

# The Life of the Messiah in His Jewish Context

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Based upon  
Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaum's  
teaching of  
*The Life of Messiah from a Jewish Perspective*  
available as a DVD series from  
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This work is based on Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaum's DVD series *The Life of the Messiah from a Jewish Perspective*. And Dr. Fruchtenbaum is the primary source for the understanding of the Jewish context of the gospels found herein. The outline and much of the content are taken from His teaching. These are used with his permission.

As my understanding of what he teaches has grown I have edited the text to reflect that understanding. I have also changed the presentation of the material to suit the needs of my students.

This is still a work in progress as you will be able to observe when you read it. So I trust you will download a more up to date copy from time to time. You can find it at

[www.lifeofmessiah.vear.info](http://www.lifeofmessiah.vear.info)

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My hope and prayer is that you will find it useful, both in your own understanding of the Life of the Messiah, and in your teaching of it to others.

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*May God,  
Who inspired the gospel writers,  
give you understanding of what they wrote.*

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## Introduction to the Study

Welcome to our study of The Life of Jesus the Messiah in His Jewish Context, covering events from before His birth through to His death, burial, resurrection and ascension. This study is based upon Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaum's teaching of *The Life of Messiah from a Jewish Perspective* at Camp Shoshanah, Ariel Ministries' annual Bible teaching camp.

### Organization of Course

#### 1. The Importance of Study Breaks<sup>i</sup>

You will also find it easier to retain information if you take regular breaks between each study period. During breaks your brain will be integrating what it has learnt naturally and spontaneously building up internal Mind Maps of thought.

You also need to take breaks because your brain finds it easier to remember more from the start and end of a study period than it does in the middle. When you take regular breaks the amount of time in the middle of your study session is reduced and there is less information at risk of being lost in the middle.

Ideally, each study session should last about 45 minutes before you give yourself a 5- or 10-minute break. Go out of the room and think about something else, step out in the fresh air and move around. Whilst you are relaxing your brain will actually be quite busy: it will be sorting through and filing the information you have given it. When you return to your studies, your brain will feel refreshed and you will also find it easier to concentrate.

#### 2. We will meet for approximately two hours each week, from 7:30 to 9:30. And we will divide our time into two 45 minute sessions separated by a break of about 15 minutes to get up and move around, and talk about anything other than what we have been studying. So this is a good time for some supper if we would like.

#### 3. Repetition and Memory<sup>ii</sup>

There is a specific formula for how often you should go over information in order to fix it in your long-term memory. This is as follows:

**1st review** Just after you first learnt it

**2nd review** One day after you first learnt it

**3rd review** One week after you first learnt it

**4th review** One month after you first learnt it

**5th review** Three to six months after you first learn it

If you follow this formula you will permanently memorize what you want to learn – and even start to remember more as your brain will be thinking synergetically about the information it stores and start to make new links between what it knows.

#### 4. So at the end of the lesson we will hand out some homework sheets containing review questions. They will be most valuable to you if you will look at them and answer the questions sometime the next day. They are not a test, and I won't be asking you to read out your answers. They are simply there to help you review what you have learned.

5. We have enough material to occupy us for about 50 evenings which would amount to five ten week terms, and we can be flexible about our meeting schedule.

## First Century Jewish Perspective

Bible Schools, commentaries and Bible studies usually give the Greek and Roman backgrounds to the Bible which is useful for some parts of the New Testament.

But the life of Jesus is played out in a Jewish culture – specifically the Jewish culture of first century Israel. And that Jewish context played a vital role in determining both the events that took place and the way things were said. It also influenced the way these things were recorded by the gospel writers. Naturally this Jewish context was common knowledge at the time the gospels were written. That knowledge has been ignored since about the fourth century, although it was never lost.

For example, phrases like “born of water” had a very specific Jewish meaning in first century Israel, but somebody forgot to ask a Jew what it meant, and so you suddenly had a brand new denomination based on that phrase alone.

This study will focus on that Jewish context so that we can better understand what the gospel writers were writing about. It will look at some Jewish idioms or colloquialisms, and it will also give an appreciation of the theological, cultural, political and geographical context into which Jesus entered.

## Thematic Approach

Now there are basically two ways to approach the life of the Messiah.

1. Geographical Approach

Perhaps the most common way of looking at Jesus’ life is the Geographical approach which divides Jesus’ life by the various regions in which he acted – such as the “Greater Galilean Ministry”, or the “Later Judean Ministry”. With this approach the focus is more on where Jesus did what, rather than on the reason or motivation for his actions and teachings. As a result the gospels are seen as a series of individual events and teachings and we fail to see the correlation between the various events and teachings of his life.

2. Thematic Approach

We will be using a thematic approach to Jesus’ life, and we will see that the gospels have an overall theme with each event relating to the next in a continuous stream of thought. The theme is: Jesus the Messianic King. We will see the correlation between the different events of His life. And as we begin to see why Jesus does what He does, and why He teaches what He teaches, we will find a story unfolding which has a major turning point.

## Materials

1. *A Harmony of the Gospels for the study of The Life of the Messiah*

And we will use *A Harmony of the Gospels for the study of The Life of the Messiah*. It consists of the text of the four gospels arranged under headings and sub-headings that assist a thematic study of Jesus’ life in His Jewish context. The text follows the order of Luke’s gospel and is arranged so that parallel accounts of the same event are side by side. The order of Luke’s account is chosen because he claims to have investigated everything carefully and he has written it out in consecutive order. This makes it easier to draw from the various gospels all that the writers report from their different viewpoints.

A copy of this harmony can be found at [www.GospelHarmony.vear.info](http://www.GospelHarmony.vear.info).

## 2. Outline

The table of contents of the harmony forms a convenient outline for the life of the Messiah.

## 3. Rules of Interpretation

Appendix 1 of the harmony summarises four important interpretation rules for understanding prophecy and scripture. We will be observing these rules in our study. Turn to page 182 and look at these for a moment.

4. As the life of Messiah unfolds, there will be opportunity to learn more about particular events, subjects, and doctrines as they are encountered. Ariel Ministries holds a wide range of Manuscripts, books and audio and video files which will cover most of these topics. You can find them at [www.ariel.org](http://www.ariel.org).

## Goal

Our purpose is not to get through the material in a given time, but to let the content of the gospels get into us.

Our goal for this course is threefold:

1. To learn the Jewish context of the gospels, and
2. To recognise in the gospels the story (or overall theme) of the Messiah's life, and especially to recognise the turning point and its significance.
3. And in the process to understand and use the rules of interpretation which lead to a sound understanding of the text which in turn results in sound doctrine.

## Prologue § 1-2

### A. The Source of Knowledge (Luke's Prologue), § 1, Luke 1:1-4

Have you ever wondered why the four gospels have recorded different sets of events, and sometimes in different orders? Why do you think that is?

There are at least two reasons:

1. John writes in the last verse of his gospel (21:25): *And there are also many other things which Jesus did, which if they were written in detail, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that would be written.* So obviously each writer had to be selective in what he wrote.
2. Also, each writer had a specific audience in mind and a theme that he wanted to develop, so naturally he chose events and teachings relevant to his theme and audience.

For these two reasons the gospels contain different events and teachings arranged in different orders and what one includes may be omitted by others.

So now we will introduce each of the gospels, looking at the theme, prime audience, and the background and emphasis of each one.

#### 1. Matthew

*Theme:* Jesus the Messiah the King of the Jews

*Prime Audience:* Jewish believers

*Background and Emphasis:*

- Matthew was formerly a tax collector for the Roman government.
- Initially believers could bring their questions to an apostle, but after the dispersion that followed Stephen's martyrdom in Acts 7 they needed an authoritative source for the life of the Messiah.
- He quotes the Old Testament (Tanakh) over sixty times and makes extensive use of Messianic prophecies to show that Jesus really was the Messianic Davidic King.
- He writes to show why the Messianic Kingdom was not set up. If Jesus is the Messiah the question arises: where is the Messianic Kingdom, where is world peace? Matthew especially will explain the Messianic Kingdom program.
- He writes to give necessary warnings about the impending judgment and destruction (70 AD, Matt. 22:7; 23:36-38).

#### 2. Mark

*Theme:* Jesus the Messiah the Servant of Jehovah

*Prime Audience:* Romans



### Background and Emphasis:

- The Romans were more concerned about a man's ability than his lineage.
- The ideal Roman servant was one who receives a command and who quickly carries it out.
- To meet the Romans 'action' mentality, Mark focuses on what Jesus did rather than what he said. The words *immediately, straight away, forthwith* are used forty times. He presents Jesus as a man of action.
- While presenting Jesus as one who appeals to a Roman mindset, he explains Jewish customs to the Romans in his Gospel.
- Mark also used passages from Isaiah to portray Jesus as the suffering servant of Jehovah. Isaiah's favourite title for the Messiah was "the servant of Jehovah, or the servant of the Lord". Mark used this motif of Messiah as a servant carrying out the mission He was called to perform. In Mk 10:45 he says, "*For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.*"
- He was a close friend of Peter and cousin of Barnabas (Col 4:10).

### 3. Luke

Now turn to section 1 of the harmony on page 1 and read Luke's prologue, Luke 1:1-4.

<sup>1</sup>*Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile an account of the things accomplished among us,*  
<sup>2</sup>*just as they were handed down to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word,*  
<sup>3</sup>*it seemed fitting for me as well, having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, to write it out for you in consecutive order, most excellent Theophilus;*  
<sup>4</sup>*so that you may know the exact truth about the things you have been taught.*

Notice that:

- Luke's sources were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. He probably used both Matthew and Mark. He lived for two years in the land of Israel while Paul was in prison, and would have access to eye-witness people like Mary. And as we see from his gospel, he reveals certain things that only Mary would know about.
- He investigated everything carefully
- He wrote it out *in consecutive order*
- His purpose was that Theophilus *might know the exact truth about the things he has been taught*

*Theme:* Jesus the Messiah the Son of Man

*Prime Audience:* Greeks who were interested in “the ideal man” - disciplined physically and mentally, and in historical accuracy. So the correct chronological order was important to them.

*Background and Emphasis:*

- Luke shows Jesus to be disciplined in body and mind and he wrote with historical accuracy. He is the only author to claim to write in chronological order.
- Luke was a physician, close friend of Paul, and possibly the only Gentile author of any part of the New Testament, but most likely Jewish. He was not an eye witness.
- He shows special concern for women and gentiles and Jerusalem. He records events about Jerusalem, and the teachings of Jesus about Jerusalem, which are not recorded by Mathew, Mark or John. He also records things about the gentiles that were not recorded by the other gospel writers. He came to the Lord through the ministry of the apostle Paul. He travelled with Paul for a while, and Paul of course had a concern and calling for Gentile evangelism. He also records things about women and the role of women that the other writers chose not to record.
- He emphasizes the humanity of Jesus.

#### 4. John

John makes his purpose clear in 20:31, *but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.*

*Theme:* Jesus the Messiah the Son of God

*Prime Audience:* The world at large

*Background and Emphasis:*

- John is a Jewish fisherman, and *the disciple whom Jesus loved*, John 21:20,24
- His emphasis is on Jesus’ teachings more than His actions. So in his gospel we have sermons, messages, and teachings of Jesus that are not found in the other 3 accounts.
- While his main theme is Jesus the Messiah the Son of God, he has two sub-themes running throughout his gospel:
  - The conflict between light and darkness. This comes out several times in his gospel account. We will simply point these out in passing without developing this subtheme since we are teaching the Life of Messiah using all four gospels..
  - The second subtheme is that Jesus came for the purpose of teaching about the Father to humanity. And that is why John will spend more time on what He said and what He taught. It is because of that subtheme that John alone records an incident where a disciple asked him, “*Show us the Father*” and Messiah said, “*If you have seen me you have seen the Father*”. Everything true about the divine nature of the Father is true of the Son, therefore to know the Son is to know the Father.

- John is known for his sevens: 7 signs, 7 discourses, 7 I AM's. There is a list of these in Appendix 2.
- John wrote after Matthew, Mark & Luke and is concerned to record what they left out, although at the end of his gospel he writes (21:25): *And there are also many other things which Jesus did, which if they were written in detail, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that would be written.*

## B. The Pre-existence of the Messiah (John's Prologue), § 2, John 1:1-18

Now we come to section 2, John's Prologue. Read John 1:1-18.

While Luke's concern in his prologue was the source of knowledge about the life of the Messiah, John emphasises the pre-existence of the Messiah in his prologue. He was already there before He became human.

John opens his gospel saying, <sup>1</sup>*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. His subject is the Word.* And I am sure you already know that in the Greek he is using the word *Logos*. Now the question is: Why did John choose the word *Logos*? And what did it mean to him?

In Greek philosophy *Logos* embodies two concepts, reason and speech. Consequently this passage is often explained as Jesus being God's expression of those concepts. By reason He was the very idea of God, and by speech He was the very expression of God.

However John was a Jewish fisherman, not a Greek philosopher! And he was using concepts of God that were being taught by the rabbis of his day, and building on these concepts based on God's divine revelation.

### *Personification of the WORD (Hebrew Davar, Aramaic Memra)*

In Hebrew the word for "word" is "Davar". In Aramaic it is "Memra".

The rabbis noticed the personification of "Davar" in the Old Testament and developed a concept they called by the Aramaic term "Memra" as much of the rabbinic writings were in Aramaic.

We can see this personification in the following passages where the WORD is often found carrying out a commission. As we look up the following verses see if you can notice how the term WORD is personified.

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <a href="#">Genesis 15: 1</a><br><sup>1</sup> <i>After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not fear, Abram, I am a shield to you; Your reward shall be very great."</i>  | The WORD is personified as revealer   |
| <a href="#">Psalm 33:4-6</a><br><sup>4</sup> <i>For the word of the Lord is upright, And all His work is done in faithfulness. <sup>5</sup> He loves righteousness and justice; The earth is full of the lovingkindness of the Lord. <sup>6</sup> By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, And by the breath of His mouth all their host.</i>   | It is the agent of creation. God spoke the WORD, and what He spoke came into existence.               |
| <a href="#">Psalm 147:15</a><br><sup>15</sup> <i>He sends forth His command to the earth; His word runs very swiftly.</i>   | The WORD moves swiftly to carry out God's purpose.  |
| <a href="#">Isaiah 9:8</a><br><sup>8</sup> <i>The Lord sends a message [Davar] against Jacob, And it falls on Israel.</i>   | The Lord sent the WORD against Jacob to accomplish a specific mission and <i>it falls on Israel</i> . |
| <a href="#">Isaiah 55:10-11</a><br><sup>10</sup> <i>"For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, And do not return there without watering the earth And making it bear and sprout, And furnishing seed to the sower and bread to the eater; <sup>11</sup> So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; It will not return to Me empty, Without accomplishing what I desire, And without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it.</i> | The WORD goes and returns. It accomplishes Gods desire. It succeeds. It is sent.                      |
| <a href="#">Isaiah 45:23</a><br><sup>23</sup> <i>"I have sworn by Myself, The word has gone forth from My mouth in righteousness And will not turn back, That to Me every knee will bow, every tongue will swear allegiance.</i>  | The WORD goes out. It is able to turn back, but will not.   |
| <a href="#">Ezekiel 1:3</a><br><sup>3</sup> <i>the word of the Lord came expressly to Ezekiel the priest, son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the river Chebar; and there the hand of the Lord came upon him.</i>  | The WORD of the Lord came expressly to the prophet.   |

## *Six things the rabbis taught about the Memra*

Now the Rabbis taught six things about the Memra, all of which are reflected in John's prologue.

### **1. The Memra was distinct from God, but the same as God. John 1:1-2; Isaiah 9:8**

<sup>1</sup> *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.* <sup>2</sup> *He was in the beginning with God.*

The rabbis recognised this paradox, but were unable to explain it.

Isaiah 9:8

<sup>8</sup> *The Lord sends a message against Jacob, And it falls on Israel.*

### **2. The Memra was the agent of creation. John 1:3; Psalm 33:6**

<sup>3</sup> *All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.*

God spoke and it came into being. Genesis 1; Hebrews 11:3

Psalm 33:6

<sup>6</sup> *By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, And by the breath of His mouth all their host.*

### **3. The Memra was the agent of salvation. John 1:10-12; Hosea 1:7**

<sup>10</sup> *He [the Word] was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him.* <sup>11</sup> *He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him.* <sup>12</sup> *But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name*

Notice here that:

- 1) The Word came in visible form.
- 2) The world in general did not recognize Him.
- 3) His own Jewish people did not receive Him.
- 4) But individual Jews and Gentiles who recognized Him became the children of God and received their salvation from the One who is the Agent of Salvation. *To them He [the Word] gave the right to become children of God.*

Hosea 1:7

<sup>7</sup> *"But I will have compassion on the house of Judah and deliver them by the Lord their God, and will not deliver them by bow, sword, battle, horses or horsemen."*

### **4. The Memra is the means by which God becomes visible. John 1:14; Genesis 15:1-17**

<sup>14</sup> *And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us.*

In John 1:14 the word “dwelt” in Greek is not the usual Greek word used for “dwelling”, but the Greek word used for “to tabernacle” - skeinei. This is derived from the Hebrew word Shechinah, but as there are no “sh” sounds in Greek it became skeinei. The very concept of the word was borrowed from the Hebrew concept. Literally it means the Memra “tabernacled” among us.

In Ex. 40:34 we read, *Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.* So the Shekinah tabernacled with Israel.

The in the book of Ezekiel, in chapters 8-11, we find the account of the Shechinah of the Lord departing from Israel in four stages. And now, after an absence of about 6 centuries, in the incarnation of Jesus, the Shechinah of the Lord had returned to earth, not in the form of light, fire or cloud but in the form of a man of flesh who tabernacled among us.

Look at the account of the transfiguration in Mark 9:2-8, which you will find in section 85 on page 69 of the harmony.

The physical body of Jesus veiled His glory - look up Hebrews 10:19-20.

<sup>19</sup> *Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus,*  
<sup>20</sup> *by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh,*

So we see the writer to the Hebrews referring to Jesus body as a veil. It was a veil that normally hid His glory.

At the mount of transfiguration, three of Jesus’ apostles were allowed to see the Shechinah shine through Jesus’ flesh. And this is what John is referring to when he says “*and we saw His glory*” in verse 14.

So again we see a parallel between what John is expressing about the Word and what the rabbis taught about the Memra. The rabbis taught that the Memra is the means by which God becomes visible, and we find that Jesus, the Word is the means by which God has made himself visible.

#### **5. The Memra was the means by which God signed His Covenants. John 1:17; Ex 24:1-11**

<sup>17</sup> *For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ.*

For Example:

- The Abrahamic Covenant Genesis 15:17
- The Mosaic Covenant Ex 24:1-18
- The New Covenant was signed and sealed by Jesus’ blood being shed on the cross as described in Hebrews chapters 8-10.

#### **6. The Memra is the agent of revelation. John 1:18; Genesis 15:1; Hebrews 1:1-3**

<sup>18</sup> *No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him. (John 1:18)*

<sup>1</sup> *The word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, saying, “Do not fear, Abram, I am a shield to you; Your reward shall be very great.” (Genesis 15:1)*

About 100 times in the Old Testament it is recorded that the word of the Lord came to ...

Hebrews 1:1-3 tells us that God has revealed Himself to us in His Son:

*<sup>1</sup> God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, <sup>2</sup> in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. <sup>3</sup> And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,*

One of the sub-themes of John is that Jesus came to reveal the Father to men.

So we find that the six things the rabbis teach about the Memra are also true of Jesus of Nazareth.

And John's point in these 18 verses is that Jesus is the Memra, the living Word, the second person of the trinity who came to fulfil the Jewish Messianic hope.

# I The Introduction of the King

## A. The Arrival of the King (mbs127) § 3 - 19

### 1. The Genealogy of the King, § 3, Matthew 1:1-17; Luke 3:23-38

Now we will deal with the genealogies at this point because genealogies deal with origins – where people came from.

Have you ever noticed how many of the four gospel accounts give us a description on Jesus' birth? There are two of them: Matthew & Luke. And because of their interest in where people came from they give us an account of the birth of Jesus and they also give us his genealogy.

Now each of these two accounts has its own different perspective.

- 1) In Matthew's gospel Joseph plays the active role. Angels speak to Joseph, and we read about what Joseph is thinking.
- 2) In Luke's gospel Mary plays the active role. Angels appear to Mary, and we read about what Mary is thinking.

So this context already tells us that Matthew's genealogy is that of Joseph and Luke's genealogy is that of Mary.

Question: Why do we need these two genealogies? After all Jesus is not the biological descendant of Joseph anyway!

The traditional answer goes something like this: Matthew gives us the royal line, while Luke gives us the real line. What they mean by this is that, according to Matthew's account Joseph was the heir apparent to David's throne and Jesus could have claimed the right to rule through his stepfather as heir apparent. On the other hand, Luke shows that Jesus himself is a direct descendant of David through his mother, Mary.

However the exact opposite is true. Rather than giving us the royal line, we will see that the purpose of Matthew's genealogy is to show that if Jesus' claim to kingship was through his adoption by Joseph, i.e. through Joseph's standing, then Jesus could not be king. If Jesus was in any way the son of Joseph biologically then he could not be king. Nor could he be king by being adopted by Joseph.

To understand Matthew's genealogy we first need to understand that there were two Old Testament requirements for kingship. One was applied to the southern kingdom of Judah with its capital in Jerusalem, and the other was applied in the northern kingdom of Israel with its capital in Samaria.

