widest. The shared account names the district as Dalmanutha (Mark 8:10).
- Jesus was traveling around the Sea of Galilee to minister. The southern and western sides were primarily Jewish while the northern and eastern sides were predominantly Gentile.

23 Matthew 16

Read Matthew 16:1-12 ... Spiritual Meaning Instead of Material in the Yeast of Pharisees

16:1 It is only in the book of Matthew that the Pharisees and Sadducees are linked together. (Matthew 3:7; 16:1, 6, 11-12; 22:34). The Sadducees are mentioned only one time in Mark and Luke (Mark 12:18; Luke 20:27) as well as a handful of times in Acts (Acts 4:1; 5:17; 23:6-8).

- Pharisees (“the separated ones”) evolved during the Maccabean period and held to the whole Old Testament law as well as oral conditions (Talmud) of purity. The Pharisees believed in an afterlife while the Sadducees did not. The Pharisees were at enmity with Roman power as they occupied Israel.
- The Sadducees were powerful aristocrats that primarily held to the Pentateuch and were more focused on ethics than theology. The Sadducees were the elites who

controlled the priesthood and the Temple. The Sadducees were the political leaders who controlled the power and wealth as they collaborated with Rome.

- The “signs” (semeion σημεῖον) of God are evidence of existing faith; the Pharisees and Sadducees would have doubted any sign because of their hardened hearts. (Matthew 12:38)

16:2-3 Understand the signs of the times as we are in the last days and Christ’s second coming is eminent

| Matthew 16:2B-3 Are Missing in Several Source Documents | |
|--|---|
| Matthew 16:2B-3 Are Found in: | Ephraemi “C” Bezae “D” |
| Matthew 16:2B-3 Are Missing in: | Sinaiticus “Aleph” Vaticanus “B” Peshitta Coptic |
| <i>When Sinaiticus “Aleph” and Vaticanus “B” are in agreement, it is assumed to be the original</i> | |

16:4 Faith does is not an outcome of sight, but faith does result in sight. Instead of seeing is believing, believing is actually seeing.

- The term “adulterous” (moichalis μοιχαλῖς) describes the generation as unfaithful, faithless or unbelieving.
- Jesus references Jonah which shows that at this time, Jesus understood that he would be crucified and raised again after three days. Jesus would share this foresight later in the chapter (Matthew 16:21).

16:5 This verse infers that it had become habit that the disciples would take bread with them when they traveled on outreach trips with Jesus.

16:6 While the disciples had no *bread*, Jesus warned of the Pharisees & Sadducees *yeast*; this reveals the underlying symbolism of Scripture (Mt 16:3, 6-11).

- The Greek word for “leaven” (zymēs ζύμη) is a similar word to the Aramaic word for “legal severity.”

16:7 The disciples believed that Jesus was referencing the physical situation when He was actually discussing spiritual matters.

16:8 Jesus told the disciples that they had “little faith” because they did not recognize the spiritual symbolism that He was using. As God’s Word, Jesus was teaching a deeper level of meaning.

16:9-10 Jesus had provided bread for over 9,000 people on two occasions, so He would not chide them over the lack of physical bread. Jesus uses the exact numbers loaves and people because the numbers themselves relay underlying spiritual truths.

- Jesus asks in both instances about the number of baskets that were remaining afterwards.
- The number “5” symbolizes “judgment/grace.” The number of baskets remaining after feeding the 5,000 were “12” which symbolizes “organizational witness” (Matthew 14:13-21).
- The number “7” symbolizes “complete/full” while the number “4” represents “creation.” The number of baskets remaining after feeding the 4,000 were “7” which symbolizes “complete/full” (Matthew 15:32-39).

16:11 This is the last of five questions that Jesus asks of His disciples in that He expected them to understand His spiritual truths. It might also be that Jesus was asking them to consider how they were lacking in not comprehending the spiritual truths.

- Jesus then repeats His warning concerning the “leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.”

16:12 The yeast of the religious leaders resulted in proud (yeast puffs up) lives of self-effort. Yeast has a corrupting effect. (Matthew 13:33)

Read Matthew 16:13-20 ... Peter Recognizes Jesus as the Messiah, Son of the Living God
Shared Account of Peter’s Realization: Mt 16:13-16; Mk 8:27-29; Lk 9:18-20

16:13 Jesus removed His disciples from the crowds to ask them about the identity of the Son of Man.

- There were two Caesareas. One was the Roman headquarters located on the Mediterranean coast west of Jerusalem. The other was located twenty miles north of the Sea of Galilee which was called Caesarea Philippi at the headwaters of the Jordan River.
- The term “Son of Man” references the humanity of the Messiah as He became part of mankind.
 - The divine transportation of clouds was also used by the “Son of Man” (Daniel 7:13); clouds also describe Jesus’ ascension and coming again. (Acts 1:9-11). The term “Son of Man” combined fully God and fully man without the militaristic expectations of other Messianic titles.
 - Ezekiel utilized this term to represent humanity and mankind.

16:14 Even as Jesus walked on the earth, the world confused the gospel and did not understand the identity of Jesus.

- Herod thought that Jesus was the resurrected “John the Baptist.” (Matthew 14:1-2).
- Scripture foretold that Elijah would be coming (Malachi 4:3).
- The Rabbi’s believed that Jeremiah had hid the Ark of the Covenant on Mount Nebo, and that just before the coming of the Messiah, Jeremiah would return to recover the Ark of the Covenant.
- Moses had given a Messianic prophecy of the coming of “the” Prophet after him (Deuteronomy 18:15).
- Each of these identities were related to the forerunner of the Messiah or the Messiah Himself.

16:15 This is the most important question for all of mankind where Jesus asks them, “*Who do you say that I am?*” Included in the very question are the words “I am” relating to the covenantal title of God (Yahweh – Exodus 3:14)

16:16 Beyond being the Messiah (“Christ”), Jesus was also recognized as Deity as the “*Son of the living God.*”

- Jesus was more than human – more than a “Son of Man.”
- The “living God” points to the covenantal title of God (Yahweh – Exodus 3:14).

| Same Descriptions Provided at Other Times | | |
|---|-----------------------|-------------------|
| John 1:41 | Messiah / Christ | Used by Andrew |
| John 1:49 | “Son of God” | Used by Nathaniel |
| John 6:69 | “The Holy One of God” | Used by Peter |

16:17 Jesus accepted Peter’s description of His divine nature as the fulfillment of being the long-awaited Messiah.

- The name “*Simon Bar-Jonah*” is Aramaic whereas John documents the name in Greek as “*Simon, son of John*” (John 1:42).
- The revelation of truth was from God which Peter accepted by faith, and Jesus blessed Peter’s faithfulness.

16:18 Peter stated that Jesus was God incarnate who had come as the Messiah and this truth would become the foundation rock of Jesus’ church.

- This verse utilizes two, different Greek words for the word “stone.”
 - Jesus gave the name “Peter” (Petros Πέτρος) which is a masculine word meaning “a piece of rock; a detached stone.”
 - The second use of the word “rock” (petra πέτρα) is a feminine form of the word that means “bedrock.”
 - Jesus would build His church on the bedrock (petra) of the truth of His identity that had been given by the detached stone (Peter).
- This truth of the divinity of Jesus who came as the Messiah would be the bedrock (“Petra”) upon which His church would be founded.
- The only other time that the Greek word for “church” (ekklēsia ἐκκλησίαν) is used in the Gospels would be in disciplinary matters (Matthew 18:17)
 - The Greek word for “church” (ekklēsia ἐκκλησία) means the “called out ones.” When the Septuagint translated Hebrew into Greek, the Greek term “ekklēsia” was translated from the Hebrew word “qahal” (קהל) which meant an assembly of people. (Genesis 28:3, 49:4; Exodus 16:3; Leviticus 4:13; Deuteronomy 5:22)
 - The day of the “assembly” (qahal) was the day that God gave the ten commandments to Moses as the Israelites committed idolatry. (Deuteronomy 9:10).
 - By using the word “ekklēsia,” Jesus is using a word that links the New Testament “people of God” (His church) with the Old Testament “people of God” (Israel).
- The “gates” (pylai πύλαι) could reference multiple attributes of hades:
 - Passage - Gates were the entry way
 - Stronghold - Gates were the most reinforced and secured parts of a city
 - Authority - Gates were the location that elders and authorities gathered
- The translation of “hell” is incorrect; the correct interpretation is “Hades” (hadou ᾗδου). The term “Hades” (Sheol/Grave in the Old Testament) was considered by the Jews the holding place for the dead with two divisions: Paradise for God’s people (Luke 16:19-31) and Tartarus for those who rebelled against God (2 Peter 2:4).
 - This is different from Gehenna which refers to hell after the judgment.
- This could allude to Jesus’ victory over death (Matthew 16:21). Jesus would conquer hades – the “unseen realm of the dead.”

| Uses of “Prevail Against” in the New Testament | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|---|
| Matthew 16:18 | Katischysousin (κατισχύσουσιν) | “I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock, I will build My church, and the forces of Hades will not overpower it.” |

| | | |
|------------|-------------------------------|--|
| Luke 23:23 | Katischyon (κατίσχυον) | <i>“They kept up the pressure, demanding with loud voices that He be crucified. And their voices won out.”</i> |
| Luke 21:36 | Katischysēte (κατισχύσητε) | <i>“Be alert at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are going to take place and to stand before the Son of Man”</i> |

16:19 Jesus is talking to Peter as the representative of the apostolic group (Matthew 18:18) and then further representing all believers.

- The “keys” represent the Gospel message that is powerful enough to break the chains of sin and death (Isaiah 22:22; Revelation 1:18; 3:7)
- The terms “bind” and “loose” are Rabbinical terms for what is permitted or forbidden in connection with the revelation of God.
- This is not saying that heaven will be determined by man; it is saying that whatever is already being permitted will be actualized in the church if they are following the Lord. As they follow Him, the church will reflect the mind of God in heaven. God will lead His church to understand His will and what He has ordained already in heaven.
- Parallel passages of the keys of the kingdom (Matthew 18:18; John 20:19-23).

16:20 Jesus often did this to fulfill Isaiah’s prophecy of the Messiah. (Matthew 12:16-17)

- The Jews of that age had a misconception of what the coming Messiah would be as they expected a military leader.
- The passionate command (diesteilato διεστείλατο) is only utilized this once outside of Mark (Mark 5:43; 7:36; 9:9)

| The “Thirteen Fundamental Principles” of Judaism as defined by Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon (Maimonides 1138-1204) |
|--|
| 1. Belief in the existence of the Creator, who is perfect in every manner of existence and is the Primary Cause of all that exists. |
| 2. The belief in G-d's absolute and unparalleled unity. |
| 3. The belief in G-d's non-corporeality (non-physical lifeform), nor that He will be affected by any physical occurrences, such as movement, or rest, or dwelling. |
| 4. The belief in G-d's eternity |
| 5. The imperative to worship G-d exclusively and no foreign false gods. |
| 6. The belief that G-d communicates with man through prophecy. |
| 7. The belief in the primacy of the prophecy of Moses our teacher. |
| 8. The belief in the divine origin of the Torah. |
| 9. The belief in the immutability of the Torah. |
| 10. The belief in G-d's omniscience and providence. |
| 11. The belief in divine reward and retribution. |
| 12. The belief in the arrival of the Messiah and the messianic era. |
| 13. The belief in the resurrection of the dead. |
| <i>Jewish communities often recite the thirteen articles each day after morning prayers. Each line would begin with “I believe.” (Ani Maamin)</i> |

Read Matthew 16:21-23 ... Jesus Foretells His Resurrection as Peter Focuses on Himself

- **This is the first time that Jesus explicitly foretold His Death & Resurrection (Matthew 17:22-23; 20:17-19)**

16:21 Jesus would suffer many things prior to His death on the cross. The Sanhedrin was described as the “*elders and chief priests and scribes.*”

16:22 Just as Satan had tempted Jesus in the wilderness, Peter became an obstruction to the will of God.

- Although Peter comes across as loving and consoling in his words to Christ, Peter was actually challenging God’s plan.
- Believers should be very careful when they are consoling someone in sin.

16:23 Jesus told Peter that he was being a stumbling block (skandalon σκάνδαλον) to the fulfillment of God’s word. Peter’s focus was on man’s desires instead of God’s will.

- At Paul’s trial before Festus and King Agrippa, Paul discusses his calling. Jesus had told Paul, “*I now send you to them to open their eyes so they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that by faith in Me they may receive forgiveness of sins and a share among those who are sanctified.*” (Acts 26:17-18)
- Satan is desiring to take advantage of God’s people (2 Corinthians 2:11).
- By taking responsibility of a household, some young women do not “*turn away to follow Satan.*” (1 Timothy 5:15)

Read Matthew 16:24-28 ... A Follower of Jesus Must Deny Himself & Take Up His Cross

16:24 After discussing His suffering and death with His disciples, Jesus then tells His disciples that they must die to sin and self as well. (Galatians 2:20; John 12:24).

- Every day, believers must deny themselves and follow Jesus as Lord of their lives. (Luke 9:23-24)
- Deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow Jesus

16:25 It is not enough to deny one’s self for humanitarian purposes, but those who give up their lives for Jesus will discover new life in Him.

16:26 A man’s eternal soul (psychē ψυχήν) should be worth more to him than anything that this sinful man has to offer.

16:27 Jesus will come again in same way that He ascended (Acts 1:9-11; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

- Judgment will be based on lifestyle (Matthew 25:31-46). Unbelievers will be judged for their sin (Hebrews 11:6; Ecclesiastes 12:14; 2 Chronicles 19:6; 1 Timothy 5:24); believers will be rewarded for their good works. (1 Peter 4:17; John 3:18)

16:28 The very next chapter would be the Mount of Transfiguration showing Jesus glorified.

- The Greek term for “truly” or “I assure you” is the transliterated word from Hebrew “Amen” (Hebrew: אָמֵן Greek: ἀμήν). Transliteration means that the same word is in one language as another without being changed to translate.
 - The word “Amen” is meant to be firm or certain; it means “so be it”, “I affirm” or “I agree.” The word “amen” is also used for the word “faith” (Habakkuk 2:4)
 - Jesus is the only one in Scripture that begins a sentence with the word “Amen” which He used to express that He had something significant to

say. (Matthew 5:18, 26; 6:2, 5, 16; 8:10; 10:15; 11:11; 13:17; 18:3, 18; 19:23, 28; 21:21, 31; 23:36; 24:2, 34)

| Possible Meanings of Matthew 16:28 |
|---------------------------------------|
| The Mount of Transfiguration |
| The Ascension on the Mount of Olives |
| The Kingdom Is Already Present |
| The Coming of the Spirit at Pentecost |
| The Second Coming |

24 Matthew 17

Read Matthew 17:1-13 ... The Transfiguration

Shared Account of the Transfiguration: Mt 17:1-13; Mk 9:2-13; Lk 9:28-36

17:1 Jesus took (active sense) His inner circle of Peter, James and John. Although twelve disciples were called, these three were often invited into special occasions (Mk 5:37, 14:33, Gal 2:9). In the same way, some believers walk more closely with God than others.

- The six days is measured after the revelation that Jesus is the fully God / fully man Messiah who has come as the suffering servant.
 - Both Matthew and Mark (9:2) document “after six days” while John 9:28 generalizes “about eight days.” None of the gospels give the explicit time period.
 - The number “six” may have been important for Matthew/Mark because “six” is the number of man (Revelation 13:18) which emphasizes humanity.
 - John utilizes the number “eight” which symbolizes “new beginnings.”

| The Inner Circle of Jesus | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Mark 5:37; Luke 8:51 | Resurrection of Jairus Daughter |
| Matthew 17:1; Luke 9:28 | Mount of Transfiguration |
| Mark 13:3 | Discuss End of Age w/ Jesus |
| Mark 14:33 | Garden of Gethsemane |

- Jesus had ascended with Peter, James and John. Moses had also ascended Mount Sinai with Aaron, Nadab and Abihu (Exodus 24:9), and the Jews would have recognized the association.
 - Just as the face of Moses radiated after seeing God (Exodus 34:29-35), the face of Jesus also shone bright (Matthew 17:2).
- 17:2 Jesus shone like the sun (Revelation 1:16, 22:5; 2 Thessalonians 2:8; Genesis 1:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:5), and his followers also shine His light (Mt 13:43; Dan 12:3; 1 Jn 1:7).

- His clothes are depicted as dazzling white representing purity (Malachi 3:2; Is 1:18; Dan 7:9; Ps 51:7; Rev 1:14). Jesus covers His people in this purity of His (Ps 132:9, 16, 149:4; Isaiah 61:10; Galatians 3:27; Zechariah 3:3-4; 2 Chronicles 6:41).
- The Greek term for “transfigured” (metemorphōthē μετεμορφώθη) means that the divine nature of Jesus showed through His human shell. The word

“transfiguration” is a compound noun from the Latin roots *trans-* (“across”) and *figura* (“form, shape”).

- The same Greek word is used in “*Do not be conformed to this age but be transformed (metemorphōthē) by the renewing of your mind.*” (Romans 12:2)

- This may have occurred in the night because Peter, James and John were sleeping during the Transfiguration of Jesus (Luke 9:32).

17:3 Moses represents the law while Elijah represents the prophets (Mt 5:17, 22:40).

- Moses represented the Law or the first five books of the Jewish Old Testament. Moses was the lawgiver. Moses had prophesied about the coming of Jesus (Deuteronomy 18:15).
- Elijah represented the Prophets or the second portion of the Jewish Bible. Elijah was the first and greatest of the prophets. The Prophet Malachi had prophesied that Elijah would come prior to the Messiah (Malachi 4:5).
- Jesus often referred to the Law and the Prophets which were the two parts of the Jewish Bible. Moses & Elijah were the two greatest figures in Jewish history (Abraham).
- It is possible that Moses and Elijah ended their time on this earth at the same location which was Mt. Hermon. Jesus was still up north near Caesarea Philippi. There is only one high mountain that stands apart in this region, and it is Mt. Hermon which stands 9230 feet.

17:4 Peter speaks of constructing comparable tents/tabernacles (present-day cathedrals) for Jesus, Moses and Elijah, but Jesus is the only One to be exalted and worshipped. No edifice was to be built for fellow saints; Jesus Christ alone is to be exalted and worshipped.

- It is evident that Peter wanted to stay on the mountaintop instead of going back down and ministering to the people.

17:5 God the Father speaks out of the Shekinah Glory (Ex 14:20, 24:13) which is a physical symbol of the presence of God.

- God the Father demands that the men focus their attention on His “beloved Son.” Believers are to listen to Jesus above the opinions (experiences, rationale, etc.) of each other.
- The Greek term for “overshadowed” (epeskiasen ἐπεσκίασεν) is the same root word of the Holy Spirit “overshadowing” (episkiasei ἐπισκιάσει) Mary when she conceived Jesus. (Luke 1:35)
- Jewish Scribes believed that God would speak at times without physical representation which they called “Bath Kol” (which means “the daughter of the voice”). Other examples include words of God to Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 4:31), the Baptism of Jesus (Matthew 3:17), the Transfiguration (Matthew 17:5; Mark 9:7; Luke 9:35), in the Garden of Gethsemane (John 12:28), the conversion of Paul (Acts 9:4, 22:7, 26:14) and instruction to Peter about clean and unclean (Acts 10:13, 15).
- God’s statement seems to link a Royal Davidic Psalm (Psalm 2:7) with the Suffering Servant (Isaiah 42:1); Jesus is the Lord and Christ; He is divine and man. (Matthew 3:17)

- Peter references this account (2 Peter 1:17-18) as a time when Jesus “*received honor and glory from God the Father, a voice came to Him from the Majestic Glory.*”

17:6 Even the voice of the Heavenly Father results in the apostles falling to the ground. They were terrified at the revelation before them (Mt 10:28).

- “*You cannot see My face, for no one can see Me and live.*” (Exodus 33:20) This is also referenced in other Scriptures. (John 1:18; 6:46; Colossians 1:15; 1 Timothy 6:16; 1 John 4:22)

17:7 The touch of Jesus conveys to them that they do not need to fear the spiritual power that they had witnessed. Jesus commands them to arise.

- Every other touch from Jesus brought healing; Peter, James and John may have needed healing.

| The Touch from Jesus in Matthew Brought Healing | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| Matthew 8:3 | Healed serious skin disease |
| Matthew 8:15 | Healed Peter’s Mother-in-law |
| Matthew 9:29 | Healed two blind men |
| Matthew 17:7 | Woke them after Transfiguration |
| Matthew 20:34 | Healed two blind men in Jericho |
| Other times people touched Jesus to be healed (Matthew 9:20-21; 14:36) | |

17:8 In the correct perspective, all else fades away and the only attention is towards Jesus alone.

17:9 Jesus directs His disciples not to testify of seeing Jesus glorified until after His resurrection when others would also witness His true identity. Elijah had appeared prior to the resurrection of Christ (Mal 4:5).

- This is the final time in Matthew that Jesus warns anyone not to tell.

| Jesus Warns “Not to Tell” | |
|---|--|
| Matthew 8:4; Mark 1:40-44; Luke 5:12-15 | To a healed leper |
| Matthew 16:20; Mark 8:29-30; Luke 9:20-21 | To disciples about Him being the Messiah |
| Matthew 17:9 | To disciples about Transformation |
| Mark 1:34; 3:11-12 | To demons not to identify Him |

- The term “Son of Man” references the humanity of the Messiah as He became part of mankind. The divine transportation of clouds was used by the “Son of Man” (Daniel 7:13).

17:10 Scribes were an expert group of Jews who copied and interpreted the Old Testament as a profession (e.g., legal cases).

17:11-12 It is written in the prophets of the Old Testament that Elijah will precede the coming Messiah (Malachi 4:5).

- John the Baptist represented Elijah (Mt 11:14, 17:12; Lk 1:17) in prophesying the coming of Jesus.
- John was not physically Elijah (John 1:21), but fulfilled the spiritual purpose of Elijah in clothing and deed (2 Kings 1:8; Mark 1:6).
- Of course, Elijah himself was present at the Mt. of Transfiguration (Mk 9:4) before Jesus’ death and resurrection.

- It is likely that Elijah will also be physically present again at the end of time as one of the two prophets proclaiming the Lord (Rev 11:1-6).
- 17:13 Although the scribes had been correct about Elijah preceding Jesus, but they had not understood the spiritual aspect of John the Baptist.

Read Matthew 17:14-21 ... Jesus Exorcises Demon from Son of Man without Faith

Shared Account of a Father's lack of Faith: Mt 17:14-18; Mk 9:14-27; Lk 9:37-42

17:14 In the same way that the Gentile woman of Tyre requested that Jesus free her daughter from a demon, the father knelt down before Jesus to request healing for his epileptic son (Matthew 15:25). The posture of kneeling is often the position of sincere prayer in humility.

17:15 The fits of epilepsy resulted in loss of control that often jeopardized his son's life.

- The Latin term to describe epilepsy is literally "moon struck" where the term "lunatic" originates; the word "luna" means "moon."
- The origins of diseases are not always demonic; however, this illness was caused by a demon. Believers are baptized with water and fire to bring life (Mt 3:11; Lk 3:16) while this demon attempted to destroy the child in fire.

17:16 The man had brought the boy to the disciples instead of Jesus. While believers can offer support, ultimate spiritual power lies in a relationship with the Lord Jesus.

- The disciples had been given authority over demons (Matthew 10:1,8).

17:17 Jesus reproaches the lack of faith and asks for the boy to be brought to Himself.

- This is a quote from Deuteronomy 32:5, 20; Jesus often quoted Deuteronomy as He did at the temptations from Satan.

17:18 Jesus rebuked the demon and the boy was immediately healed upon the exorcism.

17:19 The disciples had one of many private discussions with the Lord (Mk 4:34, 10:10, 13:3); every believer should seek insight in private times with the Lord.

17:20 What man was unable to accomplish, God could. Jesus told the disciples that they had lacked belief which is a recurring theme in this book (Matthew 6:30; 8:26; 14:31; 16:8; 17:20).

- "Little faith" occurs when the weakness and failures of man is considered more heavily than the power of God.
- The Greek term for "truly" or "I assure you" is the transliterated word from Hebrew "Amen" (Hebrew: אָמֵן Greek: ἀμήν). Transliteration means that the same word is in one language as another without being changed to translate.
 - The word "Amen" is meant to be firm or certain; it means "so be it", "I affirm" or "I agree."
 - The word "amen" is also used for the word "faith" (Habakkuk 2:4)
 - Jesus begins the sentence by imploring the disciples to have faith in what He is telling them.
- Jesus and His disciples had just descended a mountain from the Transfiguration which may be the mountain that the Lord references. (Matthew 17:9)
- The statement "to move mountains" may allude to the handling of problems. (Isaiah 41:15; 49:11; 54:10). Through faith in Christ, life's problems can be overcome.

- A seed has the capacity to reproduce the life form (whether a tree, a human or God Himself) from which it originated if given adequate water (living water, Spirit, Word of God).
- The mustard seed was the smallest seed of the Jews (approximately 2 mm in diameter), and mustard plants in the Mideast frequently grow to nine feet high and can reach 15 feet. (Matthew 13:31-32)
- The seed contains 33-50% of its weight in oil which is extracted by crushing the seed (Lk 17:6). Often the Spirit (oil) is most evident in the trials (crushing) of His people. Birds can symbolize spiritual truth or deceit (Jeremiah 5:27).

17:21 This type of demon needed preparation; believers should continue to prepare themselves to meet a wicked world with spiritual battles (Ephesians 6:12). Fasting prepares a Believer for greater works of the Lord (Is 58:3-7; Mk 2:18-19).

- This verse is left out of some translations because it is not found in Sinaiticus or Vaticanus (the more ancient manuscripts used as source documents). When Sinaiticus and Vaticanus agree on a text, scribes defer to their agreement.
 - This verse is repeated in Mark 9:29 in the source documents.

Read Matthew 17:22-23 ... Jesus Foretells His Death & Resurrection for the Second Time

- **Jesus had already explicitly foretold His Death & Resurrection (Matthew 16:21; 20:17-19)**

17:22 The narrative moves from north of the Sea of Galilee back into the area of the ministry of Jesus with His headquarters in Capernaum.

17:23 Jesus gives a clear prediction of His death and resurrection. The disciples must not have understood the truths because they would not have been distressed at the news of the resurrection.

- In the earlier prophecy of His death (Matthew 16:21), Jesus mentioned that He would suffer from the “elders, chief priests and scribes.” In the later prophecy, Jesus describes His upcoming torture and crucifixion from the Gentiles (Matthew 20:18-19).
 - In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus identifies those who will crucify Him as “sinners.” (Matthew 26:45)
- The chief priests and Pharisees understood the claim of a resurrection which is the reason that they posted a guard at the tomb of Jesus after His crucifixion (Matthew 27:62-66).

Read Matthew 17:24-27 ... Jesus Pays the Temple Tax So as Not to Offend

17:24 Capernaum was the headquarters of Jesus’ ministry (Matthew 4:13, 9:1). This didrachma (worth two drachmas, half of a silver shekel or two days wages) was a Temple tax (not a Roman political tax – Matthew 22:17) which was originated by Moses (atonement money - Exodus 30:12).

- These coins were not used in commerce, but instead for Temple transactions, so “money changers” were established in the Temple for currency exchange.
- The Temple Tax had increased from a third of a shekel (440 BC) to a half of a shekel (Nehemiah 10:32-33). This tax of half a shekel could purchase two sheep.

17:25 Peter immediately answered in the affirmative, but before he could speak to Jesus about the Temple tax, Jesus pre-empted the foreknown discussion with insight.

17:26 As a son is not taxed in his own house, neither should the Son of God be taxed in His Temple (Malachi 3:1).

- Even at that time, the “worship building” lost the vision of its calling to worship; the synagogue asked the Lord to pay and exalt them.
- As with much of chapter 17, Matthew clearly documents that Jesus was the Messiah.

17:27 Just as fish would come to represent believers in the chaotic seas (society) of this world, the support for the fisherman (e.g., pastor – 1 Tim 5:18) would be taken from the fish.