- 1) The first requirement was that he must be a descendant of David. We see, for example, in Isaiah 7 the account of a conspiracy to destroy the house of David and set up a new dynasty, and God's response through Isaiah is "It shall not stand, nor shall it come to pass". No one outside the house of David can sit on the throne in Jerusalem.
- 2) The second requirement was that he must have divine appointment or prophetic sanction. Anyone who tried to be king without divine appointment would be assassinated. For example, God told Jehu that his line would be allowed to sit upon the throne of Samaria for four generations and four did so. When the fifth one tried to gain



the throne he was assassinated because he did not have divine appointment or prophetic sanction.

The first of these elements is especially important to understanding the need for two genealogies.

**a. Matthew's Account of Jesus' Genealogy, Matthew 1:1-17**

By the way, Matthew broke with Jewish tradition in two ways: first, he skipped names; and secondly, he mentioned the names of Women. Read now the first 6 verses of Matthew's genealogy and notice his reference to women. ... How many women does he mention? The four women he mentioned are Tamar (v3), Rahab (v5), Ruth (v6), and Bathsheba (v6 – some translations simply have "her"). These women were not the most significant in the line of the Messiah. For example, Sarah was left out.

Yet there is a reason for naming these four and not others.

- 1) First of all: What do these four women have in common? They were all Gentiles. Early in his gospel Matthew hinted at a point which he makes more clearly later: while the primary purpose of the coming of Yeshua was for the lost sheep of the house of Israel, the Gentiles will also benefit from his coming.
- 2) Secondly, three of these women were involved in specific sexual sins: one was guilty of adultery, one was guilty of incest, and one was guilty of prostitution. Again Matthew hinted at a point he makes clearer later: that Jesus came for the purpose of saving sinners.

However these are not the key points of this genealogy.

Read verses 6-11 of Matthew 1. Matthew begins his genealogy with Abraham in verse 2 and traces it to King David in verse 6. In verse 11 he comes to Josiah and Jeconiah. In verse 12 he continues from Jeconiah down to Joseph the stepfather of Jesus. So Matthew records that Joseph was a direct descendant of David through Solomon, and also through Jeconiah. This is very significant because it means that Joseph was not the heir apparent to David's throne.

This is evident from Jeremiah 22:24-30. Turn to Jeremiah 22 and we'll read verses 24 - 30.

*<sup>24</sup> "As I live," declares the Lord, "even though Coniah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah were a signet ring on My right hand, yet I would pull you off; <sup>25</sup> and I will give you over into the hand of those who are seeking your life, yes, into the hand of those whom you dread, even into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and into the hand of the Chaldeans. <sup>26</sup> "I will hurl you and your mother who bore you into another country where you were not born, and there you will die. <sup>27</sup> "But as for the land to which they desire to return, they will not return to it. <sup>28</sup> "Is this man Coniah a despised, shattered jar? Or is he an undesirable vessel? Why have he and his descendants been hurled out And cast into a land that they had not known? <sup>29</sup> "O land, land, land, Hear the word of the Lord! <sup>30</sup> "Thus says the Lord, 'Write this man down childless, A man who will not prosper in his days; For no man of his descendants will prosper Sitting on the throne of David Or ruling again in Judah.' "*

The name Coniah is a short form of the Jeconiah. Because of the kind of man he was, God pronounced a curse on him in the days of Jeremiah. The curse has several facets to it, but the last one is so significant that God called upon the whole earth to hear it (v29). Then in verse

30 the curse is spelled out: no descendant of Jeconiah will ever have the right to sit on the throne of David.

Until that time the first requirement for kingship was membership of the house of David. From that time onward the requirement was to be a member of the house of David apart from Jeconiah.

Joseph was a descendant of David, but through Jeconiah and so he was not the heir apparent of David's throne. If Jesus had been the real son of Joseph, he too would be disqualified from ever sitting upon the throne of David. And because Joseph is not the heir apparent to the throne, Jesus could not claim the right to sit upon David's throne by virtue of his adoption by Joseph. That is why, unlike Luke, Matthew began his gospel with the genealogy. His purpose is to present the Jeconiah problem, and then to solve it by means of the virgin birth.

The virgin birth is the emphasis in the Greek text in verse 16, where it says "*Mary, by whom Jesus was born*". The word *by whom* is feminine singular showing that Jesus was born of Mary only and not Mary and Joseph. Matthew then continues his gospel with an account of the virgin birth.

Also notice in verse 16 Matthew points to his theme, and the purpose of the genealogy, when he says: *Mary, by whom Jesus was born, who is called the Messiah*. His theme is: Jesus the Messiah, the king of the Jews. So he opens his gospel with the genealogy proving that Joseph is not and could not be the father of Jesus, the Messiah. And he ends it with a pointer to the virgin birth which he is about to describe.

#### **b. *Luke's Account of Jesus' Genealogy: Luke 3:23-38***

Luke has a different theme and begins his gospel with the virgin birth and gives Mary's genealogy in chapter 3.

Unlike Matthew, Luke followed strict Jewish custom and procedure in that he mentioned no women and he skipped no names. The rule against naming women in a Jewish genealogy raises an obvious question: "If you wished to trace a woman's line but could not use her name, how would you do it?" The answer under Jewish law is, "You would use the name of her husband".

But that raises a second question: "If the husband's name appears in both his own genealogy and that of his wife, how could someone tell which one was which? The answer is quite simple. In the English language we do not use the definite article before a proper name. We don't say "the Susan". However in both Greek and Hebrew this is quite allowable. Every name in Luke's genealogy has the definite article, "the", in front of it, except one, the name of Joseph. Someone reading the original language can tell by the missing "the" that this is not Joseph's line but the line of his wife, Mary.

Now read verse 23 of Luke 3. In the NASB here it reads correctly, "*being, as was supposed, the son of Joseph, the son of Heli*". Heli was Mary's father. The Jewish Talmud refers to Mary by her Jewish name, Miriam, and calls her "the daughter of Heli", just as Joseph is called the son of Heli here in verse 23. The rabbis, when they read this genealogy, knew by the missing definite article that this was not the genealogy of Joseph, but was that of his wife, Miriam or Mary, and so referred to her as "the daughter of Heli".

Luke begins with his own time and worked back into history. Now read verse 31. In verse 31 we find that Mary was a descendant of David through his son Nathan. (Jeconiah was in the line of Solomon, not Nathan.) As a result, Mary did not have the blood of Jeconiah running

through her veins. She was a descendant of David apart from Jeconiah. Since Jesus was the real son of Mary, he too is a descendant of David apart from Jeconiah. Therefore he fulfilled the first Old Testament requirement for kingship: He was a member of the house of David, apart from Jeconiah.

However, that doesn't solve the entire problem. At this point of Jewish history there were a great number of other Jews who were descendants of David apart from Jeconiah. So Jesus was not the only one to fulfil this requirement. Why should he be the king and none of the others? The answer lies in the second Old Testament requirement for kingship, that of divine appointment. When we get to section 5, the announcement of His birth to Mary, we will see that Jesus also fulfils that requirement. And since, by virtue of His resurrection, He now lives forever, He will have no successors.

### c. *Titles of the Messiah*

Before we leave the genealogies, we should notice that they contain four of the many titles of the Messiah. Read Matthew 1:1 and Luke 3:38. In Matthew 1:1 he is called the son of David and the son of Abraham. In Luke 3:38, he is called the son of Adam and the son of God. And each title emphasises a different aspect of his person.

Calling him the son of David means that Jesus is the King.

Calling him the son of Abraham means that he is a Jew.

These happen to be the particular themes of Matthew's gospel. Matthew emphasises the Jewishness and the kingship of Jesus: He is the King of the Jews. That is why it is Matthew alone who records the coming of the wise men asking the question: *Where is he that is born the King of the Jews?* (Matt. 2:2).

His third title is the son of Adam. This title emphasises that Yeshua was a man. This happens to be the particular theme of the gospel of Luke. Luke's theme throughout his gospel is Yeshua the Messiah, the Son of Man. That is why only Luke records such things in his human development as: how he grew up, how he gained his knowledge, and his subjection to parental authority. More than the others, Luke emphasised how he was hungry and how he was tired. All of these things are trademarks of his humanity. Jesus the son of Adam means that he was a man.

His fourth title is the son of God. This means that Jesus is God. From a Jewish frame of reference, being the son of God means that He is God. This is the theme of the gospel of John. John's theme is: Jesus the Messiah, the son of God. That is why John began his gospel with the words, *"In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God."* And at the end of his gospel John records Thomas finally saying to Jesus, *"My Lord and my God"* (John 20:28). Between these passages John emphasised continually the deity of the Messiah – Jesus is God.

These four titles portray the Messianic person as the Jewish God-Man, the King.

### d. *Conclusion*

We have learned that there were two requirements for kingship in the Old Testament:

- Membership of the house of David apart from Jeconiah.
- Divine appointment.

In Matthew's account we see that, although Joseph is a member of the house of David, he is not and could not be Jesus' father because he is of the line of Jeconiah.

In Luke's account we see Jesus is of the line of David apart from Jeconiah and therefore meets the first requirement for kingship.

The second requirement, divine appointment, will be met in section 5.

## 2. The Advent of the King

### a. *The Annunciation of the Birth of John to Zacharias, § 4, Luke 1:5-25*

Read verses 5-7.

There are two key individuals in this section: Zacharias, whose name means "God Remembers", and Elizabeth, which means "the oath of God". Their names together emphasise that "God remembers his oath", and when we get to section 8, the birth of John, we will see a play upon the names of these two people.

#### (1) The Service of Zacharias as Priest

Read verses 8-10.

In 1 Chronicles 24, King David divided the tribe of Levi into 24 courses or divisions. Each division would take turns for a period of 2 weeks to take care of the daily functions of the temple rituals.

- There was 1 high priest
- 24 Chief Priests
- 24 Divisions of common priests

The duties of the common priests were chosen by lot and it was quite possible for a priest to have only one chance in his entire lifetime to function in the temple for a two week period. Zacharias was a common priest of the division of Abijah.

We see from verse 6 that Zacharias and Elizabeth were part of the believing remnant of the day. *They were both righteous in the sight of God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and requirements of the Lord.*

Zacharias' function for two weeks, twice a day, was to burn incense (v9). Every morning and evening he took a hot coal from the Altar of Sacrifice outside the building in the courtyard and brought that hot coal into the first room of the Temple building, the Holy Place. He then set that hot coal down on the altar of incense that stood in front of the thick curtain that separated the Holy of Holies from the Holy Place. After setting the coal down he dropped some incense on it causing a sweet smelling smoke of incense to ascend and penetrate through the thick veil into the Holy of Holies to be a sweet-smelling savor, a sacrifice to the Lord within the Holy of Holies.

Because of the incident that occurred in Leviticus 10 when the two sons of Aaron burned incense improperly and were smitten dead the teaching of the rabbis in the days of Zacharias was that if the priest burned incense improperly then he would also die right there. There is a Jewish legend that before the priest went into the Holy of Holies, a rope was tied on his leg in case he was stricken dead so that his body could be pulled out by that rope. But before death would come, an angel, the Angel of Death, would appear standing on the right side of the Altar of Incense.

## (2) The Appearance of the Angel

Read verses 11-17.

While Zacharias burned incense we see in verse 10 the whole multitude waiting outside were in prayer. Then in verse 11, *an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing to the right of the altar of incense*. Zacharias was troubled: because of what he had been taught he expected to die. *Fear gripped him*. However, the message of the angel was not one of judgment and death, but one of blessing and new life to come.

Although they remained childless and had grown elderly, the angel announced to Zacharias that his wife would conceive and bear a son. He was to call the son's name John (v13). In Hebrew that name is Yochanan, which means "grace". Then the angel told him some things about the son he would father (verses 15-17).

In these verses we learn about John himself, and we learn about his task, and the purpose of his task. There are 6 things. Can you list them?

i. *John's position: he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, v15*

ii. *John is to be a Nazarite from birth, v15*

The Nazarite vow was usually voluntary. Only two people in the Old Testament were called to be Nazarites from birth: Sampson & Samuel. Sampson proved unfaithful to his Nazarite vow, but Samuel proved faithful. Now John the Baptist is the third person appointed to be a Nazarite from birth. This is why he will drink no wine or liquor (v15). Nazarites abstained from anything of the grape.

iii. *He would be filled with the Holy Spirit while yet in his mother's womb, v 15*

iv. *His task will be this: He will turn many of the sons of Israel back to the Lord their God, v16*

He would begin a repentance movement and many Jewish people would turn from their sin to God by means of the preaching of John.

v. *It is he who will go as a forerunner before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers back to the children, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous, v17.*

His task in particular was to be the Messiah's forerunner and to be the herald of the King. He was to prepare the way for the Messiah.

vi. *to make ready a people prepared for the Lord, v17*

The purpose of John's task was to have a group ready that were repentant and ready to believe on the Messiah once the Messiah was identified. (See also Acts 19:4.)

## (3) The Doubt of Zacharias

Read verses 18-20. After being told all this good news, what was Zacharias' response? After being told all this good news, *Zacharias said to the angel, "How will I know this for certain? For I am an old man and my wife is advanced in years*. And the question was an expression of his unbelief. And because he spoke in unbelief Gabriel responded that Zacharias would speak no more until the birth of his son and the fulfillment of the promise. And so it happened.

Read verses 21-22. Because the conversation with the angel had taken so long, the people outside were wondering what had become of him. If the legend about the rope was true, perhaps they were beginning to tug on the rope to see if there was any response. When he did come out they recognised that he had seen a vision, but he was unable to tell them about it because he was mute.

Read verses 23-24. Here we see that the promise was fulfilled and Elizabeth rejoiced that her reproach had been taken away.

## b. *The Annunciation of the Birth of Jesus to Mary, §5, Luke 1:26-38*

### (1) The Appearance of the Angel

Luke records how the angel Gabriel was sent to Mary to inform her about the coming birth of the Messiah. Verses 26-27 read: *Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the descendants of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.*

In the sixth month, that is, six months after Elizabeth became pregnant with John, the same angel, Gabriel, who had announced the birth of John to Zacharias, now announced the birth of Jesus to Mary. At this point Mary was living in Nazareth in Galilee.

The passage clearly emphasizes that Mary was a virgin. She was betrothed to a man named Joseph, who was of the house of David. Mary, of course is an Anglicized form of her name. In Hebrew her name was Miriam.

In verse 28 the angel said to her, *Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you.* She was greeted by the angel as one who had received special grace from God in that she was going to become the mother of the Messiah.

According to verse 29, *Mary was very perplexed at this statement, and kept pondering what kind of salutation this was.*

### (2) Gabriel's Message to Mary

The angel's message to her, in verses 30-33, was that she would conceive and bear a son in her virgin state. God would become a man in the person of Yeshua, her son.

The angel then announces several things concerning this Son of Mary.

- His name would be Yeshua, which in our language is translated as Jesus. Yeshua means "to save", or "salvation", or "saviour". As Joseph would be told, the child was to have the name "Salvation" because He would *save His people from their sins*.
- *He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High.* This means He would be God.
- *And the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David.* Here is the fulfilment of the second of the two Old Testament requirements for kingship: divine appointment. He is the only one who fulfilled both Old Testament requirements.
- *He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end.* Since He, by virtue of His Resurrection, now lives forever, He will have no successors.

### (3) Mary's Question

At this point Mary raises a question: *How can this be, since I am a virgin?* (NASB, v 34) The ASV has a more literal translation of her question: *How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?* And the word "know" here is a Jewish idiom for sexual intercourse between a man and a woman.

Zacharias' question was different: *How will I know this?* Or "How can I be sure this is going to be so?" Zacharias' question was arising out of unbelief or doubt. But Mary did not question the angel's word. Her question was not, "How will I know this is true?" Her question was merely a matter of "how." The question was seeking knowledge: How will this happen in light of the fact that she is a virgin?

In verse 35 the angel answers that very question: *The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God.* It will come about by the power of God at work through the Holy Spirit, and there will be two consequences of this: the child will be holy, that is sinless; and he will be the son of God, that is, he will be deity, he will be God.

Notice here that the child will be holy because of the overshadowing power of the Most High. A common misconception is that the virgin birth was the only possible way to keep Jesus from inheriting the sin nature. Those who hold this go on to teach that the sin nature is transmitted through the male only. But the text does not teach this. The reason the child is holy is the work of the Holy Spirit.

The reason for the virgin birth is simply that this is the way God chose to do it, not because it is the only way he could do it! God hinted at the virgin birth in Genesis 3:15, and clearly stated in Isaiah 7:14 that the Messiah would be conceived in the womb of a virgin. This would be the unique credential of the Messiah.

Gabriel also told Mary (v36-37) that her cousin, Elizabeth, was pregnant and already six months along.

#### (4) Mary's Submission

Having the prophecy and the answer to her subsequent question, the passage ends with Mary's response in verse 38: *And Mary said, "Behold, the bondservant of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.*

Mary submits herself to the will and care of God, which is wise in light of three things:

- The Old Testament penalty for a betrothed woman who was found to be pregnant was to be stoned to death. Mary would have to trust God that the death penalty would not be applied to her.
- She had to trust God concerning the reaction of the community. She was in danger of being expelled from the community and ostracised for the rest of her life.
- She had to trust the Lord concerning her relationship with Joseph. Joseph, being a righteous man, did contemplate divorcing Mary in light of her pregnancy.

She trusted the Lord to work out all these important things.

#### (5) Summary of the angel's message to Mary

- The Incarnation would be a man
- His name was to be Yeshua, or Jesus
- He would be great
- He would be the Son of God
- He would fulfil the Davidic Covenant.



The Davidic Covenant promised four eternal things, all of which will be fulfilled by Jesus according to the angel:

- An eternal throne
- An eternal house or dynasty
- An eternal kingdom
- An eternal descendant

The first three are guaranteed because of the fourth: the seed of David culminates in a Person who is himself eternal.

Note again that the angel's announcement that *the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David* means that Jesus fulfils the second Old Testament requirement for kingship: divine appointment.

#### c. *The Visit of Mary to Elizabeth, § 6, Luke 1:39-45*

Mary chose to go in haste from Galilee to Judah to visit Elizabeth, who was 6 months pregnant.

When Mary greeted Elizabeth the baby leapt in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. And in Lk 1:15 we are told that John *will be filled with the Holy Spirit while yet in his mother's womb*. Being filled with the Holy Spirit means being controlled by the Holy Spirit. Being controlled by the Holy Spirit, she gave a prophetic utterance.

1. First, in v42, because Mary was specially favoured by the God, she was blessed among women.
2. Second, a special blessing to the babe Mary was now carrying in her womb.
3. Third, Elizabeth already knew who that baby was, because she said, *and how has it happened to me, that the mother of my Lord would come to me*. By the way, Mary is only the mother of Jesus' humanity, and not of his divine nature. That is something he has had for all eternity past. Here Elizabeth is recognising Mary to be the mother of the Messiah.
4. Fourth, she pointed out that as soon as the sound of Mary's greeting reached her ears, the baby leaped in her womb for joy.
5. Fifth, Mary was blessed because she believed there would be fulfilment of what the Lord had spoken to her.

This section shows the extent of Mary's faith and faithfulness.

#### d. *The Song of Mary, § 7, Luke 1:46-56*

The song of Mary shows two things: it shows the extent of Mary's personal spirituality; and it shows her knowledge of the Scripture because her song is very similar to Hannah's song in 1 Samuel 2:1-10.

In her song, Mary makes two main points: firstly, God was her saviour; and secondly, the one coming, the Messiah, was coming to fulfil God's promises to Abraham. And the song can be divided into two parts: what God did for Mary; and what God would do for Israel.

## (1) What God did for Mary

She begins, *my soul exalts the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Saviour*. The kind of people who need a saviour are sinners, so this statement clearly shows that Mary was a sinner. This is contrary to the teaching of those who teach that Mary was perpetually sinless. She declared that God was her Saviour, showing that she was saved by God from her sins.

Then she uses the word, “for”, three times, emphasising that she was praising God because of what He had done for her.

### i. *For He has had regard for the humble state of His bonds slave*

She had a humble state because, economically she was on the poverty level, and socially she lived in Nazareth, a town that had a poor reputation. Nevertheless, God looked on her with grace.

### ii. *For behold, from this time on all generations will count me blessed*

In spite of her low beginnings, from then on all generations would call her blessed because she was the mother of the Messiah.

### iii. *For the Mighty One has done great things for me*

The greatest thing was that she was going to be the mother of the Messiah.

Mary concludes this section of what God did for her by praising God: *And holy is His name. AND HIS MERCY IS UPON GENERATION AFTER GENERATION TOWARD THOSE WHO FEAR HIM.*

## (2) What God would do for Israel

In the second part of her song (v51-55), where she declared what God would do for Israel, she used the term “he has” seven different times.

### i. *He has done mighty deeds with His arm;*

### ii. *He has scattered those who were proud in the thoughts of their heart.*

### iii. *He has brought down rulers from their thrones,*

### iv. *And has exalted those who were humble.*

### v. *he has filled the hungry with good things;*

### vi. *And sent away the rich empty-handed.*

### vii. *He has given help to Israel His servant, In remembrance of His mercy, As He spoke to our fathers, To Abraham and his descendants forever.”*

Here she connects the coming of the Messiah with the Abrahamic Covenant. She will give birth to the One who will fulfil the Abrahamic Covenant.