- This is the only “sign” (semeion σημεῖον) that Scripture does not document the explicit miracle; the Bible only states what Jesus said would happen.
- Jesus sacrificed His rights so as not to offend the religious order, and believers should also strive for unity regardless of their personal rights.
- The silver coin was a shekel; the collectors would have requested a half shekel from both Jesus and Peter. Jews would need to pay the money changers (Matthew 21:12) if they did not have a shekel (it could not be a different kind of coin). The Temple tax was mandated as Tyrian shekels (tetradrachms or tetradrachmas) which were minted in Tyre. Roman coins were only 80% silver while the shekels of Tyre were more pure silver (greater than 94%).
 - An amazing characteristic of this “sign” (beyond a fish having a coin in its mouth) was that the coin was the exact type of coin that was needed.
 - On one side, the coins had an image of the Phoenician god Baal which the Jews derided as “Beelzebub.”
 - On the other side of the coin was an image of Alexander Balas who had claimed to be the son of Antiochus IV Epiphanes.
 - The Tyrian shekels were also engraved with the Greek inscription "of Tyre the holy [city] and [city] of refuge" ("ΤΥΡΟΥ ΙΕΡΑΣ ΚΑΙ ΑΣΥΛΟΥ")



25 Matthew 18:1-20

Read Matthew 18:1-5 ... The Greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven is as Humble as a Child

Shared Discussion on True Greatness: Mt 18:1-5; 20:20-28; Mk 9:33-37; Lk 9:46-48; 22:24

18:1 The followers of Jesus should be leery of being preoccupied with man’s status when the Father is to be exalted.

- This prideful argument around aspirations recurred when Jesus mentioned that He would be killed. It is almost as though the disciples were arguing as to who would take over as leader. The disciples continued to have a nationalistic, worldly view of the kingdom.

18:2 Jesus called a child to “come” stand as a visual example to His disciples. Just as David and Solomon entered their kingship in meek humility, so too should the believer approach his position in the family of God (1 Kings 3:7, 11; 1 Chronicles 1:11).

- This may have taken place in Peter’s house (Mark 9:33), so this may have been one of Peter’s children.

18:3 The child had submissively obeyed the Lord’s calling to stand as a spectacle of the men. A person must be “turned around” (straphēte στραφήτε) and accept God’s offer in the faith of a child.

- The Greek term for “truly” or “I assure you” is the transliterated word from Hebrew “Amen” (Hebrew: אָמֵן Greek: ἀμήν). Transliteration means that the same word is in one language as another without being changed to translate.
 - The word “Amen” is meant to be firm or certain; it means “so be it”, “I affirm” or “I agree.”
 - The word “amen” is also used for the word “faith” (Habakkuk 2:4)
 - Jesus begins the sentence by imploring the disciples to have faith in what He is telling them.

18:4 Believers must also possess softened hearts in humble dependence on the Lord for His salvation and sustenance. To enter the kingdom, one must obey God’s calling, turn/change/convert and accept Him in childlike faith.

- The characteristics of meekness and submission should characterize the children of God (1 John).

18:5 Those who are charitable to the child of God are, in fact, giving to the Lord Himself as the child is in His family and the Lord’s Spirit is in His child (1 John 4:4).

- When believers show love to each other, they are loving Jesus (Matthew 25:46; Acts 9:4-5; 20:15; 22:7)

Read Matthew 18:6-9... Woe to the Man Who Brings Offense Against God’s People

18:6 Just as a millstone (a weighty circular rock) was used to grind wheat into flour, trials (e.g., persecution) also refine believers into fine ingredients for God’s use.

- Believers should be careful not to have cause a younger believer to sin (e.g., temptation; false doctrine; impeded growth) through evil intent, neglect, example or discouragement.
- This exercise was a form of capital punishment by the Greeks and Romans.
- It is better to be physically destroyed than spiritually tempted. For a believer, it is better that they are physically maimed or destroyed than to bring reproach on the kingdom of God or to cause weaker believers to fall away from God.

18:7 Offenses will occur, but the instrument of evil will still be condemned (Prov 16:4; Rev 17:17; Is 10:5-12; Ex 4:21; Lk 22:22).

- This is repeated in Luke 17:1.

18:8-9 It is better to not do (hand), not go (foot), not partake (eye) than to sin.

- These verses speak to the radical obedience of God’s people to purge known sin from their lives.
- The Greek term for “hell” (geennan γέενναν) referred to the garbage dump south of Jerusalem.

- Gehenna originates from “Ge” - “valley and “Hinnom.” The valley of Hinnom was the location that children sacrifices were made to Molech (Deuteronomy 12:31; Leviticus 20:2-5; 2 Kings 16:3, 17:17, 21:6, 23:10; 2 Chronicles 28:3, 33:6; Jeremiah 7:31, 19:4-5, 32:35; Ezekiel 16:20-21, 20:26, 23:37; Psalm 106:35-38)
 - Scripture is abundantly clear that child sacrifices were wrong (Leviticus 18:21; Deuteronomy 18:10)
- As the town trash dump, Gehenna smoldered with fire day and night. (2 Thessalonians 1:9; Revelation 14:11)
- Jesus is the only one who talked about hell with the exception of James 3:6.

Read Matthew 18:10-14... The Parable of the Lord Sheep

18:10 The angels of the little ones continually have access to God; this verse often referenced in the thought of a “guardian angel.” (Acts 12:15; Hebrews 1:14)

- Believers who are supposedly more mature must have grace and patience over their weaker spiritual brothers. (Matthew 5:22; Romans 14:1)
- Angels worshipped Jesus (Hebrews 1:6), and immediately after overcoming Satan’s temptations (Mk 1:13), the angels served Jesus as they would later do in Gethsemane (Lk 22:43). Paul was also served by an angel (Acts 27:23).

18:11 No one can be the guardian (savior) as Jesus can; Jesus came to save those who were lost.

- This verse is left out of some translations because it is not found in Sinaiticus or Vaticanus (the more ancient manuscripts used as source documents). When Sinaiticus and Vaticanus agree on a text, scribes defer to their agreement.
 - This verse is repeated in Luke 19:10 in the source documents.

Shared Account of the Lost Sheep: Mt 18:12-14; Lk 15:3-7

18:12 Every single life is important to the Lord (Psalm 119:176). There are no insignificant souls. Unlike in Luke, this context refers to the believer who has fallen out of fellowship.

18:13 The Lord rejoices when there is a life change towards Him. God’s people are to be a light to the world drawing others into His kingdom. The kingdom is not egocentric (being self-centered), but instead it is altruistic and charitable as it reaches to others.

- The kingdom of God is a centrifugal nature that pushes out towards others while the nature of wickedness is like a coiling snake that is centripetal in nature pulling everything towards itself.

18:14 This verse is used to show that babies do go to heaven (2 Sam 12:23). Children mature into a state of accountability (Romans 7:9).

- God’s will can be categorized into three groups:
 - God’s “Intentional” Will - His ideal desire that His people would reject sin and obey Him
 - God’s “Permissive” Will - His allowance for our choices; to sin or not to sin....
 - God’s “Ultimate” Will - His ultimate end (i.e., that sin will be judged; that Satan will be destroyed; that Israel would be a testimony of blessing or judgement).

Read Matthew 18:15-20... Process to Deal with the Sin of a Believing Brother

- **This section of church discipline is in the preceding context of not hurting the weaker believers.**

| Three Step Process for Intervention in Lifestyle of Sin (Matthew 18:15-17) | |
|--|---|
| 1. Private Discussion | Believers should first engage one-on-one |
| 2. Witnessed Discussion | The witnesses are to establish the truth of all the facts |
| 3. Congregational Involvement | The fellowship community is to encourage repentance |

18:15 Believers should strive to encourage Christ-like living in each other (1 Pet 3:1; James 5:20).

- At times, denomination traditions are esteemed as stringently as Pharisaical oral traditions. “In essentials – unity; In non-essentials – liberty; In all things – love.” (Romans 14)
- Before presenting something at the altar, God directs His people to consider whether someone has something against them, and if they do, reconcile first.

18:16 Two or three are gathered to establish the facts and not simply to endorse the message of repentance (Deuteronomy 19:15).

18:17 The church (ekklēsia ἐκκλησία) should treat unbelievers differently than a fellow member of God’s family is treated. Publicans (tax collectors) were tolerated and endured, but rarely enjoyed.

18:18 The Father’s will should be performed on earth as it is in heaven, and His guidelines show how to judge (Matthew 16:19).

- The terms “bind” and “loose” are Rabbinical terms for what is permitted or forbidden in connection with the revelation of God.
- This is not saying that heaven will be determined by man; it is saying that whatever is already being permitted will be actualized in the church if they are following the Lord. As they follow Him, the church will reflect the mind of God in heaven. God will lead His church to understand His will and what He has ordained already in heaven.
- Parallel passages of the keys of the kingdom (Matthew 16:19; John 20:19-23).

18:19-20 Two witnesses are able to discern His Word and substantiate His direction. As believers judge with His Spirit to guide them, God’s will is performed in judgment.

- These verses are in the context of church discipline; where there are 2-3 followers of the Lord, God’s Spirit will surely be present to guide and empower.

- **Scripture now transitions from church discipline to the “Parable of the Unforgiving Slave.” Believers should have mercy and forgiveness because believers have been forgiven. (Matthew 6:14-15)**

26 Matthew 18:21-35

Read Matthew 18:21-22... Unlimited Unforgiveness Represented by Seventy Times Seven

18:21 After the passage on spiritual intervention, Peter asks how often to accept one's repentance (Lk 17:3-4).

- Jewish Rabbi's taught that an individual only needed to be forgiven three times. The source of the three times was Job 33:29-30 ("*God certainly does all these things two or three times to a man in order to turn him back from the Pit, so he may shine with the light of life.*")
 - Other passages that Jewish Rabbi's referenced were Amos 1:3, 6; 2:6.

18:22 Seven symbolizes fullness and completeness, so Jesus stresses that there should be an abundance of forgiveness from every believer.

- The "*seventy times seven*" is a metaphor for unlimited forgiveness.
- Just as God forgives His people every time, they come to Him, believers should forgive every time they are asked to forgive.

| Forgive 70 x 7 (Matthew 18:22) | 490 years tends to be the span of time between the stages of the Old Testament |
|---|---|
| From Birth of Abraham | 505 years minus 15 years for Ishmael |
| Exodus | 573 years minus 93 for captivity plus 10 for Temple Completion |
| Temple | 560 years minus 70 for Babylon |
| Nehemiah's Return | 483 years plus Daniel's "week at the end of time" |
| Messiah | |

Read Matthew 18:23-35... The Parable of the Unforgiving Slave

18:23 Another parable of the Kingdom of Heaven (Mt 13) is communicated where the King desired to settle His slave's accounts.

18:24 The debt of the slave exceeded \$3 billion. There is no way for a believer to repay his debt to the Lord for His charity of grace.

- To demonstrate the size of the debt, 600 Talents were the annual taxation for Samaria, Judea and Idumea. The size of the annual taxation for Galilee was only 200 Talents.

18:25 The point of conviction demonstrates to the sinner that everything (and everyone) related to him is to be sacrificed to the Lord. It is only through the grace of the King that anyone has anything.

18:26 Many have fallen on their faces before the Lord (Lev 9:24; Ez 1:28; Dan 8:17; Mt 17:5-6; Rev 7:11, 11:16). This servant begs for patience as he continues to mature and grow in righteousness.

18:27 The Lord acts in compassion on His people (Ps 25:6, 79:8; Mal 3:17; Lk 1:76-78; Rom 9:15).

18:28 The debt of the fellow slave were thousands of dollars, so it was substantial, but not relative to the debt that had been forgiven by the King.

- The amount of "100 denarii" would be approximately a third of a year's salary.
- This shows that the offence against the servant is legitimate, but it is nothing in comparison to what has been forgiven the servant.

18:29 The fellow slave (one who was also under the King) admits his debt to his counterpart. This is tantamount to a fellow Believer understanding that they have wronged someone in the family of God (1 Jn 3:17).

- 18:30 The prison cannot signify hell because no fellow Believer (slave of the Lord) can condemn another. Instead, the prison is one of emotional indebtedness that obliges and constrains free interaction.
- 18:31 As Believers understand the impediments and hindrances on this fellow slave, they intercede to the King for relief.
- Under the stipulations of the Old Testament, debt could be paid by offering to sell oneself as a slave (Lev 25.35-43), but this slave has nothing else to give because everything he owns already belongs to the King.
 - The lack of forgiveness affected the fellow slaves of the King. Unforgiveness can cause disruption and disunity in the body of God.
- 18:32 The initial believer who owes so much to the King will be convicted of his ingratitude.
- Although the debtors payment was forgiven, the debt was still owed. The King who had forgiven the debt, then judged the debtor for what he owed.
- 18:33 Believers should have mercy on each other as the King has bestowed an abundance of mercy on His people.
- 18:34 The jailers could equate to spiritual forces who oppress until the Believer can offer the mercy of the King to others.
- 18:35 A believer's forgiveness must be genuine and heartfelt. Believers should pursue lives of mercy and forgiveness (Romans 14; 1 Corinthians 9).
- The forgiveness of others is a sign that a person has been forgiven. (Matthew 5:7; 6:14-15; 7:1-2; 10:8; Luke 6:36; Colossians 3:13; James 2:13; 5:9)
 - **Scripture now transitions from forgiveness to the topic of divorce. God hates divorce, and married couples must both forgive each other as the Lord has forgiven them.**

27 Matthew 19:1-15

Read Matthew 19:1-12... God's Terms of Divorce

Shared Discussion of Divorce: Mt 19:1-12; Mk 10:1-12

- 19:1 The lesson of forgiveness (Mt 18:21-35) was the last instruction to Galilee until after the resurrection of Christ.
- The Jews from Galilee would travel outside of Samaria by crossing over the Jordan to the area of Perea as they traveled southward on the eastern side of the Jordan before crossing back over into Judea at Jericho.
- 19:2 Jesus came down to Judea (the southern section) of Israel where crowds of hurting people were healed and religious leaders (Pharisees) tested Him.
- 19:3 Jesus had earlier talked of forgiveness, but the Pharisee leaders wanted to discuss convenience (i.e., divorce).
- The Pharisees were viewed as the teachers of the oral and written law, and they envied the crowds around Jesus listening to His teaching (Matthew 27:18; Mark 15:10).
 - Like many today, the Pharisees were never sincerely interested in gleaning Jesus' wisdom, but instead treated Jesus as an intellectual exercise and a game.

- At this time, there were two schools of thought among Rabbinical leaders. Shammai (50BC–30AD) and Hillel (110BC–7AD) were influential Jewish scholars whose followers debated topics like divorce.
 - Shammai held a strict interpretation of Jewish law; his teaching on divorce was closer to that of Jesus in that infidelity was the only grounds for divorce.
 - Hillel taught that a man could divorce his wife for any reason. This was the more popular teaching, so the Pharisees may have wanted to force Jesus to alienate many of His followers.
 - Gamaliel “the Elder” was a leader of the Sanhedrin during this time. Gamaliel was the son of Simeon ben Hillel and grandson of Hillel “the Elder.”
 - Although Saul/Paul was a student under Gamaliel, Saul/Paul seems to have been much more zealous, conservative and inflexible.
 - Scripture states “*when a man takes a wife and marries her, if then she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found “some” “indecentcy” in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce...*” (Deuteronomy 24:1)
 - Shammai focused on the word “indecentcy” (‘erwat עֲרֻוֹת)
 - Hillel focused on the word “some” (dābār דָּבָר)
 - Deuteronomy 24 is the only time in the Old Testament that the divorce procedure was discussed.
 - There has always been a religious struggle between those who hold to a more conservative view of Scripture and those who interpret Scripture liberally.
- 19:4 Jesus directed the doubters to the Word of God. God created women with innate value to be man’s helpmate (Gen 2:20-22). The two genders are uniquely different which is beneficial as each can assist the other, but these differences can also strain the relationship.
- Marriage is described a number of times in the Bible (Gen 3:16; Prov 12:4; 31; Eph 5:22-23).
 - Jesus speaks about divorce repeatedly (Matthew 5:31-32; Mark 10:1-12; Luke 16:18; 1 Corinthians 7:1-40).
- 19:5 Adam had no parents to leave (Genesis 2:24), but the gist of the statement is to leave the inadequate heritage (in Adam’s case, the dust of this world) from which one originated (Ps 45:10) to be joined with the Lord in His glory (Eph 5:25).
- The two become one just as the believer relinquishes control of his life to the Lord (Gal 2:20).
 - The Greek word for “joined” (kollēthēsetai κολληθήσεται) means “yoked” together.
 - The Hebrew word for “joined” (wəḏābaq דָּבַק) means “glued” together.
- 19:6 “*Therefore what God has joined together; man must not separate*” (Malachi 2:16).
- 19:7 The papers allowed the woman a way to prove that she had been dismissed and expelled from the care of her husband (Deuteronomy 24:1). The papers protected the rejected wife.
- The Pharisees turn a concession into a command; because of the stubbornness of the people, God allowed divorce; however, God hates divorce. (Malachi 2:16)

- The Targum (an Aramaic paraphrase of the Tanakh) had mistranslated this verse (Deuteronomy 24:1) to command divorce.
- 19:8 God made allowances for His hard-hearted people (Ezekiel 3:7; Ps 95:7-10), but He does not condone the insolent pride (Mk 3:5, 6:52, 8:17, 16:14).
- God wrote His law in the stone (Ex 31:18, 32:16, 34:14; Dt 4:13, 5:22, 9:9-11, 10:1, 13:10; Prov 3:3, 7:2-3) with his prophets as diamonds (Ezekiel 2:7-9), but God removes the heart of stone and creates a sensitive heart of flesh when an individual comes to Him (Ezekiel 11:19, 36:26). The heart of stone reflects strength from cold pride that is impenetrable (Jeremiah 17:1).
 - Scripture documents and records activities that it does not advocate.
 - Conservative literalists need to be careful of constructing theology from obscure exceptions instead of the clear will of God. Believers should live out of selfless love and submission to God as believers selflessly serve their fellow man. (Matthew 22:36-40)
- 19:9 Jesus references the “Exception Clause” as He speaks only of a man divorcing his wife (contrasted to the woman divorcing her husband).
- While Matthew’s gospel to the Jews focuses on men instituting divorce, the gospel of Mark to the Romans includes women divorcing their husbands. (Mark 10:12)
 - The sexual immorality in this verse can be more broadly defined than adultery (e.g., pornography, etc.). The Greek term for “sexual immorality” (porneia πορνεία) is the root word for “pornography.”
 - The Mosaic Law documents immoral behaviors as established by God (Leviticus 20).
 - The Old Testament speaks several times of God divorcing His bride, Israel (Isaiah 50:1; Hosea 1 & 2). Vast number of divorces reveal an adulterous generation. Adultery is likened to idolatry in that it is difficult for man to remain faithful to the Lord (Deuteronomy 31:16; Ezekiel 6:9).
 - God’s ideal (therefore, man’s best interest) is one man and one woman for one life.
 - The husband has made a vow before God and must fulfill his pledge (Matthew 5:31-37).
 - God’s guidelines around divorce involves adultery. The only reason for divorce is adultery; if adultery did not occur, the spouse pursuing the divorce makes a remarriage adultery.
- 19:10 From these description of marriage, Jesus’ disciples say that it is better not to marry, and Jesus does not disagree.
- The response of the disciples reveals that their focus in marriage was themselves instead of the glory of God. Marriage is a ministry to each other as the two serve and minister to the world for the glory of God.
 - Maria Jane Taylor agreed to accept Hudson Taylor’s marriage proposal (1858) only after he confessed that he would never love anyone as much as God, but after that, he would never love anyone as much as his wife.
- 19:11 Jesus stated that only those who have received a special allowance from God can accept not getting married.

- Whether married or single, one’s life is to be dedicated to the Lord while bringing glory to His kingdom.
- The Greek term for “given” (dedotai δέδοται) is used six times in Scripture to mean given a special gift. (Matthew 13:11; 19:11; Mark 4:11; Luke 8:10; 1 Corinthians 11:15)

| | |
|--|---------------|
| Eunuchs were not always castrated, but those who were set aside for a distinct intent in chastity/ celibacy. (Matthew 19:12) | |
| Origin | Reason |
| From the womb | Natural |
| Made by men | Forced |
| Made themselves for the kingdom of heaven | Self-Control |

19:12 This passage on “eunuchs” could not have meant castration because one is not born castrated.

- The church father, Origen, castrated himself in response to this verse, but it was also to remove any hint of scandal as he taught young women their catechism; Origen later came to view his action as ill-advised and not to be taken as an example.

| 2020 Divorce Statistics in the United States |
|---|
| <p>Likelihood of Divorce:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Marriages: 42-45 percent will terminate with a divorce. • Second Marriages: 60 percent will terminate with a divorce. • Third Marriages: 73 percent will terminate with a divorce. |
| <p>Percentage of Divorce:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 22 percent of women have been divorced at least once. • 21 percent of men have been divorced at least once. |
| <p>Facts about Divorce:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are nearly 2,400 divorces every single day in the US meaning an average of 16,800 divorces each week as well as upwards of 875,000 divorces per annum. • Eight years is the average length of a first marriage that ends with a divorce. • Thirty years old is the average age when couples commence the divorce process. • Two years is the average duration of time a person considers divorce before commencing the process. • Around seventy-five percent of people who obtain a divorce will at some point get remarried. • If they choose to remarry, the average wait time is three years. • Detailed divorce and marriage statistics ceased to be assembled by the US Government in the mid-1990s, so the data comes from independent researchers as well as the US Census. |
| <p>Factors that increase the likelihood of a divorce:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The younger you move in together and get married the higher the chances of divorce. • The more money spent on engagement rings and wedding ceremonies and parties. |

- Associations with family members or friends who have recently obtained a divorce.
- You have a higher risk of divorce the more your co-workers are of the opposite sex.
- **Residing in an area with a high rate of evangelical or conservative Protestants.**

Read Matthew 19:13-15... Jesus Blesses the Children

Shared Account of the Blessing of Children: Mt 19:13-15; Mk 10:13-16; Lk 18:15-17

19:13 Jesus stopped the obstacles confronting the children because those who enter the kingdom of God must have the same obedient, trusting, childlike faith. Unlike the hard-hearted adults, the children are simple and trusting.

- Modern religious leaders use various methods of keeping those who need the Lord from trespassing. Often, preachers utilize their secretaries to regulate who can enter the preacher's presence. Church buildings often utilize ushers to keep out the sullied.
- It was Jewish tradition to present children for a Rabbinical blessing. The Rabbinical blessing was established from the Priestly blessing (Numbers 6:22-27).

19:14 Jesus always had time for people, and in the imperative, Jesus commanded His disciples to stop being an obstacle to the children.

- The Greek term "permit" (apheta ἄφετε) is used repeatedly to allow the children to come to Jesus. (Mark 10:14; Luke 18:16)
- Having the faith of a child is necessary to enter the Kingdom of God as the believer submits to the authority of the Lord. Jesus identifies His listeners as "children" (Mk 10:24).

19:15 The hands of Jesus brought blessings (Mark 5:23; 6:2, 5; 8:23, 25; 10:16) although He was betrayed into the "hands of sinners" (Mark 14:41, 46) before man wickedly drove nails through His hands (John 20:25, 27).

28 Matthew 19:16-30

Read Matthew 19:16-22... The Rich Young Ruler

Shared Account of the Rich Young Ruler: Mt 19:16-30; Mk 10:17-31; Lk 18:18-30

19:16 The question itself – "what must I do" – is self-effort and performance motivated. (Romans 9:30-33) This is the opposite of the childlike faith. Man is only right with God by what He has done, not in what we do.

- The man urgently (ran) knelt (submitted) to Jesus, but only recognized Jesus as a teacher instead of the Lord.
- His question contradicts itself as he asks what actions he must perform (merit) in order to inherit (which is a gift of identity instead of being earned).

19:17 Jesus responds that it is only by perfection (keeping all of the commandments – Lev 18:5) which only one who is "good" would be able to do. Only God is good, so Jesus as God incarnate can also be perfectly good.

- This man bears witness that Jesus has the attributes (goodness) of God, but the man does not apply and submit to that recognition. Jesus reveals Himself as the "good" Shepherd (Lk 18:19).
- If man wants to be good enough to get into heaven, he must be as perfect as God. (Matthew 5:48; 1 Peter 1:15)

19:18-19 Jesus lists the commandments that deal with treatment of fellow man, but the “God-focused” commandments are summarized with His statement “follow me” (Ex 20:1-17; Dt 5:6-21).

19:20 This man believes that he is good enough as his own conscience is clear (Mt 5:21-48; Jeremiah 17:9).

- This wealthy man would be stunned at the sacrifice expected of him; many in this modern time would be surprised as well.
- There would be no worldly reasoning or rationalization on how he should retain his property and possessions. Many assets owned this man and would cause him much heartache.
- Although a man’s conscience is clear that doesn’t mean that he is innocent (Acts 24:6; 23:1; 1 Corinthians 4:4).
- Since his bar mitzvah (הבֵּר מִצְוָה) at the age of 13, the ruler had kept the law. Jewish girls come to age at age 12 in the bas mitzvah (הבֵּת מִצְוָה). Prior to the bar mitzvah, the parents would have been accountable for the child’s actions; however, after the bar mitzvah, the Jewish youth is responsible for his own actions and can participate in additional Jewish community activities.

19:21 The treasures of a man become his idols (Ezekiel 20:6-9; Mt 6:21). The man was instructed to give all that he had to the poor and follow Jesus as Lord of his life (Lk 9:23, 12:19-21).

- All believers are also called to dedicate all that they are and possess to Jesus for His use (Mt 6:19-21, 16:24, 19:27; Mk 8:34; Lk 5:11, 28; 14:25-35). The assets that a person possesses become the master and owner of that person.
- Believers are commanded by the Lord to give up their possessions for the needy (Lk 12:33), and the early church accepted this command as literal (Acts 2:45).

19:22 Worldly abundance (e.g., rich, intelligent, attractive, etc.) often becomes an obstacle to walking in faith according to the will of the Lord.

- A wealthy man befriends this world and has faith in his own skills and talents. An individual cannot depend on his own righteousness or resources to be right with God.
- It is impossible to follow God when an individual has priorities above God.

Read Matthew 19:23-30... Wealth Makes It Difficult to Enter the Kingdom of Heaven

19:23 “*How hard it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God.*” The kingdom of God is founded on the principle of total subjection to His will.

- Worldly possessions limit the measure of obedience. God doesn’t desire His people to “have more” to “do more”, but instead to do more with His power and His strength. Worldly possessions undermine faith in God alone.

19:24 Just as the wealthy young man had been astounded, so now were His disciples as he reiterated the difficulty of entering the kingdom of God.

- Although there (as yet) is no historical evidence, oral tradition claimed that there was a small gate in the protective wall of Jerusalem used for nighttime traffic after the main gates were closed.
 - This gate was called “the needle’s eye” where a camel could barely pass through as long as all of the baggage that the camel had been carrying had

been eliminated; this would speak to the concept that man must also remove all of his possessions that are weighing him down.

- The camel lives primarily in desert regions and carries its own water, but to fit through the needle, the water hump must be flat (as one relies on Jesus for the living water).
 - The miraculous intervention of Jesus can enable a camel (one of the larger animals in that society exceeding seven feet in height) to pass through the eye of a sewing needle (one of the smallest openings; the needle itself can range from .6mm to 1.2mm in diameter).
 - The eye of the needle is literally the hole in a sewing/surgeon's needle. The Greek term for "camel" (kamhlon) is similar to the Greek term for "rope" (kamilon).
 - This is a rare place in the Book of Matthew, that the phrase "Kingdom of God" is used instead of the "Kingdom of Heaven." This occurs three times in the book (Matthew 12:28; 19:24; 21:31, 43)
- 19:25 Similar to the rich, young ruler, the disciples questioning Jesus are astonished at the difficulty of salvation.
- All men must first understand that it is impossible for a man to save himself.
 - A worldly, wealthy man might appear to have the favor of God, when in spiritual reality, the wealth is a curse, master and addiction to those who have it. It is difficult to discern whether the rich man owns the wealth or the wealth owns the rich man.
 - Satan told God that the only reason that Job trusted Him was because of his material blessings (Job 1:9-11; 2:4-5)
- 19:26 *"With men it is impossible, but not with God, because all things are possible with God"* (Philippians 4:13). Although a man may give up everything, it is only through the power of God that they can be saved.
- 19:27 Peter heard the promise of being in the kingdom before declaring what he and the disciples had given up.
- 19:28 When Jesus is on His throne, the twelve disciples (including Matthias) will judge (rule and influence) Israel (1 Cor 6:2-3).
- The word "regeneration" ("palingenesis" derived from "palin-" meaning "again" and "-genesis" meaning "a birth") is only used twice in the New Testament (Titus 3:5).
 - It is thought that this "regeneration" is equivalent to the "restoration" (Acts 3:21).
- 19:29 The spouse is not mentioned as they are one body.
- Every believer who has left everything (possessions and relationships) for Christ will be rewarded with abundance as well as eternal salvation.
 - The greatest reward is the presence of God – Immanuel ("God with us")
- 19:30 *"But many who are the first will be last and the last first"* (Mt 20:16; Mk 9:35, 10:44; Jn 12:25)

29 Matthew 20:1-16

Read Matthew 20:1-16... The Parable of the Vineyard Workers

20:1 The "land owner" symbolizes the Lord while the "vineyard" represents Israel.