This passage ends in verse 56: *And Mary stayed with her about three months, and then returned to her home*. These three months were the 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 9<sup>th</sup> months of Elizabeth’s pregnancy. So Mary left Elizabeth’s home just before John was born. We are not told why she left before John’s birth, but perhaps it was to avoid attracting attention to herself at this point. By this time she was herself three months pregnant and still in an unmarried state,

though betrothed to Joseph. When John was born it aroused great attention in the town and perhaps Mary did not wish to draw any of that attention to herself.

e. *The Birth of John, § 8, Luke 1:57-80*

(1) The Birth of John

When Elizabeth gave birth the whole town was stirred up and her neighbours and relatives rejoiced with her because she had been barren for so long and now gave birth to a son.

Now in Jewish tradition, even to this day, a male child is not named at birth, but is only named on the eighth day, the day of his circumcision. The Jewish custom today is to name the child after a relative who has already passed away. However, the custom in Jesus day was different. They did name the child after a relative, but the relative did not have to be dead, so all the people who came to the circumcision of John assumed that the parents would name the child Zacharias, after his father.

Since Zacharias was unable to speak, Elizabeth took the initiative and pointed out that he would not be named Zacharias, but would be named John (v60). This was contrary to Jewish custom as her neighbours pointed out in verse 61: *“There is no one among your relatives who is called by that name.”*

The neighbours then tried to go over Elizabeth’s head, assuming that Zacharias would certainly follow Jewish tradition and would overrule his wife. *They made signs to his father* (v62). The fact that they made signs implies that not only did Gabriel strike Zacharias mute, but also deaf.

Since he could not speak at this point, he asked for a writing tablet and wrote, *“His name is John”*, confirming what Elizabeth has said. Although it was contrary to Jewish custom, they named the child John in obedience to the command of the angel.

In response to his obedience, Zacharias’ tongue was loosed and he was able to speak, and he praised God.

Because of these peculiar events, the stories spread all over the country (v65-66). People recognised that something unique had taken place. They knew that God was with John and that he would have a special role in God’s plan, although they did not know what it was.

(2) Zacharias’ Prophecy

Verse 67 states that *Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied*. His prophecy can be divided into two sections: verses 68-75, where he spoke of the Messiah; and verses 76-80 where he spoke of his son, John.

i. *Regarding the Messiah*

Zacharias also connects the coming of the Messiah with the Jewish covenants.

In verse 69, the Davidic covenant: *And has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of David His servant*. 2 Sam. 7:11b-16; 1 Chron. 17:10b-14.

In verse 73, the Abrahamic covenant: *the oath which He swore to Abraham our father*. Genesis 12:1-3, 7; 13:14-17; 15:1-21; 17:1-21.

And verse 77 is a reference to the New Covenant: *To give to His people the knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of their sins*. The remission of their sins was to be a product of the New Covenant (Jer. 31:34).

Earlier it was pointed out that the name, Zacharias, means “God remembers,” and the name Elizabeth, means “the oath of God.” Here is a play on the meaning of both names. The last line of verse 72 states: *And to remember His holy covenant*. And the first line of verse 73 states: *the oath which He swore to Abraham our father*. The two names together teach that God remembers his oath.

In verses 71 & 74 Zacharias sees the physical salvation of Israel from her enemies. This is something which the prophets foretold, and which Israel is expecting the Messiah to accomplish. See for example Ezekiel 28:25-26; 34:23-31.

Verse 75 speaks of Israel serving God *in holiness and righteousness*. This will be the result of their spiritual salvation which is also the subject of verse 77.

So the coming Messiah will bring both a physical and a spiritual salvation to Israel, and it will happen according to the promises of the Davidic covenant, the Abrahamic covenant, and the New Covenant.

## ii. *Regarding John*

In verse 76, Zacharias spelled out exactly what John’s task was going to be: *And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go on before the Lord to prepare His ways*. This says two things about John. First, he will be a prophet of God. John was the last of the Old Testament prophets. A prophet was one who received direct revelation from God (Deut. 18:18), and John received it. Secondly, he was to *go before the Lord*, and in fulfilment of Malachi 3:1, he was the Messiah’s forerunner and the herald of the King.

Then, in verse 78 he says: *Because of the tender mercy of our God, with which the Sunrise from on high will visit us*. The term “sunrise” is a reference to the “sun of righteousness” of Malachi 4:2. It paints a picture of the morning star signalling the coming of the day. Even so, John will be like the morning star that will precede the coming of the sun of righteousness.

Now when the sun of righteousness arrived, He was to benefit two different groups of peoples, as is evident by the change of pronouns in verse 79: *TO SHINE UPON THOSE WHO SIT IN DARKNESS AND THE SHADOW OF DEATH, to guide our feet into the way of peace*. Notice “those”, and “our”. “Those” refers to the Gentiles *who sit in darkness and the shadow of death*. The Messiah will benefit them because it was prophesied that He will be the light of the Gentiles (Isaiah 9:2). They were in darkness because they did not have the light of divine revelation. “Our” refers to the Jewish people. He will bring peace to Israel.

The passage ends in verse 80 summarizing John’s development. He grew both physically and spiritually, and *he lived in the deserts until the day of his public appearance to Israel*. Growing up in the desert meant that he was separated from the Judaism of his day. This in turn meant that when his message finally came it was different from the Judaism of his day.

John was called to be the forerunner of the Messiah and the herald of the King.

*f. The Announcement of the Birth of Jesus to Joseph, § 9, Matthew 1:18-25*

The emphasis of this section is clearly on the virgin birth, and three different times the virgin birth is emphasised.

1. First, in verse 18 it says: Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: when His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. This makes it very clear that she was pregnant before there were any sexual relations between Joseph and Mary.
2. The second time this is emphasised is in verses 22-23: Now all this took place to fulfil what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: "Behold, the virgin shall be with child and shall bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which translated means, "God with us." The fact that Matthew is quoting from Isaiah 7:14 clearly shows that first century Judaism understood Isaiah's prophecy to speak of a virgin birth. For Matthew of course, this is the solution to the problem of the Jeconiah curse (Jer. 22) raised by his genealogy.
3. The third time the virgin birth is emphasised is in verse 25: *but kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son; and he called His name Jesus*. Even after the wedding ceremony they had no sexual relations whatsoever until after the birth of Jesus. The very word *until* points out that after Jesus was born they did have sexual relations. This statement falsifies the claim of one section of Christendom that teaches the perpetual virginity of Mary. In fact Mary produced at least six more children, four sons and at least 2 daughters according to Matthew 13:55-56.

In § 5 about the announcement of the birth of Jesus to Mary, we noted that in submitting to God, Mary would be trusting Him to work out her relationship with Joseph, because Joseph would naturally assume the obvious: that Mary had been unfaithful.

Indeed, verse 19 states: *And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, planned to send her away secretly*. Joseph had already made up his mind to divorce her privately, concluding that she had been unfaithful. It is at this point that the angel appeared to him with a message containing three essential points (v 20-23):

1. First, he was to proceed with the wedding, even though she was pregnant.
2. Secondly, he was to believe Mary's story that the child has been conceived by the Holy Spirit, and not through an immoral relationship.
3. Thirdly, he was told: *She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins*. In other words, as Matthew emphasises in verses 22 and 23, what was happening was according to God's plan which he announced through the prophet Isaiah (7:14).

As Mary was told, so Joseph was told that the child's name was to be Jesus, though no one in Mary's line or Joseph's line had that name. Jesus and John had this in common. A name was given that no one else had on either side of the family. The name Jesus in Hebrew was actually Yeshua, which comes from a root meaning "to save". And according to the angel, the reason he was given this name was that he shall save his people from their sins.

Joseph's response was to obey the command of the angel in every point (verses 24 & 25). He married Mary, kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son, and he named him Jesus.

#### *g. The Birth of the King, § 10, Luke 2:1-7*

A decree issued by Quirinius commanded all to be enrolled for tax purposes in their own city. Since both Mary and Joseph had their origins in Bethlehem rather than Nazareth, they were forced to go down to Bethlehem, even though Mary was in the advance state of pregnancy. But this was in keeping with prophecy, for it was only in Bethlehem that the Messiah was to be born.

Based upon what Luke tells us, together with Matthew, and historians like Josephus we are able to pinpoint fairly accurately the year in which Jesus was born. There are a number of specific clues:

1. Herod died in 4 BC and when Jesus was born Herod was alive. Therefore Jesus was born before 4 BC.
2. The census decreed by Quirinius (Luke 2:2) was issued in the year 8 BC. Mary was with child when she and Joseph went up to Bethlehem in response to the decree. So Jesus was born after 8 BC.
3. Josephus recorded that Herod left Jerusalem in 5 BC, never to return. He spent the final months of his life in Jericho and died there. We know from Matthew 2 that the wise men met with Herod while he was still in Jerusalem, so that must have been sometime between the years 8 BC and 5 BC, before Herod left Jerusalem for Jericho.
4. Furthermore, Josephus also stated that Herod was away from Jerusalem fighting a war throughout the year 8 BC. Therefore the wise men could not have met him during that year. They must have met Herod sometime during the years 7 BC and 6 BC.
5. In Matthew 2, Jesus is already about 2 years old and Herod was still in Jerusalem. So Jesus was 2 years old sometime during the years 7 BC and 6 BC.

Putting all these clues together, the conclusion is that Jesus was born some time during the years 7 & 6 BC. It was probably closer to 7 BC, because Jesus was approximately 2 years old at the time the wise men arrived and this was prior to 5 BC when Herod left the city.

When Jesus was born, He was wrapped in swaddling clothes. This will prove to be something significant as we will see in the next section.

#### *h. The Announcement to the Shepherds, § 11, Luke 2:8-20*

Now we come to section 11, The Announcement to the Shepherds.

Now verse 8 says: In the same region there were some shepherds staying out in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night.

Some people use this verse to argue against a December birth date for Jesus. They say you would not have sheep out in the fields in December. But in Israel, December is a good time to have sheep out in the fields. In Israel the rain is fixed to a specific period of time. The rains begin to fall at the end of October, they will begin to peter out in March and die out by mid-April. From mid-April to mid-October no rain falls. By October all the fields have been burned brown by the sun. Once the rains begin to fall in October the fields begin to turn green, and it is a good time to take the sheep out into the fields. So this verse cannot be used to argue against a December birth as some do. Mind you, I am not arguing in favour of a December 25th birth, only that this verse cannot be used against it. While we have enough information

to determine that he was born somewhere between 7 and 6 BC, we do not have enough information to know when during the year he was born. We simply don't know.

More significant is what happened on this occasion. In verse 9, the Shekinah glory appears in one of its more familiar Old Testament forms, in the form of light. An angel also appears for the purpose of interpreting the light. And the angelic message to the shepherds includes three things.

1. Do not be afraid of what you are seeing
2. They are told that a saviour has just been born. Israel has had many saviours in her history. In the book of Judges, the judges of that book were all saviours. What makes this one different? That is his third point at the end of verse 11.
3. This one is Christ the Lord. This is the Messianic Saviour

And now the shepherds are instructed to go and find the child, but there are many babes in Bethlehem. How could they know they have found the right one? Verse 12 says, "and this is the sign unto you". The word sign by itself does not always require the miraculous, but it minimally requires something unusual, something out of the ordinary to serve as a sign. And there are two elements in this sign.

1. Number one, you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes
2. And number 2, lying in a manger.

The fact that the baby will be lying in a manger tells the shepherds not to look into private homes, but to look inside stables. Now stables were not separate buildings like the western farmers have, but caves in the hill country where Bethlehem was located were used for housing animals on bad weather days. If it was not a bad weather day they could be kept outside. And so looking among the stable caves, and being shepherds by profession they would know where these stable caves are. He is using their profession to help find these caves. Why was he born in a stable cave? As section 10 shows, when they came into Bethlehem looking for better accommodation, there is no room for them in the "Holy Day Inn" and so they had to find different accommodation, and what they found was a stable cave. That is not the totality of the clue.

The clue also says you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes. That is not merely baby cloth. The same word is used of burial cloth. You will find a baby wrapped in burial cloth. Now why burial cloth? Because interspersed among the caves were caves used for burial purposes. So, in these burial caves, in niches, in the walls you can still see to this day, they would store burial cloth. If a person died within the town, they would bring the body out, wrap the body up in strips of cloth from the cloth stored in the stable caves, and then take him to be buried, either in a different cave, or in a cemetery below the ground. Because he was born in a stable cave, Mary and Joseph had to make use of that which was most readily available, which was burial cloth. And the symbolism should not be missed. On the first day of his life he was wrapped with the same kind of cloth they will wrap him in again on the last day of his life, with burial cloth. And that shows the purpose of his birth. All of us here were born to live. This one here was born to die, and it is signified by being wrapped in burial cloth.

At this point, in verse 13, a host of angels become visible with a twofold message in verse 14.

1. Concerning God: Glory to God in the highest, and



## 2. Concerning man: on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased

Many of our popular Christmas hymns, while they are rather nice songs, in other ways they are not always accurate Biblically. One such hymn says, “hark the herald angels sang”. Notice, in verse 13, it does not say they sang it, they merely said it. It was a proclamation made, but not put to music.

As a result of these two clues they were able to find the right child, and in verses 15 – 20 we have the first recorded Jewish worship of the Messianic King, initiated, notice, by means of the shekinah glory.

Now verse 19 says, *Mary treasured all these things, pondering them in her heart.* And Luke is the one who recorded this, noticing the women’s side of things. Later on she will reveal these things to Luke.

## 3. His Infancy and Childhood, § 12-19

### a. *The Circumcision, § 12, Luke 2:21*

Notice, as it was with John, what happens to the herald will happen to the king. Although they know what the name is, they do not officially give him the name until he is 8 days old. *When eight days had passed, before His circumcision, His name was then called Jesus, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb.*

Now circumcision was commanded under two Old Testament covenants: First of all the Abrahamic Covenant, and later again by the Mosaic Covenant. None the less they carry the same meaning for the persons involved. In the Abrahamic Covenant circumcision was intended for Jews only and for those who were part of the household of Israel. Circumcision under the Abrahamic Covenant was a sign of that covenant, a sign of Jewishness. In the Mosaic Covenant it was obligatory for both Jews and Gentiles. Those Gentiles who would wish to partake of the covenantal blessings would have to undergo circumcision. It was the means of submission to the Law. That is why Paul warns the Galatian Gentiles that if they submit to circumcision they have to keep the whole Law, and not just this one commandment. And he was circumcised under both covenants, the Abrahamic covenant which made it a sign of his Jewish identity, and under the Mosaic covenant, the means of submission to the Law.

With the Messiah’s death the Mosaic Covenant came to an end. Today there is no basis for circumcising any one, either Jews or Gentiles, on the basis of that covenant, the Mosaic Covenant. But the Abrahamic Covenant is an on-going, eternal covenant. It still requires Jews, even Jewish believers to circumcise their sons on the eighth day. So while people condemn Paul for circumcising Timothy, the Bible itself makes no such condemnation. Now, in Acts 15 Paul would not allow the circumcision of Titus. In Acts 16, he himself initiates the circumcision of Timothy. What is the difference? Timothy had Jewish origins and Titus did not, which put Timothy under different covenantal obligations.

Now one more thing about circumcision: It shows the faith and obedience of the parents, not the child. If at the age of 8 days the child had a choice to make he would probably choose to forego the experience. That is one reason why baptism is not the anti-type to circumcision. Baptism is to show the faith and obedience of the one being baptised, not the parents. In the Bible, the anti-type to circumcision of the flesh is the circumcision of the heart, not baptism.



| CIRCUMCISION       |                 |                       |
|--------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| Basis (Covenant)   | Obligatory for  | Meaning               |
| Abrahamic Covenant | Jew Only        | Sign of Jewishness    |
| Mosaic Covenant    | Jews & Gentiles | Submission to the Law |

**b. The Presentation, § 13, Luke 2:22-38**

**V22-24** Verse 22 says: *when the days for their purification according to the law of Moses were completed*. This specifies that this happened 40 days after he was born.

In keeping with the Mosaic Law (Leviticus 12), if a woman gave birth to a baby girl she is unclean for 80 days and then she undergoes the cleansing process. When she gives birth to a son she is unclean for 40 days and then undergoes the cleansing process. Because it was Mary's first-born son, she goes there for two reasons:

**Reasons**

**Purification of Mother**

1. The first reason is for the ceremonial purification of the mother. And the offering she provides in verses 23-24 is a pair of turtle doves or two young pigeons. One was used for a sin offering and one was used for a burnt offering.

**House of David – a stump**

But the fact that she offers up birds shows her economic status, because you were only allowed to offer up birds if you could not afford anything better. This shows that they were on the poverty level. And that fulfils, for example, Isaiah 11: 1, where he prophesies that the Messiah will appear only when the mighty House of David has been reduced to a stump compared to what it was in Jesse's day.

**Redemption of 1<sup>st</sup> born**

2. The second purpose was for the redemption of the first born because the first born of both humans and animals belonged to God (Exodus 13:11-15). And therefore the kosher animals would be sacrificed. For un-kosher animals there would be a substitute sacrifice. And for the firstborn human males there would be the payment of a price.

That is the purpose of this visit: to cleanse the mother, and to provide the redemption of the first-born male.

**Encounter**

But here they have an encounter with two individuals. Again notice that this is Luke's account giving us a woman's and a Gentile perspective.

**V25-35**

**Simeon**

The first one is Simeon in verse 25, who *was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel*. He was a member of the remnant of that day, a believer. And God had revealed to him that, no matter how old he might get, he would not die until he sees the Messiah personally. He recognises in this forty day old baby the fulfilment of that promise. So now he is ready to die.

**Yeshua**

He says in verse 29: *Now Lord, You are releasing Your bond-servant to depart in peace, according to Your word; for my eyes have seen Your salvation, which You have prepared in the presence of all peoples*. Now keep in mind here he was not speaking English, he wasn't speaking Greek, he was speaking Hebrew, and there is a play upon words here. The play upon words has to do with his statement: *my eyes have seen Your salvation*. In Hebrew the

name, Yeshua, means salvation. If you just add another character to the end of the same root word it becomes Yeshuah, which means salvation. So my eyes have seen your Yeshuah, your Jesus.

Notice, in verse 32, that he is coming to benefit the same two groups that Zacharias sang about.

A Light to  
the  
Gentiles

1. *A LIGHT OF REVELATION TO THE GENTILES.* Again, the Gentiles were those sitting in darkness with the shadow of death. Upon them the mercy and the light will shine.
2. *The glory of Your people Israel.*

A sign to be  
opposed for  
Israel

Up until now all this has been positive, but now he has something negative to say to Miriam, to Mary, in verse 34. *Behold, this Child is appointed for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and for a sign to be opposed.* The point is that he will become a new point of division in the Jewish family. For those who believe: a rising; for those who don't believe: a falling. He will prove to be the stone of stumbling and the rock of offence, and one against whom people will speak.

Sword

Then he says: *—and a sword will pierce even your own soul— to the end that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed.* And the sword will begin to pierce in section 61-64 when she sees the leaders of Israel rejecting him, and it will pierce its deepest when she sees him hanging on the cross. Yet the death of Jesus is essential so that the hearts of people could be revealed.

V 36-38

Anna

The second encounter is with a woman, as Luke will report. In verses 36 to 38 there was one Anna. Anna is the Hellenised form for the Hebrew Hannah. She was a prophetess. Notice what tribe she was from: Asher. This is supposed to be one of those so-called ten lost tribes. She is not lost. She knows where she is. And the concept of the ten lost tribes is simply a myth, and Jewish people today come from all twelve tribes. Notice how old she is. She is over a century old, because she had been a widow for 84 years. She was married for 7 years previously to that. And so by this point she is over a century old.

Messiah

And she also recognises in this 40 day old baby the messianic person. And in verse 38, she *continued to speak of Him to all those who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem* – to the believers, to the members of the remnant.

### c. *His Infancy, § 14 - 16*

Now we come to his infancy in sections 14-16, beginning with the visit of the magi in section 14.

#### (1) *In Bethlehem, § 14, Matthew 2:1-12*

When I first studied this passage it began to raise some questions in my mind. And the more I thought about the passage the more questions it raised.

V 1-12

As we read this passage, see what questions it raises for you.

Questions

Questions raised by this section:

- What are magi?
- How many were there?
- Why was all Jerusalem troubled?

- Who were the magi talking to in verse 2?
- Where is the east?
- Why Jerusalem? Why did they choose to come to Jerusalem?
- How do they know:
  - About a king of the Jews?
  - About the Jewish concept of the Messiah?
- Why do they want to worship a Jewish king?
- What is this star?
- How did they know it was His star? Or, what do they mean by calling it His star?
- How did its appearance indicate to the magi that the king of the Jews had been born?

**Number**  
**Jerusalem**  
**troubled**

First of all, in verse 1, how many magi were there? Notice we don't know how many there were – there were at least two because the word is plural – maybe 2, maybe 20, maybe 200, maybe 2000, we don't know. But there were enough of them to cause the whole capital to be stirred with excitement. We read in verse 3: *When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.* That implies more than just two or three.

**magi**

Now what are magi? Our Christmas song calls them kings, and they are pictured on Christmas cards as kings, but they are not called “kings” anywhere in the passage. They are called “magi”, or wise men. It is a word that means astrologer.

**east**

They came from the east. Where is the east? It is Mesopotamia or Babylon.

What we have here is an unknown number of Gentile astrologers coming from the east, from Mesopotamia, from Babylonia to Jerusalem with their question: where is he who is born the king of the Jews?

And this raises even more questions, such as:

1. Being Gentiles how would they even know about a Jewish messianic concept?
2. Even knowing about the birth of a Jewish king, why would they want to come and worship him? After all there were Jewish kings in the Old Testament and Babylonian astrologers in the Old Testament, and they didn't want to worship Jewish kings then, why now?
3. And does this passage authenticate a form of Christian astrology when the Bible forbids any such dabbling?