- Since the Book of Matthew was directed primarily towards the Jewish community who refrained from using the term “God”, the “Kingdom of God” was called the “Kingdom of Heaven.”
 - A “Kingdom” requires a “King” to whom His subjects submit; God is the King of believers to submit and follow His laws while pleasing and praising Him.
 - The spiritual “Kingdom of Heaven” in men’s hearts now will become the material “Kingdom of Heaven” in the age to come. (Matthew 13)
 - The timing may have been at sunrise around 6:00am.
- 20:2 The denarius is not eternal salvation because salvation is neither through works nor merit. The denarius reflects the rewards of His people.
- A denarius was a day’s wage for an agricultural worker or a soldier.
- 20:3 Jesus identifies idle men who are doing nothing productive with their lives, and He gives them purpose, objectives and intention.
- The Jews had scheduled a morning (9:00am) and evening (3:00pm) sacrifice where a lamb was sacrificed in the Temple. The Jews also added noon (12:00pm), so at those three times, the Jews would turn and face the Temple to pray.
- 20:4 In this parable, everyone that Jesus called to His vineyard obediently went to serve Him. The landowner did not define an explicit wage to pay these later workers, so they would work in faith that the landowner would give them what was fair.
- 20:5 Jesus came out to the possible workers five times. No discrete time was identified during His first visit. The next three visits were three hours apart. The final visit was only two hours from the last, and an hour before the Jewish “end of day” at 6:00.
- 20:6 The owner of the vineyard never had too many workers; there was always space for more.
- The workers had been available for work all day, but no one had engaged them for work.

| Most Faith Translates into First Rewards (Matthew 19:30-20:19) | | | |
|--|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| | <u>Called</u> | <u>Time of Calling</u> | <u>Rewarded</u> |
| 1. (Mt 20:2) | Understood Agreement | ~6:00am | Last |
| 2. (Mt 20:4) | Promise of Rightful Recompense | 9:00am, Noon, 3:00pm | Second |
| 3. (Mt 20:7) | Obedience | 5:00pm | First |

- 20:8 The sequence of reward is noticeable as the last were paid first (Mt 19:30, 20:16). Had the first been the initial ones rewarded, they might not have had questions of pay.
- The landowner followed the Mosaic Law that encouraged the pay at the end of the day.
 - *“Pay them their wages each day before sunset, because they are poor and are counting on it. Otherwise, they may cry to the LORD against you, and you will be guilty of sin.”* (Deuteronomy 24:15)
 - *“You shall not oppress your neighbor, nor rob him. The wages of a hired worker are not to remain with you all night until morning.”* (Leviticus 19:13)
- 20:9 While the value of equal pay is prevalent, the sequence in which the workers are paid is also important because the first workers had to wait until the last were already rewarded.

- The last workers received as much pay as the landowner had promised to the first workers.
- 20:10 The workers who had first been engaged watched the payment to the other workers who came later which changed their expectations.
- 20:11 Immediately before this parable, Peter had stated that the disciples had left everything for the Lord (Mt 19:27). This parable may have been in response to the disciples expecting to receive a far greater reward than others.
- 20:12 The Jews have been persecuted (burning heat) throughout the millennia, but they had a covenant (agreement) with God that they would be His chosen people.
- Later in the age of this world, Gentiles had faith to work for the Lord, and He blessed (rewarded) them for their faithful service.
 - This parable followed Peter’s question to Jesus concerning the rewards for the disciples (Matthew 19:27). Peter had a self-centered mindset over his rewards after having left everything.
- 20:13 The owner of the vineyard regarded the first worker as a “friend” as He reminds him of the arrangement that they had agreed upon.
- Everything that God’s people receive from Him comes from His grace.
- 20:14- 15 Rewards belong to God to be given as He sees fit; God will give whatever is right. The first worker is identified as jealous because the last workers were elevated to the worth of the first.
- 20:16 “*So the last will be first, and the first last.*” (Matthew 19:30; Jn 12:25); for emphasis, this time, the last are even mentioned first in the verse.
- This closing verse is repeated from the end of the prior chapter. This verse ties this parable to Peter’s question about rewards.
 - Early church fathers interpreted this parable to speak of the Jews and Gentiles. This parable would reveal to Peter that there would be later followers of Christ – the Gentiles and the later Jews (even into the Tribulation) that would also receive rewards for their work although they followed Christ much later.
 - This parable could also apply to the disciples as Peter, Andrew, James and John were called before any of the others much less the followers of God beyond the disciples (Matthew 18:1; 20:20-21). Believers should not list worldly credentials and accomplishments above a faithful walk with the Lord. (Mark 10:31)
 - Although salvation is based solely on the grace of God alone (Ephesians 2:8-9), God will also reward His people according to their faithful walk:
 - “*Now the one who plants and the one who waters are one; but each will receive his own reward according to his own labor.*” (1 Corinthians 3:8)
 - Scripture encourages those who are persecuted that their reward in heaven is great. (Matthew 5:12; Luke 6:23)
 - God will reward every man according to how he has applied his faith in Christ Jesus (Matthew 16:27; 25:14-30; Luke 19:11-27; 1 Corinthians 3:11-55; 2 Corinthians 9:6; Revelation 22:12)
 - Heavenly rewards can decline. (Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18; Romans 2:5-6; 2 John 1:4-10).

- Believers should purposefully invest in heavenly rewards (Matthew 6:20).
- Religious rituals should not be misconstrued as works of faith; the Lord desires a relationship with His people. (Matthew 15:8)

30 Matthew 20:17-34

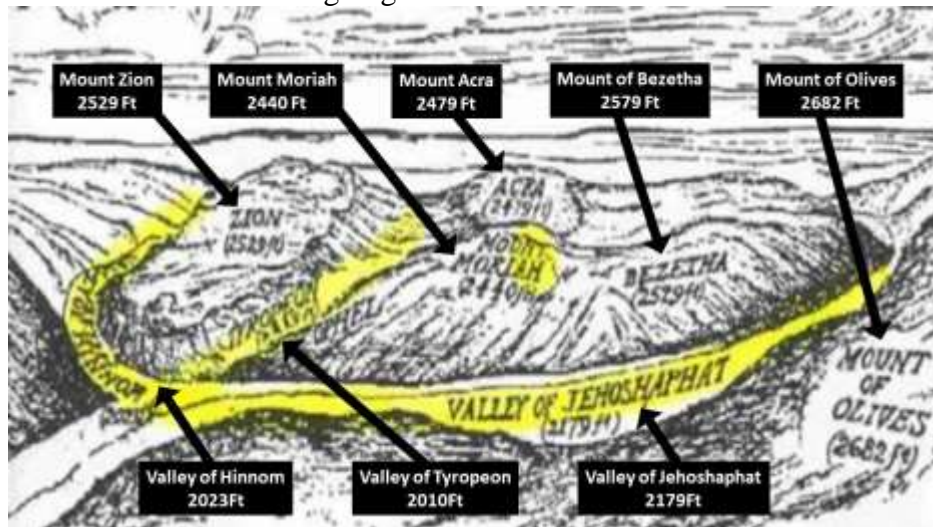
Read Matthew 20:17-19 ... Jesus Foretells His Resurrection for the Third Time

- **Jesus explicitly foretold His Death & Resurrection (Matthew 16:21-23; 17:22-23)**

Shared Account of Jesus' Private Revelation: Mt 20:17-19; Mk 10:32-34; Lk 18:31-34

20:17 Jesus had private times of revelation with His disciples. Believers should also take time away to just be with Him.

- Beyond the physical description of Jerusalem being situated in the midst of a mountainous region at 2460 feet above sea level, "going up" denotes positive direction (progress).
- Although surrounded by higher mountains, Scripture always speaks of "going up" to Jerusalem and never "going down."



1. The northern summit (hill) is called Scopus,
 2. The middle summit (hill) was called Nob,
 3. The highest point of the Mount of Olive
 4. Southern summit (hill) was called in the Holy Scriptures the "Mount of Corruption" or "Mount of Offence" (II Kings 23:13).
 5. On the middle ridge between the Kedron and the Tyropeon Valleys there was (formerly) in the south "Mount Zion" (the original "Mount Zion" and not the later southwest hill that was later called by that name),
 6. The "Ophel Mount"- to the north of that the "Rock" around which "Fort Antonia" was built
 7. The southwest hill itself that finally became known in the time of Simon the Hasmonean as the new "Mount Zion."
- Although Zion represented the temple area, the Temple was actually constructed on Mount Moriah next to Mount Zion which is higher.

- With the crowds that had accumulated around Jesus, it may have taken some effort to privately pull his disciples away from the masses. (Matthew 4:25; 5:1; 7:8; 8:1, 18; 9:8, 33; 11:7; 12:23, 46; 13:2, 34, 36; 14:14; 15:10, 30-33; 17:14; 19:2)

20:18 Jesus speaks of Himself in the third person. Although he is living in the human shell, His physical body did not encompass all of who He was. Jesus clearly communicates to His disciples that the Jewish religious leaders would condemn Him to death.

- The term “Son of Man” references the humanity of the Messiah as He became part of mankind.
 - The divine transportation of clouds was also used by the “Son of Man” (Daniel 7:13); clouds also describe Jesus’ ascension and coming again. (Acts 1:9-11)
 - Ezekiel utilized this term to represent humanity and mankind.
 - Hebrew is an ancient language with very few adjectives, so Hebrew uses a phrase to reference a noun. As an example, a smart man would be called a “son of wisdom” or a wealthy man would be the “son of wealth.” The “son of man” emphasizes the humanity of the individual.
 - Jesus chose this title for Himself as it was not used by Jewish Rabbis, and there were no associated misperceptions of Messianic connotations.
- The “chief priests and scribes” (Matthew 21:15) is a shortened version of the “elders, chief priests, and scribes” which is used to identify the Sanhedrin (Matthew 16:21). The Sanhedrin consisted of seventy men who were the ruling council of the Jews both politically and spiritually. Although limited in power by the occupation of Rome, the Sanhedrin were the highest court that a Jew could make a plea.

20:19 After the Jews have condemned Jesus, He would be passed to the Gentiles for persecution. Jesus foretells His crucifixion, but also His resurrection in three days.

- During the Roman flogging, the prisoner’s hands would be tied together around a pillar or boulder or else the prisoner would be bent down and tied to a stake.
 - A “Roman flagellum” (or “flagrum”) was a whip with two or three long leather strips attached to a short wooden handle. Metal, rock or bone was knotted at the ends of the leather strips which were long enough to wrap completely around the body. If the Roman scourge contained a hook at the end, the whip was called the “scorpion.”
 - The floggings were performed by two Roman soldiers (“lictors”) on each side of the prisoner that took turns as one would hit and then the other.
 - Prisoners often died as the intestines were often exposed through the back while eyes and teeth were knocked out.



| Three Levels of Intensity of Flogging | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|---|
| 1. | Fustigatio | Less severe of a beating; used as a warning. |
| 2. | Flagellatio | Brutal; used for more serious offences. |
| 3. | Verberatio | Worst beating associated with capital punishment. |

- Crucifixion was invented by the Phoenicians and perfected by the Romans. The torturous death would take 3-4 days for the convicted to die, and water was periodically provided to keep the convicted alive longer. This was a public spectacle often performed beside roadways and gates as an example and deterrent to others. Crucifixion meant death by asphyxiation.
 - In the Old Testament, the ultimate humiliation was to have the corpse of the dead person impaled on a tree after they died (Deuteronomy 21:23).
 - Jews believed that anyone who was hung on a tree was cursed by God. When Paul accepted Christ, he understood that the sinner’s curse was taken upon Jesus Christ at the cross. (Galatians 3:10-13)
- Paul would later state that Christ’s resurrection could be found in the Old Testament (1 Corinthians 15:4) as Jesus claims the sign of Jonah (Matthew 12:38-40).
 - “He will revive us after two days; He will raise us up on the third day, that we may live before Him.” (Hosea 6:2)
 - In the Jewish mind, any “part of a day” was counted as “a day.”
 - The Jewish day began at 6:00pm, and on Friday, Jesus died at 3:00pm. If Jesus was put in the grave prior to 6:00pm on Friday, it was counted as a day.
 - From 6:00pm on Friday until 6:00pm on Saturday was the second day.
 - From 6:00pm until the next morning was counted as the third Jewish day.
- Although Jesus was straightforward, the disciples did not understand what He was saying (Lk 18:34).
- Without Christ’s resurrection, man would remain lost in sin (1 Corinthians 15:17).

| The World’s Maltreatment of Jesus (Mt 20:18-19) | | | |
|--|----------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. | Jews | Condemn Him | Old Testament Israel |
| 2. | Gentiles | Belittle/Disparage Him | New Testament Church Age |

- **Each time that Jesus forewarns His disciples of His death and resurrection, the disciples go directly into an argument concerning which ones will be exalted.**

Read Matthew 20:20-28 ... The Greatest in the Kingdom Make Themselves Servants

Shared Account of Position and Submission: Mt 20:20-28; Mk 10:35-45; Lk 22:24-27

20:20 James and John were brothers in the inner circle of the Lord (Mk 5:37, 14:33, Gal 2:9) with much ambition.

- Their mother is not identified by name (Salome – Mt 27:56/Mk 16:1), but instead is related to Zebedee (“gift of God”).
- It may be that James and John told their mother to ask the question as they stood behind her (Mark 10:32).

| James and John may have been the Cousins of Jesus | | |
|--|--|--|
| Matthew 27:56 | <i>“Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of Zebedee’s sons.”</i> | |
| Mark 15:40 | <i>“There were also women looking on from a distance. Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joseph, and Salome.”</i> | |
| John 19:25 | <i>“Standing by the cross of Jesus were His mother, His mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.”</i> | |
| Mary Magdalene | Mary the mother of James and Joseph | The Mother of Zebedee’s Sons |
| Mary Magdalene | Mary the mother of James and Joseph | Salome |
| Mary Magdalene | Mary the mother of Jesus | His mother’s sister, Mary, the wife of Clopas, |
| James was the second born from Mary, and Joseph was the third born of Mary. (Mt 13:55) | | |

20:21 As Salome knelt to petition the Lord, He knew that she had not come to worship but to request.

- As Jesus asked her what explicitly she wanted, believers should also be candid and explicit when praying to the Lord.
- James and John told Jesus that they want Him to do whatever they ask Him to do (Mark 10:35)
- Jesus had told the disciples that they would sit on thrones in judgment over Israel (Matthew 19:28).

20:22 Believers must be careful when praying because human understanding is limited; the ramifications of a prayer may be beyond the believer’s intent.

- This cup of wrath that is being referenced foretells suffering and pain (Is 51:22; Jeremiah 25:15, 49:12; Ezekiel 23:33; Matthew 26:39).
- In ancient Ugaritic texts, the term “Cup” means “Destiny.”
 - The Ugaritic texts are a collection of ancient cuneiform texts discovered since 1928 in Syria. They are written in Ugaritic which is a northwest Semitic language dating back to the 12th century BC.

| The Term “Cup” Is Used in the Old Testament as Life Experiences (Blessing & Judgment) | |
|---|---|
| Judgment | Blessing |
| Psalm 75:8; Isaiah 51:17-23; Jeremiah 25:15-28; 49:12; 51:7; Lamentations 4:21-22; Ezekiel 23:31-34; Habakkuk 2:16; Zechariah 12:2; | Psalm 16:5; 23:5; 116:13; Jeremiah 16:7 |

20:23 James was the first disciple to be martyred (James 12:1); however, John lives to be an extremely elderly man. They had different “cups” that were specifically meant for them.

- Jesus lived a submissive life to God the Father. Jesus understood that God the Father had already foreordained the position of His followers in heaven, and it wasn’t the decision of Jesus to decide. Eternal positions have been prepared for those that God the Father has designated.

20:24 Personal ambition (even spiritual) creates conflict and disunity (Gal 5:20; Philippians 2:3; James 3:16). The next verse seems to show that the remaining disciples also had ambitions.

20:25 Worldly men pursue power and control regardless of the setting (e.g., religious, professional, sexual, societal, etc.)

- The Jews had endured the subjugation of Roman occupation forces, and in contrast to the Romans, Jesus calls His followers to serve (Lk 22:27).
- Believers who accept positions of authority are said to be “serving” in a specific capacity.

20:26-27 Since each of the disciples had ambitions of esteem, Jesus gave them the secret to being esteemed in God’s sight. God esteems those who selflessly become servants and slaves.

- Believers should serve in humility (not seeking the popular, spotlight positions). Jesus came to serve and give His life as a sacrifice (Romans 15:3); His followers should do the same.
- Self-denial and service is a difficult truth for a self-centered and competitive society.

20:28 The reason that Jesus came to earth was “to serve unto death as a ransom.” Beyond Jesus being a wonderful example of selfless living, He came to die as a payment for sin (Is 52:13-53:12; 2 Cor 5:21).

- God the Father sent His Son (John 3:16); however, Jesus would lay down His own life (John 10:17-18).
- To ransom would be a personal payment for a relative; to redeem means to “buy back” (Hosea 13:14). In ancient times, if a warrior was captured during warfare, there were times when a family could ransom and redeem the prisoner of war.
- Jesus gave His life for “many.” God chooses and then man must respond to God’s calling (Matthew 11:28-30; Romans 10:9-13; 1 Timothy 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9).

Read Matthew 20:29-34 ... Jesus Heals Two Blind Men

Shared Account of Healing of Two Blind Men: Mt 20:29-33; Mk 10:46-52; Lk 18:35-43
20:29 A large multitude followed Jesus out of Jericho (“a sweet smell”).

20:30 Jesus passed by two (witness) blind men (symbolizing no spiritual insight) sitting by the wayside, and they called out to Him for mercy.

20:31 The reference to the Son of David expressed the right of kingly authority as the Messiah (2 Sam 7:16). The blind man fervently begged for mercy; the world attempts to quell the cry for Jesus, but Jesus beckons the seekers to come.

- 20:32 Jesus asks the blind men the same question that He asked Salome (Mt 20:21), but instead of grandiose prestige, these men simply wanted sight.
- 20:33 The two blind men identify Jesus as Lord and request for their eyes to be opened (spiritual insight and discernment).
- 20:34 The blind men obviously received “spiritual sight” as well because instead of going his own way (Prov 14:12, 16:25), He followed Jesus (Jn 14:6).

31 Matthew 21:1-22

Read Matthew 21:1-11 ... The Triumphal Entry

Shared Account of Jesus’ Triumphant Entry: Mt 21:1-11; Mk 11:1-10; Lk 19:28-44; Jn 12:12-19

21:1 Jesus approached Jerusalem (“the city of peace”) and walked through Bethphage (“house of unripe figs”) and Bethany (“house of figs/dates”) near the Mt of Olives (east of Jerusalem where Jesus was arrested for crucifixion).

- Fruitless fig trees represent fruitless Israel (without ripe figs) who did not recognize Jesus as the Messiah (Lk 13:6-9; Is 5:7).
- As the olive is pressed to bring forth oil, so too would the crushing of Jesus result in His resurrection, ascension, and the sending of the Spirit (oil) to anoint His people. Two are needed as a witness to testify (Deuteronomy 19:15).
 - The Greek words for “mercy” (“eleos”) and “oil” (“elaion”) have the same root.
- The mount of Olives is several hundred feet taller than Mount Zion and Mount Moriah which provides a good view into the city before coming down through the Kidron Valley and into the eastern city gates.
- Jesus and His disciples were coming from Jericho which is approximately 17 miles away and a steep incline of approximately 3,000 feet. This was a Roman military road where the parable of the Good Samaritan was placed; it was a dangerous road with periodic guards along the way. Pilgrims often traveled in groups for additional protection.

21:2 In ancient times, the donkey was a “royal mount.” The King would have his own donkey; it was a symbol of royalty which only the King could ride. No one would have ridden the colt before Jesus.

- A donkey represents the old unruly nature, but the rider (Jesus) can tame that disposition (old nature) and utilize the strength of the donkey productively for his purpose.
- The mature donkey is representative of the Israel who rejected Jesus while the new donkey (the colt) is likened to the Gentiles who submit to Him.

21:3 The words that the Lord gives are sufficient for any situation (Mk 13:11; 2 Tim 3:16).

21:4-5 This triumphant entry fulfills two prophecies (Isaiah 62:11; Zechariah 9:9). The passage of Isaiah deals with a new age as well as Zechariah’s Messianic prophecy.

- The term “Daughter Zion” reflects the intimate relationship that God desires with His people.

- The Jews were expecting the Messiah to come in military might; however, in His first incarnation, Jesus was “gentle” (John 3:17-21). Jesus was coming to save the world.
 - A characteristic of the donkey is clearly stated. The donkey is a “beast of burden.” Indeed, Jesus would also have a burden to bear as He took on the sin of all mankind. (Psalm 55:22; Matthew 11:28). God calls believers to bear each other’s burdens (Galatians 6:2).
- 21:6 The disciples were obedient to Jesus. Until this time, Jesus repeatedly urged testimony not to be made public; however, from this time on, Jesus would proclaim that He was the Messiah.
- 21:7-8 Jesus sat and rode above the coats (coverings) of the people. Clothing is symbolic of the righteousness, and all of the people laid their robes (self-righteousness) down before the Lord. It is only by His righteousness that man is saved.
- Laying cloaks down before an important arrival is similar to “rolling out the red carpet.”
 - As a child might toss rose petals before the coming of the bride at a wedding ceremony, the people laid palm leaves before the colt of the Messiah.
 - During the feast days, Jerusalem would swell to three times the normal population. The Roman guard would bring in additional soldiers in the Fortress Antonio overlooking the Temple to ensure peace.
- 21:9 “Hosanna” is a term of praise derived from “save,” and the multitude were crying out for salvation as they yelled “Hosanna” which literally means “save us”; however, Jesus did not save them in the worldly way, so shortly thereafter they yelled “crucify him!” (Mt 27:22-23).
- The people shouted from Scripture as they welcomed the Messiah (Psalm 118:26-27). This was the last Hallel Psalm (113-118) that was recited on special feast days (Feast of Passover and the Feast of Tabernacles).
 - The term “Son of David” was a Messianic reference (2 Samuel 7) alluding to the Davidic Covenant of David’s lineage having an eternal throne.
 - The first “Hosanna” was in reference to the Messiah while the second “Hosanna” was directed to the divine God on high. Jesus would in fact fulfill both as the incarnation of God.
- 21:10 The Israelites of Jerusalem expected Jesus to reign in the same way that David ruled his physical kingdom.
- The whole city of Jerusalem had been “shaken” at the birth of Jesus when the wise men arrived to bring gifts to the King of the Jews (Matthew 2:3).
- 21:11 The Nazarene portrayed Jesus as the branch (netzer) foretelling the Messiah in the Old Testament (Mk 1:24; Is 4:2, 11:1; Jeremiah 23:5, 33:15; Zechariah 3:8, 6:12); this was also the identity referenced after the resurrection (Mk 14:67, 16:6).
- Nazareth was an uncultivated, disreputable place (Jn 1:46) that may have been named after the hill behind it (Lk 4:29); the hill Notserah means “one guarding/watching.”

Read Matthew 21:12-13 ... Jesus Drives Commercial Buyers & Sellers from the Temple

Shared Account of Jesus Cleansing the Temple: Mt 21:12-17; Mk 11:15-19; Lk 19:45-48; Jn 2:13-25

21:12 Just as Jesus had “cast out” the unclean spirits, He now “cast out” the religious leaders because they profited by the sale of overpriced sacrifices to the impoverished Jews.

- God had extended the sacrifice to birds (doves) so that the poor could afford the act of sacrifice (Lev 5:11).
- The money changers provided the service of currency exchange for travelers and foreigners at a profit.
- The money changers would also sell sacrificial animals to those who traveled distances. However, priests would find blemishes from the local sacrifices, so that even the local Jews were forced to buy sacrifices at the Temple for much more money.
- Those in poverty could not afford a sheep, so the Lord allowed dove sacrifices for the impoverished. The money changers were even taking advantage of society’s poorest.
- The money changers were set up in the court of the Gentiles which was the location of outreach to foreigners wanting to know God. A “missionary” place became a “monetary” place.
- Scripture records a separate account of Jesus performing the same cleansing of the Temple earlier in His ministry (John 2:15).

21:13 The religious leaders had turned the House of Prayer (Isaiah 56:7) into a Den of Thieves (Jeremiah 7:11). Prayer shows the relationship with the Lord, His provision and a focus on the divine. Commerce shows the relationship with the world and self-effort.

- Isaiah 56 leads into a new section of the Book of Isaiah that reveals with a new Jerusalem.
- Jeremiah 7 is called “Jeremiah’s Temple Sermon” where he preached at the gate of the Temple in the same way as Jesus seven centuries later.
- In the gospel of Mark, he goes on to add “a house of prayer for all nations” (Mark 11:17); however, Matthew was focused on the Jewish community.

| The Failures of the Religious Leaders | |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| Matthew 21:12-17 | The Cleansing of the Temple |
| Matthew 21:18-22 | The Cursing of the Fig Tree |
| Matthew 21:28-32 | The Parable of the Two Sons |
| Matthew 21:33-46 | The Parable of the Wicked Tenants |
| Matthew 23:1-14 | The Parable of the Wedding |

Read Matthew 21:14-17 ... Children Praise Jesus

21:14 Jesus cleansed the Temple (1 Cor 3:16-17) before healing at the Temple (Mt 9:2-6). Believers should confirm that they are submitting to the Lord without practicing sinful lifestyles before they seek His healing.

- Individuals who were cripple or physically disabled could not offer a sacrifice in the Temple. (Leviticus 21:16-24) While these hurting people were rejected at the Temple, Jesus received them to heal them.

- 21:15 The religious leaders witnessed the “signs” (semeion σημεῖον) of Jesus, but they were more concerned with the praise of Jesus by children. The reference to the “Son of David” expressed the right of kingly authority as the Messiah (2 Sam 7:16).
- The “chief priests and scribes” (Matthew 20:18) is a shortened version of the “elders, chief priests, and scribes” which is used to identify the Sanhedrin (Matthew 16:21).
 - The Sanhedrin consisted of seventy men who were the ruling council of the Jews both politically and spiritually. Although limited in power by the occupation of Rome, the Sanhedrin were the highest court that a Jew could make a plea.
 - These children may have been at the triumphal entry of Jesus (Matthew 21:9) and had heard these shouts of the Hallel Psalm (118:26-27). “Hosanna” is a term of praise derived from the term “save.”
- 21:16 Once again, Jesus answers critiques with Scripture. Jesus references the positive part of the verse (Psalm 8:2) without the first section (“Because of Your adversaries”) and without the last section (“to silence the enemy and the avenger”). The religious leaders were indeed being utilized by Satan.
- The voices of children would show the correct way for the adults and experts.
 - Jesus would often challenge those who claimed to be experts of the law (Matthew 12:3; 19:4; 21:42; 22:31).
 - Psalms 8:4 is referenced in Hebrews 2:6 to show the humanity of the Messiah.
- 21:17 Jesus never stays overnight in Jerusalem until He is arrested to be crucified. It was a two (witness) mile walk from Jerusalem (city of peace) to Bethany (house of affliction).
- Lazarus, Mary and Martha owned a house in Bethany, so Jesus may have stayed with them.

Read Matthew 21:18-22 ... Jesus Curses the Fruitless Fig Tree

Shared Account of the Barren Fig Tree: Mt 21:18-22; Mk 11:12-14, 20-26

- 21:18 Early in the morning (as the light was approaching), Jesus was about His business. Believers should also make the most of the time in this world to testify to the Lord.
- 21:19 The fig tree represents Israel during this age of the church; the tree was fruitless (Galatians 5:22-23; Matthew 3:10, 7:19; Luke 3:9), so Jesus cursed it.
- However, the tree will revive (Matthew 24:32) as Israel will get another opportunity to bear fruit for Jesus (Luke 13:6-9).
 - The fig tree is unique in that it often bears fruit prior to growing its leaves, so when the leaves appear, the fruit should have already been produced (Jeremiah 8:13). This was not the season for the tree to bear figs (Mark 11:13).
 - Believers should not pursue reputations of fruitfulness, but instead, be productive and bear fruit. Just as Israel’s season to bear fruit is only after the Tribulation (in the Millennium), so too were figs out of season for this tree.
 - Jesus cursed the fig tree for not bearing fruit, and this ended Jesus ministry to the Jews of Israel.
 - The fig tree had dried to the roots (Mark 11:20), and there was no way for this fig tree to be nourished by the water (Jesus provides the living water – John 4:14).