**Star**

Now how did they know about a Jewish Messiah? The first clue is in the second half of verse 2: by the star that they saw in the east. And the basic rule of interpreting the Bible is simply this. We always interpret the Bible literally unless there is something in the context that tells us we cannot take it that way.

What do we learn from the text about this star? Do you notice anything unusual about it that might cause you to think it is not an ordinary star?

There are five things about this star that tell us it is not an ordinary star.

His star

1. First of all the star is called *His star*. Notice the possessive pronoun at the end of verse 2. Why should one star in the sky be singled out as His star? This was uniquely Messiah's star in a way that is not true of any other star he himself created. This is His private star.

Appears & disappears

2. Secondly, the star appears and disappears on at least two occasions. At least twice it appears and disappears – maybe more than that, but minimally two times. First we are told that it appeared to them in the east. Then we are told that it appeared to them in Jerusalem.

Moves east

3. Thirdly the star moves from east to west. Its second appearance is west of its first appearance.

Moves south

4. But fourthly it also moves from north to south, guiding them from Jerusalem to Bethlehem.

Hovers over one house

5. And then fifthly, it comes down and hovers over one house in Bethlehem. Any little star that would hover over one house in Bethlehem would end up destroying this entire planet!

Shekinah

It is not an ordinary star as we think of a star. Now the Greek word for star has a root meaning, which is radiance or brilliance. What we have here is what we have with the Jewish shepherds: the Shekinah Glory in the form of a light up in the heavens, somehow signalling to them that this is the birth of the messianic King.

Magi's profession

Now keep in mind that in those days astronomy and astrology were not separate disciplines. If you studied one you knew the other. If you were a student of astronomy you were also a student of astrology. These were not separate sciences. So if anybody would notice a new light up in the heavens it would be these men. This was their profession. And just as God used the profession of the Jewish shepherds to find the right stable cave, he now used the profession of these astronomers to notice a new light up in the heavens.

That is the first clue. They saw the star, which was God's Shekinah Glory, and they recognised it as the Messiah's star.

Messiah

Daniel

But being Gentiles, how would they know about a messianic king? Of all the prophecies about the first coming, of which there are quite a few, only one gives a timetable for the first coming, and that is Daniel 9:24-27 where Daniel spells out how many years will transpire before the coming of the Messiah. Unlike other books of the Old Testament, the book of Daniel was not written in Israel. It was written in Babylon. In fact, half of the book of Daniel is not Hebrew, the Jewish tongue, but is Aramaic, the tongue of the Babylonians. And as you read through the book of Daniel, you will see two things that become relevant to Matthew chapter 2.

1. First of all you will notice that Daniel became the head of the Babylonian school of astrology, not because he practiced astrology. As a Jew loyal to the Mosaic Law he would not dabble into astrology. He became the head only because of the lack of spirituality and insight of Nebuchadnezzar.

Nebuchadnezzar noticed some unique abilities that Daniel had and he made the assumption that Daniel was a superior astrologer and made him the head of the whole Babylonian school of astrology. But he never received any revelation from the stars, only the creator of the stars, the God of Daniel.

2. The second thing is that one day Daniel saved the lives of all the wise men of Babylon, because when they could not interpret the dream that Nebuchadnezzar had, he sentenced all of them to be executed. Among the ones who were sent to be arrested and executed was Daniel. He asked for an audience with the king and interpreted the king's dream, and by so doing he saved the lives of all the others. And no doubt this resulted in many of them turning away from worshiping the stars and beginning to worship the creator of the stars, the God of Israel. And they had in their possession a book written by their former head, Daniel, to give a timetable for the first coming. So when they saw this new light up in the heavens, and the timing was right, they took that to be the sign that the king has been born.

#### Balaam

Now, while Daniel did give a timetable for the first coming, he did not connect the coming with the concept of a star. For that there is one other Babylonian connection. It is found in the book of Numbers chapters 22-24, the story of Balaam. Now Balaam's reputation was: whomsoever Balaam blesses will be blessed, and whomever he curses will be cursed. Because of his reputation the king of Moab hired Balaam to curse the Jews, and four times he went up on a high mountain and looked down on the Jewish encampment, four times he opened his mouth to curse the Jews, all four times God took over his tongue and he ended up blessing the Jews instead. In these four blessings he issues several messianic prophecies, including the one in Numbers 24:17: *A star shall arise out of Jacob to whom the sceptre of kingship will be given.* It was Balaam who connected the Messiah with a star and kingship, and as a result you have both the star connection and the kingship connection. And by profession Balaam was an astrologer. Twice we are told he also came from Babylonia – Numbers 22:5; Deuteronomy 23:4.

From the Balaam connection they knew that a star would be the sign of His coming, and from the Daniel connection they knew when to expect Him, so when they saw the light in the heavens they took that to be the sign and they went to Jerusalem.

#### Jerusalem

Now why Jerusalem? Why did they go to Jerusalem? As this context shows, while they had the knowledge of Daniel they didn't have the knowledge of the book of Micah. Micah 5:2 prophesied that Bethlehem, not Jerusalem, would be the place of his birth. They did not know this. For them the logical place for the Messiah to be born would be the Jewish capital, and that was Jerusalem, not Bethlehem. And to Jerusalem they came, causing a stir, a stir that reached the ears of Herod the Great.

#### Herod

Now for his own reasons he calls in the Jewish leaders who tell them about the Micah 5: 2 prophecy in verses 5 & 6. And verse 7 says Herod privately called the wise men to learn of them exactly what time the star appeared. How long has it been since the star first appeared? As section 15 points out in verse 16, it appeared two years earlier. So again notice, by now Jesus was already two years old. For his own reasons Herod sends them to Bethlehem to find the child and report back to him.

#### How to find Him in Bethlehem?

But as they head down for Bethlehem, how do you find one two year old? Do you go from house to house, door to door? If you see one how do you know it is the right one? Well the star that previously disappeared now (in verse 9) re-appears: *and the star,*

*which they had seen in the east, went on before them until it came and stood over the place where the Child was.* It now moves north to south. No need to go from house to house, or door to door. The light came down to show them where the child was now living.

And verse 11 says they came into the house. Not a stable cave where the shepherds found him, but now in a private home.

Gentile  
worship

And here in verse 11 you have the first recorded Gentile worship of the messianic King. Both the first Jewish worship and the first Gentile worship were inaugurated in the same way, by means of the Shekinah Glory.

gifts

They leave behind three types of gifts, each of which contains symbolic meaning.

1. Gold is a symbol of kingship. He is a king.
2. Frankincense is a symbol of deity. He is God.
3. Myrrh is a symbol of death and sacrifice.

The kingship is found in Daniel 2; the frankincense in Leviticus 2:2; 5:11; and the death and sacrifice in Mark 15:23; and John 19:39. The first line of the Christmas song is not Biblically correct: we three kings of orient are. The last line is: God and king and sacrifice.

Now they were to report back to Herod, but in verse 12 they were warned by God in a dream not to do so. They returned to Babylonia by a different route.

## (2) In Egypt, § 15, Matthew 2:13-18

Now § 15 is his infancy in Egypt.

Now Matthew's theme of kingship is Herod's fear. While historically he is called Herod the Great, Arnold calls him Herod the Paranoid. In his older age he became more and more paranoid, always afraid that somebody out there was trying to take his throne away. Because of his suspicions he killed three, maybe four of his own sons. He also killed his favourite wife, Maryumni, because of suspicions of conspiracy. Now Cesar Augustus, who was Cesar in those days once said in light of Herod's actions, it was safer to be Herod's pig than Herod's son. Herod was a nominal convert to Judaism and so he did not eat pork, so if you were Herod's pig you were in pretty safe hands. But to be Herod's son was an occupational hazard.

Now he has concluded that there is a two year old boy in Bethlehem conspiring to take his throne away. So he sends him army into Bethlehem to kill every male child from the age of two years and under. Why two years? Because verse 16 tells us that is the information he got from the wise men – how long ago the star first appeared to them.

This is Matthew telling us the story from Joseph's perspective, and an angel appears to Joseph warning him to flee the city. And so they flee into the land of Egypt where they live for the next year or two.

We already know they are on the poverty level. How would they get the money to travel and live there for that length of time? The answer is the gold, frankincense and myrrh. They finally have some resources.

## (3) In Nazareth, § 16, Matthew 2:19-23; Luke 2:39

His infancy in Nazareth. Matthew's account, in verse 9, says: *when Herod died*, that is about a year to two years after this, once again Matthew telling the story that an angel appears to Joseph informing him and telling him to return to the land.

Now no single son of Herod got all of his inheritance, but it was divided among three of his sons, one of which was Archelaus, who receives Samaria and Judea. As bad as Herod was, Archelaus was considerably worse in many ways. In fact at the time of his crowning he had 3,000 Jews killed. It was done in the temple compound during Passover.

Galilee was under the jurisdiction of Herod Antipas, who was a milder man. And so Joseph chooses not to go back to Bethlehem, but to go to Nazareth.

And that creates a negativism later on because while Judeans looked down upon Galileans, Galileans looked down on the people from Nazareth. And the saying, "can any good thing come out of Nazareth" was a common saying of that day. The rabbis used to say, if you want to get rich go north, if you want to get wise go south. There were no rabbinic schools in the Galilee at that period of time. That began only after the first Jewish revolt failed. All rabbinic schools were in Judea, and that is where you would get your wisdom. And so, being from Nazareth will create a future negativism, even one of his future disciples will say: Can any good thing come out of Nazareth.

#### (4) Four Different Ways the New Testament quotes the Old

Have you ever wondered what it means when the New Testament says that some event was to fulfil what was spoken by one of the prophets? Has the Old Testament passage quoted ever raised questions for you as to how it is relevant, or how it is fulfilled?

What do we mean when we say that a particular event is the fulfilment of prophesy?

The way Matthew quotes from the Old Testament is exactly the way that the Jewish people of the first century would themselves quote the Scriptures.

In sections 14-16 we have come across several quotes from the Old Testament. And now is a good time to look at them again to see how many different ways the New Testament quotes from the Old.

There are four different ways the New Testament quotes from the Old. And in each case we will read the Old Testament passage and then the New Testament passage that quotes from it. And as we do, I want you to look out for what the Old Testament passage is saying in its own context. Then compare that with what the New Testament is describing.

1. Now turn to in your harmony to section 14 (Matthew 2:1-12). And in verses 5 & 6 he quotes Micah 5:2. So look up Micah 5:2 as well.

What is Micah saying? What is the literal meaning of this verse in its context? The literal meaning of Micah 5:2 is that whenever the Messiah is born he will be born in the town of Bethlehem. Furthermore it specifies, not the Bethlehem of the Galilee, but the Bethlehem of Judah.

Now with the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem of Judah we have the literal fulfilment of literal prophecy. The literal prophecy is the child will be born in Bethlehem. The literal fulfilment was when Jesus was born in Bethlehem, and notice that it is a point for point fulfilment. Every point of the prophecy was fulfilled.

This first category is called: **Literal prophecy plus literal fulfilment**.

2. The second category is called: **literal plus typical**, meaning typology. **Literal event or object plus typology**. Now go down to § 15 and look at verse 15. Here he quotes Hosea 11:1 where he says, "out of Egypt did I call my son". Now, if we go back to the prophecy as found in Hosea 11:1 we will notice in the context it is not really a prophecy. It is referring to something that was long history. He is referring to the time of the Exodus. Now Israel as a nation is the national son of God according to Exodus 4:22-23. And so when God brought Israel out of Egypt at the time of the Exodus, he called his son, Israel, out of Egypt. And so the literal meaning of Hosea 11:1 is a reference to the exodus, which was already a historical event by the time Hosea wrote his book. Often what you have in the Old Testament is elements which are historical or elements which refer to things, like the things of the tabernacle, and they become typologies of something future. Now we have in this passage in Matthew, God calling his unique son, his messianic son, out of Egypt. And so the verse is quoted not as a fulfilment. It was not a prophecy to begin with. It is quoted as a type. And the exodus of Israel out of Egypt was a type of the messianic son also coming out of Egypt. And that is literal plus typical.



3. The third category is called: **literal plus application**. Meaning **literal event or prophecy plus application**. This you will see in the same section, § 15, in verses 17 & 18, where he quotes Jeremiah 31:15. Now if you go back to Jeremiah 31:15 and look at the context, it is not dealing with a prophecy per se, nor is it a long history as it was for Hosea 11. It's a current event of Jeremiah's own time. What he is referring to is the event where the Jewish young men were being taken into Babylonian captivity. The fighting had already ended. And now all the POW's were being taken north to Babylon. And as they were going north from Jerusalem they were going by the town of Ramah. Ramah is where Rachel was buried. If you go to Israel today they take you to Bethlehem to show you Rachel's tomb. That, however, is an incorrect location. She is actually buried near the town of Ramah. And Rachel in the Old Testament also became the symbol of Jewish motherhood. And the Jewish mothers of Ramah came out weeping for sons they will never see again. As Jeremiah observed the scene of weeping Jewish mothers for sons they will never see again he makes that statement: *"A voice is heard in Ramah, Lamentation and bitter weeping. Rachel is weeping for her children; She refuses to be comforted for her children, Because they are no more."* So again, the literal meaning of Jeremiah 31:15 refers to young men being taken into captivity while the mothers of Ramah were weeping for sons they will never see again. What you often have in the New Testament is simply one point of similarity. And because of that one point of similarity the verse is quoted as an application. And the point of similarity here is that once again you have Jewish mothers weeping for sons they will never see again. Everything else is quite different. What happens in Jeremiah happens in Ramah, north of Jerusalem. What happens in Matthew is south of Jerusalem in Bethlehem. Furthermore in Jeremiah these sons are not dead, they are merely taken into captivity. Whereas in Bethlehem the sons are dead. Furthermore the sons in Jeremiah were young men who were POWs, formerly fighting men, whereas the sons in Bethlehem were infants two years old and under. Everything is quite radically different, but you have that one point of similarity: Jewish mothers weeping for sons they will never see again, and the verse is therefore quoted as an application. Literal plus application. That, by the way, is how the Joel 2 passage and the Acts 2 passage fits. Because, look at the prophecy of Joel 2. Whatever Joel prophesied, not one thing of his prophecy happened in Acts 2. The one thing that happened in Acts 2, the coming of the Spirit resulting in the speaking of languages or tongues, Joel did not even mention. The one point of similarity between Joel and Acts 2 is an outpouring of the Spirit resulting in an unusual manifestation. But the manifestations of Joel are different from those of Acts 2. So, again, what happens in Acts 2 Joel did not mention. And what Joel did mention is not happening in Acts 2. And furthermore Joel says the Spirit will be poured out on all flesh, in that context all Jewish flesh. But in Acts 2 only 12 men, or at the most 120 people, but no more than that, which hardly fulfils the necessity of all flesh. And so the fulfilment of Joel 2 is still future, waiting for Israel's national salvation when these events occur. But you have one point of similarity again: an outpouring of the Spirit resulting in an unusual manifestation, and the text is quoted as an application. Literal plus application.

4. Then we come to a fourth category called: **Summation**, or Summary. A **summary plus a literal fulfilment**. This is found in § 16 at the end of verse 23: *to fulfill what was spoken through the prophets: "He shall be called a Nazarene."* You can hunt through every single page, every single phrase in the Old Testament and you will find no such prophecy. (And those who want to point to Isaiah 11:1 will find only one word that has a similarity, otherwise there is no point of similarity between Isaiah 11:1 and Matthew 2:23). Now, where you have a situation where it says, "spoken by the prophets", and you don't have an exact quotation, it fits into a fourth category. He is not trying to quote what a specific prophet said, he is simply summarising what the prophets had to say. And normally the clue, although this will not be true in every specific case, but it will be true in most cases, is when the word prophet switches from singular to plural. Now go back to section 14 and notice verse 5, "written by the prophet" singular. The § 15 verse 15, "spoken by the Lord through the prophet" singular. Verse 17, "by Jeremiah the prophet", singular. When you come to section 16 and verse 23: "spoken by the prophets", plural. So again, he is not trying to quote a single prophet as he has up until now, he is simply summarising what the prophets had to say. Now what was a Nazarene in the first century Jewish context? A Nazarene was someone who was despised and rejected. And as we mentioned previously, people living in Nazareth always had to live with this stumbling block because, while Judeans looked down on Galileans, Galileans looked down upon the people of Nazareth. And the saying "what good thing can come out of Nazareth" was a common saying of that day. And in fact Jesus was just that. In fact they used to tell Nazarene jokes back then in place of other types of jokes that we tell today. Was Jesus a Nazarene in that sense? According to the prophets like Isaiah 53, 49; Psalm 22, among others, he was a despised rejected individual. And that is captured in the term "a Nazarene".

And so, when you see the New Testament quoting the Old Testament, you first of all have to go back to the Old Testament original and see what the verse means in the Old Testament context. Then you can see whether it was:

1. A literal prophecy followed by literal fulfilment,
2. Whether it is a literal event or thing that ends up in a typology, (and a major part of typology is in the book of Hebrews where he talks about the Aaronic priesthood, the Melchisedekian priesthood, the Kadesh-Barnea incident, the tabernacle, the temple, the blood sacrifices. He does not deny there was an Aaron, there was a Melchisedek, a tabernacle, a temple – these are all types of a New Testament event. Here you have literal plus typical).
3. Where you only have one point of similarity then it is an application of that passage. (In fact that is the most common way that pastors operate today. If they are expositors they will first of all explain what that passage means in its context and then they will give an application to a modern day situation, not implying that that was what the prophet was speaking about. It is only based upon a point of similarity.)
4. And then fourthly, if you cannot find such a quote that is a good indication that it is a summary. And so that is the way that you can determine how these various passages fit.

Now these were common rabbinic concepts, and there is a term the rabbis used, Pardes, and acronym.

- Pshat – the simple basic meaning of the text
- Remez – a hint
- Drash - exposition
- Sod - secret

These categories were not just used by the New Testament writers. The rabbis also used these same four categories, and their technical term for these categories was the term Pardes.

#### d. *His Boyhood*

##### (1) His Growth, § 17, Luke 2:40

Luke is the only one who gives us the summary of his human development. *The Child continued to grow and become strong, increasing in wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.* Not much detail, but it summarises his human development from the age of four to the age of twelve. Whatever else we want to know about his human development will have to be found in other sources.

From the Biblical accounts we know that he grew up in a Jewish home comprised of Bible believing parents who were faithful to obey the Mosaic Law. So he grew up not only in a Jewish home, but a spiritual Jewish home of that day.

Now the way Jewish boys were trained in those days:

- They began to study the Scriptures at the age of 5 in the Jewish schools.
- At the age of 10 they would begin to study the rabbinic traditions known as the oral law (which I will explain a bit later)
- At the age of 12 they would be apprenticed to a specific profession. Now if they were going to follow their father's profession they would stay at home. If they were going to learn another profession they would be sent away from home to stay with someone that would train them in this new profession. This would begin at the age of 12. If they were to continue to study the scripture and become rabbis, they would be sent to a specific rabbi to be trained for the rabbinate. This would continue from the age of 12 to the age of 30 when they would be ordained.
- At the age of 13 they would receive Bar Mitzvah.

No doubt Jesus underwent the basic training. At the age of 5 he began the study of the Scriptures; at the age of 10 he began to study rabbinic tradition. At the age of 12 he would make a decision concerning his occupation.

That alone does not explain how he knows all that he knows by the age of 12. Here is one example where we can learn things about the Messiah from the Old Testament that are not revealed in the New. So take your Bibles and turn to Isaiah chapter 50. Isaiah's favourite title for the Messiah is "The Servant of Jehovah", or "The Servant of the Lord".

He has several “Servant of Jehovah” passages that run throughout the book. And the one that is relevant to us right now is found in chapter 50:4-9. We will read verses 4-6.

- 4 The Lord God has given Me the tongue of disciples [they that are taught],  
That I may know how to sustain the weary one with a word.  
He awakens Me morning by morning,  
He awakens My ear to listen as a disciple [one that is taught].
- 5 The Lord God has opened My ear;  
And I was not disobedient  
Nor did I turn back.
- 6 I gave My back to those who strike Me,  
And My cheeks to those who pluck out the beard;  
I did not cover My face from humiliation and spitting.

The key verse here is verse 4. As he was growing up, morning by morning, in the wee hours of the morning, he was awakened by God the Father and taken aside to be personally trained for his messianic mission. He was disciplined by God the Father individually on a daily basis.

In verse 5, when he learned that his mission included a great deal of physical suffering he did not rebel against what was being taught.

And in verse 6, when that day came he says: *I gave my back to those who strike me*. He didn't try to shield his back from the whipping scourge. Nor did he shield his face from those who would pull out his beard, because he was uniquely trained for this mission.

Keep in mind that with Jesus we have one person with two distinct natures: a human nature and a divine nature. As to his divine nature, he was always omniscient and knew everything. But, as to his human nature, he had to undergo the same learning experience that we undergo. He had a unique experience of being trained by God the Father. So, by the age of 12 he clearly understood his sonship relationship with God the Father.

That brings us to § 18.

## (2) The Visit to Jerusalem, § 18, Luke 2:41-50

Now sometimes you have people saying this visit was for his Bar Mitzvah. However, Bar Mitzvah occurs at the age of 13, not at the age of 12. But they are following a basic tradition of that day.

Notice it says in verse 41 that his parents went every year to Jerusalem at the feast of Passover, which again shows their clear obedience to the Mosaic Law. There were three festivals out of 7 that they could not observe at home. Passover, Weeks, and Tabernacles had to be observed wherever the tabernacle or temple stood, and ultimately that became Jerusalem. And the parents went every year to the festival, showing their obedience to the Mosaic Law.