- The Mosaic Law allowed by-passers to eat fruit sparingly (Deuteronomy 23:24-25). This was not to harvest and carry away, but it was only to satisfy immediate hunger.
- 21:20 The disciples were amazed at the immediate nature of the Lord’s words. Mankind always believes that additional time (process) will be given, but the Word of the Lord immediately alters the natural (Gen 1:3).
- 21:21 Jesus tells His disciples to have faith; believers with faith will see the supernatural interaction of God in their lives and circumstances.
- In Scripture, mountains represent authority while the sea represents the chaos of this world.
 - The prayers of righteous men (James 5:16; 1 Pet 3:12) that align with God’s resolve will come to pass (Mt 26:39); even the beginning of the Lord’s prayer submits man’s will to God’s (Mt 6:10). Prayer that confirms God’s will is powerful (James 5:16-18).
 - This occurred as Jesus was descending the Mount of Olives where the Dead Sea is slightly visible. The “mountain” may reference the Mount of Olives while the sea references the “Dead Sea.”
- 21:22 *“If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer.”*

| Conditions of Prayer | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| God Centered Focus | |
| 1 John 5:14-15; Isaiah 55:8 | According to the will of God |
| 1 Corinthians 10:31; Ephesians 3:20 | It brings glory to God |
| The Result on the Individual | |
| Psalm 91:10; 121:7; Romans 8:28; Jeremiah 29:11 | It will benefit & not harm you |
| The Prayer | |
| James 1:6; Matthew 21:22; Mark 11:24; Hebrews 11:6 | Have Faith |
| James 4:6, 10; 1 Peter 5:6; Proverbs 29:23 | Pray humbly |
| Matthew 6:5 | Pray privately |
| 1 Thessalonians 5:17-18; Luke 18:1 | Persevere in prayer continually |
| The Heart | |
| James 4:3; Proverbs 16:2 | Right Motives |
| Psalm 66:18; Isaiah 59:2; John 9:31; 1 Peter 3:12 | Confessed Sin |
| Proverbs 21:13 | Helping the Needy |
| John 15:7 | Fellowship with the Lord |
| Matthew 6:14; Mark 11:25-26 | Forgiving others |
| 1 Peter 3:7 | Treating spouse with love & respect |

FEBRUARY

1 Matthew 21:23-46

Read Matthew 21:23-27 ... The Chief Priests & Elders Challenge the Authority of Jesus

Shared Account of Jesus’ Authority: Mt 21:23-27; Mk 11:27-33; Lk 20:1-8

21:23 It was understood that authority is bestowed by another authority, and the religious organization had not condoned nor promoted the teaching of Jesus.

- The Chief Priests (upper class of Jewish priests who oversaw the Temple and sacrifices) and the Elders (older men of a community that formed governing

councils) did not want Jesus to undermine their social structure from the pulpit (Amos 7:10-15).

- Jesus had recently accused the religious leaders of price gouging and exploiting the needs of the congregation (Mt 21:12-13).
- This delegation of the Sanhedrin questioned the credentials of Jesus. They had attributed His “signs” (semeion σημειον) to Beelzebub. (Matthew 12:22-32)
- Jesus was probably teaching in the covered (porches) portico’s of Solomon that surrounded the Gentile courtyard, so that if it rained, He could continue teaching.
- In order to become a rabbi in modern times, an individual must pass a test in certain difficult areas of Jewish law; the individual will then receive a Semicha (Rabbinical ordination) from the testing rabbi.

21:24 Jesus was not intimidated by these men, and He demanded that they answer Him first. Jesus asked them about John the Baptist who was recognized by the people (Lk 3:2-3, 7:29) as a prophet (and as a prophet he had been persecuted).

21:25-26 These religious leaders engaged in lifestyles of intellectual contests even with each other (Rom 14:1; Philippians 2:14; 2 Tim 2:14).

- The religious leaders cared more about public opinion than the truth. Not once did the religious leaders actually consider truthfully answering the question, but instead they considered the consequences at the expense of truth.
- The world should stop playing games with God, and seek the truth.
- Believers as well as unbelievers should judge the truth on its own merit instead of determining truth by the consequences on a lifestyle. The religious leaders (like many today) align “truth” with their sinful lifestyles.

21:27 The religious leaders accurately conclude that they did not know that God’s authority was on John the Baptist. Jesus did not enlighten them that John’s authority came from God, but instead denied them knowledge of Him (Mt 13:12, 25:29; Lk 19:26).

Read Matthew 21:28-32 ... The Parable of the Two Sons

21:28 The father told the son to go work the vineyard; it was not a request but a directive. The Father made the deadline as today (Heb 4:7); the work in the fields was not to be put off until tomorrow. As “sons of God”, believers have no choice, but to minister for Him today.

21:29 The first son that was approached, denied the father by voicing the son’s selfish desires. The work of the Father should not be determined by the wishes of the son.

21:30 The second son respectfully addressed his father as “sir” before unfaithfully breaking his word.

- In the same way, the Jewish religious leaders publicly pretended to submit to the will of God, but in reality, they rebelled against the Father’s will.

21:31 The two worst sinners, prostitutes (preying on man’s lust for illicit pleasure) and tax collectors (unfair business/political practices promoting greed), both possess pride from the power that they wield over sinful man; however, these sinners were repenting and submitting the Father’s will.

- Unlike the religious leaders who based their value on merit, and being self-righteous paid spoken respect to the Lord without repenting of their pride and submitting to His work.

- Because the book of Matthew was written for the audience of the Jews, Matthew would usually refer to the Kingdom of Heaven out of respect for not speaking the name of God. However, three times Matthew proclaims the “kingdom of God.” This occurs three times in the book (Matthew 12:28; 19:24; 21:31, 43)
 - Jesus was “the way” (John 14:6), and His followers were referenced as “the way” (Acts 9:2; 19:9, 23; 22:4; 24:22)
- 21:32 John the Baptist had adhered to rabbinical law while preaching repentance, and yet the religious leaders had rejected his ministry as well.
- The defining principles were belief and change. Many people claim to believe, but their lack of change proves that their hearts are far from the Lord (Luke 6:46; Matthew 7:21).

| Parables Reveal the Growing Rejection of God’s Message | | |
|---|------------------|------------------|
| Scripture | Parables | Rejection |
| Matthew 21:32 | Two Sons | The Prophets |
| Matthew 21:33-46 | Vineyard Workers | The Son, Jesus |
| Matthew 22:1-14 | Wedding Feast | God, the Father |

Read Matthew 21:33-46 ... Vineyard Workers Mistreat the Owners Slaves & Kill His Son

Shared Account of the Parable of the Vineyard Owner: Mt 21:33-46; Mk 12:1-12; Lk 20:9-19

- 21:33-34 Jesus used parables to conceal deeper truths from the spiritually blind (Mt 13:10-13), but these religious leaders would understand that they were being chastised (Mt 21:45).
- This parable is similar to the Old Testament vineyard story (Isaiah 5:7).
 - The vineyard owner prepared the field completely: 1. Planted vineyard 2. Put fence 3. Dug winepress 4. Built watchtower 5. Leased land 6. Went away 7. Sent messengers.
 - The Judean hills are terraced with the stones removed to build retaining walls. A winepress would be added to glean the juice from the pressed grapes. Watchtowers enable the farmer to identify any threats to the vineyard.
 - God had prepared the nation of Israel; however, Israel rejected a relationship with God. Instead, Israel pursued a religious system built on laws.
 - In Scripture, the Greek word for parables (parabolais παραβολαῖς) is mentioned twelve times. The root of the word parable is a compound noun consisting of “para” (meaning “alongside”) and “bole” (which means “to cast”). The application is “to cast alongside” a spiritual truth, a cultural picture of daily life that illumines the underlying spiritual truth
- 21:35 The slaves sent by God were likened to His prophets forewarning Israel to bear fruit to the Lord (Matthew 22:6).
- Jesus had asked the religious leaders earlier in this discussion about John the Baptist’s authority. John had been sent from God (John 1:6), but was ostracized by these religious leaders and killed for his stance on righteousness.
 - This fallen world promotes sexual freedom (perversions) over religious freedom.

- Although people claim to want a relationship with the Lord, they reject His Word and will for their own opinions and sinful lifestyles.
- 21:36 The persecution of God’s messengers became increasingly severe until their wickedness increased to the level of murder. Although the treatment of three slaves is defined, God sent many messengers.
- 21:37 God continued to send messenger after messenger even to the point of sending His beloved Son (John 3:16).
- 21:38 The religious leaders recognized Jesus, but killed Him out of ambition for power and possessions.
- 21:39 The Jewish leaders took three actions: 1. Jesus was seized 2. Jesus was crucified outside the city gates 3. Jesus was denied a place in Judaism.
- 21:40-41 Israel was to be destroyed and scattered in the diaspora while the vineyard is now given to the Gentiles during the church age.
- 21:42 Jesus quoted from the Old Testament (Ps 118:22-23) that the religious leadership (the builders – Acts 4:11) had rejected the foundation of God’s work (1 Cor 3:11; 2 Tim 2:19, Acts 4:11; Eph 2:20; 1 Pet 2:7).
- God is repeatedly viewed as a stone in the Old Testament (Psalm 18)
 - The rock (Jesus) will be the foundation (Isaiah 28:16) or the rock (Jesus) will be the destroyer (Daniel 2:34-35). Jesus will be one or the other to every person.
- 21:43 The gospel message was now to be refocused from the Jewish nation to the Gentiles (Romans 11:25).
- 21:44 Jesus is the cornerstone (Daniel 2:34), and mankind has a choice of either falling on the Stone in humility (Psalms 51:16-17) while being protected by the Stone (Psalms 27:5, Rev 6:15, 16) or being crushed by the Stone.
- 21:45 The religious leaders were offended at the truth of the parable instead of correcting their mindsets.
- The world is offended at the thought of being sinful without regarding the truth of the conviction.
- 21:46 The common people had a more sincere, true appreciation of Jesus than the religious leaders.
- The religious leaders were swayed by public opinion more than conviction (Mark 11:32).

2 Mt 22:1-22

Read Matthew 22:1-14 ... The Parable of the Wedding Banquet

Shared Account of the Wedding Banquet: Mt 22:1-14; Lk 14:15-24

- *Matthew and Luke may be two different accounts*
 - *Matthew 22:1-14 may consist of two different parables:*
 - *Matthew 22:1-9*
 - *Matthew 22:10-14*
- 22:1 At this time, religious leaders were attempting to verbally and physically entrap Jesus; therefore, Jesus spoke in parables, so that truths would only be discerned by the spiritually enlightened (Mt 13:10-11).

- The plural term for “parables” might infer that Matthew 22:1-14 consists of two parables (Matthew 22:1-9; 10-14).
- 22:2 The Kingdom of Heaven is a central focus of Jesus. Although the “son” is not the primary emphasis of this parable, the wedding banquet was in honor of the King’s son. God’s people will attend the “wedding feast” of the Lord (Revelation 19:9).
- Since the Book of Matthew was directed primarily towards the Jewish community who refrained from using the term “God”, the “Kingdom of God” was called the “Kingdom of Heaven.”
 - A “Kingdom” requires a “King” to whom His subjects submit; God is the King of believers to submit and follow His laws while pleasing and praising Him. The Kingdom of God that reigns in men’s heart in this current age will be materially realized over all of the earth during the millennium.
- 22:3 As a nation, Israel has always rejected the invitation to the gospel of Jesus as the Messiah.
- In ancient Mideastern weddings, individuals would be invited to a wedding feast for a general timeframe, and later (at a separate time), the call would go out that it is time to come to the actual event.
- 22:4 God repeatedly communicated the blessings that would flow from accepting the invitation. The oxen were the most valuable form of sacrifice.
- The Greek term for “dinner” (ariston ἄριστόν) usually infers an earlier meal (lunch or brunch) instead of an evening meal ((Luke 14:12). In those days, the Jewish community tended to eat two meals each day with this earlier being between 10:00am-noon.
- 22:5 The Jews, and mankind in general, are more distracted than they realize.
- Although the King’s call went out, the call was ignored as the people went ahead with their ordinary life routines.
 - Distracted with careers, financial aspirations, and hobbies, misguided man does not sense the urgency of complying with God’s call.
- 22:6 The prophets of the Lord were persecuted (Mt 21:35) throughout the Old Testament times (including John the Baptist).
- While some disregarded the King’s call (in the verse prior – Matthew 22:5), others wickedly executed the King’s servants.
 - The execution of the King’s slaves who are simply calling individuals to come enjoy a wedding banquet is equivalent to the persecution of believers around the world. The deaths and persecution are irrational.
 - These deaths of the servants show the relationship with the preceding parable of the vineyard owner (Matthew 21:33-46).
- 22:7 The heavenly armies bring justice on the rebellious. Beyond physically killing the prophets of the Lord, the worldly have killed themselves spiritually (Rom 6:16, 7:5; James 1:15). Those who rejected the King’s call will lose everything in fire (judgment).
- Israel physically lost the “heart of their nation” when the Temple of Jerusalem was razed in 70AD by the Roman army.
 - The entire city of Jerusalem was destroyed and the Roman Emperor Hadrian exiled the Jews to the great diaspora after the Bar Kokhba (132-135AD).

- 22:8 The “worthiness” of the individual was not based on their moral behavior, but instead on whether they received the invitation of the King. Those who reject the call of the Lord are not counted worthy.
- 22:9 The calling of the Lord went out to those on their way (on the roads) and not to those who made their homes in the city (this world).
- The city may symbolize Jerusalem (and Judaism as a whole) while the Gospel message was now going to be extended to the outliers and the Gentiles (Matthew 28:19; Acts 1:8)
- 22:10 The invitation was not based upon personal merit, but instead upon obedience to the invitation. The evil as well as the good would attend the marriage ceremony.
- 22:11 When accepting an invitation, the attendee should comply with the “dress code” of the one whose banquet it is (Rev 3:4-5, 19:7-9).
- An individual’s personal merit (e.g., the self-righteousness of the Pharisees) will not be good enough for the banquet; the clothing represents righteousness, and only the righteous covering of Jesus Christ will do (Job 29:14; Psalms 32:9; Isaiah 61:10, 64:6).
 - Alternatively, many are taught that they can accept Jesus as Savior without making Him Lord of their lives, but one cannot become a believer and continue to wear the filthy clothes (polluted lifestyle) of the old nature.
 - A believer must be covered by the Lord’s righteousness (Rom 13:14; Col 3:12; 1 Peter 5:5).
 - This verse may begin the next parable as the impoverished and uninvited on the outlying roads would not have had wedding clothing; however, this may the point, in that the King would have needed to provide wedding attire.
- 22:12 The person inadequately dressed was considered a “friend” to the King, but was without excuse when questioned about his covering. The guest understood that he was inappropriately attired, and he was without answer.
- This guest may have been an individual who responded to the invitation, and yet after coming to the wedding feast, he did not behave appropriately. He continued in his lifestyle of sin.
 - On the other hand, this man may have appeared to have been a good person (a Jewish religious leader) – a guest and friend of the King. However, in reality, the man did not accept the wedding garments provided by the King.
- 22:13 Although Jews correctly claim that they are God’s chosen people, one must accept the sacrifice of Jesus Christ (Matthew 8:11-12). This loathsome place is repeatedly referenced (Mt 8:12, 13:41-42, 50, 24:51, 25:30). The man was confined, so that he could do nothing (hand) nor go anywhere (foot) according to his selfish desire.
- The concept of outer darkness is correlated in Scripture to hell (Matthew 8:12; 25:30). This is spiritual rejection by God.
- 22:14 Mankind has received an open invitation into God’s kingdom, but only those whom the Lord chooses will become His people (Rom 9:10-33).
- One may receive the message of God’s Word (e.g., church, reading, and hearing), but never accept and apply the truths of the Spirit.
 - **The last three parables were insights to the diabolical nature of the Pharisees and religious leaders. The parable of the Tow Sons (Matthew 21:32), the**

Vineyard Workers (Matthew 21:33-46), and the Wedding Feast (Matthew 22:1-14).

- **Instead of learning and applying the truth of Jesus, the religious leaders attacked Jesus on social and political grounds.**

Read Matthew 22:15-22 ... Pay Taxes to Caesar & Give to God the Things of God

Shared Account of Taxation According to Image: Mt 22:15-22; Mk 12:13-17; Lk 20:20-26

22:15 The Pharisees did not sincerely listen to the truth of the Lord, but instead, they disparagingly approached the teaching of Jesus. Often the scholarly, listen to truths that should be applied, but instead, the Word of God is treated with arbitrary criticism.

- Pharisees (“the separated ones”) evolved during the Maccabean period from the Hasidim family (the Essenes also originated from the Hasidim). Pharisees believed the entire Old Testament (Tanakh) as well as oral conditions (Talmud).
- The primary character flaws of the Pharisees seemed to be their arrogance and legalism. The key to knowing God is faith instead of rules.

22:16 Political activists and false religions often join efforts against Jesus and His believers. Herodians were political supporters of Herod the Great and his heirs.

- These politically savvy people (e.g., the media) feign flattering respect for Jesus as they attempted to destroy the truth of the Lord.
- They identified Jesus as “teacher” without sincerely intending to learn from Him; they did not understand that Jesus was God incarnate
- Jesus was “the way” (John 14:6), and His followers were referenced as “the way” (Acts 9:2; 19:9, 23; 22:4; 24:22)

The History of the Herodians

- The Leadership of the Jewish State transitioned from Seleucid Empire (Antiochus Epiphanes (IV) to a family of Priests – the Maccabean Family (165BC). The head of the family was Judas Maccabeus (called “The Hammer”).
- Israel remained a vassal of the Seleucids and a military ally of the roman republic. The Hasmonean Dynasty began with John Hyrcanus as High Priest and Prince. Hyrcanus forced the Idumeans to convert to Judaism (King Herod’s family).
- Circa 60BC, Rome made the Hyrcanus’ descendants only responsible for religious leadership as High Priest. Antipater I the Idumean (died 43BC) had assisted Rome during several civil revolts, so Rome granted Antipater I the Idumean power over Israel.
- Antipater I the Idumean was the father of Herod the Great who came into power upon his father’s death. The Herodians were political supporters of Herod’s dynasty, and they are only mentioned three times in Scripture (Matthew 22:16; Mark 3:6, 12:13).
- The Herodians were a political party and not a religious party. The Herodians wanted to support the status quo because they felt that a reign of Herod’s family was better than a reign of Rome who had no idea of the Jewish history and culture.

22:17 The Herodians would have supported the roman tax while the Pharisees may have pretended as if they were opposed. Regardless of the seemingly different aspects of the fallen world, they are united in purpose against the Lord Jesus Christ. There are truly two categories of people in this world, those who accept Jesus as their Savior and Lord contrasted to those who do not.

- Although the Pharisees and Herodians used the term “pay” with an “either/or” question, Jesus changed the term to “give back” “and” give God what is owed Him as well. (Matthew 22:21)

| Taxes During the Time of Jesus >40% | |
|---|--|
| Religious Tax | Temple Tax (Due Annually for Males over 20 years old) – Half Shekel |
| Roman Tax | Census Tax (due Annually) – This was the tax in Matthew 22 and the tax for Joseph & Mary at the nativity |
| Herodian Tax | Land Tax Import/Export Tax Crop Tax Income Tax (10% Annual) Road Use tax Transportation Tax City Entrance Tax Salt Tax Sales Tax Emergency Tax (if taxes couldn't cover expenses) |

22:18 Jesus asks the reason that they are testing Him; hopefully, this caused them to think in themselves of the true reason without playing intellectual games.

- The Greek term for “test” (peirazete πειράζετε) carried the meaning “to test with the purpose of destruction.”
- The people were heavily taxed, so these individuals wanted to pull Jesus into the political discussion concerning taxes. The political topic of taxes was rife with emotion and bias.
- Jesus identified these individuals as hypocrites because (like the media) they pretended to be neutral learners when they actually had a deep agenda.
 - The term “hypocrite” was only used by Jesus in the New Testament.
 - The Greek term for “hypocrite” (hypokritai ὑποκριταὶ) continues the theatrical theme; in the 1st century BC, actors were called hypocrites. (Matthew 6:5, 16, 7:5, 15:7, 22:18, 23:13-15, 23, 25, 27, 29; 24:51; Mark 7:6; Luke 6:42, 12:56, 13:15)
 - The root of the word “hypocrite” is a compound noun based on two Greek words: hypo (“under”) and krínō (judge). In ancient times, actors wore masks, so the intent is to judge the person under the mask.

22:19 Jesus does not answer his cynics straightaway, but forces them to obey His demand for the coin. A denarius always had the bust of the reigning ruler embossed on the coin.

- By Jesus’ time the denarius was pay for a day’s worth of work (Matthew 20:2). The name was derived from the value at its origin; when it was introduced (two

centuries prior to Christ), the “denarius” coin was worth ten (“den”) donkeys. The donkey represents the rebellious old nature of man.

- The denarius was a silver coin. The family of Herod was allowed to make copper coins but not silver coins which were often used to pay Roman soldiers.

22:20-21 The lives of every human should be given to God because mankind was made in His image (Gen 1:26, 27). While believers should pay taxes, they should present all they are to God.

- Believers are to live under submission to whatever form of authority (government) is established unless that authority demands that God’s law be broken.
- Believers should live out of an existence in Jesus Christ regardless of what the others side of the relationship brings (political leader, religious leader, spouse, children, friend). Believers should retain focus on Jesus Christ regardless of the fallen nature of those around them.
- The citizenship of the followers of Jesus is in heaven (Philippians 3:20); however, believers are responsible to authorities of this world as well.

22:22 The frauds were impressed with the wisdom of Jesus, but instead of following Jesus, they left on their own way.

3 Mt 22:23-46

Read Matthew 22:23-33 ... Jesus Educates the Sadducees on the Resurrection

Shared Account of Life After Death: Mt 22:23-33; Mk 12:18-27; Lk 20:27-40

22:23 The Pharisees and Herodians had just been subdued by Jesus. Now another group of leaders, the Sadducees, harass Jesus.

- The Sadducees did not believe in resurrection or the afterlife, so they questioned Jesus from their misconceptions and incorrect assumptions. The Sadducees were attempting to show that the concept of the resurrection was irrational.
- Every religion has conservative/fundamental and liberal divisions as well as a number of moderate denominations that temper certain extremes. In Judaism, the Pharisees were the conservatives while the Sadducees were the liberal progressives.

| The Two Primary Sects of Judaism in Jesus Day | |
|--|---|
| Pharisees | Sadducees |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Believed in the Tanakh (OT) • Created an Oral Law • Taught the concept of purgatory for the righteous • Controlled the Synagogues • Highly respected by Jewish Community | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Believed in the Torah (Pentateuch) • Rejected Oral Law • Did not believe in angels, demons, eternal punishment, resurrection of the dead or God’s interaction in lives • Controlled the Sanhedrin & the Temple • Aristocrats who were politically collaborative with Rome |
| <i>Continued after 70AD as Rabbi’s</i> | <i>Destroyed in 70AD with the Fall of the Temple in Jerusalem</i> |

22:24 The Sadducees referenced Jesus as “Rabbi” (“Teacher”). This is always an understatement of the power of Jesus; they did not realize that He was God incarnate. They did not realize that he was Lord.

- The Sadducees are referencing the Law of Levirate Marriage (The Latin word “levir” means “brother-in-law”); however, they did not mention the caveat that this command related to brothers living on the same property nor did they understand the “spirit of the law” (Matthew 5:17-48).
 - The purpose of the Law of Levirate Marriage was to keep the hereditary land passed within a family in provision for the mother as well (Deuteronomy 25:5).
 - If a husband dies without children, the wife would have a child with the brother of the dead husband in order to preserve the dead man’s name in Israel in order to keep the tribal allotments under that name.
- 22:25 Seven represents fullness and completeness which emphasizes the large number of brothers.
- 22:26-27 The woman in the Sadducee tale never did bear offspring because the Sadducees did not want to give any brother preference. All had equally failed in providing offspring.
- 22:28 The Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection, so they are questioning out of doubt.
- 22:29 The source of deception is a lack of Biblical knowledge and a disbelief in the power of God.
- The Greek term for “err” (Planasthe Πλανᾶσθε) is repeated seven times in Scripture to mean “mistaken” or “deceived.” (Mark 12:24, 27; 1 Corinthians 6:9; 15:33; Galatians 6:7; James 1:16).
 - There will be no marriage (no need for helpmates) in heaven (Rom 7:2-3), so marriage vows are accurate in saying “until death, do we part.”
 - The Sadducees only accepted the Pentateuch and did not believe that God had the power to give life to the dead.
- 22:30 As the angels are focused solely on the will of God in heaven (Mt 6:10), so too will resurrected man be focused solely on His will.
- When humans die, humans do not become angels; they are two separate forms of created beings. Man was made after God’s image (Genesis 1:26) and retain a humanness when they die (Luke 16:19-31). Man will judge the angels (1 Corinthians 6:3).
- 22:31-32 Sadducees only accepted the Torah/Pentateuch (the first five books of the Old Testament). Knowing this, Jesus quoted from the Torah showing that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were viewed by God as “living” even after they had died from this physical life. (Exodus 3:6).
- God spoke in the present tense (“*I am the God of...*”) instead of the past tense (“*I was the God of...*”).
 - Jesus references the Old Testament writer that the Sadducees revered, Moses (who had penned the Torah). God states to Moses that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are alive at that point in time.
- 22:33 Beyond the “signs” (semeion σημεῖον), the crowds were amazed at the insight of Jesus (Mt 7:28, Mk 1:22, 11:18, Lk 2:47, 4:32).
- Although there was an answer to the Sadducees, Scripture does not record any response of the Sadducees.

- Believers, who are spiritually alive, serve the Lord while fallen men who are dead in their sins serve false gods. God gives eternal life to those existing in spiritual death (Jn 5:24; 2 Tim 1:10).

Read Matthew 22:34-40 ... The Greatest and the Second Greatest Commandment

Shared Account of the Greatest Commandments: Mt 22:34-40; Mk 12:28-34

22:34 Now that the Sadducees had been silenced, the Pharisees regathered in an attempt to undermine Jesus.

22:35 One of these Pharisees, a scribe, was impressed with the answers of the Lord, so he sincerely asked a question, but the scribe did ask a question that he already had a point of view (Mk 12:32).

- At this time, the Jews revered 613 laws from the Torah (248 were positive commandments while 365 were negative). Jews believed that 613 laws reflected the requirement to be wholeheartedly committed to God (Deuteronomy 18:13).
- Judaism teaches that the body consists of 248 physical parts (limbs and organs) and 365 nerves and sinews. The calendar also changed from 360 days in the Babylonian calendar to 365 days in the Julian calendar. Jews believe that the 613 laws drive the individual to worship God with all of their being (248 limbs & organs) all of the time (365 days of the year).

22:36 Jesus needs to be more than a teacher to scholarly individuals – religion must be more than an intellectual exercise – Jesus needs to be recognized as their Lord.

22:37 Jesus answers this question straightforward and without hesitation. Jesus uses Scripture for the most forthright answers as He quotes the Jewish “shema” (Deuteronomy 6:4-5).

- Man should love the Lord God with everything that is in him (1 Cor 13:13). *“You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.” This is the first commandment. And the second, like it, is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”*

| All four references position “Soul” consistently in middle | | | |
|--|---------------|------|----------|
| Deuteronomy 6:5 | Heart | Soul | Strength |
| Mt 22:37 | Heart | Soul | Mind |
| Mk 12:33 | Understanding | Soul | Strength |
| 1 Thessalonians 5:23 | Spirit | Soul | Body |

- Three times in the New Testament (Mk 12:30; Lk 10:27), Jesus is recorded as adding “mind” to the Jewish “shemah” (the most important Jewish prayer) as if emphasizing the thoughts, considerations and reason of man being fully devoted to the Lord as well.
- Shema Israel (Sh'ma Yisrael שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל) means to "Hear, O Israel" which is a Jewish prayer utilized in the morning and evening Jewish prayer services. The Shema is often the first Scripture learned by the Jewish child; *“Hear, Oh Israel; the LORD is our God; the LORD is one”* (Deuteronomy 6:4).

| The 10 Commandments Covered by 2 Commandments About “Love” (Exodus 20:2-17 & Deuteronomy 5:6-21) | |
|---|------------------------------------|
| 1. You shall have no other gods before God. | <i>“Love the Lord your God</i> |
| 2. You shall not make or worship graven images. | <i>with all your heart, with</i> |
| 3. You shall not take God’s name in vain. | <i>all your soul, and with all</i> |

| | |
|---|--------------------------------|
| 4. Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy. | <i>your mind.</i> ” |
| 5. Honor your father and mother. | |
| 6. You shall not murder. | |
| 7. You shall not commit adultery. | “ <i>Love your neighbor as</i> |
| 8. You shall not steal. | <i>yourself.</i> ” |
| 9. You shall not bear false witness (lie). | |
| 10. You shall not covet. | |

22:38 The focus of man should be towards the Creator God. No humanitarian effort is worthwhile outside of the Lord’s will. Obedience precedes service.

22:39 In the same unselfish nature as the greatest commandment, the second asserts that mankind should care for each other as each man cares for himself (Jn 13:34; Gal 5:14). Jesus quoted Scripture for the second greatest command (Leviticus 19:18).

22:40 Jesus and the scholar agree that the commandments are of varying importance. Love is the enactment of obedience (2 John 1:6) which is more pleasing to God than a sacrifice (Heb 13:15; 1 Sam 15:22; Ps 69:30-31).

Read Matthew 22:41-46 ... Jesus Questions Pharisees on David’s Respect for the Messiah

Shared Account of the Messiah’s Identity: Mt 22:41-46; Mk 12:35-37; Lk 20:41-44

22:41 The Pharisees questioned the Lord to test Him and undermine his public popularity, but the Lord also questioned them to undermine their beliefs and reveal His identity as the Messiah.

- Contrary to man’s right or ability to effectively question the Lord, Jesus Himself can pose questions that lead His people to truths.
- The account of the intelligent scribe was just recorded (Mk 12:28-34), but the fallacy of their reasoning is now called to question.
- Man’s limited intelligence and subjective reasoning is no comparison to spiritual enlightenment (1 Cor 1:20).

22:42 The Pharisees correctly answered with common knowledge that the Messiah would come from the lineage of David (Mt 12:23, 21:9) according to the Davidic Covenant (2 Samuel 7:8-16).

- Jesus was born in Bethlehem (Luke 2:4) which was the city of David (Matthew 2:5-6; Micah 5:2) because of His lineage.
- The most common Messianic term for the Jews was “the Son of David” which is one reason that Jesus embraced the term “Son of Man” which did not carry the Jewish Messianic beliefs of a military Messiah.

22:43 Jesus attributes David’s writings to the Holy Spirit as David was given insight about the coming Messiah.

22:44 David (in the Spirit) called the Messiah his “Lord” (Ps 110:1; Heb 1:13) then how could he be David’s son? The elder was to be greater than his progeny, so David would not call a mere descendant his “Lord” (Greek: Kyrion Κύριον Hebrew: Adonai אֲדֹנָי).

22:45 A Jewish father would never hold a descendent in higher honor than himself as ancestry was exalted (Heb 7:4-10). Jesus stresses that the Messiah must be deity existing before David himself.

22:46 The flawless truth of Jesus' reasoning silenced the cynics, and they felt inadequate to ask any more questions as Jesus might also question them. Worldly wisdom falls far short when confronted with God's spiritual truths.

4 Matthew 23:1-22

Read Matthew 23:1-7 ... The Lifestyle Sins of the Scribes and the Pharisees

Shared Declaration of the Woes of Spiritual Hypocrites: Mt 23:1-36; Mk 12:38-40; Lk 11:37-54

23:1 Jesus now turned His attention from the religious leaders (who would not change according to His truth) to the crowd who were repentant and teachable.

- This rebuke would be a public denunciation of the Pharisees.

23:2 The scribes (lawyers) and the Pharisees (moral adherents) were the experts of the Old Testament Scripture and elaborated on the truths of God's word.

- These religious leaders sat in the leadership position of Moses and reflected the law of Moses instead of the grace of the Lord.
- The "chair of Moses" ("Moses Seat") was the seated position of authority while teaching Jewish Scripture. The Jewish Teacher sat while the students stood. The chair was place of authority; Catholics say that the pope speaks "ex cathedra" which is Latin for the phrase "from the chair." The individual presiding over a meeting is called "the chair" while the tenured university professor might also "chair" an area of studies.

23:3 The religious leaders were hypocrites, but the believers were told to obey their teaching without emulating the lifestyles. Do as they say, but not as they do.

- Spiritual leaders should strive to live out their message of humility, purity, and reliance on God.
- Believers should look past the person of the teacher to the message of truth.

23:4 These religious leaders expected the congregation to carry the burden of regulation, service and testimony to the world while the religious leaders remained in their comfortable settings not being sullied by day-to-day struggles of the world (Mt 11:30).

- The religious leaders did not understand their followers or their lives in that the religious leaders mandated challenging religious practices to laymen who wanted to please God.
- To the Jew, oral law was necessary to elaborate on God's requirements in Scripture. The means and methods of sacrificing animals or keeping the Sabbath day holy needed to be spelled out by religious scholars in order to establish actionable guidelines.

| The Jewish Method Utilized to Construct the Oral Law |
|---|
| 1. Assess the Hebrew words |
| 2. Identify apparent repetitions and determine if any of the 13 Hermeneutic Principles are applicable |
| 3. Identify ambiguities and compare all possible meanings |
| 4. Interpret the verse at all four levels of interpretation while verifying all levels are consistent |
| 5. Ensure consistency with the statements of the Torah |

The “13 Hermeneutical Rules” of Rabbi Ishmael (2nd century)

1. Inference is drawn from a less important premise to a more important premise, or vice versa.
2. From the similarity of words or phrases in separate texts it is inferred that the law expressed in the one must also be applied to the other.
3. A comprehensive principle, as contained in one or two biblical laws, is applicable to all related laws.
4. When a generalization is followed by specification, the specification applies instead of the generalization.
5. When a specification is followed by a generalization, the generalization then applies.
6. If a generalization is followed by a specification and then treated again by a general term, one must interpret according to what the specification implies.
7. When, however, the specification or generalization is necessary for the sake of clarity, rules 4 and 5 do not apply.
8. Whatever is first implied in a generalization and afterwards specified to provide new information concerning it, is stated not only for its own sake, but to teach something additional concerning the general proposition.
9. Whatever is first implied in a general law and afterwards specified to prove another similar provision, is specified in order to alleviate, and not to increase the severity of that provision.
10. Whatever is first implied in a general law and is afterwards specified to prove another provision which is not similar to the general law, is specified in order to alleviate the severity in some respects, but to increase it in other respects.
11. Whatever is first implied in a general law and is afterwards specified to determine a new matter, cannot be applied to the general proposition, unless the text expressly states that it can.
12. An ambiguous word or passage may be interpreted from its context or from a subsequent expression in the text.

23:5 Instead of generosity from the heart, the religious leaders were more concerned about their reputations (Numbers 15:39).

- The theatrical “spotlight” is not the light that should be attractive to the religious leader (Jn 1:1-9).
- A phylactery was a leather box worn on the left arm and head during certain Jewish services (Ex 13:9, 16); inside the phylactery were inscribed strips of parchment segmented into four selections of Scripture (Ex 13:1-10, 13:11-16; Dt. 6:4-9, 11:13-21). The idea of the text was that individuals would think about and speak about God’s law instead of this tangible box.
- The length of the tassels (“tzitzit” - Numbers 15:37-41) represented the righteousness of that individual. Jewish men would lengthen their tassels as they were self-righteous.
- God is not pleased with religious exhibitionists. The central focus of the “Sermon on the Mount” (Matthew 6) condemns performing religious exercises to be seen by others. God desires the heart (attitude; motive) instead of the “externals.”

| Six Wrongdoings of the Religious Leaders (Matthew 23:5-7) | | |
|---|--|---|
| 1. | Scriptural Knowledge (Phylactery) | <i>Phylacteries symbolized knowledge and adherence to law</i> |
| 2. | Self-righteousness (Tassels) | <i>Long robes inferred righteous living</i> |
| 3. | Places of Honor during Worldly Events | <i>Banquets represented gorging on the things of this world</i> |

| | | |
|----|----------------------------------|---|
| 4. | Noticeable Places during Worship | <i>Front Seats were utilized to be seen</i> |
| 5. | Popularity/Recognition | <i>Marketplaces stressed worldly commerce</i> |
| 6. | Honorary Titles/Degrees | <i>Being Respected and Admired as a Teacher</i> |

23:6 Believers should take positions of humility. While in the congregation of the local fellowship,

- Believers should be wary of the spotlight (e.g., deacon, elders, ushers, etc.).
- The activities are not wrong in themselves, but an individual's motivation can make it sin (e.g., personal ambition).
- The only location in the houses of worship (synagogues) that is warned against is the front seats. Individuals sit in front and center in order to be seen and recognized by fellow men as pious individuals.

23:7 Followers of Christ are not called to popularity. Fame and status can seduce a believer away from directing others to the Lord.

Read Matthew 23:8-12 ... Warning to Elevate God Above Rabbis, Fathers and Masters

23:8 Believers should not refer to fellow believers as teachers, but instead view them as brothers whom the Lord is using. Truths are taught by the Spirit (Jeremiah 31:34; Lk 12:12; Jn 14:26).

- The "spirit" of this teaching is to not place emphasis on titles. Individuals should go to college to learn instead of being credentialled. Titles result in pride.

23:9 Jesus was born of Mary, but His focus was on His heavenly Father (Lk 2:49; Ps 89:26; Dt 32:6).

- Believers should abandon everything of this world (including relationships) for a relationship with the Heavenly Father (Mt 10:37, 8:21-22; 12:46-50, 19:29; Lk 14:26).
- However, the Bible does emphasize the respect and honor due a parent even above the church (Mt 15:4).
- The focus is on a motive of pleasing God or the motive on receiving accolades from peers.

23:10 Although man commands fellow man, the Lord Jesus is the believer's ultimate Master and authority. Believers should not view fellow man in the first two relations (teacher nor father), but this third relationship of Master is one that a man should not view of himself.

- Some Pastors do not want to be called "Reverend" because the word is used only one time in Scripture to describe God Himself. "*He hath sent redemption unto his people; He hath commanded his covenant forever: Holy and 'Reverend' is his name*" (Psalm 111:9).

23:11 A great man is reflected by his service to the Lord (first) and then to fellow man (second). (Matthew 20:26)

- Jesus never condemned the heavenly aspiration of being first in the Kingdom of God; however, He instructed His followers that in order to fulfill that ambition, they needed to be a selfless servant.

23:12 “Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

| Matthew’s Blessings Contrasted to Woes (Matthew 23:13-29) | |
|--|---------------------------|
| Matthew 5:3-10 | Eight Blessing/Beatitudes |
| Matthew 23:13-29 | Eight Woes |
| Jesus begins each condemnation of the religious leaders with the term “hypocrite” and “blind” because they could not discern spiritual truths. | |

Read Matthew 23:13-15 ... The Impact of Scribes and Pharisees on Others

- 23:13 The religious leaders were obstructing people from wholly submitting to the Lord.
- Scribes and Pharisees conveyed that perfect obedience to the written and oral laws was required to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Instead of a relationship with the Lord, Scribes and Pharisees reduced religion to a list of “do’s and don’ts.”
 - Believers should be wary of religious leaders who do not encourage the congregation to read Scripture for themselves (Acts 17:11).
 - Believers are called to lives of radical submission to the Lord, and religious leaders should not dilute that calling to pacify congregants or build local church organizations.
 - Religious leaders should be careful not to become barriers instead of bridges.
- 23:14 There are degrees of judgment with greater punishment (Luke 12:47-48; Mt. 10:15, 11:20, 22, 24, 23:14, Lk. 10:12, 14, James 3:1, Rom 2:6, Gal. 6:7, Rev. 20:12).
- These religious leaders take from the impoverished instead of assisting the needy.
 - These religious leaders pontificate instead of truly talking to the Lord.
- 23:15 Witnessing is only fruitful if it brings someone to the Lord and His purpose.
- The growth of a local church fellowship does not reflect accurate teaching; many followers of mega-churches have followed their own lifestyles and worldly ambitions; they have false hope.

| Two Categories of Proselytes to Judaism | |
|--|--|
| “Proselytes of the Gates” | Those who were circumcised, baptized themselves with two witnesses and offered a sacrifice. They were allowed to enter beyond the Court of the gentiles. |
| “God Fearers” | Gentiles who had joined local synagogues for preaching and giving of alms. |

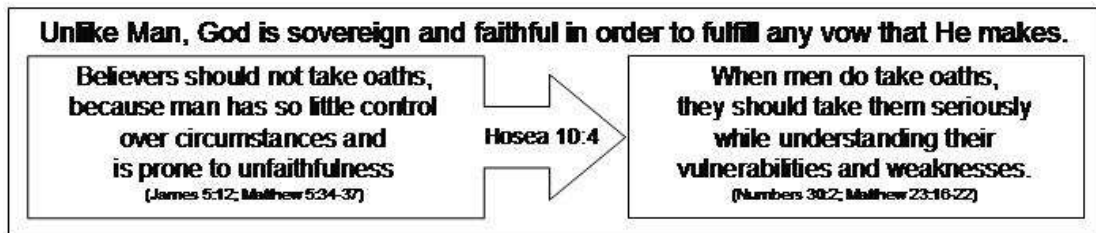
- Modern Jews believe that there are only two ways to become a Jew: 1. If an individual’s mother is Jewish 2. If an individual converts, but this is not encouraged.
 - Jews believe that Gentiles should remain whatever they are, and simply attempt to follow seven of the ten laws in the ten commandments
 - If a Gentile becomes a Jew, they do not become a “Jewish believer” – they become a “Jewish person.” Gentiles are allowed by Jews to change religions; however, a Jew may never change their religion.
- The Greek term for “pit” (geennan γέενναν) referred to the garbage dump south of Jerusalem.

- Gehenna originates from “Ge” - “valley and “Hinnom.” The valley of Hinnom was the location that children sacrifices were made to Molech (Deuteronomy 12:31; Leviticus 20:2-5; 2 Kings 16:3, 17:17, 21:6, 23:10; 2 Chronicles 28:3, 33:6; Jeremiah 7:31, 19:4-5, 32:35; Ezekiel 16:20-21, 20:26, 23:37; Psalm 106:35-38)
 - Scripture is abundantly clear that child sacrifices were wrong (Leviticus 18:21; Deuteronomy 18:10)
- As the town trash dump, Gehenna smoldered with fire day and night. (2 Thessalonians 1:9; Revelation 14:11)
- There is only one time (outside of the Words of Jesus) where the term “hell” (Gehenna) is used (James 3:6).

Read Matthew 23:16-22 ... Judge Value Correctly Between the Material & the Spiritual

23:16 Three times, the religious leaders are called blind (Mt 23:17, 19) because they lack spiritual insight and discernment.

- Instead of emphasizing honesty, integrity and truth, the religious leaders would argue over whether a vow was “bound” or not by the item that it was sworn upon. In modern times, someone might say “I swear on a stack of Bibles.” The need to swear reveals men’s lack of faith in another man’s word.



23:17 The religious leaders have mistakenly placed more value on the grandiose gold than on the holiness of the place of worship.

23:18-19 These religious leaders had put such great emphasis on the gifts and tributes that man submits instead of on the altar which the Lord established.

23:20 The altar represents all that is connected to the altar. There is no value outside of the value given by the Lord.

23:21 The value of the sanctuary is only in Him who dwells in that sanctuary and is worshipped there. The believer is the sanctuary of God (1 Cor 3:9-17, 6:19; 2 Cor 6:16; Eph 2:20-21; Heb 3:6; 1 Pet 2:5, 4:17).

23:22 The value of the throne of God comes from Him Who sits on the throne.

5 Matthew 23:23-39

Read Matthew 23:23-28 ... Scribes and Pharisees Focus on Outward Appearances

23:23 The religious leaders ignored the three most important factors of the law: 1. Justice 2. Mercy 3. Love

- There are more important laws relative to other laws.
- The religious teachers held followers accountable to giving to the organization (but not necessarily to God).
- This tithe was strictly kept to a minute degree of leaves and seed (Leviticus 27:30-33); however, the spirit of the law was disregarded.

- This is one of the few times in the New Testament that tithing is mentioned (2 Corinthians 8-9). The spirit of giving should be one of love and charity.
 - The prosperity gospel makes giving a selfish act as an individual is focused on acquiring more from this sinful world for themselves.
- 23:24 The Pharisees were conscientious of insignificant things while devouring large indulgences and offenses.
- The camel was one of the larger animals in that society exceeding seven feet in height. The metaphor is that Pharisees were tirelessly straining to eliminate a gnat while they swallow a camel.
 - This type of comparative writing is called an “oriental overstatement.” (Matthew 7:5; 19:24)
- 23:25-26 Religious leaders were more worried about reputation than righteousness.
- The state of the heart bleeds through to the entire man; man should change his heart and his life will follow. Faith begins on the inside and changes the individual; legalism begins on the outside and changes the façade.
 - Believers should pursue humility and restraint instead of lifestyles of greed and self-indulgence.
 - Individuals should not be self-deceived that they are righteous when they have no relationship with Jesus, their hearts are filled with evil thoughts, and their motives are selfish.
- 23:27-28 Tombs were whitewashed (painted white) during Passover, so people could avoid and would not stumble into them and accidentally become unclean.
- These religious leaders also appeared white (pure) on the outside, but there was death within. (Deuteronomy 27:2-3; Mark 16:4)
 - Prior to the feast days, the Jews of Jerusalem would paint the tombstones white, so that anyone visiting Jerusalem would become ceremonially unclean by unwittingly touching a tombstone.
 - A tremendous amount of attention was being applied to the outside being clean and orderly while the inside was spiritual decay and disaster.

Read Matthew 23:29-32 ... The Scribes and the Pharisees Admit Their Forefathers Erred

- 23:29 The graves of the prophets had been constructed into grand edifices of honor with sepulchers and monuments identifying and emphasizing the tragedy of their deaths.
- Many that are living in need, go without, while money and resources are spent honoring the dead.
 - Martyrs are persecuted in life and celebrated in death without any change to the ills of society that killed them.
 - God does not desire a monument for the dead, He wants an active relationship where His follower listens and obeys. God desires love instead of liturgy.
- 23:30 Believers should understand their tendency to sin in the same ways that their forefathers have.
- Instead of denying any similarity or weakness, it is better to identify exposures to sin by understanding predecessors and others who have held the position.
 - It is much easier to say how one “would have behaved” instead of actually behaving in a certain manner.

23:31 The religious leaders admitted their association with their wicked ancestors and the similarity of power with position.

23:32 The religious leaders would continue along the lines of their ancestors, and just as their forefathers had killed the prophets, so too would these religious leaders kill Jesus.

- Scripture references those who increase to the fullness of sin (Gen 15:16) compared with the fullness of Christ (Jn 1:16).
- A recurring metaphor is the cup of wrath that foretells suffering and pain (Is 51:22; Jeremiah 25:15, 49:12; Ezekiel 23:33; Matthew 26:39).

Read Matthew 23:33-36 ... Israel’s Persecution of God’s Prophets, Sages & Scribes

23:33 This is likened back to the seed of the viper in the Garden of Eden (Gen 3:15; John 8:44). As the serpent was the most cunning of creature, this “brood of vipers” represents the religious leaders misleading mankind (Gen 3:15).

- This is the last of three times that this expression (“brood of vipers”) is used in Matthew’s account (Mt 12:34; 23:33; Lk 3:7).
- The teachings of the religious leaders were deadly and empowered by the “old serpent” Satan. (Genesis 3:1; Revelation 12:9; 20:2)
- The Greek term for “pit” (geennan γέενναν) referred to the garbage dump south of Jerusalem. Gehenna originates from “Ge” - “valley and “Hinnom.” The valley of Hinnom was the location that children sacrifices were made to Molech. As the town trash dump, Gehenna smoldered with fire day and night. (2 Thessalonians 1:9; Revelation 14:11) There is only one time (outside of the Words of Jesus) where the term “hell” (Gehenna) is used (James 3:6).

23:34 Jesus speaks as God when He states that He is sending (Lk 11:49) three types of messengers: 1. Prophets 2. Sages / Wise Men 3. Scribes/Writers/Teachers/Experts of the Law

| Persecution by the Religious Leaders (Matthew 23:34) | | | |
|--|-----------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. | Prophets | Kill/Crucify | Mt 11:13, 21:11; Mk 6:4 |
| 2. | Sages/Wise Men | Disciplined in the Sanctuary | Mk 13:9; Acts 5:40; 2 Cor 11:25 |
| 3. | Scribes/Lawyers | Chased from Town to Town | Acts 14:5-6 |

23:35 Both references (Abel, Zechariah) related to the desecration of altars (pertaining to the sacrifice) – Joel 2:17. Zechariah was the son of Jehoiada (2 Chron 24:20-22), also named Berechiah (Zechariah 1:1, 7)

- The only item between the Temple and the altar was the laver which often represented the Word of God.

23:36 Jerusalem was sacked in 70AD (Ps 91:1-4) as Judaism rituals were lost with the destruction of the Temple.

- The entire city of Jerusalem was destroyed and the Roman Emperor Hadrian exiled the Jews to the great diaspora after the Bar Kokhba (132-135AD).

| Summary of the Old Testament (Matthew 23:37-39) | |
|---|---------|
| Matthew 23:37 | Purpose |
| Matthew 23:38 | Tragedy |
| Matthew 23:39 | Triumph |

Read Matthew 23:37-39 ... Jesus Grieves Jerusalem's Rejection of Salvation

23:37 Jesus cries out time and again to Jerusalem. The "wings" were the hem the of prayer shawl (tallit) or robe (Ruth 2:12; Mark 13:2).

- The corner is "Kanaph" in Hebrew meaning wings (Mal 4:2; Mt 23:27; Lk 13:34).
- As many as touched the hem of Jesus garment (Jesus' authority and righteousness) were healed (Mk 6:56).
- The power of choice is shown; "*you were not willing.*"

23:38 The city of Jerusalem would be utterly demolished and the house of Israel scattered around the world. The "house" represents the Temple, the city of Jerusalem and the nation of Israel.

- The Greek term for "desolate" (Erēmos Ἐρημός) is used multiple times to describe a wilderness without water. (Matthew 14:15; 23:38; Mark 6:35; Acts 1:20; 8:26).
 - Jeremiah had pronounced desolation (ləḥārəbāh :לְחָרְבָה) on the city of Jerusalem prior to the conquest of the Babylonians (Jeremiah 22:5)
 - Isaiah had used this very same Hebrew term (ləḥārəbāh :לְחָרְבָה) to describe the Temple (Isaiah 64:11) as did Ezekiel (Ezekiel 5:14; 38:8).

23:39 At the end of the Great Tribulation, Israel (as a nation) will petition for the Lord Jesus Christ to come back and save them, and He will. (Matthew 21:9; Psalm 118:26-27) This is called Jesus' second coming (Romans 11:25-26)

6 Matthew 24:1-22

- **The Olivet Discourse (Matthew 24-25; Mark 13; Luke 21) is known as the Little Apocalypse because of its apocalyptic language.**
- **This narrative on the Mount of Olives was Jesus' last public teaching prior to His arrest and crucifixion. The teaching probably occurred on Tuesday afternoon of the Passion week (prior to Passover).**
- **His topic was the end times, and His audience was Israel. His sermon concerns the future of the nation of Israel. The prophesied events included the destruction of the Temple in 70AD and His second coming at the conclusion of the Tribulation.**

Read Matthew 24:1-2 ... Jesus Foretells the Destruction of the Temple

24:1 As Jesus leaves the Temple, He is symbolically withdrawing the presence of God in the departure of the Spirit from the "House of God" just as the Shekinah Glory left centuries before (Ezekiel 10-11).

- The followers of Jesus should focus on spiritual truths instead of the worldly accomplishments of man. As an Idumean, Herod constructed the Temple to placate the conservative Jews.
 - It is estimated that over 80,000 laborers were employed on the construction of the Temple.
 - The Temple was positioned on an area of 36 acres which was 20% (1/5) the land mass of Jerusalem at that time.

- This (Herod's) Temple structure was in the midst of being built as the construction lasted from 20BC until 64AD.
 - Herod's Temple only stood complete for 6 years before it was demolished by the Romans.
 - The Temple was constructed of either polished limestone or a native stone (mezzah). This was a bright white structure that was trimmed in gold.
 - Josephus documented that the stones were 25 cubits x 8 cubits x 12 cubits. An average cubit was 18 inches, so the stones were 37½ feet x 12 feet x 18 feet.
- 24:2 When Rome (under Titus command) overthrew Jerusalem in 70AD, they accidentally set fire to the Temple which melted the gold, so that it flowed between the stones. The Romans deconstructed the Temple (stone by stone) to find any melted gold thus fulfilling this prophecy by Jesus (Lk 19:44).
- The Jewish nation had begun putting their faith in the Temple instead of God.

Read Matthew 24:3 ... The Disciple Ask About the Signs of the End of the Age

| "The Olivet Discourse" | | |
|--|-------------|-------------|
| Matthew 24, 25 | Mark 13, 14 | Luke 21, 22 |
| John does not have the Olivet Discourse because the book of John was written to the Gentiles | | |

Shared Account of the Olivet Discourse: Mt 24, 25; Mk 13, 14; Lk 21, 22

24:3 Jesus' closest disciples (Peter, James, John and Andrew – Mark 13:3) asked Jesus privately to talk about the culmination (consummation) of the age. Just as with modern end time (eschatological) discussions, the focus of the attention was on the timing as they asked "when will it occur?".

- In the days prior to Jesus' death, he talked more about His coming again than His crucifixion (Mt 24-25; Mk 11-13; Lk 21).
- The disciples would have been able to look down onto the Temple from the Mount of Olives on the other side of the Kidron Valley. When God's presence departed from the Temple (six centuries before), He also came to the Mount of Olives (Matthew 11:23).
 - This would cause questions among the disciples who understood Zechariah's prophecy of the end times where the city of Jerusalem will be destroyed (Zechariah 14:1-2) before the Lord returns to the Mount of Olives (Zechariah 14:3-4) to destroy the enemies of Israel (Zechariah 14:12-15) as He restores Jerusalem (Zechariah 14:5-11) where the world will bring annual tribute through the millennial kingdom (Zechariah 14:16-21).
- The (inner circle) disciples ask three questions:
 - When will these things happen?
 - Matthew only addresses the 2nd & 3rd questions; however, Luke does capture the response (Luke 21:12-38)
 - What is the sign of your coming?
 - What is the sign of the end of the age?

The "End"

The disciples actually did not ask when the end would be, but instead they asked when the beginning of the end would be. The Greek term "Sunteleia" is used by the disciples to request the events before the end.

Jesus responded with certain events that would not be the ultimate end which is stated a "Telos" (Mt 24:6, 13, 14), but that the Abomination of Desolation would be the consummate end to the current state.

Read Matthew 24:4-14 ... The First 3½ Years of the Tribulation

24:4 The immediate answer of Jesus was that His followers should not be misled. God's people should be careful not to be deceived by false teachers, false messiahs and false timeframes.

- After cautioning against being deceived, Jesus discusses the seven years of Tribulation (Matthew 24:4-28).

24:5 In speaking about the timing, Jesus warns the disciples not to be misled by those who speculate on when the end times will occur.

24:6 God's people should never be distracted by the worldly events (e.g., media, news) because God is working out His plan in His perfect timing.

24:7 The demise at the end of time is told in the exact sequence of the first four seals (Revelation 6)

24:8 The intensity and frequency of pain grows and accelerates as the birth nears (Rom 8:22; Jeremiah 30:4-7; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-3; Rev 12:1-2) These are the signs of the last days which the earth has experienced since the giving of the Spirit (Acts 2).

24:9 As Bible believers are persecuted by religious (Sanhedrin) and political leaders (Col 1:23), the one being persecuted should be a testimony to the tormenters and oppressors (Esther 4:14). The world hates Jesus (therefore, Believers) with ferocious animosity (Jn 15:18-19, 17:14; 1 Jn 3:13).

24:10 When faith is tested, those who enjoy various "church" activities will show their true colors by being attacking fellow members of the Body of Christ.