And it was a tradition that once a son reached his 12<sup>th</sup> birthday, he was to be taken to Jerusalem for the observance of the Passover that comes after his 12<sup>th</sup> birthday, in preparation for the Bar Mitzvah that will happen at the age of 13. And this they do.

When you travelled in those days you travelled in groups. So when they left the city they made the assumption that Jesus was with the group. After travelling a whole day,

and coming to the first night's campsite, they realised he was missing. It would take a whole day for them to get back to Jerusalem. And once they returned they also took three more days before they finally found him. And in verse 46 we read: *Then, after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers.* The word 'teachers' here refers to those who were experts in the interpretation of the Mosaic Law. He was sitting with those who were experts in the Mosaic Law, *both listening to them*, in the sense that he understood what they were saying, *and asking them questions.*

Verse 47 says: *all who heard Him were amazed at His understanding and His answers.* Normally at the age of 12 you would not be able to understand these things or raise the right questions. And furthermore, they all knew the Nazareth school system was not all that good anyway. But what we see here is the result of his special training by Father on a day by day basis.

And when his mother finally sees him, of course she is greatly relieved, but she temporarily forgets who he is. And she says to him in a typical Jewish mother's way: *Son, why have You treated us this way?* Now, if you know the Jewish community well, you know the tendency of the Jewish mothers is to try to control their kids by laying guilt trips upon them. And that is a common aspect. In fact, I was once told the difference between a Jewish mother and an Italian mother. An Italian mother says to her kids: if you don't finish your food I will kill you. A Jewish mother says: if you don't finish your food I will kill myself. And this is typical of the way that Jewish mothers make their sons feel guilty. The story goes: how many Jewish mothers does it take to screw in a light bulb? Just one who says: that's all right children, I'll just sit here in the dark. And if a mother buys her children two shirts for Hannaker or something, when he puts one on she will say to him: didn't you like the other one? And notice here that Mary does the same thing: *why have You treated us this way?* Didn't you know that your father and I were *searching for you in great distress?* (NIV) – trying to lay a guilt trip on him.

His answer in verse 50 is: *"Why is it that you were looking for Me? Did you not know that I had to be in My Father's house?"* Now, first of all he reminds her that his real father is not Joseph. His real father is the Heavenly Father. Therefore, knowing that she should have known exactly where to look for him: in the temple compound, in the house of his Father.

Notice that the footnote number 3 in your harmony gives you a more literal Greek rendering: *about my Father's business or occupation.* She should have realised that he would be about his father's occupation. Remember he is 12 years old. That's when the Jewish son chose the specific occupation he would pursue. And the point he makes to her is this. She should have known where to look for him: in the house of his father because he will follow his father's occupation.

So, on the one hand he did follow his foster father's occupation and became a carpenter. But secondly, he also followed his heavenly father's occupation, and that's why he will be in the temple compound.

So the events of Isaiah 50:4-9 shows us what happens here. What we see is the results of his training in Isaiah chapter 50, and he clearly recognised by the age of 12 his sonship relationship with God the Father.

...

We don't always have all of the details of the day to day course of his life, but now and again we are given a bit more day by day details. Go back to § 18 for a moment.

Luke 2:41 says: *They went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover*

Verse 43: *after spending the full number of days*. These are two days: the day of the Passover, and the day of Unleavened Bread.

Verse 44 says they travelled a full day journey to the first campsite. That would be the third day.

In verse 45 they returned, and that is the fourth day.

And then verse 46 says it took them three more days to find him. That would be days 5 – 7. So here you have a full week. There are a couple of other times we will see a full week, but that is very unusual.

### (3) His Development, § 19, Luke 2:51-52

- 51 And He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and He continued in subjection to them; and His mother treasured all these things in her heart.
- 52 And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

Notice two things here.

1. Firstly we have here an example that shows that subjection is not a question of superiority or inferiority. It is a matter of divine order. What you have here in verse 51 is the superior sinless God-Man subjecting himself to two sinful inferiors, two sinful human beings because subjection is a matter of divine order. In the husband-wife relationship it is one co-equal subjecting himself to another co-equal because it is a matter of divine order.
2. Secondly, notice in verse 52 he develops in the same four areas that all of us have to develop.
  - a. He develops mentally – he advanced in wisdom.
  - b. He develops physically – he advanced in stature.
  - c. He grew up spiritually – he advanced in favour with God.
  - d. He developed socially – He advanced in favour with men.

These are the same four areas we must develop as we grow up. That summarises human development from the age of twelve to about the age of 30 or more.

## B. The Herald of the King, § 20-23

### 1. The Message to John, § 20, Mark 1:1; Luke 3:1-2

Notice Luke's historical concerns as he records who was ruling where at the time. And based upon all the information he gives us it would now be the year AD 26.

At the end of verse 2 he says: *the word of God came to John, the son of Zacharias, in the wilderness*. The term used for word is different from the term, *logos*, we saw earlier. The word he uses here is *rheima*. *Rheima* is the spoken word. And he hears the spoken word of God telling him to begin the mission for which he was born.

*Logos* is the wider term that refers to the written word, the spoken word, and the incarnate word. *Rheima* is a segment of *logos*. *Logos* is the wide term, and by context we can tell whether it is the written word, the spoken word, or the incarnate word. Here *rheima* would be the spoken element of *logos*.

### 2. The Message by John, § 21, Mark 1:2-6; Matthew 3:1-6; Luke 3:3-6

Mark's particular concern is to present the Messiah as the Servant of Jehovah. Notice here how he makes reference to Isaiah, because that will be the background out of which he writes concerning the ideal servant.

The content of John's message is three things.

1. First of all, repentance – *Repent* in Matthew verse 2. This represents a “back to God” movement.
2. Secondly, his teaching is kingdom centred: *for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*. It is kingdom centred.
3. Thirdly, those who respond to John's message undergo a baptism of repentance. Exactly what baptism means in a Jewish context we will discuss when we get to section 24. So we won't discuss it here. Just keep in mind that baptism was a very common Jewish practice long before it became a church practice. Nor did it begin necessarily with John. It was a common Jewish practice for centuries before the time of John.

We are also told in Matthew's account, in verse 4, that he dresses like Elijah. Earlier we are told that he came in the spirit and power of Elijah, and now we are also told that he dresses like Elijah. And we will see more references to Elijah a bit later.

And he immediately gets a lot of attention. And Mark says in verse 5: *And all the country of Judea was going out to him, and all the people of Jerusalem; and they were being baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins*. (Matthew puts it: *as they confessed their sins*.) Although he is in the desert area, in the Jordan river, just north of the Dead Sea, he gets quite a following rather quickly. And the fact that he is proclaiming the coming of the kingdom of heaven has messianic overtones.

That leads us to section 22, the explanation by John.

### 3. The Explanation by John, § 22, Matthew 3:7-10; Luke 3:7-14

Read the Matthew passage. What do you think of John's response to the Pharisees and Sadducees? Doesn't it look like a strange way to respond to someone who is coming for baptism?

When our eyes are open to see it, we often find the New Testament portraying something that was a common occurrence in first century Israel. This is one of those occasions.

What was common in first century Israel and is coming out in this passage is that whenever there was any kind of messianic movement of significance it had to be investigated in two separate stages.

1. The first stage is the stage of observation. In the first stage a delegation was sent out to do nothing but observe.

At this stage they could raise no questions, they could raise no objections. They could only observe what was being said, taught and done, but nothing could be verbalised out loud.

After a period of observation they were to go back to Jerusalem and give a report, and issue a verdict. The verdict was to answer the question: is the movement significant, or is the movement insignificant? If the movement was considered to be insignificant the matter was dropped. But if they said it was significant then came the second stage.

2. The second stage is the stage of interrogation. And now a second delegation was sent out, but this time they would raise questions, and they would raise objections, looking for a basis to accept or reject a person's claims.

Now because John came preaching the concept of the kingdom, which had messianic overtones, what happens here in section 22 is the first of these two stages, the observation stage.

In verse 7 of Matthew he says in the NASB: *when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism*. Now the Greek preposition translated *for* by the NASB is *epi* and (followed by the accusative as it is here) it means *upon*, *unto* or *to*. The NASB also ignores the personal pronoun. It simply leaves it out.

Here the ASV has a more accurate translation: *when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism* (ASV). They were not coming to John to be baptized! They were coming to his baptism to make observations! And when we get to section 57 we will see that the Pharisees and Sadducees were not baptized by John. So when they came to the baptism of John it was not for the purpose of being baptised by John.

This is the observation stage: They are observing what he is claiming, what he is saying, and what he is doing.

And to them John says (in Luke's account in verse 7): *You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?* <sup>8</sup> *"Therefore bear fruits in keeping with repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham for our father,' for I say to you that from these stones God is able to raise up children to Abraham".* Now when the Pharisees say *'We have Abraham for our father,'* they are referring to the common teaching of the rabbis that all Jews will enter the messianic kingdom. When the Messiah comes all Jews will be resurrected and all Jews will enter into the messianic kingdom. And so merely being a descendant of Abraham, they say, will qualify you for entry into the kingdom, and John is warning them against relying on this teaching.



Furthermore he tells them that what determines the outcome of the judgement is the nature of their fruit. Our entrance into the kingdom is actually on the basis of an internal righteousness from God that is evidenced by our fruit.

Verses 10-14 of Luke's account show us what these Pharisees and Sadducees and members of the Sanhedrin begin to observe. And what they observe is John instructing people to do what goes contrary to their nature and what goes contrary to their office.

- For example, in Luke's account in verse 10, when the multitudes ask, "what shall we do?" he says to them: if you have two coats, give one away. Whatever you have double of, share it with others. It is a tendency for people to want to hoard and collect things, and he tells them to keep what is essential for them to meet their needs and what is left over should be given away.
- Verse 12 concerns the tax collectors. The tax collectors all got their job because, in spite of the ostracization they would feel from the community, they chose to take the job because Rome would allow them to get away with collecting more funds than were necessary. Now John tells them in verse 13: *Collect no more than what you have been ordered to*. And so the very reason they entered the job of tax collector is now to be rejected. They can continue to be tax collectors, but not to collect more than what is allotted by the authorities.
- As for the soldiers in verse 14, why would Jewish soldiers become mercenaries in the Roman army? Because as part of an occupying army they could also become rather wealthy by taking spoil. Now he tells them not to take money from anyone by force and not to practice what they became soldiers to do. This is not dealing with defending the country; this is dealing with becoming wealthy through the spoils of war.

So John is telling people to do things that were contrary to their nature, and were contrary to their office. And when this group went back to report to the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem, as we will see later, the movement of John the Baptist is considered significant.

At this point he underwent the stage of observation, and what happens to the herald will happen to the king.

#### 4. The Promise by John, § 23, Mark 1:7-8; Matthew 3:11-12; Luke 3:15-18

Read the Luke account here, Luke 3:15-18. Now let's focus in on what is happening here.

Verse 16 says that *John answered and said to them all...* Who was he answering and what was their question? *The people*, the crowd that had gathered, *were in a state of expectation*. And they were all wondering if John was the Messiah.

Notice the word *but* in verse 16. In his answer to the crowd's wondering John draws a contrast between himself and the Messiah, and there are two aspects to the contrast. Can you see them?

First the Messiah is mightier than he and he is not even worthy to untie the thongs of the Messiah's sandals.

The second contrast is between John's baptism and the Messiah's baptism.

John points out (in Matt 3:11) that while he baptizes with water, the one coming after him will baptize with two types of baptisms: those who believe, by the Spirit; those who don't believe, by fire.

The focus of the construct here is on a different kind of baptism that the Messiah will do. He points out that unlike John, this one will perform a baptism of fire. He will also perform a baptism of the Holy Spirit. And everybody will be baptised one way or the other.

Those who are baptised by the fire will be the chaff, and the chaff in Matthew's gospel focuses on those who never believe. These are the ones who will be thrown into unquenchable fire. Notice at the end of verse 12 of Matthew, the unquenchable fire is the lake of fire. And so the first kind of baptism, which will be applied to unbelievers, is the baptism of fire.

Those to be baptised by the Spirit are the wheat, which represents believers, and they will be gathered into the barn. While some interpret the barn to be heaven, within Matthew's gospel it is better to interpret it as the messianic kingdom since much of Matthew's focus is on the messianic kingdom.

There is no middle ground. There is no purgatory. Everybody is baptised either by fire, or by the Spirit. Those who believe on the Messiah will have the baptism of the Spirit, and those who reject the Messiah will have the baptism of unquenchable fire.

And Luke says in verse 18: *So with many other exhortations he preached the gospel to the people.*

In other words, Luke records here the content of John's message in summary form and he had many other things to say. But this was the main element of his message and the focus of John's ministry is on the coming of the Messiah.

## C. The Approval of the King, § 24-27

### 1. At His Baptism, § 24, Mark 1:9-11; Matthew 3:13-17; Luke 3:21-23

The baptism of Jesus marks the last act of his private life and the first act of his public life.

Here we need to discuss what baptism was among the Jewish people, because the church has picked up baptism, and as we will see, in subsequent centuries the church lost its vision of what baptism was about.

The Key Words

1. Mikvah – the place of immersion
2. Tvilah – immersion. This is the Hebrew word for baptism. In Jewish circles immersion was the only practice, and today it is the only practice. And so when a Gentile converts to Judaism he undergoes a process of immersion. In Jewish circles there is no sprinkling, and there is no pouring. Only immersion is practiced in Jewish circles.
3. Bapto – to dip, to dye. Used of a piece of cloth dipped into a dye. When you pull it out it has changed its colour, it has changed its identification.
4. Baptidzo – to immerse (the more intensive form). This is the Greek equivalent to the Hebrew Tvilah.

The English word, baptize, is derived from a transliteration of the Greek word. The first translators of the Bible into English were reluctant to translate the word because the church already practiced sprinkling. So they transliterated the Greek word instead.

The meaning of the word in both Hebrew and Greek is immersion.

The meaning of the act or ritual is identification. So when a person underwent immersion he identified himself with a person and/or message or group. A new identification always meant a break with the old identification. So for example, when a Gentile converted to Judaism he was breaking away from his former pagan idolatry, and now identifying himself with the God of Israel and the Jewish people. A new identification always meant a separation from the old identification.

And when John came with his baptism, those who were baptised by him were identified with John's message and they were making a commitment: whoever John points out the Messiah to be, upon him they will believe. This is the identification of John's baptism (You can see this reflected in Acts 19:4).

For believers' baptism we identify ourselves with the death, burial and resurrection of the Messiah.

The meaning of all baptisms is identification. What differs from one baptism to the next is who or what you identify yourself with.

Therefore in the New Testament the only kind of baptism that is practised is immersion.

Furthermore in the New Testament you only find baptism of those who already have believed. There is not one case of infant baptism anywhere in the New Testament.

Now, when Jesus comes to be baptised, Matthew's account in verse 14 says that John would have hindered him because he recognises this one has no need for repentance, but Jesus insists on undergoing the ritual.

So the question is: why did Jesus submit himself to baptism? Let me give you 6 reasons, four of which come out of the context and two of which come from other passages.

1. To fulfil all righteousness. To be identified with righteousness, specifically the righteousness of the Law in that he will fulfil all the required demands of the Mosaic Law.
2. To be identified with the preaching of the Kingdom, John's message. John's message was the kingdom of heaven, and therefore Jesus' baptism by John would identify him with John's kingdom message.
3. You also identify yourself with a group in baptism, and so he would identify himself with the believing remnant being prepared by John.

The remnant is a technical term in the Scriptures. First of all you have all Israel, all Jews, all who are descended from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Now within the larger Israel you always had a smaller Israel, which the prophets called the remnant of Israel. These were the Jews who actually believed what God had revealed through Moses and the Prophets.

Isaiah talks about the remnant in Isaiah 8, for example. He says what distinguishes the remnant from the non-remnant. The remnant believes what God has revealed through Moses and the Prophets, while the non-remnant rejects it and pursues idolatry and occult practices.

Isaiah 8 also points out another point: When Immanuel comes he will become the new point of division between the remnant and the non-remnant. And for the remnant he will be a sanctuary, something precious. For the non-remnant he will be the stone of stumbling and the rock of offence.

The remnant was at times rather small. In Elijah's day only 7,000 people were members of the believing remnant and the vast majority were idolaters. And it continues to be small into the New Testament times.

Now the remnant will consist of those who are responding to John's message. And by undergoing baptism he identifies himself with this group being prepared by John at this point of time.

4. To be made publicly known to Israel. I'll come back to that in a moment. These first four come from the context of the baptism.
5. To be identified with sinners – 2 Corinthians 5:21: *He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*
6. To receive his anointing by the Holy Spirit – Acts 10:38: *"You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.*

Let's go back to the fourth reason: to be publicly made known to Israel. In the context of the baptism the whole triune God makes His appearance.

1. The Son is the person of the Messiah Jesus who is in the water undergoing the immersion.

2. The Holy Spirit comes in visible form in the form of a dove. Notice what the second half of verse 16 says: *and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and lighting on Him*. And to make sure we do not think it is a ghostly form that had the mere appearance of a dove, Luke is a bit more specific. Luke says in verse 22: *the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form like a dove*.

Now the question is: why did the Spirit take on the form of a bird, and why the specific bird of a dove? There is a Jewish background here. The first time the Spirit is mentioned is in Genesis 1:2, where it says: *the Spirit of God brooded over the face of the waters*. And the Hebrew word used is Merechefet. The Hebrew word, merechefet, is used of a mother bird hovering over her eggs just before they hatch. And so Moses presents the Spirit hovering over the waters just before the “hatching” of the dry land. And so, as far as the Genesis account is concerned the Spirit is pictured as doing the work of a bird.

But in the Midrashim, a collection of rabbinic writings, it was the rabbis who defined what kind of bird it was. It was a dove. So in the Jewish mindset of that day the Spirit would be connected with a dove. And so for that reason he comes in bodily form as a dove and descends upon the Son.

3. Now while the Son and the Spirit are visible in some form, God the Father is only present by His voice. In Matthew verse 17: *and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.”* This is the way the Father chose to make himself known, identifying his son with the messianic son of Psalm 2. Why did he do it this way. Here again there is something involving the Jewish mind set.

The Hebrew Bat Kol literally means the daughter of a voice. It became the technical term for God’s voice when he spoke out of heaven. In Jewish theology the prophetic voice ceased with Malachi and God no longer spoke through prophets as of Malachi. The next prophet they were expecting to arrive on the scene would be Elijah the prophet who would tell the Jewish people about the coming of the Messiah.

Between Malachi and Elijah’s second coming there will be no prophet. But this did not mean that God was silent. Periodically God would simply speak out of heaven, but not give a long discourse. What he would say would be one or two sentences and no more.

So in rabbinic writings you have a lot of Bat Kols, a lot of voices from heaven making a simple declaration.

And so in the Jewish mindset this would fit quite well: the Father speaks out of heaven saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.”

And so everything fits the Jewish context of that day, with the Spirit as a dove, and the Father’s voice from heaven.

So in summary, two things happen at Jesus’ baptism:

1. He was identified audibly by God the Father to be the Messianic Son, and
2. He was anointed by the Holy Spirit for service.

Luke points out at the end of verse 23 that he was about 30 years of age. And people often skip the word “about”. He was not exactly 30. He was about 30. He was closer to 32 or 33 already.

## 2. Through the Temptation, § 25, Mark 1:12-13; Matthew 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13

Now the correlation between § 24 & § 25 should not be missed.

In § 24 he was declared to be the Son of God. In § 25 he will be told to prove he is the Son of God.

In § 24 he was baptised to fulfil all righteousness. Now in § 25 that righteousness is going to be tested.

All three gospel accounts note that this is part of a divine plan. Mark verse 12 says: *Immediately the Spirit impelled Him*. Matthew verse 1 says: *Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit*. Luke verse 1 says twice: *Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, ... and was led around by the Spirit*. It was very much part of the divine plan.

Mark simply tells us he was in the wilderness for forty days, he was tempted by Satan, but he provides no details. The details are given only by Matthew and Luke. If you take time to read the two accounts you will notice that the order of the temptations is different between the two accounts. And so, if we want to put the events in chronological order, we will follow Luke's account because Luke alone claims to put his account into chronological sequence. Matthew simply follows his theme, and because his theme is kingship and the kingdom he saves the temptation about the kingdoms of the world for last. But Luke puts it in the correct order as these temptations occurred.

As for the purpose of the temptation, from God's perspective it is to prove the sinlessness of the Son. Satan's purpose is to cause him to sin in order to disqualify him from making the atonement.

Now in this temptation everybody recognises that he plays a representative role with believers. What is often missed is that he plays two separate representative roles.

1. First of all he plays a representative role with Israel – to show that where Israel failed this one Israelite did not fail. We see this in five ways:
  - a. First, the use of the term "Son of God". Israel is called the Son of God in Exodus 4:22-23.
  - b. Both testings occur in the wilderness. 1 Cor. 10:1-13 points out that the journey in the wilderness was a time of testing. Now he is being tested and tempted in the wilderness or desert.
  - c. The figure 40. For Israel it was 40 years. For Jesus it was 40 days.
  - d. The presence of the Holy Spirit. Isaiah 63:7-14 points out that the Spirit was present with Israel in the wilderness. The first verse of each of these gospel accounts points out that the Spirit was with him in the wilderness.
  - e. When Jesus quotes from the Old Testament he only quotes from one book, the fifth book of Moses, the book of Deuteronomy.