The Demise of the Church (Matthew 24:10)

| | | |
|----|----------|---------------------------------|
| 1. | Offense | Mt 11:6, 13:57, 15:12-13 |
| 2. | Betrayal | Mk 13:12-13; Lk 21:16; Jn 6:64 |
| 3. | Hatred | Mt 5:44; Titus 3:3; 1 Jn 2:9-11 |

24:11 The Greek is literally translated to "rise up for the purpose to deceive."

24:12 Lawlessness numbs the individual to the spiritual discernment of need and charity. As selfish pursuits intensify love loses its passion.

24:13 "*The one who endures to the end will be delivered.*" God calls on His people to have a faithful, enduring walk with Him instead of erratic, periodic worship. This is a perseverance of faith.

The "Phase/Tense" of Salvation (An Initial Decision Followed by a Lifestyle of Faith)

| | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------|
| Past Tense | <i>“Have been saved”</i> | Romans 8:24 |
| Current Tense | <i>“Are saved”</i> | Ephesians 2:5 |
| A Process | <i>“Are being saved”</i> | 1 Corinthians 15:2 |
| Future Tense | <i>“Will be saved”</i> | Romans 10:9 |
| Believers begin with a commitment decision that results in a lifestyle relationship; beyond decision to discipleship. | | |

24:14 Israel will become a mighty witness for the Lord (Mark 16:20 → Rev 7:4-10).

- Beyond the Jewish nation, salvation is made available to every Gentile nation (Is 45:22; Mt 28:19; Acts 1:8; Rom 10:18; Rev 14:6-7).
- Isaiah spoke often of the Messiah’s ministry to the Gentiles (Isaiah 42:6; 49:6; 51:4; 52:10; 60:1-3).
- The Greek word for “whole world” is “oikoumene” which could be “locally” applied as “the world of the Roman empire” (Rom 16:26).

Read Matthew 24:15-22 ... The Great Tribulation

- **The second half of the Tribulation (called the Great Tribulation) is described (Revelation 13:1-18) God promises salvation to anyone who rejects the Beast as Jesus will come to establish His earthly kingdom (Revelation 20:4-6).**
- **The Great Tribulation is also called the “Time of Jacob’s Trouble” (Jeremiah 30:7) which begins in the middle of the Tribulation when the Abomination of Desolation is established in the Holy of Holies by the Antichrist.**

24:15 “Let the Reader understand” harkens back to the prophetic work of Daniel (Daniel 9:22). The “abomination” (idolatry) of desolation (Daniel 9:23-27; Zechariah 14:4-5; Hosea 6; Deuteronomy 7:25) concerns the defilement of the Holy of Holies by placing an idol there.

- An “abomination” can reference any sacred or holy item of God that is polluted or transgressed by evil.

| The “Abomination of Desolation” | | |
|--|---|---|
| The Term Originates with Daniel | Daniel 9:27 | Roman Army in 70AD |
| | Daniel 11:31 | Antiochus IV Epiphanes |
| | Daniel 12:11 | The Antichrist |
| The Destruction of Jerusalem | Luke 21:20 | Surrounded by “Armies” |
| | Mark 13:14 | “He” is “Neuter” (should be “It” instead of “He”) |
| | Matthew 24:15 | “Holy Place” |
| | The Flight of believers occurred in 70AD when they fled to Pella in Perea | |

24:16 The focus is on the Israelites (in Judea).

- The historian, Eusebius, documented that as the army of Titus approached Jerusalem, the Christian community fled away from Jerusalem to Pella (Tabaquat Fahil) in Perea (the region of the Decapolis in the Transjordan) while the Jews remained in the city.
- Epiphanius of Salamais (a Bishop in Cyprus around 400AD) also documented that the Christian church had been forewarned and fled to Pella.
- Jesus had traveled through Perea (Matthew 19:1; Mark 10:1) and may have visited Pella (Mark 7:31) during His ministry.

- 24:17 The disaster is so urgent and pressing that man cannot even survive running into his own house to gather his possessions.
- 24:18 This man is already living out the curse of laboring in the fields for harvests (Gen 3:17-19). The field represents the opportunity for spiritual harvests while one's own clothes (covering) represents his personal "good works."
- 24:19 This woman is already living out the curse of a laborious pregnancy and at the sign must flee (Gen 3:16).

| Obstacles to Tribulation Flight | |
|--|--|
| Matthew 24:17 | Leisure |
| Matthew 24:18 | Labor |
| Matthew 24:19 | Attachments (ailments; responsibilities) |
| Matthew 24:20 | Nature and Spiritual |

- 24:20 For Israel, the middle of winter has lows of 40° and highs of 50° (Fahrenheit) with rainy season (SoS 2:11) being from November through March (five-six inches of rain in January).
- While Jerusalem is blanketed with snow every few years, Mt Hermon (Israel's highest peak) is the only place in Israel which receives snow every year.
 - This persecution will erupt on a single day (e.g., the Sabbath); escape will require much work and effort which is not allowed on the Sabbath.
- 24:21 The Great Tribulation will be worse than the Holocaust. The first 3½ years are called the tribulation while the last 3½ years are called the great tribulation (Jeremiah 30:7). The "BowI" judgments occur during this time (Revelation 16).
- 24:22 Satan will attempt to destroy the remnant (Rev 7:4-10) because it has been prophesied that these Israelites will call for Jesus' return. Even the length of time in the day obeys the sovereign Lord (Joshua 10:12-13) as He cares for His people who He predestined (Eph 1:4; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Tim 1:9; Rev 17:14).

7 Matthew 24:23-51

Read Matthew 24:23-28 ... False Messiahs Contrasted to Jesus Second Coming

- 24:23-24 There is much spiritual warring in this world (Eph 6:12), but the focus should not be on false miracles, but on Jesus (2 Thessalonians 2:9-10).
- Believers should be careful of false teachers (Jude) who focus on anything other than Jesus Christ.
 - Miraculous works are not automatically a sign of God's favor.
 - While the church is concerned with "false teachers," the people of Israel were concerned with "false prophets." The false Messiah, Bar-Kokhba (Ben-Kosevah), would lead to the destruction of Jerusalem and the great diaspora of the Jewish people under the Roman Emperor Hadrian (135AD).
- 24:25 Jesus emphasizes "*Take note: I have told you in advance.*" Man is without excuse as the Lord has been revealed as the only means of salvation, and He is coming again.
- 24:26 Believers should deny anyone who claims that the Lord has returned in any setting however extreme. The wilderness represents a place of spiritual depravity (without the living water and life) while the inner rooms represent the place of the most holy (Holy of Holies).

24:27 Jesus will come with speed as a strike of light, and His coming will be universal (Lam 4:19; 2 Sam 1:23; Isaiah 40:31; Jeremiah 4:13).

- The term “Son of Man” references the humanity of the Messiah as He became part of mankind. The divine transportation of clouds was also used by the “Son of Man” (Daniel 7:13); clouds also describe Jesus’ ascension and coming again. (Acts 1:9-11). The last use of the term “Son of Man” in the New Testament describes His second coming (Rev 14:14).

24:28 As man is likened to an unclean bird attracted to those who are dead and dying, so two will the fallen nations of the world search out persecuted Israel.

Read Matthew 24:29-31 ... The Second Coming of the Lord Jesus

24:29 If this first part has referenced the 3½ years of tribulation, the next several verses can be viewed as pointing to the last 3½ years of the great tribulation (Dt 4:30; Ps 2:1-4; Zechariah 14:6; Is 50:3).

- The earth will be in spiritual darkness as the Lord nor His followers share His enlightenment.
- This event aligns to the sixth seal (Isaiah 50:3; Ezekiel 2; Revelation 8:12). The stars represent His messengers/servants which are both heavenly and earthly (Daniel 12:3; Revelation 1:20). These servants of the Lord will fall in persecution.
- Jesus is referencing the judgment of Persia on Babylon (Isaiah 13:10).

24:30 Jesus references Himself in His most common way, as the Son of Man, focusing on His humanity even as He comes in majesty and glory (Mt 24:30, 26:64; 1 Thessalonians 4:16). Jesus will come again in the clouds (Daniel 7:13; Zechariah 12:10-12; Acts 1:9-11; Rev 1:7)

24:31 Jesus encourages His people to live watchful lives of His coming (Mt 24:42; Lk 21:34-36; 1 Thessalonians 5:6; 2 Tim 4:5; 1 Pet 4:7).

- The Lord’s angels will gather the elect from the four (creation) corners of creation through all of earth and space (Jeremiah 49:36). These angels are harvest the Believers and then become the “grim” reapers (Matthew 13:39; Revelation 14:15).

Read Matthew 24:32-35 ... The Parable of the Fig Tree

- **The Lesson from the Parable of the Fig Tree is to “be alert.”**

24:32 The fig tree represents Israel that will show signs of (spiritual) life in turning to Jesus Christ. This is a parable of “watchfulness.”

- Biblical prophecy is never given in Scripture to satisfy curiosity about the future. The Old Testament asserts that seeking the spirit world to determine the future (e.g., horoscopes, palm reading, astrology, etc.) is an abomination (Deuteronomy 18:10-14; Leviticus 19:31).
- Biblical prophecy is a caution that people need to be made right with God; it’s purpose is a focus on God, a reliance on God, and a faithful lifestyle of obedience to God.

24:33 Similar to the end of time, Jesus stands at the door ready to fellowship with every Believer (Rev 3:20).

24:34 Within forty years of Jesus' prophecy, Jerusalem would be destroyed (70AD).
Once Israel, as a nation, calls on Jesus, His eminent return will not be delayed even one generation.

24:35 *"Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away."*

Read Matthew 24:36-43 ... Be Alert - Only God the Father Knows the Day & Hour

24:36 With Jesus' humanity, at this point (prior to His resurrection) even He did not know the time that His prophecy would be fulfilled (Mt 24:39; Lk 2:52). Jesus understood the reasons and events, but He was not focused on the timing of it being fulfilled; it was certain to be fulfilled in God the Father's good time (Acts 1:6-7).

| Three Groupings of Mankind | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Christians | Raptured before the Tribulation | 1 Cor 15:51-52; 1 Thes. 4:16-17 |
| Jews | Witness Jesus Save Israel | Rev 19:11; Mt 24:29-30 |
| Gentiles | Judgment | Rev 20:12-15 |

24:42 Believers should watch for God's supernatural intervention in their lives at all times and eagerly await His second coming (Rev 22:20).

24:43 Jesus has given His authority (Jn 14:13) to His slaves to fulfill his work (His calling). Scripture often refers to believers who are casual in their beliefs as being spiritually asleep; believers should not be nonchalant about those going to eternal punishment (1 Thes 5:6; Jonah 1:5-6).

Read Matthew 24:44-51 ... The Masters Faithful and Wicked Slaves

Shared Account of Masters Return to His Servant: Mt 24:45-51; Lk 12:42-46

24:44 *"Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect."*

24:45 Every believer should be sharing spiritual food (Jesus is the bread of life - Jn 6:35, 48) to the (spiritually) starving of the world. Endurance and perseverance originate with faithfulness and wisdom.

24:46 Believers are called to be diligent until the end (Philippians 3:14). There will also be degrees of reward for believers (Mt 16:27; 25:14-30; 2 Cor 5:10; Lk 19:11-27).

24:47 Believers are to be a royal priesthood in service to the Lord (1 Cor 6:3; 1 Pet 2:9; Mt 25:21)

24:48 The Jews did not receive the Messiah's first coming; many people who attend church and claim Him as Savior have never submitted to Him as Lord of their lives. (2 Peter 3:4)

24:49 Believers should use the resources from God for ministry instead of selfish gain (Proverbs 23:6-7).

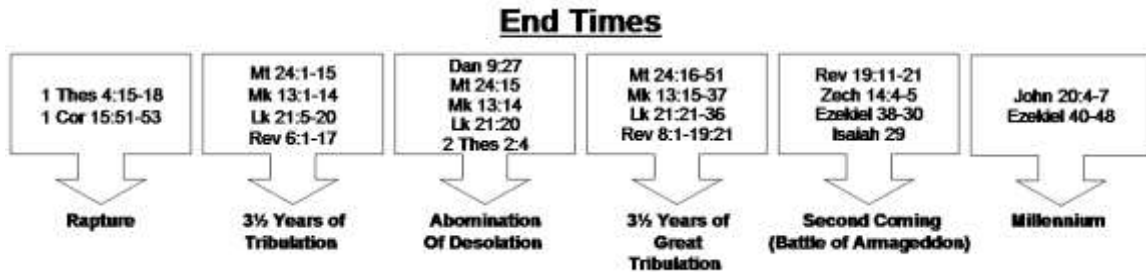
24:50 Although believers wait expectantly for Him, the exact timing will be a surprise to everyone.

24:51 These people who claim to understand the gospel and yet live in conflict with the Lord's guidance (pursuing their own sinful lifestyles) will be cut off from God's people (Mt 22:13).

- The concept of cutting an individual as judgment was fairly common (2 Samuel 12:31; Hebrews 11:37).
- The parallel passage substitutes the word "unbelievers" for "hypocrites" (Luke 12:46).

- The act of “gnashing of teeth” came from the Greek phrase “to grind one’s teeth together.” This phrase is most commonly repeated in Matthew six times.
 - Beasts can gnash their teeth before they attack their prey

| The Gnashing of Teeth | |
|-----------------------|---|
| In Pain & Suffering | Matthew 8:12; 13:41-42; 22:11-13; 25:14-30 |
| In Anger | Acts 7:54; Psalms 35:16; 37:12; 112:10; Lamentations 2:16 |



8 Matthew 25:1-30

- **Matthew 24 contains parables of the Lord Jesus coming again while Matthew 25 deals with the manner in which judgment will occur.**

Read Matthew 25:1-13 ... The Parable of the Ten Virgins

- **The Lesson from the Parable of the Ten Virgins is to “be spiritually prepared” when the Groom comes. (Luke 12:35-36)**

25:1 The virgin represents someone of purity who has lived with a certain degree of righteousness.

- The number “ten” represents order and organization.
- The lamp could symbolize the word of God and the truths therein which can only be illumined by the Spirit (Ps 119:105).
- Jesus frequently spoke about the Kingdom of Heaven

| Customs of First Century Jewish Weddings |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jewish children were available for marriage any time after the boys bar-mitzvah (13 years old) and the girl’s bat-mitzvah (12 years old). Sometimes these were arranged marriages while they were still children, but they would need to wait to come of age. • The individuals would become engaged for at least a year. In order to break an engagement, a divorce was required. If either the bride or groom died during that time, the survivor was called a “widow.” • During this time, the groom would often construct a residence for he and his bride. This residence would frequently be a built-on addition to his Father’s house. The Father would then inspect the completed construction of the son prior to releasing the son to go and retrieve his bride. • After a year, the groom would lead a progression (parade) to retrieve the bride from her house and take her to his house for an open seven-day party. Sometimes, grooms would attempt to surprise their brides by coming at odd hours – even after midnight. |

25:2 Half of these people (e.g., church members) had not begun appropriately (counting the costs – Lk 14:27-29; being filled with the Spirit – Zechariah 4:12). This is tantamount to joining a local church fellowship without ever being introduced to Christ.

25:3-4 Oil often represents the Holy Spirit (1 Sam 16:13), and the flame of His work represents His enlightening and purifying effect on Believers (Acts 2:3).



25:5 Jesus represented Himself as the departed groom (Mt 9:15; Mk 2:19; Lk 5:34).

After the ascension of Christ (Acts 1:11) and into the early church (2 Thessalonians 2:2), there has been an interval of several millennia for the Lord Jesus to return. His people should be active while waiting for Him, but instead, many have become (spiritually) slovenly and asleep instead of actively pursuing His service.

25:6 In the darkest hour (middle of the night) when He is not expected, Jesus will come for His people with a shout (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17). It was the Jewish custom that the Groom could not come for his fiancé (the Bride) to have the wedding until the house was built. Then the Groom would surprise the Bride when he came unexpectedly (often in the middle of the night).

25:7 All of those virtuous people who had claimed to be awaiting the Lord's return prepared by getting their lives in order by trimming what was corrupted (spent, darkened wick) and had been burned away (1 Cor 3:9-15).

25:8-9 The one's without the Spirit (oil) recognize those with the Spirit and request to share in their Spirit, but the believers filled with Spirit cannot provide the Spirit (oil) to others as that comes from God alone.

- Believers are called to focus on the Lord instead of this world; the worthy humanitarian effect is second after loving the Lord.
- Any person desiring to be with the Lord cannot relinquish the calling of the Lord to help others.

25:10 Not everyone who appears to be a servant of the Lord and awaiting His return is sincere (Mt 7:21-23). This unfit virgin is similar to the tare (Mt 13:24-30), the rejected fish (Mt 13:47-50), the poorly clothed wedding guest (Mt 22:11-14), the person with the talents who did not invest them in this world (Mt 25:29-30).

25:11-12 The Bible does not say that the virgins had successfully filled their lamps with oil, but they did recognize that Jesus was the door and the way too late (Jn 10:7). But the virgins had not found the door and were denied as He states "*I have not known you*" (Matthew 7:21-23; Romans 8:9).

25:13 Believers should be filled with the Spirit and live expectantly of Jesus' return (1 Thessalonians 5:4-6; 1 Cor 15:51-53).

- Many pretend and profess the Lord, but are not ready for His calling.

"Late, Late, so Late" by Alfred Lord Tennyson

Late, late, so late! and dark the night and chill!
 Late, late, so late! but we can enter still.
 Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now.

No light had we: for that we do repent;
 And learning this, the bridegroom will relent.
 Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now.

No light: so late! and dark and chill the night!
 O, let us in, that we may find the light!
 Too late, too late: ye cannot enter now.

Have we not heard the bridegroom is so sweet?
 O, let us in, tho' late, to kiss his feet!
 No, no, too late! ye cannot enter now."

| The Return of Jesus | |
|---|------------------------------|
| Scripture Emphasizes | Believers Response |
| The Exact Time is Uncertain, But the Event is Certain | Be Prayerful |
| The General Time Is Given, But Not the Specific Time | Be Ready at All Times |
| The Event Will Occur Suddenly & Unexpectedly | Be Faithful to God's Calling |

Read Matthew 25:14-30 ... The Parable of the Talents

- **The Lesson from the Parable of the Talents is to “be involved in ministry,” so that the returning Master will find His servants being about His business.**
- 25:14 Israel, as well as the church, was to be under submission to the Lord and His will; however, the truths of His word were frequently not put into practice and invested in the world.
- The Lord is with the Father in heaven (Rom 8:34; Jn 1:18) symbolized by the master's journey.
- 25:15 A talent was a large sum of money (6000 denarii) which translates into one year's salary; symbolically, the talents (1 Cor 12:8) represent the gift from God which is the Word of God (Mk 4:24; Isaiah 55:11).
- 25:16 The man given the greatest value invested the sum immediately and didn't waste any time in acquiring a return.
- 25:17 The man who had a number also matched what he had received; 100% return on his investment.

| Ruinous Practices of the Bad Servant (Matthew 25:18) | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Went Off | Looked for a place to hide | Pursue Good |
| 2. Dug a Hole in the Ground | Focused on this world | Work for the Lord |
| 3. Hid His Master's Money | Buried the value to hide the gift | Don't Hide His Gifts |

25:19 The Lord's servants have waited for His return for two millennia.
 25:20 The Lord's servants can offer their service for His glory.

- 25:21 *“Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord”* (Mt 24:47).
- 25:22-23 The servant who had been given less and had achieved a smaller return was blessed in the same way as the other man because both had received 100% return. Neither received more than what had originally been given them. The Lord’s joy results in the joy of His people (1 Thessalonians 2:19-20).
- 25:24-25 Everything belongs to the Lord (Ex 9:29; Ps 24:1, 89:11; 1 Cor 10:26). The evil servant blamed the lack of testimony on fear.
- 25:26 God expects His followers to scatter the seed of the gospel (1 Pet 1:23; Lk 8:11; Mt 13:19) which will result in harvests of new believers.
- 25:27 Although new believers may not be brought to the Lord, even sharing with other believers creates “interest.” Even planting the Word of God with other believers creates “interest.”
- 25:28 Those who have no interest in the Word of God will lose what little understanding that they have.
- 25:29 When the life of the believer is Spirit controlled, increasingly more of the life is submitted to His control as the truths of His Word become increasingly clear. (Matthew 13:12)
- 25:30 Anything not executed for the Lord is achieved in vain; it is not good-for-anything.
- The term “weeping and gnashing of teeth” is repeated seven (complete) times in Scripture (Matthew 8:12, 13:42, 50, 22:13, 24:51, Luke 13:28).
 - Teeth represent strength, cruelty and violence (Psalm 3:7; Proverbs 30:14).

9 Matthew 25:31-46

Salvation is not from “works,” but instead, it is our profession of faith in Christ which is captured in the Lamb’s Book of Life which impacts lifestyle and decisions; the manner in which believers live, confirms the decision that was made for Christ (Revelation 20:11-15).

Read Matthew 25:31-46 ... The Sheep and the Goats

- **Jesus may be amplifying an earlier teaching (Matthew 16:27)**
- **The Sheep/Goat Judgment separates the saved from the unsaved at the end of the Tribulation before millennial reign of the Lord Jesus.**
 - **This is not the “Great White Throne” judgment of the unsaved (Revelation 20:11-15) nor is it the “Bema Seat” judgment of God’s people (Romans 14:10; 2 Corinthians 5:9).**
 - **This is an earthly judgment depending on whether the nation supported or rejected the nation of Israel during their greatest time of need in the Tribulation.**

25:31 Not “if” but “when” Jesus comes; there is certainty of His coming. As the Son of Man, Jesus identifies with His humanity in combination with His divinity (Dan 7:13-14; Zechariah 14:9; Acts 1:11).

- The angels surround God on His throne (Matthew 8:38; 2 Thessalonians 1:7; Daniel 7:10). The angels perform God’s work of gathering and separating (Matthew 13:24-30).

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| Magistrate over Judgment |
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| God the Father | Romans 14:2; 1 Peter 1:17 |
| The Lord Jesus Christ | John 5:22, 27; Matthew 16:27; Acts 10:42; 2 Corinthians 5:10; 2 Timothy 4:1 |
| God the Father Through God the Son | Acts 17:31; Romans 2:16 |

25:32 The nations are gathered to publicly be separated. The nations are judged before the millennium (Isaiah 60:12, Jeremiah 30:11, Ezekiel 34:16-17; Joel 3:1-2); some regard this judgment as being in relation to how the nations treated the Israelites during the tribulation.

- Judgment will depend on the manner His people have been treated – His prophets and ministers throughout history (Mt 10:11-15) as well as the 144,000 Israelites during the tribulation.
- While the sheep and goats graze together during the day, they are separated at night for sleep.

25:33 The right hand represents one of strength while the left reflects weakness and shortcoming. In the practice of astrology, the goat symbolizes male fertility, and is known as representing the astrological sign of Capricorn. Capricorn is a combination of both a goat and a fish which refers to the dual tendencies of life towards the abyss (or water), and " the heavens or mountains."

| Nature Offers Truths About God Such As The Contrasts between Sheep and Goats | |
|---|---|
| Natural Fact | Spiritual Application |
| Goats naturally have horns while many breeds of sheep are naturally hornless. Goat horns are narrower, upright, and less curved than sheep horns. Sheep tend to curl their horns in loops on the sides of their heads. | In the Bible, horns represent authority/power. All goats (sinners) would carry their own authority (self-made) while most sheep have no power. Crooked is never a good attribute in the Bible, but sheep horns are wrapped around their ears (power in hearing) versus out into the world. |
| Most goats have hair coats that do not require shearing or combing. Most sheep grow wool and need to be sheared annually. While goats (being good dairy animals) produce four times as much milk as sheep, sheep produce wool which keeps people warm. | Considering the annual visit by the high priest to the holy of holies and the annual shearing of most sheep to prune/ cleanse the sheep, goats are self- possessed and are never trimmed or manicured. |
| Goats are natural browsers, preferring to eat leaves, twigs, vines, and shrubs. They are very agile and will stand on their hind legs to eat vegetation. Sheep are grazers, preferring to eat short, tender grass and clover. They like weeds and can graze very close to the soil surface. | Sheep almost always have their heads bowed, in a humble posture. Goats like to keep their heads upright when they eat, so that the other goats can't attack them from behind. Sheep are humble, goats are not. |
| A goat's tail will go up (unless the goat is frightened, sick, or in distress). Sheep tails hang down and are often docked (cut off) for health and sanitary reasons. | From head to tail, first-to-last, prominent-to-insignificant, goats are prideful. Wheat and tares cannot be differentiated until they are fully grown. The difference then is that the wheat, heavy with good fruit, bows its head as if in humility. The tare, a lightweight, keeps its head raised stiff and erect. The differentiating factor between the wheat and tares is humility. |
| Goats have more of an odor than sheep. Male goats have glands beneath their tail and are especially odorous during mating season. Sheep have "scent" glands between the hooves. | This disagreeable smell might represent boasting and self-glamorization with the key driver of the unredeemed being sexually while the sheep is influenced by interaction with the world (dust). |
| Goats have horizontal slit-shaped pupils, an adaptation which increases peripheral depth perception. Because goats' irises are usually pale, the pupils are much more visible than in animals with horizontal pupils but very dark irises, such as sheep. | It is easily noticeable that the unredeemed are intent on the world (horizontal focus) looking all around at the periphery. |
| Goats are curious/inquisitive and more independent while sheep have a strong "flock mentality." A sheep will become very agitated if it is separated from the rest of the flock, and it is this flocking behavior that provides their best defense against predators. Sheep are fearful and loyal while goats are open and curious. Sheep know the voice of their master, but if a stranger comes around, they run away. Goats on the other hand are very | This is a world of tolerance with the thought "don't knock it until you try it" but God wants His people to be naïve in the terms of sin and wise in spirituality (1 Cor 14:20) |

| | |
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| welcoming of strangers. | |
| Goats are innovative in escaping their confines by jumping over fences or finding clever ways to open the gates that hold them in. On the other hand, sheep tend to stay put, so they do not appear as smart as goats, but sheep are smart enough to cluster together when danger (e.g., dogs, wolves) are around. This makes them easy to herd. Another attribute that makes sheep appear "dumb" is that they blindly follow each other while goats also follow each other, but they are independent minded, and little sub groups keep splitting off and rejoining the main group. | Goats meander following their own wills (not adhering to regulations) instead of the will of the master. |
| Goats are natural browsers, preferring to eat leaves, twigs, vines, and shrubs. They are very agile and will stand on their hind legs to eat vegetation. Sheep are grazers, preferring to eat short, tender grass and clover. They like weeds and can graze very close to the soil surface. | Sheep almost always have their heads bowed, in a humble posture. Goats like to keep their heads upright when they eat, so that the other goats can't attack them from behind. Sheep are humble, goats are not. |
| Sheep and goats both have the same gestation period, of 145-155 days (about 5 months), but sheep give birth in the dead of winter, three months before goats start giving birth in spring. | God's people always seem to thrive in harsh times while unredeemed enjoy the world's comforts and life conditions. |
| Sheep (Ovis Aries) have 54 chromosomes, while goats (Capra Hircus) have 60; they are two distinct species and genus. Fertile sheep-goat hybrids are rare. Hybrids made in the laboratory are called chimeras. | It is rare indeed that a Christian and non-Christian can be "equally yoked" in any capacity with any success. |
| Both genders of goat have horns, but male goats have beards. The "goatee" relates to the goat. | Beard represents outer wisdom, and unbelievers are the "wise" of this world. |
| Sheep have face or tear glands beneath the eyes. | This world is not the believer's home. John 11:35 |

25:34 Jesus will bid the obedient and gracious nations to come. As this is the millennial rule on earth, the point is emphasized that the kingdom has been prepared since (not before) the creation of the world.

- This is the divine shepherd (Matthew 25:32) as well as the King over all.
 - God the Father is called King (Deuteronomy 10:17; 1 Timothy 6:15)
 - Jesus is called the "King of Kings." (Revelation 17:14; 19:16)
- God's people were chosen before the creation of the world (Ephesians 1:4, 11).

| "Before the Foundation of the World" (pro katabolēs kosmou - πρὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου) | |
|---|---|
| John 17:24 | The Father Loved the Son |
| Ephesians 1:4 | God's People were Chosen in Him |
| 1 Peter 1:20 | Jesus Christ was Ordained to be the Sacrifice |

25:35-36 Six needs of God's people are identified: hungry, thirsty, stranger, naked, sick, and imprisoned.

- Every believer should take account as to the manner that they are personally assisting people (especially God's people) in each of these categories.
- Blessings come to those who know the word of the Lord and act on it.
- The manner that a person treats another is evidence of His being filled with the Spirit (1 Jn 2:9-11).
- Believers were brought to salvation to do good works in His name (Eph 2:8-10); actions testify of a living faith (James 2:21-26).

25:37-39 Both the good and the bad were acting out of natural inclinations not suspecting that their generosity and selfishness were towards the Lord (Mt 25:44).

25:40 *"The King will answer them, 'I assure you: Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of Mine, you did for Me.'"*

- Jesus identified with His followers (Matthew 10:40; 1 Corinthians 8:12; Acts 9:4, 22:7, 26:14)

25:41 An eternal fire is awaiting the devil (diabolos), his demons (daimonion), and those who have rejected Christ (Rev 20:10, 15).

- Scripture espouses an “eternal fire.” (Isaiah 33:14; 66:24; Matthew 3:10, 12; 5:22; 7:19; 13:40, 42, 50; 18:8-9; Jude 1:7; Revelation 14:10; 19:20; 20:10, 14, 15; 21:8)

25:42-43 The six misfortunes are listed again as those without the Spirit did not minister to the representatives of Jesus.

| Believers should meet the Physical and Spiritual needs of the World (Matthew 25:42-43) | | | | |
|--|------------|---------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. | Hungry | “ <i>peinao</i> ” | Bread of Life | (Jn 6:35, 48) |
| 2. | Thirsty | “ <i>dipsao</i> ” | Living Water | (Jn 4:10, 7:38) |
| 3. | Stranger | “ <i>xenos</i> ” | Family of God | (Eph 2:19-20; Gal 6:10) |
| 4. | Naked | “ <i>gumnos</i> ” | Covering of the Lord | (Is 61:10; Zech 3:4) |
| 5. | Sick | “ <i>astheneo</i> ” | Touch of the Great Physician | (Mk 2:17) |
| 6. | Imprisoned | “ <i>phulake</i> ” | Set Free from Sin | (Rom 8:21; Gal 5:1) |

25:44-45 It is not enough to testify with the mouth that He is Lord; actions must accompany speech (Mt 7:21; James 1:22). Ignorance of the needy in this world is no excuse for inaction (Ex 16:49).

- The Greek term for “truly” or “verily” is the transliterated word from Hebrew “Amen” (Hebrew: אָמֵן Greek: ἀμήν). Transliteration means that the same word is in one language as another without being changed to translate.
 - The word “Amen” is meant to be firm or certain; it means “so be it”, “I affirm” or “I agree.” The word “amen” is also used for the word “faith” (Habakkuk 2:4)
 - Jesus is the only one in Scripture that begins a sentence with the word “Amen” which He used to express that He had something significant to say. (Matthew 5:18, 26; 6:2, 5, 16; 8:10; 10:15; 11:11; 13:17; 18:3, 18; 19:23, 28; 21:21, 31; 23:36; 24:2, 34)

25:46 The word “eternal” is repeated as the same Greek word is used for the time span of punishment as the time span of life.

10 Matthew 26:1-19

Read Matthew 26:1-5 ... The Plan to Kill Jesus at Passover

26:1 Just as Jesus had told His followers to give, He Himself would also offer His life as a sacrifice. This was the end of Christ’s ministry, and He had shared many truths, but now He was to be crucified.

26:2 The Passover was to commemorate the salvation of Israel from Egypt through the killing of the Passover lamb.

26:3-4 Caiaphas (“depression”), whose wife was the daughter of Annas (a former high priest), was a Sadducee and a Roman appointee to this position.

- The elders and religious leaders met in the palace of Caiaphas to devise a scheme to kill Jesus.
- These were not the descendants of a priestly line, but instead, the position was appointed by (bought from) the Romans.

26:5 The elders understood the power of a mob and would eventually use that influence to force the crucifixion (Mt 27:22-23).

- The vocal majority is often swayed by the message of their leaders; man should search out the truth of the Lord in spite of the media who give false and misleading messages to manipulate public opinion.
- Jerusalem would swell three-to-five times the typical population; many Jews from Galilee would come into Judea for the holidays.

Read Matthew 26:6-13 ... The Anointing at Bethany

Shared Account of the Anointing at Bethany: Mt 26:6-13; Mk 14:3-11; Lk 7:36-50; Jn 12:1-8

26:6 Jesus was at the home of the Pharisee Simon (“who hears/obeys”) in Bethany (“house of dates/figs”). Skin diseases represent the “disease of sin” (Lev 13). Simon was no longer a leper; he had been healed. However, Simon bore the title of “leper” in the same way that a believer would continue to be referenced as a “sinner – saved by grace.”

26:7 The alabaster (white) jar represents the life that is broken before the Lord as all that is in it is offered to Him. Jesus was anointed from head (as was the usual anointing) to His feet (in humility) which relate to this world (John 13:9-10; Lk 7:44-46).

- The Greek name “alabastrites” was derived from a town in Egypt where the soft stone resembling marble was quarried called Alabastron.
- Alabaster jars usually had long “necks” to restrict the amount to be poured, so that none would be wasted. The neck was often broken to enable pouring.
- The oil is called “nard” which is made from the stems of an expensive Indian herb; the value of this oil was comparable to an average man’s annual salary.
- John documents that Mary poured a pound of oil and anointed the feet of Jesus; a pound is a great deal of ointment that was used on his head and feet. (John 12:3).

26:8 The disciples prioritized the worldly humanitarian needs above the spiritual.

- The ultimate purpose of creation is to bring glory to God.
- Mankind should focus on serving Him while one of the outcomes of that relationship with Him is in serving each other. In spite of the Pharisee Simon’s personal skin disease (Luke 7:36-43), he was focused on warning Jesus about the woman’s touch.
- Believers should focus on their own sin instead of pointing out the faults of others.
- John seems to infer that Judas began the criticism while the other disciples joined in (John 12:4).

26:9 Worship is more important than service; after the service is stressed in the goat/sheep discourse, Jesus once again shows that service should only flow out of relationship to Him – no self-effort.

26:10 The woman who rightfully honors and serves Jesus is accosted by the disciples who should also be serving Him. Believers should continue following the Lord in spite of the maltreatment of fellow believers.

26:11 Christianity is more than a humanitarian effort; the focus on Jesus should be above all services and ministries.

- 26:12 Anointings are associated with the preparation of an individual for a specific task (e.g., King, Priest, and Prophet). While the disciples struggled with the concept of the Messiah's death, Mary seems to act upon a clearer understanding (John 12:3).
- 26:13 The legacy of this act of worship and preparation for Christ's crucifixion was treated as a blessing for Mary (Luke 1:48).
- Jesus understood the Christianity would continue to grow worldwide to the Gentiles.

Read Matthew 26:14-16 ... The Chief Priests Pay 30 Pieces of Shekel to Betray Christ

- 26:14 Judas was interested in betraying Jesus prior to even being offered a reward. Judas was one of the twelve disciples, but he betrayed the Lord (Mt 13:30, 49-50, 22:12-14, 25:11, 30).
- The term "Iscaiot" means "from Kerioth" which was a town in Judea. The other disciples were from Galilee, and Judas was the only disciple from Judea.
- 26:15 Jesus was valued at the cost of a slave (Ex 21:32); this scanty price had been paid to Zechariah for his prophecy which was not accepted and acted upon (Zechariah 11:12-13). Judas was the treasurer of the disciples and was focused on personal profit (John 12:6).
- 26:16 Although the 30 pieces of silver is viewed as the cost of Christ, in reality, the 30 pieces bought Judas who now began to look for an opportune occasion to sin. The betrayal was a gradual, premeditated plan (Prov 14:22).

Read Matthew 26:17-19 ... The Disciples Prepare the Passover Dinner for Jesus

- Shared Account of the Preparation of Passover: Mt 26:17-19; Mk 14:12-16; Lk 22:7-13*
- 26:17 On the 14th of Nisan, the disciples knew they should prepare the Passover, so they asked Jesus where they should do it. Although Judas was pursuing selfish ends, these other disciples were focused on the Lord and preparing the Passover dinner for Him.
- The lamb needed to be bought earlier (Exodus 12:3).
- 26:18 The disciples were not to request, but instead, to tell the man of the Lord's coming presence in his home. The request was not to come from the disciples, but Jesus was to be the source of the statement.
- The man would prepare his home and the upstairs room would already be ready.
 - The last supper would be in an upper room (Mark 14:15; Luke 22:12); the disciples would also gather in an upper room after the ascension (Acts 1:13).
- 26:19 The disciples obey straightaway without hesitation or doubt, and the Passover dinner occurred without difficulty just as Jesus had foretold.

11 Matthew 26:20-54

Read Matthew 26:20-25 ... The Identification of Judas by Jesus at the Last Supper

- Shared Account of the Foretelling of Betrayal: Mt 26:20-25; Mk 14:17-21; Lk 22:21-23; Jn 13:21-30*
- 26:20-21 As the light had dimmed, and the time had grown darker, Jesus told His disciples that one of them would betray Him. In a greater sense, all of His disciples (Mt 26:31) would desert Him (except for John – Jn 19:26), but Judas would directly lead to His captivity.

- 26:22 Jesus declares that one would betray Him, and each of the disciples distrusts his own heart (Jeremiah 17:9).
- 26:23 Jesus comments that one is dipping his own bread along with Jesus. Jesus' faithful followers ate from the bread provided by Jesus (Mk 14:22), but Judas relied on his personal provision.
- In the Mideast, the height of treasonous action was to betray someone who was eating with you.
 - “*Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me.*” (Psalm 41:9)
- 26:24 Even the wicked are utilized to bring about God's plan to their own detriment (Proverbs 16:4). Jesus Christ was the suffering Messiah who would be crucified (Genesis 3:15; Psalm 22; Isaiah 53).
- 26:25 Each of the disciples calls Jesus “Lord” (Mt 26:22); however, Judas refers to Jesus as “Rabbi” (just a teacher). Christ Jesus confirms the guilt of Judas.

| Jesus Uses Their Words: “Thou Hast Said” | |
|---|--|
| Matthew 26:25 | Judas asks if he is the betrayer |
| Matthew 26:64 | The High Priest asks if Jesus was the Messiah & Son of God |
| Mark 15:2; Luke 23:3 | Pilate asks if Jesus is King of the Jews |

| The Four Questions of the Mah Nishtanah (How is this night different from all other nights?) |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “On all other nights, we eat <i>chametz</i> (leavened foods) and matzah. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Why on this night, only matzah?” ○ Answer: Matzah represents humility (without leaven/pride) and is called the “bread of affliction.” • “On all other nights, we eat all vegetables. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Why, on this night, <i>maror</i> (bitter herbs)?” ○ Answer: Bitter herbs represent the bitter difficulties of life as a slave in Egypt. • “On all other nights, we don't dip even once. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Why on this night do we dip twice?” ○ Answer: Dipping food was a luxury symbolizing blessing and freedom. At the Seder, vegetables are dipped into salt water (representing tears) and bitter herbs into charoseth (representing the mortar/bricks that Israel was forced to produce). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Charoseth originated with the Hebrew term “cheres” (חֶרֶשׁ) that means “clay.” ▪ Charoseth is a sweet, dark-colored paste with the ingredients of fruits and nuts. • “On all other nights, we eat either sitting upright or reclining. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Why on this night do we all recline?” ○ Answer: Reclining was also luxury symbolizing blessing and rest. |

Read Matthew 26:26-30 ... The Lord's Supper

Shared Account of the Lord's Supper: Mt 26:26-30; Mk 14:22-26; Lk 22:14-20

- 26:26 Jesus blessed and broke the bread as His body was also blessed and broken (Jn 6:32-33, 51).
- 26:27 Each of the disciples drank from the same cup as Jesus (Mk 10:39).
- 26:28 The Hebrew word for wine is “yayin” which is literally defined as “blood of the grape.” The blood of Christ established the new covenant (Jeremiah 31:31), but the blood was not shed for all people. There is not universal salvation.
- 26:29 The Lord’s Supper (communion/” sharing”; eucharist/” giving thanks”) is performed in a remembrance (1 Cor 11:26) of the Lord’s death (payment of sin) and anticipation of the future dinner with the Lord made possible through His resurrection (Rev 19:9).
- 26:30 The Passover dinner is traditionally concluded by the Hallel (“praise”) Psalms used to observe Jewish holidays (Psalms 113-118).

Read Matthew 26:31-35 ... Jesus Foretells Peter’s Denial

Shared Account of the Disciple’s Desertion: Mt 26:31-35; Mk 14:27-31; Lk 22:31-34; Jn 13:36-38

- 26:31 Jesus identifies with the prophecy of Zechariah that He will be beaten and the disciples will flee.
- “...*Saith the Lord of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered*” (Zechariah 13:7)
 - “*He was wounded for our transgressions; he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.*” (Psalm 53:5).
- 26:32 The disciples would be reminded of this on resurrection morning (Mark 16:7).
- 26:33 Peter boasts in self-confidence without understanding his personal weakness and fallen nature. Believers should be cautious in judging others as every believer could also fall to sin (1 Corinthians 10:12).
- 26:34 Just as the “cocky” rooster crows before daybreak, Peter would deny Jesus Christ three times, but the Lord would bring light and love to Peter again (Jn 21:15-19).
- 26:35 Each of the disciples believed their estimation of themselves instead of Jesus’ word about them. Mankind always believes that they are “good enough” disbelieving the word of God.

Read Matthew 26:36-46 ... Jesus Prays in the Garden of Gethsemane

Shared Account of Prayer in Gethsemane: Mt 26:36-46; Mk 14:32-42; Lk 22:39-46

- 26:36 Gethsemane (“oil press”) was a garden at the base of the Mt of Olives; just as sin entered the world through the Garden of Eden (Gen 2:8), now sin would begin to be dealt with in this garden.
- At that time, the city of Jerusalem would not allow gardens within the city because the manure used to fertilize the plants was considered unclean.
 - Wealthy individuals often owned gardens outside of the city walls.
 - This garden was a common place for Jesus to visit (Judas knew the exact location), and the disciples may have bivouacked in this location during the last Passover week.

- 26:37 Jesus walks with His most trusted inner circle in deep sorrow without comfort. He desired their prayer support as Jesus went to the Father alone; Believers can rely on the faithful Father in prayer instead of the support of fellow man.
- The two sons of Zebedee were James and John (Matthew 4:21).
 - Peter, James and John were the inner circle of Jesus who were always recorded first in the listing of the disciples (Matthew 10:2-4; Mark 3:16-19; Luke 6:12-19; Acts 1:13), and the companions of Jesus at the mount of Transfiguration. Jesus told them of His grief and asked that they keep watch (Mark 14:33).
- 26:38 The soul (Psalm 35:12; Jeremiah 31:12, 25) is understood to be emotions/feelings/sensations while the spirit represents life (Hebrews 4:12; 1 Samuel 1:15; Job 7:11; Isaiah 26:9).
- 26:39 Jesus fell to the cursed ground (Genesis 3:17) and asks God to consider possible alternatives. All things are possible for the Father (Matthew 19:26; Mark 10:27; Luke 1:37, 18:27), but the primary focus of Jesus was in submitting to the will of the Father.
- This cup of wrath that is being referenced foretells suffering and pain (Is 51:22; Jeremiah 25:15, 49:12; Ezekiel 23:33; Matthew 20:22).
 - In ancient Ugaritic texts, the term “Cup” means “Destiny.”
 - The Ugaritic texts are a collection of ancient cuneiform texts discovered since 1928 in Syria. They are written in Ugaritic which is a northwest Semitic language dating back to the 12th century BC.
 - Self-centered man sinfully says, “not what you want, God, but what I want” while the selfless Christ says, “not what I want, Father, but what you want.”
- 26:40 Although all three of the disciples were sleeping, Jesus calls out Peter (“the pebble”), but He references him as Simon (“to hear/obey”).
- Believers should pursue lives which are attentive to the Spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:5-11; Eph 5:14; Prov 20:13).
 - The disciples were weary from their grief and sorrow (Luke 22:45)
- 26:41 Prayer impedes temptation. *“The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak.”* Believers should also stay alert in prayer (Mt 25:13; 1 Thessalonians 5:4-6) and not fall into sleep (mediocrity) spiritually.
- Peter would be tempted three times, and Peter would deny Christ three times this very night (Luke 22:54-62; John 18:15-27). Peter should have been praying that he would not fall into temptation.
- 26:42 Jesus prayerfully came before God the Father repetitively. Long prayers are discouraged in Scripture, but frequent prayers are encouraged. The cup of the Father’s wrath is fierce (Psalm 75:8; Isaiah 51:17) while the cup of His grace is abundant (Psalm 23:5)
- 26:43 The disciples could not remain spiritually attentive, so they were unaware of the occasion. The disciples were not ministering to Jesus because of their own needs (e.g., weariness).
- 26:44 Although Peter denied Jesus three times, Jesus substantiated the Father’s sovereign control and prayed to the Father three times with the same request before accepting that His time had come.

- Just as Satan had tempted Jesus three times to take an easier way to be glorified (Matthew 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-14; Mark 1:11-13), Jesus would now go to God the Father three times in requests to let this destiny past from Him.
- 26:45 The third time that Jesus came, He said that the time was at hand when He would be given into the hands of sinners. Jesus had prophesied about this in Caesarea Philippi (Matthew 16:21).
- 26:46 Jesus commands three actions from the spiritual sleepers: 1. Arise 2. Follow Him 3. See (perceive the truth).

Read Matthew 26:47-56 ... Judas' Kiss and the Arrest of Jesus

Shared Account of the Arrest of Jesus: Mt 26:47-56; Mk 14:43-52; Lk 22:47-53; Jn 18:1-11

- 26:47 Instead of listening to Jesus, Judas had his own agenda. The mob was led by their religious leaders including the chief priests, captains of the Temple and the elders (Luke 22:52).
- 26:48-49 The betrayer (Judas) was insincere and dishonest to the very end. Judas formulates a sign (feigning love and respect) that would identify Jesus for arrest. In the estimation of Judas, Jesus was only a teacher (rabbi) and never "Lord."
- When someone is greeting a superior (teacher, king, Pope, etc.) they often kiss their hand. A European custom is to greet with a kiss on both cheeks.
- 26:50 Jesus refers to Judas as "friend" and then asks Judas a rhetorical question on the reason Judas had come. The Lord is loving as He brings sin to light.
- 26:51 Peter cuts off Malchus' (meaning "king" or "counselor") ear (Jn 18:10-11) making him unfit for service (Lev 21:18-21); this is also representative of wielding the sword (Word of God) in such a way that it removes the way for unbelievers to hear the message (loss of ear).
- Malchus (John 18:10) was the servant of the high priest (Mark 14:47; Luke 22:50).
- 26:52 Enthusiasm must be governed by the will of the Lord. Although the sword of separation is applied and many Believers have been persecuted by the sword (Mt 10:45), Believers are called to use the Word of the Lord as their sword (Eph 6:17; Heb 4:12).
- 26:53 Twelve Legions were at Jesus' disposal. A Legion consists of 6000 soldiers, so 12 Legions equates to 72,000 troops. The common practice was for each Legion to have a back-up which would bring the total number for Jesus to call being 144,000 (Rev 7:4).
- 26:54 Jesus Christ was cognizant of prophecy and the truth of the God's Word. The numerous prophecies of the Messiah in the Old Testament were to be fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

12 Matthew 26:55-75

- 26:55 Jesus questions the mob about the arrest as Jesus had led them in the worship services at the Temple complex.

26:56 Jesus submitted to the prophecy of the Scripture which told of His persecution and crucifixion; however, the disciples deserted Jesus as they feared man and did not understand the word or will of God (Zechariah 13:7).

| Judaism's Laws Concerning Court |
|---|
| 1. No Capital Trial at Night |
| 2. No Trial & Punishment on Same Day |
| 3. No Trial on Feast Day or Eve of Feast Day |
| 4. The Morning was the Time of the Phylacteries Prayer |
| 5. Gifts were to be Offered to the Temple on the Morning before Passover (Ex 23:15) |

Read Matthew 26:57-68 ... Jesus on Trial Before the Sanhedrin

Shared Account of the Sanhedrin Trial of Jesus: Mt 26:57-68; Mk 14:53-65; Lk 22:63-71

26:57 On the way to the Sanhedrin, the mob took Jesus to visit Annas, the former high priest, who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas (Jn 18:12-14, 19-24). Three categories of religious leaders (chief priests, elders, scribes) judged Jesus with the high priest.

- After presenting Jesus to Annas (John 18:13), Jesus was presented to Caiaphas who served as high priest for eighteen years.

26:58 Marginal Believers continue to follow Jesus as a distance. Peter had been reduced to sitting (associating) with the priests and Levites in charge of guarding the religious order (2 Kings 12:9).

26:59 The chief priests nor the Sanhedrin cared to pursue truth, but instead, attempted to substantiate their own sinful intentions. The Sanhedrin were the council of judges (Supreme Court) of Judaism (Numbers 11:16). When unfaithful religious leaders abet immoral judges, the righteous are always persecuted.

26:60 The Sanhedrin recruited two false witnesses to appear that they were following the Mosaic Law of persecution (Deuteronomy 19:15). Material witness against Jesus could not be found, and even in modern times, the worldly continue to persecute Jesus with rage (Jn 15:18-19; 1 Jn 3:13).

| Six Statements Against Christ | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| 1. | Mt 26:61; Lk 14:56-58 | False Witnesses |
| 2. | Mt 26:62; Lk 14:60 | High Priest |
| 3. | Mt 26:63; Lk 14:61 | High Priest |
| 4. | Mt 26:65; Lk 14:63 | High Priest |
| 5. | Mt 26:66; Lk 14:63 | Sanhedrin |
| 6. | Mt 26:68; Lk 14:65 | Sanhedrin |

26:63 Jesus maintained silence as the worldly judicial system pursued their evil intent (Is 53:7). Jesus remains quiet in front of the high priest until the high priest places Jesus under oath “by the living God”, and then Jesus answers succinctly.

26:64 Jesus breaks His silence as He discusses His second coming in power which will be visible to all men alive and who have lived (Rev 1:7; Rom 14:11; Philippians 2:10).

26:65 The High Priest was so irate that he tore his robe which broke the law (Lev 21:10).

- This worldly high priest was being replaced by Jesus, the new high priest (Heb 7:26-8:1 & 9:11); the robe of the high priest Jesus was kept intact (Jn 19:23-24).

- The robe of Jesus (given by tetrarch Herod Antipas in Luke 23:11) ended in Gentile (Roman) hands just as Jesus' robe (covering) of righteousness (Isaiah 61:10) ended with the Gentiles in the age of the church.
- 26:66 Jesus was the only perfect one who did not deserve death, but these sinful men who were deserving of death were spiritually backwards. There were no dissenters present; every one of them condemned Jesus. Any who were inclined towards Jesus (e.g., Joseph of Arimathea) are thought to have not been at the hearing (Lk 23:51).
- 26:67 Jesus was abused and demeaned by the Sanhedrin as well as those who managed Temple security (Mk 14:65); these men were viewed as ultra-religious, but the evil of the hearts could not bear the sight of Jesus' eyes as they mistreated him. They also mocked His claim as the Messiah was expected to have sight beyond the physical (Is 11:3).

Read Matthew 26:69-75 ... Peter Denies Jesus Three Times

Shared Account of Peter's Denial: Mt 26:69-75; Mk 14:66-72; Lk 22:55-62; Jn 18:15-18, 25-27

- 26:69-70 Even a slave girl was intimidating to Peter when he was asked of his association to Jesus. Believers should never deny the Lord (Mt 10:33).
- 26:71 Instead of being drawing closer to Jesus, Peter moves from the courtyard to the gateway (Jn 18:15-16). Although she probably inferred contempt by the term "Nazarene" (a less affluent, seedy region filled with many outcasts and ruffians), in reality this was a term of honor as the Messiah was the "Netzer" (root of David-Is 11:1).
- 26:72 Peter's denial had now been intensified by an oath that he did not know "this man." Peter further distances himself by referring to Jesus as simply "this man."
- 26:73 No one believed Peter's denial as he was forced a third time to deny any relationship with the Messiah (Jn 18:25-27). Believers should be overwhelmingly associated with Jesus in word and deed.
- 26:74 Peter cursed to prove that he was more worldly than what the accusers would think. Peter even swore an oath to confirm his lie. These denials by Peter resulted in isolation and bitterness.
- 26:75 Peter's "strong suit" had always been courage and bravery, but this second (witness) rooster crow (wake-up alarm because the daylight is near) revealed the defeat and failure of his strongest characteristic.
- Upon Peter's final denial, Jesus turned and looked at Peter (Luke 22:61)
 - Although Peter denied Jesus three times, Jesus reconciles Peter to Himself in asking three times if he loves Him (John 21:17).

13 Matthew 27:1-31

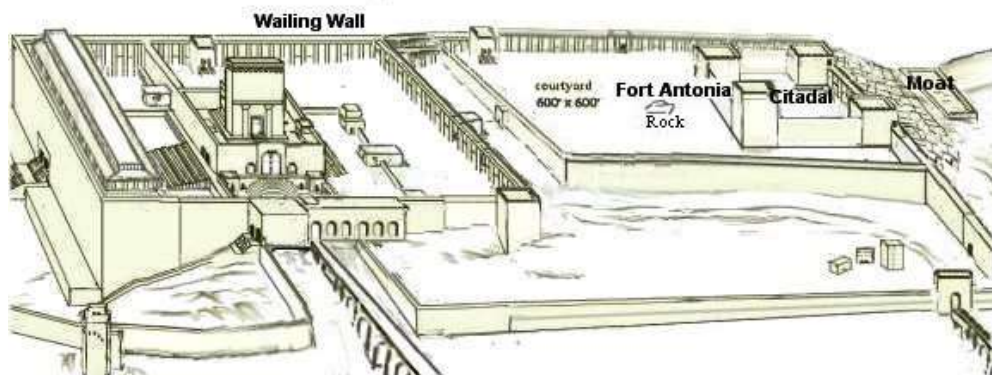
Read Matthew 27:1-2 ... Jesus Delivered to The Roman Governor, Pilate

27:1-2 Daybreak often symbolizes the coming of light (enlightenment) into a situation, and Jesus was turned over from the Jews to the Gentiles.

- Although Pilate judged Jesus to be innocent (Mt 27:24), they would still carry out the will of the Jewish mob and leaders. The Jewish leaders fulfill the prophecy of Jesus to His disciples (Mt 20:19).

- Although the Jews kept the “self-centered laws”, they broke others: No Trial at Night; Cannot tie a prisoner before judgment; accused can’t be found guilty on the same day
- Pontius Pilate was the sixth Roman Prefect (Governor) of Judea who served under Emperor Tiberius from 26AD to 36AD.
 - Pilate had the right to appoint the Jewish High Priest, and Pilate chose to retain the same high priest (Caiaphas) for his entire term; when Pilate was removed from the governorship, Caiaphas was also removed.
 - Pilate was recalled to Rome in 36AD after slaughtering a group of Samaritans near Mount Gerizim. The historian, Eusebius, documented that Pilate committed suicide after being recalled to Rome.
- Although some scholars believe that Pilate was located in Herod’s Fortress, Pilate was probably located in the Antonia Fortress because the “Bema” (Matthew 27:19) and the “Praetorium” (Matthew 27:27; John 18:28, 33; 19:3) were both located in the Antonia Fortress which was 115 feet high and overlooked the Temple.
 - The Antonia Fortress was constructed in 35BC in honor of Herod’s Roman friend, Mark Antony, who had requested the Roman Senate confirm Herod as King of Judea.
 - Six hundred Roman soldiers were garrisoned in the Antonia Fortress in order to preserve order from Jewish riots (Acts 21:37).
 - The Priestly ceremonial robes were kept in a guard tower of the Antonia Fortress and were worn only on Jewish feast days.
 - In 70AD, the Antonia Fortress was destroyed along with the Temple while Titus spared the Herodian Fortress.

Herod's Temple and Fort Antonia



Read Matthew 27:3-5 ... Judas Remorsefully Rejected the Money and Committed Suicide

27:3 The full consequences of sin are rarely understood beforehand, but Scripture clearly teaches that sin results in death (James 1:15; Rom 6:23).

- There are Greek words for shallow and deep repentance (2 Corinthians 7:8-10):
 - Metamelomai (μεταμέλομαι): Shallow regret; a sadness for getting caught.
 - Metanoian (μετάνοιαν): Sincere heartfelt repentance for wrong-doing.