Now when people read Exodus, Leviticus and Deuteronomy what they often conclude is the book of Deuteronomy seems to repeat much of the history and many of the laws of the previous three books. And that is why in Greek the name of the book became known as Deuteros Nomos, two Greek words which make up the English word Deuteronomy, which means a repetition of the Law.

That is not the Hebrew name for the book. The English does not follow the Hebrew, but the Greek name.

If all we are seeing is that he merely repeats what he said previously we are missing the point that Moses was making. What Moses does in the fifth book is to take the history and the many commandments and rearrange them in a specific covenantal order.

These are called suzerain vassal treaties. We have discovered several of these in archaeology and they all have the same five or six point outline. And the book of Deuteronomy follows that same 5 to 6 point outline of an ancient suzerain treaty with God being the suzerain and Israel being the vassal. So Deuteronomy is not merely repeating, but is actually God's covenant book with Israel. It is a covenantal arrangement.

And so, because he represents Israel in this temptation, he quotes only from the book of Deuteronomy. And so, in these five ways he plays a representative role with Israel to show that where the people of Israel failed, this one did not fail.

2. Secondly, he will play a representative role with believers in general – to show how we should deal with the issue of temptation.
  - a. This we see from Hebrews 4:15 which says: *One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin*. When Hebrews says he suffered temptation in all points as we do, it does not mean that he suffered every type of temptation that we do any more than we suffer every type of temptation that he did. For example, I have never in my whole life been tempted to change stones into bread. I never will be tempted to do that because Satan won't waste his time tempting me to do something I cannot do anyway. I can always get through those temptations with flying colours and always have victory 100%. For me that is not a real temptation. For him it is a real temptation. He could change stones into bread. On the other hand he was not tempted to waste his whole day watching soap operas on television. So again the word does not mean that he suffered every type of temptation that we do any more than we suffer every type of temptation that he did.
  - b. Rather, the word points means areas, and in 1 John 2:16 there are three areas of temptation: For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.
    - i. The lust of the flesh. In Luke verses 3-4 is the temptation to change stones into bread. This occurred at the end of a forty day fast. At this point his flesh was hungry. It was the will of God the Father to satisfy his hunger at this point of time, but it was not the will of God for him to use his messianic power for self-gratification. This was a temptation in the area of the lust of the flesh.
    - ii. The lust of the eyes. That is in verses 5-8, where he is shown a satanic vision. He could see all of the kingdoms of the world, and Satan says, I will give you my authority over all these kingdoms if you will worship me. Of course it is the will of the Father for the Son to rule over the

kingdoms of this world, but the means of obtaining that authority will be by the cross and not by means of worshiping Satan. And Satan was using a short cut to his messianic goal. This is a good example of illegitimate means to obtain legitimate ends.

- iii. The pride of life. In verses 9-12 he is taken to the pinnacle of the temple at the south east corner, the highest point from top to bottom. And Satan says to him, if you really are the Son of God, prove it to me by jumping off. If he jumped off and floated down people would declare him to be the Messiah. So prove to me that you are the Son of God because Psalm 91 does say if the Messiah stumbles the angels will catch him so he cannot be hurt before his time. This is a temptation in the area of the pride of life.
- c. So he did suffer in the same three areas in which we are tempted, but in his case, without sin.

Luke verse 13 says: *When the devil had finished every temptation* meaning all three areas, *he left Him*. That illustrates another teaching, that if we resist Satan he will flee from us. But it also points out that every victory is temporary. Notice the last phrase: *until an opportune time*. Eventually he will come back and tempt us again. Spiritual warfare is not a one-time battle. It is a life-long conflict.

From this account we learn the proper way to deal with temptation. Notice what he does not do. He does not practice any of the practices such as you see on TBN. He doesn't call Satan any names. He doesn't renounce him. He doesn't bind him. He doesn't walk around him 7 times. He simply quotes Scripture relevant to that issue. And spiritual warfare can be won by at most two elements:

1. Study the word of God
2. Apply it. Knowledge alone can puff up. Unless we apply what we learn we have not won the victory. But we cannot apply what we do not know. The two have to work together: studying, followed by application.

### 3. By His Herald, § 26-27

#### a. *Testimony of John before Leaders, § 26, John 1:19-28*

What we have here is the second stage of the investigation that we mentioned earlier. The first stage was observation. The second stage is interrogation. Now they have come back to John and this time they are raising questions, and three times we are told this is an official delegation from Jerusalem.

1. The first time is in verse 19: This is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent to him priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?"
2. The second time is in verse 22: Who are you, so that we may give an answer to those who sent us?
3. The third time is in verse 24: Now they had been sent from the Pharisees.

So three times we are told this is not just people standing by raising questions. It is an official delegation to find out exactly who John claims to be. And this is the stage of interrogation.



John denies being three things.

1. He denies being the Messiah in verse 21: *I am not the Christ*.
2. In verse 21: *“What then? Are you Elijah?” And he said, “I am not.”*. Notice he denies being Elijah. Here is the third basic connection with Elijah. He comes in the spirit and power of Elijah. He dressed like Elijah. But now he denies being Elijah. There will be other connections further on in our study.
3. Then they ask him: *“Are you the Prophet?”* meaning the prophet of Deuteronomy 18. The rabbis made that a unique prophet but didn’t identify him with the Messiah. Again he answers *“no”*.

So he is not the Messiah; he is not Elijah; he is not the prophet of Deuteronomy 18. And so who is he? *He said, “I am A VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS, ‘MAKE STRAIGHT THE WAY OF THE LORD,’ as Isaiah the prophet said.”* And the point is: he is the forerunner of the Messiah; he is the herald of the King.

And in verse 26 he says: *among you stands One whom you do not know*. John, of course, knows who the Messiah is, but he is not ready to make him known publicly yet. But he is standing there in their midst. And John is not even worthy to undo this person’s sandals.

So at this point he has undergone the second stage, the stage of interrogation. And again, what happened to the herald will happen to the king.

#### ***b. Testimony of John to Jesus, § 27, John 1:29-34***

A day passes as we see in verse 29: The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, *“Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!*

There were two concepts of the lamb in the Jewish minds of the first century.

1. The Passover Lamb of Exodus 12.
2. The Messianic Lamb of Isaiah 53.

And by calling him the lamb he identifies him with the Passover Lamb and he identifies him with the Messianic Lamb of Isaiah 53.

He points out in verse 30: *“This is He on behalf of whom I said, ‘After me comes a Man who has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.’* As to his humanity, of course, Jesus is six months younger than John. But as to his deity, he preceded John.

The reason he began his ministry of baptism is found in verses 32-33: He was told in a previous revelation that one day when he is baptising someone he will see the Spirit of God descending on him, and that will be the Messiah himself. Now obviously he knew who Jesus was already, but the coming of the Spirit when Jesus was baptized was the authenticating sign.

This ends the first major division of the life of Jesus. We now come to the second major division which deals with the authentication of the king consisting of sections 28 – 56. There are two subdivisions: the acceptance of his person in § 28-36; and the authority of the king in § 37-56.

## II The Authentication of the King, § 28-56

### A. Acceptance of His Person, § 28-36

#### 1. In the Belief by the First Disciples, § 28, John 1:35-51

Another day passes, and once again John identifies Jesus to be the Lamb of God.

What happens now is that two disciples of John leave John to become disciples of Jesus. And the first two are John, the author of the gospel, and Andrew, the brother of Peter.

There is an interchange here that is quite strange until you realise the Jewish background behind it. They are simply following him for a while, and finally, in verse 38, Jesus comes out with the question: *“What do you seek?”* And *they said to him, “Where do you live?”*

Who are you seeking? And the answer: where do you live? This fits the way a disciple became a disciple of a specific rabbi. If a man was to become a disciple of a specific rabbi, he would follow the rabbi around for a while – not too close so as to become a bother, but not too far away to be noticed. It might be a matter of hours or days. But eventually the rabbi would turn around and ask the same question Jesus did: *“Who are you looking for?”* And the response is to be: *“Where do you live?”*

If the rabbi said *“that’s none of your business”* it meant that he was rejecting the person as a disciple. But if he said *“come and see”* that meant he was accepting him to be a disciple.

And in verse 39 Jesus says: *“Come, and you shall see.”* And this marks the point that these two men become disciples of Jesus.

In verse 40, Andrew has a brother who becomes a bit more famous, Simon Peter. He tells Peter in verse 41 *“We have found the Messiah.”* And he brought him to Jesus. And so, on this first day he has the first three of his twelve apostles.

Then another day passes, and this time he himself sees Philip and he calls him to discipleship and Philip becomes the fourth disciple.

And in verse 45: *Philip found Nathanael and said to him, “We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.”* And when he mentioned the place of Nazareth notice the response of this future disciple. Nathaniel expresses the typical Galilean attitude: *“Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?”* Philip doesn’t argue the issue but tells him to *come and see*.

And then you have another strange conversation going on. We read in verse 47 that when Jesus sees Nathaniel approaching he makes a proclamation: *an Israelite indeed in whom is no guile*. This is the first time the two men actually meet. Nathaniel responds to him: *How do you know me?* And Jesus answered: *Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you*. And notice Nathaniel’s response: *“Rabbi, You are the Son of God; You are the King of Israel.”*

That’s a rather strange conversation. Now, if I came up to you and said I saw you sitting underneath the apple tree I don’t think you would respond, *“Man, you must be the King of Israel, you must be the Son of God.”* If you are normal you wouldn’t be responding that way. And yet Nathaniel responds this way to Jesus simply saying: *“I saw you under the fig tree.”*

Based upon that why does Nathaniel conclude that Jesus has to be the King of Israel and the Son of God? Let's look more closely. Notice that initially Jesus does not call him by name, but by title (v 47): *An Israelite indeed in whom is no guile*. Now the first one named Israel was Jacob. And Jacob had to flee his home because of one act of guile. Often you hear that he lived a life of guile, but that is not true. He performed only one act of guile, deceiving his father. Even that was at the instigation of his mother. Because of one act of guile, the first Israel, Jacob, had to flee the household. And now you have one of Jacob's descendants, also an Israelite indeed, but this one has no guile.

And of course this is the first time the two men meet. So Nathaniel wants to know: *"how do you know me?"* And then Jesus answered: *"when you were under the fig tree, I saw you."*

Now what is significant about being underneath the fig tree? Now keep in mind that in those days it was not possible for everyone to have a copy of the Scriptures. Scrolls were rare and far between. So what Jewish people did was to go to the synagogue school. The reader would read the text and they would memorise it. Repeating and memorising, repeating and memorising. And then the common rabbinic teaching was that the best place to meditate on what you memorised is underneath a fig tree. And Talmudim records how different rabbis had their classes under fig trees. So Jesus telling Nathaniel he saw him underneath the fig tree wasn't something that was purely accidental.

By seeing him underneath the fig tree and by calling him an Israelite indeed, what Nathaniel began to realise is that Jesus knew the passage of Scripture that he was meditating on. He was meditating on the same passage of Scripture in Genesis 28 where Jacob was fleeing from the household of Isaac because of that one act of guile.

It becomes a bit clearer as we continue. Now Jesus responds to him in verse 50: *"Because I said to you that I saw you under the fig tree, do you believe? You will see greater things than these."* And He said to him, *"Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see the heavens opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man."* Now where else in the Bible do you read about the angels ascending and descending upon the earth? In Jacob's dream in Genesis 28, the dream he had the first night after he left home.

So if you put the whole section together: Jesus knew the very Scripture that Nathaniel was meditating upon. He was meditating on Genesis 28, the chapter on Jacob fleeing and having his dream of angels ascending and descending. And so what Nathaniel realised is that Jesus could read his mind. And because he could read his mind he must indeed be who he claims to be. So there is more involved than something that could have been accidental, "I saw you underneath the fig tree." He knew the very passage that Nathaniel was meditating upon, and therefore Nathaniel concluded: "You are the Son of God. You are the King of Israel."

## 2. The Belief through the first Miracle, § 29, John 2:1-11

Here we have the first of John's 7 signs.

Once again we see a full week transpiring. Go back to § 26. Here we have the first day.

- § 27, John 1:29 *The next day* is the second day.
- § 28, verse 35 *Again the next day* is the third day.
- Verse 43 *The next day* is the fourth day.
- § 29, verse 1 three more days pass making a full week.

So, once again a full week is recorded.

So there is a wedding that takes place in a town called Cana, about 7 miles north of the modern day Cana. And Jesus comes to the wedding and brings with him the five disciples he has with him. Now keep in mind that a Jewish wedding feast lasted for 7 days, and so there are 7 days of festivities. And the normal pattern was to serve the better wines at the beginning. Then once people have had a bit too much and their taste buds are not so sharp they would serve the lesser wines. A terrible thing happened that should not happen at any Jewish wedding. They suddenly ran out of wine. And Mary comes to him with the statement that they have run out of wine and why she came to him is not clear. Maybe she is implying that the reason they ran out of wine is that he brought these five extra men.

He says to her in verse 4: *“Woman, what does that have to do with us? My hour has not yet come.”* The ASV puts it *“Woman, what have I to do with thee”* When you see this statement it is usually made in reference to his coming death. But here the point is that this is not the place for him to go public with his miracles. The place for him to go public would be in Jerusalem, not little Cana. Furthermore, by saying “what do I have to do with you?” he is saying that she no longer has any parental authority over him. So if he does it he will do it out of the need to honour the parent, not out of the need to obey the parent.

Jewish people cannot eat anything until they first wash their hands, and because this is a 7 day festival there will be frequent washing of hands, and so there are great water pots of stone used for their washing rituals before eating. These water pots are filled with water, and by the miracle he performs it is turned into wine.

Furthermore the wine in these pots is far more significant, better than the wine first served. And so the one who served the food was commended (although he probably didn’t know what he was being commended for) for serving the better wine last rather than first which was the normal pattern.

The results are found in verse 11.

1. First of all John point out he manifested his glory, because it shows his power to create. He bypassed all the processes of growing the grapes and pressing the grapes and giving them time to ferment.
2. And secondly, his disciples believed on him. They already accepted him to be the Messiah, but now that faith in his Messiahship is confirmed.

Now verse 11 says: *This is the beginning of his signs.* This is the first miracle he performed. This falsifies other spurious gospels that talk about him performing miracles as a baby or as a child.

This is the first miracle he performs: turning water into wine. In Psalm 104:15 the drinking of wine is a symbol of joy: *And wine which makes man’s heart glad, so that he may make his face glisten with oil, and food which sustains man’s heart.*

### 3. The Sojourn in Capernaum, § 30, John 2:12

This is strictly a family journey, though it will later become his ministry headquarters.

### 4. The Possession of the Temple – the First Passover, § 31, John 2:13-23

Verse 13 mentions the Passover. This is the first of four Passovers mentioned during his public ministry. And four Passovers make up three years. He was baptised somewhere between 4 and six months previously, and that is why we account his ministry to last about three and a half years. But his public ministry lasts exactly three years from this Passover until the last Passover.

Passover was an ideal time to go public with his ministry. Jews from all over the world were gathered in Jerusalem. According to Josephus there could be up to two and a half million of them. And afterwards the news of his ministry would be carried all over the world.

He comes to the Passover and he sees two things: those who are selling sacrifices, and those who are changing money. This was all the business of one man, Annas. Annas was a Sadducee and he turned the temple compound into a private family business. He made his sons the treasurers, and his sons-in-law assistant treasurers. And Josephus, a first century historian, defines him as being a hoarder of money, very rich, and despoiling the other people by violence. Any common priest that would object to the actions that he performs would be beaten up.

**Selling Sacrifices.** According to the Mosaic Law you had the perfect right to bring your own sacrifice into the temple compound. However, it had to be without spot or blemish, and therefore it had to be inspected by the priesthood before it could be sacrificed. If you chose to bring your own sacrifice the priests, who were working of behalf of Annas, would simply find something wrong with your sacrifice. You had two options. You could go back home and get another one, and if you lived near Jerusalem that would be possible. If you lived up in Galilee, which was a three day journey, six days round trip, that would not be practical. So in one part of the temple compound they had these stalls erected with sacrificial animals already stamped with the Sadducees stamp of approval. You could purchase your sacrifice from them and they were sold at highly inflated prices. And the money went into the pockets of Annas and his family.

The second thing is the money changers because the Passover time is the time when everybody had to pay their half shekel temple tax. Now because the Romans were ruling the country they were using Roman coins as legal coins. But Jews could not use that money to give to the temple treasury because they had images of the Caesars. And so they had to change the money into temple currency. And there was always a service charge that was charged in the exchange, and this also went to Annas and his family. And the Pharisees did not like this either and in the Pharisaic writings it is called the Bazar of the sons of Annas.

And Jesus, using his authority begins to drive the sellers of sacrifices out and overturning the money changers' tables. He even pulled out a whip and began scourging them out of the temple compound. They have turned the house of God into a house of merchandise. In verse 17, the disciples applied to this the statement of Psalm 69:9: *For zeal for Your house has consumed me*. More literally this is "My zeal for your house will be the cause of my destruction".

The Sadducees then come to him and ask by what authority does he do these things. He gives a cryptic answer in verse 19: *Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up*. He is talking about his body, but at this point they do not yet understand what he is saying.

They pointed out that the temple was already 46 years in the building. In fact it won't be completed until about six years before it was destroyed. So could he rebuild all this in there days.

By the way, in the year 67 AD the Pharisees got upset at what these people were doing and they raided the temple compound, overthrew the money changers' tables, drove out the sacrifices, and they cleansed it. Three years later the whole temple compound was destroyed in the year AD 70.

## 5. Acceptance in Judea, § 32, John 2:23-3:21

### a. Faith in His Signs

At this particular Passover Jesus begins His public ministry, going public in two ways.

1. In the previous section He publicly claimed to be the Messiah.
2. Now in section 32, in verses 23 – 25, He begins to perform His miracles in public.

From section 32 to section 61 the purpose of his miracles is to serve as signs for Israel, to get Israel to make a decision concerning his Messianic claims. In sections 61- 64, as we will see later, he will change the purpose of his miracles.

The miracles recorded in sections 32-61 were performed to authenticate two things:

1. First of all, his person, that he is the Messiah the prophets spoke about.
2. Secondly, his message: he is offering to Israel the kingdom spoken of by the Jewish prophets.

If they will accept him as the messianic king they will see the kingdom established in their day, but no such kingdom could be established until they first own him to be their messianic king.

So keep in mind that until we get to section 61 the purpose of his miracles is to serve as signs to get Israel to accept his messianic claims.

#### **b. The Explanation to Nicodemus**

Here we have the first of John's seven discourses, the discourse on the new birth.

#### **A Pharisee**

Now verse 1 says: *Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews.*

Calling him a Pharisee right away tells us about his beliefs, because we always use these one-word titles to describe where people happen to be theologically. We do that to this day. For example:

If you call someone a Baptist, what does that mean? One of the fundamentals of the Baptists is that only immersion is the proper mode of baptism, and only those old enough to believe and have believed qualify for baptism.

If you call someone else a Presbyterian you are saying something different. Now you point out that here is someone who believes that infants are allowed to be baptised, and who also believes that only a little dab will do you, a few drops of water is sufficient water for baptism.

There are certain fundamentals that make you a Baptist, Presbyterian, Lutheran, Episcopalian, and so on. Even terms like Calvinist and Arminian are terms that spell out where people are on certain theological issues. There are certain fundamentals that make you one or the other.

The same principle applies to the term Pharisee. There are certain fundamentals that will make you a Pharisee and distinguish you from a Sadducee, from an Essene, from a Zealot, or for some other branch of Judaism of that day.

Among the fundamentals of Pharisaic Judaism in that day was, and I quote: "All Israel has a share in the age to come." What they meant by that is this: Merely being born a Jew would give someone automatic rights to God's kingdom.

That is not true with the Gentiles. If a Gentile wished to qualify for God's kingdom he would have to do one of two things. One option is to obey the 7 laws of the Noahic Covenant of Genesis chapter 9. A second option is to convert to Judaism and also take on the Mosaic Law. A Gentile could qualify one way or the other, but a Jew qualified by merely being born as a Jew.

And there is a saying in the Pharisaic writings that went like this: "Abraham sits at the gates of Gehenna to snatch an Israelite consigned thereto." If by some heavenly beaurocratic mistake a Jew was assigned to go to hell, not to worry. Abraham sits at the gates of Hell and will catch him before he has a chance to fall in, because all Israel has a share in the age to come. So again, merely being born a Jew would confer automatic rights to God's kingdom.

And being born physically was given a specific expression in Pharisaic writings, and that was to be born of water. To be born of water meant to be born physically. And to be born physically as a Jew gave you rights to Messiah's kingdom.

That is the theology of this man who now comes to Jesus because of what he saw and heard in John chapter 2.

### *Unless one is born again ...*

Before the conversation gets too involved, Jesus says to him, unless one is born again, or anew, or from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus said to him: *"How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born, can he?"*

Before the conversation gets too involved, Jesus simply says to him, until he experiences the new birth he will not even see the God's kingdom. And his response is often misunderstood. It is popular among evangelistic style speakers to interpret his response to mean that he did not understand what Jesus meant by the term born again, it was a brand new term for him, he had never heard it before.

But if you look at his question, that is not really his dilemma. He is not asking how is one born again. His question is: how is one born again when he is old? If his problem was the meaning of new birth, what difference will age make?

He does know something about the term. It was a commonly used term in Pharisaic writings. What he does not understand is how one can achieve it once he has reached a certain stage in life, and status in Jewish society. And the reason for his lack of understanding is that in Pharisaic Judaism there were six different ways of being born again. All six of these ways are in the realm of the physical, in the realm of being born of water only.

Of these six ways he did not qualify for two. He did qualify for four.

1. The first way to be born again is when a Gentile was converted to Judaism. Conversion to Judaism is a process. And in the process you would be declared born again. Nicodemus was born a Jew and did not need to undergo that process and so did not qualify for this kind of new birth.
2. The second way to be born again is to be crowned king. And a man being crowned king would undergo a rather lengthy coronation service, at the end of which he would be declared born again. John nowhere implies that Nicodemus was a member of the house of David apart from Jeconiah, a requirement for Jewish kingship. Even if he happened to be that, at this point of Jewish history the Jews were under



Roman domination and there would be no opportunity to be crowned king anyway. So, in the second way he did not qualify either.

But there were four other ways he did qualify to be called born again and which did achieve.

3. The third way is going through a special type of ceremony at the age of thirteen. It is now referred to as the Bar Mitzvah. That was not the term used in the first century, but it subsequently became the term used. And the term Bar Mitzvah means “a son of the commandment”. It refers to a ceremony that happens when the lad is thirteen years old. At that age he takes upon himself the obligations of the Mosaic Law. The common teaching was that until that point his parents were responsible for his sins. Afterwards he is responsible for his own sins. And by Jewish law he is legally an adult. By Jewish law you cannot have a service of any kind unless you have ten adult males present. And once you have had your Bar Mitzvah you could be counted among the ten adult males necessary for a Jewish service to be conducted. Now at this point Nicodemus is well past the age of thirteen. He was born again for the first time at that age.
4. Now the fourth way to be born again is to marry. Jewish men underwent a Jewish wedding underneath a canopy and in various rituals he would be declared born again. And nowhere in the passage does John come out and say that he was married, and yet we know that he was married by going back to verse 1 where John calls him two things. John first of all calls him a Pharisee, but that tells us nothing about his marital state. You could be either married or single and be a Pharisee. But the second thing he calls him is a ruler of the Jews. This was the title given to the 71 members of the Sanhedrin, and among the prerequisites for membership in the Sanhedrin was to be a married man. Single men of any age or scholarship would never qualify. So the fact that John calls him a ruler of the Jews means that he was a member of the Sanhedrin, which also means that he was a married man. And so he qualified to be born again the second way. And Jewish men married in those days between the ages of 16 and 20.
5. The fifth way to be born again is to be ordained a rabbi. After years of training you would be officially ordained into the rabbinate. Being a Pharisee Nicodemus was an ordained rabbi. Rabbis were ordained at the age of thirty. At that age he was born again for the third time.
6. The sixth way was to become a Rosh Yeshivah, a title given to those who were the head of a Rabbinic Academy, a Rabbinic Seminary, where they were responsible to train and ordain future rabbis. And we know that he attained that level in Jewish society because of the way Jesus addresses him in verse 10 where he says: *Are you the teacher of Israel and do not understand these things?* (The KJV changes the “the” to “a” and totally misses the point that is being made here.) Those who were common rabbis had the title of Rav, which means “a teacher”. But those who were the head of an Academy were given the title of Rabban, which means “the teacher”. So Gamaliel is always referred to as Rabban Gamaliel because he was the head of a rabbinic academy, and one of his students happened to be the apostle Paul. The fact that Jesus calls him “the teacher” of Israel, not “a teacher” means that he was the head of a rabbinic academy around Jerusalem, and that he had attained the age of fifty. At that point he was born again for the fourth and also the last time.



Once he underwent these four ways available to him in Pharisaism there was no other way to be born again. And that's why he asked the question the way he did: *How is one born again when he is old?* What he is saying is, "hey, I've used up all my options." As far as he can see there is no other way to be born again except the way he suggested back in verse 4: to go back into his mother's womb, be born physically once more, and simply begin the process all over again, and be born again at the ages of 13,20,30, and 50.

Now what Jesus is doing with Nicodemus is a very common method of Jewish teaching where you go from the known to the unknown. The known fact is the expression "born again", or "born anew", or "born from above". But the unknown element is the spiritual ramifications, because in Pharisaism it was given a strictly physical connotation, but not a spiritual one.

### *Unless one is born of water and the Spirit ...*

So when he has set the stage he says in verse 5: *"Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."* And by saying you have to be born of both water and the Spirit he rejects the Pharisaic fundamental: "all Israel automatically has a share in the age to come". Merely being born physically, even as a Jew, does not qualify anyone for the kingdom. One has to be born both physically and spiritually, both born of water and the Spirit to qualify. Until Nicodemus has this kind of new birth he does not qualify.

He points out the difference between the two types of birth in verses 6 & 7. To be born of water is to be born of the flesh. And flesh birth is flesh birth, and flesh alone will not qualify you for the kingdom. To be born of the Spirit means that the Holy Spirit will rejuvenate the dead human spirit. We then become alive to God. That is the kind of new birth that is essential for God's kingdom. Now until Nicodemus has this kind of new birth he will not see, he will not enter into, God's kingdom.

### *How can these things be?*

The next question that would come up in the mind of Nicodemus is: how is one born again spiritually? And to this Jesus begins to respond, pointing out that there are two separate steps. God does the first one. Man does the second. Verse 14: *As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; so that whoever believes in Him have eternal life.*

1. The first step is the one that God does: He sent his son to provide the final atonement. When He died on the cross He did provide salvation for the whole world. By itself that will save no one.
2. Then comes the second step: the individual must believe and receive what God has provided by means of the Son.

The same two steps are repeated in verse 16. *God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son.* The first step is a finished step. God has done all that he needs to do to provide salvation for all. But again, by itself that will not save anyone. Then comes the second step, the individual must receive what God has provided: *whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.*

Now, until Nicodemus accepts Jesus to be the messianic king, he will not see, he will not enter into God's kingdom.

## Nicodemus

For Nicodemus this was such a new interpretation of the new birth he could not accept it right away. And those of us involved in Jewish ministries learn a lesson early. It is very rare for a Jew to accept the gospel when he first hears it. A Jewish person undergoes a struggle, a spiritual struggle, a theological struggle, a mental struggle, a family struggle, and an ethnic struggle. He must reprogram his whole way of thinking before he can begin to see the possibility that Jesus could be the Jewish Messiah. Any Jewish believer you meet has undergone a struggle for a short or a long period of time. For Nicodemus the struggle begins here and will continue for three years. He will appear two more times in John's gospel. The second time will be in John 7, not yet a believer, but as we will see, willing to defend the right of Jesus to be heard before being condemned. And thirdly, at the time of the burial of Jesus, he comes out openly as a believer.

Now because Nicodemus was prominent in Jewish society and could not be ignored in Jewish writings, he was not ignored. We learn some other things about Nicodemus outside of John's gospel, from rabbinic writings. In those days rabbis did not make a living off the Rabbinate. Every rabbi had to have a profession with his hands or a side business by which he would earn his living, so he could teach the Scriptures free of charge. That is why Paul, who was an ordained Rabbi, was a tentmaker by profession. And according to these writings, Nicodemus was a well digger, a very wealthy well digger. According to the rabbis he was among the wealthiest men in all Jerusalem, and he was among three of the most righteous men of Jerusalem. But when he became a believer in Jesus he was reduced to poverty, died a pauper; his daughter had to go around begging for bread to stay alive.

Rabbis record the story only for one reason: to warn other Jews against believing in Jesus. If you believe on him all these bad things could happen to you too. It may be true he died physically poor; we simply don't know the facts of the case. But we also know he died spiritually rich. He will have his place in God's kingdom.

## First confrontation with Pharisees and Sanhedrin

Now, for the theme we are developing, here we have the first confrontation between Jesus and a member of the Pharisaic party. He is also a member of the Sanhedrin. It becomes obvious early in the ministry of Jesus that he will reject certain fundamentals of Pharisaic Judaism, like the one: all Israel automatically has a share in the age to come.

## Light & Darkness

I mentioned that one of John's subthemes is the conflict between light and darkness. The first time that was actually found is in section 2 in verses 3-9. Here you have a second example, in section 32 verses 19-21. We will not be developing this theme, only pointing out references to it.

### 6. The Witness of John, § 33, John 3:22-36

Verse 23 says: *John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was much water there.* Again, Jews only practice immersion. If he were practicing sprinkling or pouring he wouldn't have to move. His ministry is primarily at the southern end of the Jordan River where it runs into the Dead Sea. (See section 21, Matthew 3:11,5-6.) And towards the end of the summer months before the rainy season begins the water gets rather shallow. It is always possible to sprinkle and to pour, but not always possible to immerse. So he goes up north near to Salim,

which is not too far from where the river exits the Sea of Galilee, and there it is always deep enough to immerse. This again shows how important immersion was in the Jewish context.

John's disciples observed the discipleship movement of Jesus and became a bit jealous for John's sake, but John says there is no need to be jealous. How does John respond to his question? In essence he says this is God's plan, I am not the Christ, but I am the forerunner of the Messiah.

In verses 29-31 John continues to speak about his relationship to the Messiah. Notice the three terms he uses in verse 29: the bride, the bridegroom, and the friend of the bridegroom. As the New Testament teaches, the bridegroom is the Messiah, the bride will be the church, and the friends of the bridegroom are the Old Testament saints. Old Testament saints are not part of the church. The church began only as of Acts chapter 2. But they are the friends of the bridegroom.

And John says in verse 30 that his joy has been made full at the coming of the bridegroom. Like the friend of the bridegroom, he is rejoicing at the coming of the one who comes from heaven and is above all.

He goes on to say several things about the Messiah and he points out in verse 34: *He gives the Spirit without measure*. The Messiah was given the Spirit without measure. This is a fulfilment of Isaiah 11:2. All of us receive the Spirit in measure, and therefore we have different callings, different gifts, and things of that nature. And God gives us all that we need to fulfil his calling in our lives. In the case of Jesus, he has no limitations; he has the seven-fold fullness of the Spirit of Isaiah 11:1-2. See also Matthew 12:18; Luke 4:14; Acts 10:38.

## 7. The Imprisonment of John, § 34, Mark 1:14; Matthew 4:12, Luke 3:19-20; John 4:1-4

Jesus now leaves Judea to go back to Galilee. Notice there are three reasons recorded here:

1. In Matthew's account we read that it was *when Jesus heard that John had been taken into custody that He withdrew into Galilee*. Luke adds that John was arrested because of his statements about the false marriage of Herod to Herodias. That problem we will explain later in a different section, but she married him when her first husband, Philip, was still alive. And Philip and Herod were brothers.
2. In John's account we read: *When the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John ... He left Judea and went away again into Galilee*. But, as John points out, he himself was not doing the work of baptism; that was given to his disciples to perform.
3. Thirdly, John adds in verse 4: *He had to pass through Samaria*. Now why did Jesus have to pass through Samaria? Certainly Samaria was between Judea and Galilee. But He could have gone around it as Jews often did.

Notice Luke 14:4. *Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit*. So it was the divine plan that He go through Samaria at that time, and the reason for that comes out in the next section where Jesus encounters a Samaritan woman at the well near Sychar.

Now John is imprisoned, and again, what happened to the herald will happen to the king.

## 8. The Acceptance in Samaria, § 35, John 4:5-42

### *Samaritans*

The Samaritans were a mixed breed in two ways.

1. First of all, ethnically: These were the people the Assyrians brought into the land that was the northern kingdom of Israel, and they intermarried with the Jewish population left in the land.
2. Secondly, it was also a mixed religion because they brought their own worship styles with them and they simply adopted the God of Israel to be one of their gods, but not the only one. And, although by the time of the New Testament they were already monotheistic, they still had certain practices that were uncomfortable for the Jews. When they wanted to participate in the rebuilding of the temple the Jews would not let them do that, and so they built a rival temple on Mount Gerizim. You can still see the foundations of that temple on the top of that Mount today. Therefore Mount Gerizim became their holy site. Mount Gerizim overlooks the Biblical town of Shechem.

Samaritans generally would not allow Jews to travel through Samaria on their way to Jerusalem. They are very anti-Jewish. In fact they went through the Mosaic Law and they changed every possible reference to Jerusalem and made it Mount Gerizim. So, if you pick up the Samaritan Pentateuch it doesn't say Abraham brought Isaac to Mount Moriah, but to Mount Gerizim.

So when Jews wished to travel through Samaria to get to Jerusalem they are often forbidden to travel, or were attacked and often killed. The Samaritans did not mind seeing Jews travelling away from Jerusalem, that was alright.

Jesus now travels from Jerusalem and that is fine. Later on we will see when he tries to travel again through Samaria in the opposite direction they will not let him pass.

A common Jewish saying was: may my eyes never see a Samaritan. And the Jews were just as much anti-Samaritan as the Samaritans were anti-Jewish.

### *A Samaritan Woman*

Now He encounters a Samaritan woman. And there are 5 basic stages to this encounter.

1. In verses 10-14 he reveals to her a new kind of life
2. In verses 15-19 he reveals to her something about herself – why she needs this new kind of life.
3. In verses 20-23 he spells out what constitutes true worship
4. In verse 24 he reveals who the Father is.
5. In verses 25-26 he reveals himself to be the Messiah.

At the end of the encounter the woman believes, and it is interesting to notice the growing of her faith.

1. She first of all calls him a Jew in verse 9, and that is not a compliment coming from her.
2. She then becomes more respectful and calls him “sir”, as in verse 11 & verse 15.
3. She then calls him a prophet. This is significant because in Samaritan theology the only prophet that would come would be the Messiah.
4. Fourthly, she recognises him to be that Messiah.

### *Jesus' revelation to the woman*

So in this passage, they are travelling through Samaria and they come to a well. The well is outside the town. He sends his disciples into the town itself to purchase some food. When he asks her for water she says: *“How is it that You, being a Jew, ask me for a drink since I am a Samaritan woman? (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.)”* And that is correct. There are no relationships about trade and so on between the two ethnic groups. And she is surprised that he, being a Jew, would even talk to her, being a Samaritan woman.

At that point He introduces her to a new kind of life: that He has another type of water he calls the living water in verse 10. If you partake of this water you never thirst again. And in verse 14: *the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life.* So He points out that He has a special kind of water that he can offer to her.

So she requests in verse 15: *“Sir, give me this water, so I will not be thirsty nor come all the way here to draw.”* She does not yet understand the nature of the water he is offering to her.

At that point He asks her to bring her husband. The woman responds that she has no husband, and then He shows her what He knows: You have spoken correctly. You have already been married five times, but the man you are living with now is not your husband.

Now what she does is a common response you will find when witnessing to people. They don't realise their need for salvation and they don't realise what we all are before God – sinners. And when you finally point out their sin, they suddenly want to get theological again and have a theological argument. She points out that you Jews say that Jerusalem is the place to worship, but we Samaritans say that Mount Gerizim is the proper place to worship.

Now He does answer the question. He points out that indeed Jerusalem is the proper place to worship, because the Mosaic Law was still in force at this stage. And that is the place to worship according to the Mosaic Law, and public worship elsewhere is not acceptable. But He points out that a time is coming when it will be neither here nor there, but everybody who believes can worship God in spirit and in truth wherever they are.

Notice verse 22: *“You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews.* The Jewish people received the message of salvation. They recorded the record of salvation. And therefore they knew where the proper place of worship is. But again, ultimately *God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.*

Now when she called him a prophet, keep in mind that in Samaritan theology the last prophet was Moses. They don't recognise any of the prophets after Moses. And the next prophet will be the Messiah. That is already one step towards recognising who he is. And when she says in verse 25: *I know that the Messiah is coming; when he comes, he will declare all things to us.* Jesus said to her: *I am that Messiah; I who speak to you am He.*

## Teaching on evangelism

At that point, in verse 27, the disciples returned and they are kind of disturbed that He would be talking to a Samaritan woman. And while she runs into town to tell people, He has a discussion with His disciples and He points out that while the physical field is yet four months before it is ready for harvest, the spiritual harvest is ready even that same day.

And He points out a principle of evangelism. Some sow, and others reaps. And sometimes we sow the seed, and someone else does the reaping. Sometimes someone else does the sowing and we do the reaping. And He points out to them that while they are reaping someone else has sown before them, like John the Baptist. And both those who sow and those who reap will receive wages. They will receive their rewards. And so it is not only those who succeed in reaping people who will be rewarded, other people who first witnessed to them will also be rewarded.

## Example of evangelism

And you get a clear example of this here in verses 39-42.

<sup>39</sup>*From that city many of the Samaritans believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, "He told me all the things that I have done."*

In verse 39 the woman sows the seed after telling her story, and she even reaps those who believe.

<sup>40</sup>*So when the Samaritans came to Jesus, they were asking Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days.* <sup>41</sup>*Many more believed because of His word;* <sup>42</sup>*and they were saying to the woman, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves and know that this One is indeed the Savior of the world."*

In verse 40, as a result of the woman's story, the Samaritans came to Jesus and ask Him to stay with them. Then in verse 41: *Many more believed because of His word*. Notice, she does the sowing and Jesus does the reaping.

The woman sows, and Jesus reaps. That's the principle of evangelism.

It is a very successful tour of Samaria at this stage. There will be a downward side later on.

## 9. The Acceptance in Galilee, § 36, John 4:43-45

Those who accept him in Galilee, we notice, are those who had been to Jerusalem for the Passover and saw his miracles. When they came back many of them believed on him because of the signs they saw him do in Jerusalem a little bit earlier.

And so these sections focus on the acceptance of his person.

## B. The Authority of the King, § 37 - 56

### 1. Messiah's Authority to Preach, § 37, Mark 1:14-15; Matthew 4:17; Luke 4:14-15

Here we have his first preaching tour. He goes from city to city and synagogue to synagogue. As we read these sections we will see Him performing three roles: rabbi, teacher, and prophet. He behaves like a rabbi, like a teacher, and like a prophet..

He presents a basic twofold message.

- a. First of all soteriological: in Mark 1:15: *repent and believe in the gospel*. Notice the word gospel here. Here is a good example that the word gospel doesn't always mean the same thing. The basic meaning is always the same. It means good news. But the content of the good news is not always the same. Now what is the gospel they are proclaiming? The gospel they are proclaiming is that Jesus is the messianic King. They are not proclaiming anything at this point about his death and resurrection. They are not conscious of that taking place as yet. In fact, when he finally tells them about it in a later section, even then they would not understand and they would react against it. The gospel we have to believe to be saved today is three points. Firstly: He died for our sins. Secondly: He was buried, the evidence of his death. Thirdly: He rose again the third day. That is the content of the gospel we have to believe to be saved. That is not the gospel they are presenting here. As we shall see they have no consciousness of that. The gospel, the good news they are presenting is that he happens to be the messianic King.
- b. The second aspect of his message is eschatological. He is presenting the kingdom program. *Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*. Note "is at hand" is *eggizo* (eng-id-zo) which means come near, draw near, or approach. He is not saying the kingdom has arrived. He is saying that it is near.

Then Luke tells us three things about the nature of his ministry.

1. In Luke verse 14, it was Spirit controlled. He went *in the power of the Spirit*.
2. His reputation begins to spread. *Fame went out concerning him through all the regions round about*.
3. The main place of his proclamation is synagogues. He went from synagogue to synagogue proclaiming his messianic claims.

### 2. Messiah's Authority to Heal, § 38, John 4:46-54

Here we have the second of John's seven signs. He happens to be in Cana where earlier he changed the water into wine. And a man comes up to him from Capernaum (that is about 20 miles or 32 kilometres away). He comes to Jesus saying that his son is at the point of death. And he asks Jesus to come down with him to Capernaum, 20 miles (32 kilometres) away to heal his son.

The point of Jesus response is: do you need a sign to convince you that the miracle has occurred? Or can you simply believe what you are being told, that the miracle has occurred without having a sign to verify it? And the fact that the man had faith shows in that he did not depart to go back to Capernaum right away. As verse 52 shows he stayed in Cana and the next day apparently, he travelled down to Capernaum. On the way the servants met him saying his son was healed.

When he asked them when they said: *"Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him."* If this is Roman time it would be 7 pm. If it is Jewish time it would be 1 pm.

As a result of this second sign that he performed the man's whole household believed Jesus' messianic claims.

### 3. The Rejection in Nazareth, § 39, Luke 4:16-31

We come to His rejection in Nazareth. Now concerning what we see here, Nazareth is a microcosm of the nation as a whole. What happens in Nazareth will happen later in the nation as a whole. In section 39 you have the initial rejection in Nazareth. Later in section 69 there will be the final rejection in Nazareth. What happens locally in Nazareth will also happen nationally.

Notice who records this first rejection. It is Luke alone. Notice how Luke is very careful to spell out the Jewish motifs. In the Jewish practice, when you read the Scriptures you always stand. When you teach you always sit. You read the text standing, you teach the text sitting.

In the synagogue service they have divided the Mosaic Law into 54 divisions. Every Sabbath one section of the Mosaic Law is read. If you go to any synagogue anywhere in the world the same passage of Scripture is read on that Sabbath. Concerning the prophets, not all of the prophets are read, but they have segments of the prophets to correlate with the reading of the Mosaic Law.

And it is Jesus' turn to read from the Prophets. Notice the last line here: *He stood up to read*. This is very Jewish. You read the scripture standing. And what he reads is Isaiah 61, but he reads only one and a half verses. That went against the Jewish practice because the Jewish law for reading these prophets is that you must read a minimum of three verses. Different people read different portions, but whatever you read, you must read a minimum of three verses. He read only half of that passage from Isaiah 61, verse 1 and the first part of verse 2. And the people don't quite understand why until he sits down. But in verse 20, notice, he closed the book and gave it back to the attendant, and sat down, because you teach in the sitting position.