- Judas experienced the first, shallow experience (metamelētheis μεταμεληθείς) instead of sincere, heartfelt repentance. Worldly grief ends in death while godly grief leads to the cross and life ever after.

27:4 The chief priests and elders know that Jesus is innocent.

27:5 Judas threw the silver (Zechariah 11:12) into the “naos” (holy place) which was an area where only priests were allowed to enter.

- Judas, who had betrayed Jesus to His death on the cross, similarly ended up hanging from a tree by his own hand.
- Judas hung himself from a limb overhanging a cliff, and the rope or the branch had broken, as did he when he hit the ground (Acts 1:16-19).

The Death of Judas

It is not explicitly stated that Judas died from either hanging (Mt 27:5) nor falling (Acts 1:18).

Judas may have committed suicide by hanging, and then may have been cut down from the tree prior to the Passover (Jn 19:31; Dt 21:22-23)

- Judas was the only disciple to have the courage to confront the religious leaders while Peter hid and cried. However, Peter would repent and come to Jesus (John 21:15-17) while Judas despaired in his sin.

Read Matthew 27:6-10... Chief Priests Adhere to the Law & Purchased the Potter's Field

27:6 As men die around them and Christ is sacrificed, the chief priests continue to focus on the law.

- As an example of hypocrisy, the same religious leaders had paid this “blood money” but their self-righteousness kept them from accepting it back.
- These leaders did not see that all donations to their religious system were “blood money” resulting in the death of Christ.

27:7 Scripture speaks of the potter having the authority to create vessels of service and wrath (Romans 9:21; Isaiah 29:16; Jeremiah 18:4-6; Lamentations 4:2).

- The field that had no doubt been exhausted by the potter for his purposes had been purchased with a relatively small sum for use as a cemetery for strangers (meaning “Gentiles”).
 - The tradition (from the times of Jerome) is that this is located in the Valley of Hinnom (Gehenna).

27:8 This field was probably the same field where Judas had committed suicide (Acts 1:19-20).

27:9 Jeremiah had been called out to buy a field with silver although it would soon be worthless as Israel was deported to Babylon (Jeremiah 32:6-9 & chapters 18-19).

- Judas also fulfills the prophecy of the Levite, Zechariah (Zechariah 11:12-13) which was given nearly 550 years earlier.
- Zechariah had written a book of visions and prophecies (referenced forty times in the New Testament), but his message had been disregarded.

27:10 The potter's field was most likely the location where potters gathered clay for their pots. (Acts 1:18-19)

Read Matthew 27:11-14... Jesus Amazed Pilate by Not Answering the Charges

Shared Account of Pilate's Interview: Mt 27:1-2, 11-14; Mk 15:1-5; Lk 23:1-5; Jn 18:28-38

27:11 Herod had been informed by the wise men that the King of the Jews had been born at the birth of Jesus (Mt 2:2).

- Pontius Pilate had been appointed Governor by Rome (the fifth Roman Procurator) and his administration was 26-36 AD.
- Due to his contempt for Jews (and them for him), Pilate resided in Caesarea only visiting Jerusalem when necessary.
- The Kingdom of Heaven is a spiritual kingdom beyond the millennial rule (John 18:33-37). Jesus affirms with a qualification that His kingdom is not of this world.

27:12 Pilate refers to Jesus as the One that the Jews call "King of the Jews." In reality, the religious leaders (chief priests) were worldly (not spiritual) and they claimed no King (1 Sam 8:7) but Caesar/the emperor (Jn 19:15).

- The Jews did not enter the Roman Praetorium because it would defile them for the Passover (John 18:28-29). Jesus would answer Pilate in private, but He would not say anything in front of the Jewish leadership. (Isaiah 53:7)

27:13 After Jesus responded to Pilate, He listened silently to the religious leaders without response. These accusations of the chief priests and elders symbolized the rejection of Christ by all of Judaism.

- *"They began to accuse him, saying, 'We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying that he himself is Christ a King.'" (Luke 23:2)*

27:14 Jesus was always in control as He could not be made to speak, drink (Mk 15:23), or die (Mk 15:37). The religious leaders accused Jesus of many things, but Jesus fulfilled prophecy and amazed Pilate by remaining silent (Is 53:7).

Read Matthew 27:15-26... Pilate Frees Barabbas to the Jews & Condemns Jesus

Shared Account of Barabbas Selection: Mt 27:15-26; Mk 15:6-15; Lk 23:13-25; Jn 18:39-40

27:15 The Jews pressured Pilate to maintain his custom of releasing a prisoner (Mk 15:8).

27:16-17 Barabbas means Bar ("son of") Abbas ("the father"); his spiritual father being the devil (John 8:44).

- A different rendering of the name Barabbas would be "Ba" ("son of") Rabbas ("a Rabbi") or "Son of a Rabbi."
- Barabbas was a notorious insurrectionist (Mark 15:7) who had murdered during this rebellion.
- As with every sinner, this prisoner destined for punishment by death was set free because Christ would go to His death instead of the one deserving punishment.

27:18 Pilate thought that the religious leaders were envious of Jesus, so he assumed that the people would want their "King of the Jews" to be released against their leaders (Acts 7:9).

27:19 Not only does Pilate regard Jesus as innocent, his wife understood Jesus to be righteous. She was warned in a dream how to respond (Mt 2:12).

- The bench was the place of judgment (John 19:13)
- 27:20 The chief priests incited the crowds to mass hysteria and persuaded them to pursue rebellion against the Lord. Congregations should always focus on Jesus instead of the human leader/speaker.
- 27:21 Majority rule does not equate to reason or righteousness. The cries of the erratic crowd had turned from Hosanna (“save us” – Mt 21:9) to “crucify Him”.
- 27:22 The Jews expected the coming Messiah to have a physical kingdom and free them from the bondage of service to Rome, so the roman Pilate’s support for Jesus would contradict what the Jewish thought of the Messiah was to be.
- 27:23 When Pilate asked for the reasoning behind the assertion, the crowd simply grew more emphatic. Reason supports God and His Word, and when confronted with the truth, the world traditionally turns to unsubstantiated assertions and attacks on the messenger (e.g., the 1st and 2nd law of thermodynamics along with irreducible design contradicting macro-evolution).
- 27:24 Pilate understood that the irrational mob (the world) would soon turn on him as the messenger of the truth of Christ’s innocence.
- The blood thirsty world is gratified when justice is not performed (e.g., those promoting the release of guilty prisoners; those against capital punishment); they are also gratified when Jesus (and His followers) is persecuted and martyred.
 - The hand washing is a Jewish procedure for the priests (Deuteronomy 21:6; Psalm 26:6; 73:13).
- 27:25 The innocent blood of the perfect Christ is on the hands of the Jews as requested by their forefathers.
- *“Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children.”*
 - The Jewish leaders would later deny that they are guilty of Christ’s blood (Acts 5:28)
- 27:26 Pilate handed two men over to the will of the masses, the murderer Barabbas would walk free while the sinless Christ would die. Although the world’s judicial system was established as a representation of God’s truth, ungodly judges have removed His truth while making subjective judgments based on personal bias and flawed reason.

Read Matthew 27:27-31... Pilate’s Soldiers Abuse and Mock Jesus

Shared Account of Military Harassment: Mt 27:27-31; Mk 15-16-20; Jn 19:2-3

- 27:27 Law enforcement were responsible to peacefully uphold justice; however, they became the persecutors of Christ as the entire group gathered around to pursue abusive gratification. There is no peace in this world without Jesus. Evil man is born with wicked intent.
- 27:28 Scarlet represents the sin payment of blood (Isaiah 1:18) as the soldiers prepare Jesus to shed His own.
- 27:29 Thorns represent the consequence of sin (Genesis 3:18) which Jesus wore on His head. The strength of Jesus (represented by His right hand) is mocked by a weak reed (representing the authority of a scepter – Philippians 2:5-8). In their mockery, they had no idea that they were correctly identifying Jesus as the king of the Jews.
- 27:30 The scorn was exceedingly aggressive as they hit Jesus on the head and attempted to demean Him. The worldly soldiers did not realize that in fact they were disgracing

themselves; these men, no doubt, considered themselves “good people” as they represented the best of society.

27:31 They stripped Jesus of the robe which they valued, and clothed Jesus again in His personal coverings. The covering of Jesus has inestimable worth, and yet the world values the items that briefly pleasure the eyes.

14 Matthew 27:32-66

Read Matthew 27:32-37... The Crucifixion of Jesus

Shared Account of the Crucifixion: Mt 27:32-44; Mk 15:21-32; Lk 23:26-43; Jn 19:17-27

27:32 The descendants of all three sons of Noah were present at Jesus’ crucifixion. The two blessed sons: Shem (Jews) and Japheth (Romans). But the descendant of the accursed Ham (Simon of Cyrene) was the only one to help Jesus. Simon of Cyrene (a Gentile) agreed to bear the cross of Jesus when no Jewish person would, and the church continues to bear Jesus’ message. The cross beam easily exceeded 50 lbs. was carried by Simon was Cyrene who was from Libya in northern Africa (Acts 11:20, 13:1).

27:33 Various translations are used for the same location: Golgotha/Aramaic, Golgoth/Hebrew, Calvaria/Latin, Kranion/Greek all meaning the skull (Judges 9:53; 2 Kings 9:35). Christian forefather Origen suggested that the skull of Adam was buried beneath the place of the crucifixion which would emphasize Jesus as the new Adam (Rom 5:14; 1 Cor 15:22). The exact site of Golgotha is unknown.

27:34 Gall (Greek word “chole” for “bitterness”) was vinegar infused with some bitter substance (e.g., wormwood) to anesthetize/numb a person to pain through intoxication (Psalm 69:21; Jeremiah 8:14). Jesus was intent on drinking sensibly and fully of the cup that God the Father had intended for Him (John 18:11).

27:35 The covering of Jesus is now given to the Gentiles (soldiers) just as the Gentile church is covered by His righteousness. This was a fulfillment of the prophecy of David (Psalm 22:18).

27:36 The centurions were attentive to the crucifixion of Jesus throughout His death and burial; there could have been no mistake that Jesus died and rose again.

27:37 The Roman custom was to hang a sign which publicly identified the crime of the person being crucified.

Read Matthew 27:38-44... Jesus Crucified Between Two Criminals as He Was Mocked

27:38 Sinners are the focus of Jesus’ ministry. The two (witness) thieves are mentioned in all four gospel accounts (Mt 27:44; Lk 23:39-43; Jn 19:18). These differing thieves could represent the Jews who mocked Jesus and the Gentiles who have accepted Him.

27:39-40 The passers-by (Ps 22:7-8) recalled what Jesus had said about the Temple; with His own words they mocked and judged. But their words would also be used in judgment on them (Mt 12:36-37)

27:41-42 The religious leaders acted in the same manner as the common passers-by. Although the three categories of religious leaders (chief priests, scribes, elders) mocked Jesus, even many priests of Jerusalem would come to believe (Acts 6:7).

- The members of the Sanhedrin quoted Psalm 22:8.

27:43 The world continues to mock those who trust in God; the world promotes self-effort and competition without reliance on the Lord (Col 1:17).

- God does not always rescue His faithful from worldly persecution because the ramifications may better support His plan.
- The Jews clearly understood that Jesus claimed to be deity. (Luke 23:39-43)

27:44 Even those dying taunted the Lord, but one came to understand the futility of this mocking and the realization of Who Jesus is (Lk 23:39-43).

Read Matthew 27:45-53... The Death of Jesus Christ

Shared Account on the Death of Jesus: Mt 27:45-56; Mk 15:33-41; Lk 23:44-49; Jn 19:28-30

27:45 Jesus was crucified at 9:00am which translates into the third hour in Jewish time (Mark 15:25) or the sixth hour according to Roman time (John 19:14).

- After three hours on the cross (when the light should have been brightest at noon), the entire land became (spiritually) dark for the last three hours of Jesus' crucifixion.
- The darkness is a judgment from God against sinful man (Amos 8:9; Exodus 10:21).

27:46 This is the only time that Jesus prays "My God" instead of "Father". The literal intonation in Hebrew infers asking God if there was no other way which was to say, "Why was I chosen to be the sin bearer – the sacrifice?" Jesus calls twice for God which shows emphasis on the two other persons of the Godhead (Father, Spirit). Jesus asks literally why He was selected to carry the judgment. This is the only statement by Jesus on the cross that is recorded in Scripture twice (witness – Mk 15:34).

27:47 The onlookers misconstrue Whom Jesus is calling. These pseudo-religious individuals are man-centric and focused on the things of this world mistaking God for Elijah ("My God is Yah").

27:48 Beyond cruelty, the rationalization of the crucifixion was to be a deterrent to passers-by of wrong-doing. The offering of sour wine may have been additional cruelty in prolonging the prisoner's death experience or it may have been compassion in attempting to numb the pain. As wine represents joy and the blood of life, this onlooker had nothing to offer Christ except sour wine – a poor substitute. This world continues to offer "sour wine" to appease mankind.

27:49 Scripture had testified that Elijah would precede the Messiah (Malachi 4:5), and possibly there was still a role for Elijah to play (Mt 17:11-12).

27:50 Jesus, always in control, gave up His Spirit; crucified men could hang for days without dying. After six hours on the cross (from 9:00am until 3:00pm), Jesus took His last breath (Genesis 2:7; Job 12:10, 33:4; Ezekiel 37:5-6) Jesus defeated Satan on the cross (Job 26:13).

27:51 The curtain (Ex 26:33) that separated the holy of holies was 18 inches thick which was easily split as were the rocks torn apart.

- The tear was from top (30 ft. high – 1 Kings 6:20) to bottom beginning with the heavenlies to the earth.
- The torn curtain physically represented the flesh of Jesus (Heb 10:20) enabling direct access to God through His righteousness.

27:52-53 Many saints returned to physical life after Jesus' death, but His death provided for spiritual life of all Believers (2 Kings 13:20-21). One thought is that those of the Old Testament slept until Christ fulfilled the prophecy by paying the price, and then in their resurrected bodies, the Old Testament saints were able to proceed to God the Father (Jn 8:56); New Testament Believers would be able to go directly to the Father at death (Lk 23:43; 2 Cor 5:8).

Read Matthew 27:54-56... Witnesses to the Death of Jesus Christ

27:54 The centurion was standing in opposition to Christ, but at His death, the centurion realized Who Jesus actually was (Mk 15:37).

27:55 A good deal of women had supported the ministry of Jesus, and unlike most of His disciples, they witnessed His crucifixion.

27:56 Three of the women are emphasized: 1. Mary ("sea of bitterness") Magdalene (Mary of Magdala) (Lk 8:2) 2. Mary, the mother of Jesus, James and Joseph (Matthew 13:55) 3. Ambitious Salome ("perfect") who was mother of James and John (Mt 20:20-21, 27:56) and possibly the aunt of Jesus (Jn 19:25)

| James and John may have been the Cousins of Jesus | | |
|--|--|--|
| Matthew 27:56 | <i>"Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of Zebedee's sons."</i> | |
| Mark 15:40 | <i>"There were also women looking on from a distance. Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joseph, and Salome."</i> | |
| John 19:25 | <i>"Standing by the cross of Jesus were His mother, His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene."</i> | |
| Mary Magdalene | Mary the mother of James and Joseph | The Mother of Zebedee's Sons |
| Mary Magdalene | Mary the mother of James and Joseph | Salome |
| Mary Magdalene | Mary the mother of Jesus | His mother's sister, Mary, the wife of Clopas, |
| James was the second born from Mary, and Joseph was the third born of Mary. (Mt 13:55) | | |

Read Matthew 27:57-61... Joseph of Arimathea Buries Jesus

Shared Account of the Burial of Jesus: Mt 27:57-61; Mk 15:42-47; Lk 23:50-56; Jn 19:38-42

27:57 The wealthy Joseph ("increase") had been a timid, secret (Jn 19:38) disciple of Jesus (Mt 27:57; Jn 19:38). The word "Arimathea" is translated "a lion dead to the Lord" which is what Joseph had been prior to the crucifixion. As a prominent leader (Is 53:9) of the seventy ruling judges (the Sanhedrin), it is a question as to his participation in the condemnation of Jesus Christ (Mk 14:64).

- The creation account in Genesis was first night and then day, so the Jewish community believed that the new day began at 6:00pm. Evening would have been just prior to 6:00pm.

| Joseph of Arimathea Described in the Gospels | |
|---|---|
| Matthew 27:57 | Wealthy Disciple of Jesus |
| Mark 15:43 | Member of the Sanhedrin Seeking the Kingdom of God |
| Luke 23:50 | Member of the Council |

| | |
|------------|------------------------|
| | A Good and Upright Man |
| John 19:38 | A Secret Disciple |

27:58 This took place shortly before the Passover began at 6:00pm, so Joseph of Arimathea ceded being ceremonially clean for the Passover. The acts of entering the house of the Gentile Pilate and then touching the corpse of Jesus would result in Joseph being ceremonially unclean.

- Because Joseph requested the body of Jesus, this would publicly reveal His relationship with Christ and place him under suspicion by the Romans and the Sanhedrin.
- Pilate was amazed that Jesus had died after approximately 6 hours instead of passing over 2-3 days. When Pilate confirmed the death of Jesus with the centurion, Pilate gave the corpse to Joseph of Arimathea. (Mark 15:44-45)

27:59 The custom was to wrap corpses (Acts 5:6; Jn 11:44) with linen which represented the righteous acts that had been performed (Ex 28:41-42; Lev 16:23-24, 32; Dt 22:11; Rev 19:8, 14).

- Another member of the Sanhedrin, Nicodemus, brought one hundred pounds of a mixture of myrrh and aloes. (John 19:39) Nicodemus had discussed the teachings of Jesus with Him at night (John 3:1-21). Nicodemus later reminded the Sanhedrin that the law required an individual to be heard before being judged (John 7:50-51).
- The Jews do not embalm, and it is the Jewish practice (even in modern times) that a Jew must be buried on the same day that he dies. Spices are put on the body, and the corpse is wrapped.

27:60 It was the custom to place boulders in front of tombs to deter thieves (as belongings were often buried with their owners) and animals (John 11:41).

- *“He made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death.”* (Isaiah 53:9)
- The boulder probably rested in a slot for several reasons:
 - Sometimes, items (jewelry, rings, etc.) were buried with the corpse of an individual.
 - To cap the odor inside

27:61 The two Mary’s were the last to see Jesus was placed in the grave, and the first to experience His resurrection (Matthew 28:1).

- Jesus had cast seven “devils” out of Mary Magdalene (Mark 16:9).
- Jesus performed various activities after crucifixion and prior to His resurrection (1 Peter 3:18-22; Acts 2:24, 27, 31; Ephesians 4:7-10)

Read Matthew 27:62-66... Pilate Secures the Tomb of Jesus with a Guard of Soldiers

27:62 The trial and crucifixion of Jesus occurred on the “day of preparation” (Mt 27:62; Mk 15:42; Lk 23:54; Jn 19:14, 31, 42).

- The “day of preparation” was the time when the Jewish people would work (gather/bake) to prepare for rest on the Sabbath (Ex 16:23-30).
- The religious leaders (chief priests and Pharisees) were continued to be apprehensive after the crucifixion; as with most sin, these men were not satisfied and calmed with the sinful act, but instead they were disquieted.

- Clearly, the chief priests and Pharisees were concerned because this day was the “High Sabbath” of Passover, and they were willing to interact with a Gentile Roman (possibly in his living quarters).
- 27:63 There was no respect for Pilate as these leaders had instigated a mob the day before, but this day these esteemed men met civilly in the political realm and referred to Pilate as “Sir”. Even well-mannered, respected men are vicious in their sin.
- Jesus was the truth incarnate (Jn 14:6), but these wicked leaders judged Him as a deceiver. However, although they did not believe Jesus, these men had listened to the prophecy of the Lord.
 - The Greek term for “deceiver” (planos πλάνοϛ) originates from the same root as planets. Ancient astronomers would track the movement of the stars; however, some heavenly bodies would not travel as the other heavenly bodies because they were planets.
 - This was the same term (“deceiver” or “wanderer”) that was later used to describe the Antichrist. (2 John 1:7).
- 27:64 Jesus had a short period of time to fulfill His prophecy (three days), and the religious leaders were going to hamper His resurrection as much as they could.
- These religious leaders believed that the resurrection would be a greater “error” than the first mistake of Jesus being the Messiah; they were only correct in that it was their error that would be compounded as the resurrection proved Jesus as the living Messiah.
 - It is ironic that the disciples were not expecting the resurrection, but the Sanhedrin were (Matthew 12:40).
- 27:65 A contingent of Roman guards had been assigned to ensure the capital punishment of Jesus, and these religious leaders received an extension of their duties to guard the tomb throughout Passover.
- 27:66 To set the seal, there were probably two spots of wax with the Roman seal – one on the stone and one on the bedrock of the cave with a cord suspended between the two.
- The stone would be rolled away, and just as Daniel had been saved from the lions (Daniel 6:16-17), so Jesus was resurrected from the dead.

15 Matthew 28:1-20

Read Matthew 28:1-4...An Angel Rolls Back the Stone on Resurrection Morning

Shared Account of the Resurrection Morning: Mt 28:1-10; Mk 16:1-11; Lk 24:1-12; Jn 20:1-18

- 28:1 The first day of the week (the church age) was dawning (coming to light); the light of the “Son Rise” was about to shine as the women saw that Jesus was resurrected (Isaiah 9:2).
- Mary Magdalene, Mary, and Salome traveled through the night (John 20:1; Mark 16:2) to anoint Jesus’ body.
 - These were the same women who had witnessed the crucifixion (Mt 27:56, 61; Mk 15:40), now brought spices that they had purchased.
 - Although Nicodemus had anointed the corpse of Jesus before burial (Jn 19:39), the women also felt personal responsibility to anoint Him as well.

- The conclusion of the Passover Sabbath would have been at 6:00pm on Saturday; however, the women waited until the dawning of the sunrise (Mark 16:2; Luke 24:1).

| Jews Number the Days of the Week | | | |
|---|------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Sunday | רָאשׁוֹן | Rishon (meaning "First") | Light |
| Monday | שֵׁנִי | Sheni (meaning "Second") | Sky |
| Tuesday | שְׁלִישִׁי | Shlishi (meaning "Third") | Earth; Vegetation; Seas |
| Wednesday | רְבִיעִי | Revi'I (meaning "Fourth") | Stars |
| Thursday | חֲמִישִׁי | Chamishi (meaning "Fifth") | Birds/Water Creatures |
| Friday | שֵׁשִׁי | Shishi (meaning "Sixth") | Land Creatures/Man |
| Saturday | שַׁבָּת | Shabbat (meaning "Peace") | God Rested |

| English Days of the Week Named After Roman Deities | |
|---|-----------------|
| Sunday | Sol (Sun) |
| Monday | Luna (Moon) |
| Tuesday | Mars (Tiw) |
| Wednesday | Mercury (Woden) |
| Thursday | Jupiter (Thor) |
| Friday | Venus (Frigg) |
| Saturday | Saturn |

28:2 The descent of an angel of the Lord caused this second earthquake which occurred during the time of crucifixion (Matthew 27:51); another earthquake will come at the second coming of Jesus (Zechariah 15:1-5) as even the cursed ground (Genesis 3:17) trembles before Him (Romans 8:19-22).

- It is thought that the stone would have been approximately 5-6 feet in diameter and a foot thick (possibly weighing nearly two tons).
- Upon the excavation of the grave (room), the stone would have been positioned in a track beside the door.
- At the burial the stone would have been pushed (relatively easily – Mk 15:46) into a deeper indentation where it would have been difficult to dislodge.

| Earthquakes Referenced in Scripture | |
|--|---|
| 1 Kings 19:11 | Elijah in the cave of Mount Horeb/Sinai |
| Amos 1:1 | Referenced by Amos |
| Zechariah 14:5 | During Reign of King Uzziah |
| Matthew 28:2 | Jesus Christ's Resurrection |
| Acts 16:26 | Freed Paul & Silas from Prison |
| Isaiah 29:6 | Judgment on Enemies of God's People |
| Revelation 6:12-17; 8:5; 11:13, 19 | End Time Earthquakes |

28:3 This appearance is likened to Jesus (Rev 1:13-18) with the power (lightning – Mt 24:27; Lk 17:24) and righteousness (white – Ps 51:7; Is 1:18) being represented in the covering/clothing (Is 6:1).

28:4 The mighty guards were incapacitated with fear as if dead when they saw Jesus, and indeed, they were spiritually dead (Rom 8:10; Eph 2:1).

- This is ironic that those who were alive appeared as dead, and the One who was supposed to be dead was very much alive.

Read Matthew 28:5-7...The Angel of the Lord Explains & Directs the Women

28:5 The women do not fall, but they did bow (Lk 24:5) and were comforted with “*do not fear*”. Although the world is interested in discovering the Jesus Christ Who had been crucified, Jesus now lives.

- Jesus bears the marks of crucifixion even in the heavenly realm. (John 20:27; Revelation 5:6)

28:6-7 This is the call to all of mankind: 1. Come and See 2. Go and Tell

- Jesus continues to remind His followers of His prophecies prior to death, and how He would meet them in Galilee (Matthew 26:32)

Read Matthew 28:8-10...The Women Meet Jesus on the Resurrection Morning

28:8 The relationship with God seems often characterized by “fear and great joy”

28:9 Jesus says “*Good morning*” as the women worship at His feet.

- The Greek term for “greetings” (chairete χαίρετε) shows that Jesus used the common greeting of the day when meeting the women.
- Matthew often has multiple people where Mark and Luke only mention a single person. Two Gadarene demoniacs; Two Blind Beggars in Jericho.
- The stature of bowing at someone’s feet was a Mideastern position of submission, humility and worship.

28:10 Again, Jesus reassures the women not to be afraid; He instructs His followers not to be afraid but instead to live expectantly as He intercedes for them. The disciples (Jesus’ brothers) are to obediently go to Galilee to meet Him.

Read Matthew 28:11-15...The Chief Priests & Elders Bribe the Soldiers

28:11 The guards were bribed by the chief priests to say that the body was stolen. The guards relayed the supernatural event to the religious leaders; however, the religious leaders continued to be distracted from the divine truth of God. (Luke 16:30-31)

28:12 The religious leaders continue to scheme and connive against the truth as they propagate deception of their own authority and self-righteousness.

28:13 This deceit does not even make sense because the guards would not know what happened if they were asleep.

28:14 The religious leaders instruct the guards to lie. As the guards “help” the religious leaders, the religious leaders will “help” the guards from Pilate. Although the guards were utilized to circumvent any possible deceit of the disciples, they were now paid to propagate lies.

28:15 The Jewish people as a nation have never accepted Jesus as the true Messiah who was crucified as payment for sin and is now alive.

Read Matthew 28:16-20...Jesus Gives the Great Commission in Galilee

28:16 Jesus had directed the disciples to a mountain; although the specific mountain is unknown, the imagery of “mountain” in Scripture is used to denote authority and rule.

28:17 Even upon experiencing the resurrected Jesus, some will doubt because of their faithless, sinful hearts.

28:18 All authority has been given Jesus (Matthew 11:27; Colossians 2:10; 1 Peter 3:22; Ephesians 1:9, 20-22; John 17:2).

28:19 This is a call (the “Great Commission”) to teaching discipleship while God also calls to evangelism (Mark 16:15-16).

- The Greek verb “to disciple” (mathēteusate μαθητεύσατε) infers developing learners, followers and participators in the truth.
- The concept of the Trinity is repeated through Scripture (1 Corinthians 12:4-6; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Ephesians 4:4-6)

28:20 The disciples were called to teach obedience to the commands of Jesus.

- Seven hundred years before Christ, Isaiah spoke of Immanuel (Isaiah 7:14), and the book of Matthew began by making the point (Mt 1:23) that Jesus is fully deity and man by His name Immanuel” meaning “God with us” (Isaiah 8:8, 10).
- “Immanuel” is the concept that concludes this first gospel; Jesus is always with His people. The great “I Am” (Yahweh Exodus 3:14) is always with His people.
- The final word of Matthew is “Amen.” The Greek term for “truly” or “I assure you” is the transliterated word from Hebrew “Amen” (Hebrew: אָמֵן Greek: ἀμήν). Transliteration means that the same word is in one language as another without being changed to translate.
 - The word” Amen” is meant to be firm or certain; it means “so be it”, “I affirm” or “I agree.” The word “amen” is also used for the word “faith” (Habakkuk 2:4)