And now we see why he stopped where he did. In verse 21 *He began to say to them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."* As far as Isaiah 61 is concerned he is only fulfilling verse 1 and the first part of verse 2. The second part of verse 2 and verse 3 he will fulfil only in the second coming, but not now.

But there is rejection throughout the synagogue because of a principle in verse 24: *no prophet is welcome in his hometown*. And this is his home town.

So he again brings in Gentile examples, then female examples, which are Luke's special concerns. He points out in verse 25 that back in the days of Elijah there were many Jewish widows that Elijah could have been sent to, but God did not send him to a Jewish widow but a Gentile one up in Lebanon.

In the days of Elisha, he points out there were many Jewish lepers that Elisha could heal, but no Jewish leper was healed by him, only a Gentile leper, Naaman the Syrian.

By using these examples, a Gentile man and a Gentile woman, Jesus begins to hint at what becomes obvious later: that the Gentiles accept what the Jews reject.

That made them so incensed that they took him outside the town. And the town of Nazareth is on a hill that comes to a cliff, and the cliff falls down into the Jezreel Valley. And they brought him to the cliff with the intent to push him over the cliff to kill him. But verse 30 simply says: *But*



*passing through their midst, He went His way.* Jesus was able to walk through their midst using his messianic power. They could not harm him.

#### 4. The Headquarters in Capernaum, § 40, Matthew 4:13-16

He now sets up his ministry in Capernaum. And he mentions the names of Zebulun and Naphtali that would receive most of the benefits of Messiah's light.

Zebulun is where Nazareth is located. Naphtali is where Capernaum is located. So he grew up in the territory of Zebulun, and he ministered in the territory of Naphtali.

Notice in your outline that here we go from section 40 to section 42, 43, 44, and then back to 41. Here is one of those places where AT Robertson broke away from Luke's order, and to Arnold that is a mistake since Luke says he puts his material in chronological sequence. And so whenever AT Robertson goes against Luke's order Arnold follows what Luke says.

#### 5. Messiah's Authority over Demons, § 42, Mark 1:21-28; Luke 4:31-37

In section 42 we have his authority over demons. He is now in a synagogue service and there is a demonised state. And the people who are listening to what Jesus is saying are surprised. Verse 22: *They were amazed at His teaching; for He was teaching them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.*

When the scribes taught they would have to read 2 or 3 pages of rabbinic writings: Rabbi so and so said ... and rabbi such and such said this ... Every rabbi taught on the basis of previous rabbinic authorisation. But notice Jesus quotes no rabbi, He quotes no Pharisee, He quotes no scribe. He teaches as one who has authority to interpret the text. He is the one who gave it and he has that authority.

Now when it comes to casting out the demon, they are also surprised because he does not cast out the demon in the normal Jewish manner. We will discuss the normal Jewish method in section 61.

His teaching is different from what they are used to, and his way of dealing with demons is different from what they are used to.

While people have trouble recognising who he is, the demons have no such difficulty. The demon says in Luke verse 34: *"I know who You are—the Holy One of God!"* Whenever demons announce who he is he rebukes them and holds them silent because demons do not make good character witnesses. He does not accept the testimony of demons.

Because of what happened here the report about him spread throughout the region. And we will see the results of it soon in section 43.

#### 6. Messiah's Authority over Disease, § 43, Mark 1:29-34; Matthew 8:14-17; Luke 4:38-41

In section 43 we have his authority over disease. Now the common practice for Christians is: after a Sunday morning service they would go home to a nice meal or go to a restaurant. The same practice happens after the morning Sabbath services: they have their Sabbath meal. And he is a guest at the home of Peter, and Peter's mother-in-law happens to be ill.

Luke was a medical doctor by profession and is always a bit more detailed about diseases and healings. Mark simply says she was sick with a fever. Matthew says she was lying sick in bed with a fever. Luke says she was suffering from a high fever or great fever. It meant continuous, chronic fever.

Jesus proceeds to heal her. There are three different accounts and notice that the way they are reported is based upon their theme. Mark says in verse 31, he took her by the hand and raised her up. That is the act of a servant. Matthew says in verse 15, he touched her hand and the fever left her: the touch of a king is sufficient. Luke says in verse 39, he stood over her and rebuked the fever: the act of an ideal man.

In Luke verse 39 notice there is an immediate infusion of strength: *and she immediately got up and waited on them*. The others simply said she rose up, but Luke knows it was immediate, and she was able to serve the dinner to them.

When sundown arrives on this Saturday, it says in verse 32 of Mark: *When evening came, after the sun had set, they began bringing to Him all who were ill and those who were demon-possessed*. Remember, in the Jewish way of thinking you cannot be healed on the Sabbath day. And in section 42 we noticed that the word began spreading around the region. But in keeping with the Jewish practice of that day they waited until sundown. Only then do they come out for healing.

Notice also that there is a difference between physical sickness and demon possession. There are two different groups: *all who were ill and those who were demon-possessed*.

## 7. Messiah's Authority to Preach, § 44, Mark 1:35-39; Matthew 4:23-25; Luke 4:42-44

Now we have a second major preaching tour. Notice

1. As to place: he taught them in the synagogues.
2. As to content: he proclaimed the gospel of the kingdom; the good news of the kingdom.
3. As to authentication: he healed sicknesses and cast out demons.
4. The results: In Matt. Verse 24 the news about him spread throughout all Syria. And in verse 25: *Large crowds followed Him from Galilee and the Decapolis and Jerusalem and Judea and from beyond the Jordan*. At the end of his second preaching tour his reputation has spread throughout the land and even to areas outside the land. We shall see an example of it later.

## 8. Messiah's Authority over Nature, § 41, Mark 1:16-20; Matthew 4:18-22; Luke 5:1-11

Now we go back to section 41.

We now have the recall of the disciples Peter, Andrew, and John the addition of the sixth disciple, James the brother of John.

Here again notice his position of a Rabbi. Luke's account, at the end of verse 3: *He sat down and began teaching the people*. The Rabbis always taught in a sitting position. And many times we will see that when he taught he sat down.

After teaching them, he says to the disciples to *Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch*. But Peter is the fisherman and he says: *Master, we worked hard all night and caught nothing, but I will do as You say and let down the nets*. The implication is that he says, you are not the fisherman, you are the carpenter. I'm the fisherman, and my experience tells me that if you didn't catch them during the night hours you won't catch them during the day hours because when the sun hits the water the fish go deeper into the lake. If you couldn't catch them at night you won't catch them in the day time.

But he recognised that the authority of the Messiah supersedes the authority of his experience. And therefore he lets down the nets. And to his surprise they catch a multitude of fish. And they filled their boats with so much fish their boats began sinking. And when Peter recognised his authority over nature, Luke records in verse 8: *But when Simon Peter saw that, he fell down at Jesus' feet, saying, "Go away from me Lord, for I am a sinful man!"*

If we compare ourselves with other people we can always come out looking good. There is always somebody out there worse than we are. But the proper comparison is not between us and other people, but between us and the Lord. And when we see ourselves against the Lord we have to respond the same way Peter does. "We are sinners, O Lord."

But at this time Jesus calls him into full time discipleship: *Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men*. And so now they are called to full time discipleship. The result is that they leave their fishing business. Keep in mind that for them this is a total commitment. This is their source of income. Now they have to trust him to provide the income as they travel with him and be discipled.

## 9. Messiah's Authority over Defilement, § 45, Mark 1:40-45; Matthew 8:2-4; Luke 5:12-16

We are still in the second main division of Jesus life: The Authentication of the King. And we are in the section dealing with the Authority of the King. Now we come to the section on his Authority over Defilement.

This is the account of the healing of the Jewish leper. Although he has done quite a few miracles since he went public at the first Passover, with leprosy we are dealing with something that is really special and something that is really unique. Now to understand why this is such an important and significant miracle keep this in mind: from the time that the Mosaic Law was completed there was no record of any Jew ever being healed of leprosy. In the case of Miriam, that was before the completion of the Law. And in the case of Naaman, he was Syrian and not Jewish.

Moses spelled out in great detail what the priesthood would have to do in the case of a Jew healed of leprosy. In fact, Moses devotes two lengthy chapters of his Law to the subject: Leviticus 13 & 14. Both chapters are 50 verses long, so he spends more than 100 verses dealing with the issue of how to confront and deal with someone who had leprosy, and especially if he was healed of leprosy.

In the Mosaic Law, only the priest had the authority to declare someone a leper. Once he declared someone a leper, on that day the declared leper would have to tear his clothing, from now on walking around in torn clothing. He was ostracised from Jewish society. He had to live in a special area of town reserved for lepers only. He had to keep his face covered from the nose down. And he was not allowed to enter the tabernacle or temple compound and he could not receive the spiritual benefits of the tabernacle or temple services. If he happened to be walking down the road and saw someone approaching he would have to warn the person, not with the words "leper, leper", but with the words "unclean, unclean". He was morally unclean from the day he was declared a leper. From that day on no-one could touch him. Anyone touching him would also himself become unclean.

Then Moses also spelled out some details if a Jew was healed of leprosy. He had to go before the priesthood and say, "I was a leper and now I am healed of my leprosy". And on that day the priest would have to offer up two separate birds. One bird was killed by shedding of blood. The second bird was dipped in the blood of the first one and then set free. Then came a seven day period of intense investigation for the purpose of answering three questions.

1. Was the man a declared leper? Since only the priests had the authority to declare a man a leper, there would be a record of it there somewhere.
2. If the answer was yes then the second question was: was he really healed of his leprosy? Every day for seven days his whole body was carefully investigated. His whole body was shaved of all hairs, including his eyebrows.
3. Again if the answer was yes, the third question was: What were the circumstances of the healing, to determine if it was legitimate or not.

If all three questions were answered satisfactorily, the eighth day was a day of ritual with four different types of offerings:

1. A Trespass Offering
2. A Sin Offering
3. A Burnt Offering
4. A Meal Offering.

During the ceremony they would take the blood of the Trespass Offering and apply it to three parts of the man's body: his right ear, right thumb, and right big toe. They did the same thing with the Sin Offering. The blood was applied to the three parts of the body. And then the ritual ended with the anointing of oil on the same three parts of the body.

Only then was the person allowed to return to live among the normal part of Jewish society. Only then could he visit the tabernacle or temple compound and receive the benefits of the spiritual services.

While Moses gave them all these details of what to do if a Jew was healed of leprosy, they never had a single opportunity to put any of this into effect. Because at that time since the Law was completed there was no record of any Jew healed of leprosy. And while rabbinic writings have many cures for many different diseases, and we will be looking at one of those a bit later in our study, in rabbinic cures there was simply no way to heal a Jewish leper.

And because God, in the Mosaic Law, said that one of the ways he will punish Israel is by means of leprosy. We see this in the history of Israel. For example, when king Uzziah tried to burn incense God struck him with leprosy; and when Gehazi, the servant of Elisha lied, God struck him with leprosy. The feeling by first century Israel was that if a Jew contracted leprosy it meant that he was under a special divine judgement, and therefore no Jewish leper will ever be healed until the Messiah comes.

As we shall see in the gospels as we continue to proceed, there are certain miracles performed in the Old Testament, but certain miracles were never performed in the Old Testament and they were performed for the first time in the New Testament. And those miracles, these special miracles that I'll call Messianic Miracles create a stir in the Jewish population which he does not create when he performs other kinds of miracles.

There were two basic categories of miracles.

1. First there were those miracles that anyone would be able to perform if he was empowered by God to do so.

2. There was a second category of miracles which I will call messianic miracles. These are the miracles that only the Messiah will be able to perform.

There are three main miracles in this category. As we shall see in this course, whenever he performs a miracle of the second category, the Jewish reaction is very different than when he performs miracles of the first category.

And the first of these three special miracles will be the healing of a Jewish leper. So keep in mind that from the Jewish context of the first century Israel, anyone healing a Jewish leper by so doing would be claiming to be the Messiah. Also, understanding that point we will see why things happen here the way they do.

Now Mark and Matthew simply mention that the man was a leper, but Luke being a doctor is always a bit more detailed. So in Luke verse 12 he says he was a man full of leprosy. The point he makes is this: At this point of time the leprosy was fully developed, it would not be that much later that it will take this man's life.

And now this Jewish leper comes to Jesus. He does not say, in Mark verse 40, "if you will, you can heal me", but "if you will, you can make me clean" because he was unclean, untouchable since the day he was declared a leper. And for him quite a bit of time passed by since he was declared a leper, because by now the leprosy was fully developed. It is the will of the Messiah to heal him, and in verse 13 of Luke's account *He stretched out His hand and touched him*. Now as we have seen previously already, he does not need to touch someone to heal him. In the case of the healing of the noble man's son he was in Cana and the son was sick in Capernaum, 20 mile away, and yet he was able to heal long distance. So again, he does not need to touch the leper to heal him, but in the context of leprosy that is significant. This would be the first time that the man was touched by human hands since he became a declared leper. It was a touch that causes instantaneous healing.

And notice what Jesus tells him to do in Luke's account in verse 14: *And He ordered him to tell no one, "But go and show yourself to the priest and make an offering for your cleansing, just as Moses commanded, ..." and why? "as a testimony to them."* Who are the them? The Jewish leaders. He now sends the man directly to the priesthood to begin the process of the cleansing of a leper in accordance with Leviticus 13 & 14. He wants to force them to begin taking his messianic claims rather seriously.

And so when this man came before the priesthood and said "I was a declared leper and now I am healed of my leprosy", on that day they offered up the two birds. And then came seven days of investigation when they answered three questions

1. Yes, he is a declared leper.
2. Yes, he is healed of his leprosy, but
3. It is a man named Jesus of Nazareth that did the healing. And again, from a Jewish context, the fact that he healed a Jewish leper meant that he was claiming to be the Messiah.

So in the middle of verse 45 of Mark's account notice what it says. *He could no longer publicly enter a city*. He performed miracles that created a stir earlier, but it was not as big a stir, he was still able to come to the city. But now, because he performed this unique miracle, he creates a lot more attention. And now he has to be more circumspect as he walks into a city.

Also notice the crucial point in Luke verse 16: he withdraws himself into the desert and prayed.  
And contextually he was praying regarding what was about to happen next.

## 10. Messiah's Authority to Forgive Sin, § 46, Mark 2:1-12, Matthew 9:1-8, Luke 5:17-26

### *Where this occurs*

Now the first thing to note is where the next event occurs. This is the advantage of the thematic approach where we see the correlation of one event to the other. Mark's account, verse 1, specifies that the event occurred up in Capernaum. And that is a three day walk away from Jerusalem. Keep that in mind.

### *The First Stage of Investigation: Observation*

Now look at Luke's account in verse 17. *There were some Pharisees and teachers of the law sitting there, who had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem.* Note what we do not have here. We don't merely have a few local Pharisees observing what he is doing. Luke is far more specific. He tells us all of the spiritual leaders from all over the country have come up to Capernaum. He specifies they came from every village of the Galilee, and every village of Judea, as well as Jerusalem. All of the spiritual leaders have come up to Capernaum. And the question is: why are they all up there? There was no Baptist convention being held in that city that year, so why are they all up there?

This is their response to what was happening in the previous segment, the healing of the Jewish leper. This is the first stage (that we mentioned earlier) of the Sanhedrin's investigation, the stage of observation. Normally they wouldn't all have to go. A small delegation such as the one they sent to John would have been sufficient. But this time they are not responding to someone who merely claims to be the Messiah. Now they are responding to someone who performed a miracle that has never happened before. So they all choose to go up there for this occasion.

Now remember that in the stage of observation they could ask no questions and they could raise no objections. All they can do is observe. And while they are observing and hearing what he is teaching, four friends of a paralytic try to get him over to Jesus to have him healed, but could not do so because all the leaders were there blocking the doorway. So they go to the opposite side of the house. Every house back then had an outdoor stairwell that will lead to a flat roof. And with some effort they got the man up there, and they had to take some effort because the man himself was paralytic and could not help them get him on top of the roof. And then Mark verse 4 points out they went ahead and broke the roof apart, which must have made the owner of the house rather ecstatic! But the gospels do not tell us how the owner of the house responded to the demolition of his roof. And when the hole was finally big enough they lowered the man down on his litter, down to where he was teaching.

Now on similar occasions he would simply proceed to heal, but not this time. Instead, in Luke verse 20, he makes a declaration: *Friend, your sins are forgiven you*, knowing very well that claiming the authority to forgive sins in the salvation sense would raise some serious questions among these leaders.

Also notice that sins are forgiven in the passive voice, which is significant because in the Hebrew text the only time you find the passive voice used is in the book of Leviticus chapters 4-6 which are dealing with sacrifices in reference to the atonement. So saying, *Friend, your sins are forgiven you*, using the passive voice he uses, means he was speaking as if he was God.

Now while this raises serious questions and concerns in the minds of the leaders, remember they cannot verbalise these issues. And notice how two of the gospels make that point. See Mark's account at the end of verse 6: *reasoning in their hearts*. And Matthew verse 3: *And some of the scribes said to themselves*. Once you understand the Jewish background then these small

phrases begin to make sense. They were not allowed to verbalise anything in the observation stage. All they could do was observe. And their unspoken objection is found in Mark verse 7: *"Why does this man speak that way? He is blaspheming; who can forgive sins but God alone?"* And their theology here is correct. No-one can forgive sins in a salvation sense except God alone. So if he claims to have the authority to forgive sins it means one of two things. Either he is a blasphemer, or he is who he claims to be: the messianic God-man.

And he responds to them with his own question. I mentioned earlier that a common way of Jewish teaching is to go from the known to the unknown. A second common way of Jewish teaching is responding to questions by asking questions. If you go to a rabbinic class in some rabbinic school for example, you will observe this happens all the time. And the purpose is to get the student to reason through his own question to see if he can come up with the right answer without being told what the right answer is.

There is even a rabbinic story that goes with this. There was a place where a priest and a rabbi would get together and the priest would like to ask all these different questions and the rabbi never gave him a straight answer. To every question the priest raised the rabbi responded with a question. And one day the priest got a bit frustrated and said: Why do you Jews always answer questions by asking questions? The rabbi answered: why not?

And Jesus frequently uses the same method: questions for questions. And the question he raises is in verse 9 of Mark: *"Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven'; or to say, 'Get up, and pick up your pallet and walk'?"* And the issue now is: what is the easier thing to merely say. Is it easier to say to this man: "your sins are forgiven you?" Or is it easier to say: "stand up and walk because I am healing you?" What is the easier thing to only say? Now the easier thing to merely say is, "your sins are forgiven you", because that requires no outward obvious evidence. The harder thing to say is, "I am healing you", because it will require obvious visible evidence.

I could make the same claim here and now by saying: "From now on no matter what you believe or don't believe, no matter what you do or don't do your sins are forever forgiven so don't worry about your spiritual future." Having said this you cannot prove me right or wrong because what I just said does not require any visible evidence. On the other hand if all of you here had two broken legs and I was to say: "within five minutes you will all be healed and can jog home", that is a bit harder for me to say because within those five minutes I would have to visibly prove that.

Now using a bit of rabbinic logic called *qal va-chomer*, which means light and heavy, and the system is that you prove the easier by doing the harder. He says to them I will prove to you I can do the easier, your sins are forgiven you, by doing the harder, healing the paralytic.

Only then does he proceed to heal and there is instantaneous evidence. Mark verse 12: *he got up and immediately picked up the pallet.* Luke says in verse 25: *Immediately he got up before them.* There is instantaneous evidence that he could do the harder.

That in turn becomes evidence that he can say the easier: your sins are forgiven you. And if he can say the easier, he is who he claims to be: the messianic King, the messianic Person.

Now it is obvious that when they went back to Jerusalem they said: "men, the movement of Jesus is significant." And now from section 47 to section 60 he will undergo the second stage, the stage of interrogation. From now on, everywhere he goes a Pharisee is sure to follow. But now they are asking questions and raising objections, looking for a basis to accept or reject a person's claim.



When we get to section 61 we will see the major turning point of his public ministry. But this is the point at which they begin to look for reasons to accept or reject him.

### 11. Messiah's Authority over Men, § 47 Mark 2:13-17; Matthew 9:9-13; Luke 5:27-32

Here we begin to see the second stage of the investigation: the stage of interrogation. It comes in connection with the calling of the seventh disciple, who goes by the name of Matthew, also called Levi the son of Alphaeus. By profession he was a publican. The job of publican was actually forbidden to Jews by Jewish law. But some publicans chose to bid for the office, not because Rome paid well, but because of what Rome allowed them to get away with. If the Roman government determined that Mr Cohen here owed the government 5 shekels in taxes, the publican could go to him and say, "you owe 10 shekels", collect 10, give 5 to Rome which she demanded, and keep 5 for himself. And so publicans were hated for two reasons. First of all they were working on behalf of the Romans, they were working on behalf of the Gentile subjugating authorities. And secondly, they became wealthy by extorting from their own people. So once a man decided to become a publican he was ostracised from Jewish society and the rabbis issued many rules and regulations against the publicans. Among these rules was that there are only two classes of society that were allowed to associate with publicans. And these were other publicans, and prostitutes. The term sinner in some of these passages is a euphemism for prostitute.

There are two types of publicans. Both were bad, but one was worse than the other. The lesser of the two evils was the income tax collector. The worst kind of publican was the customs official. They charge you for stuff you buy outside the country. Luke's account in verse 27 specifies that he was sitting at the place of the toll which meant that he was a customs official. So Matthew was the worst kind of publican you could possibly be. And rabbinic writings emphasise the issue of honesty, but when dealing with a customs official publican they said it was permitted to smuggle goods behind his back, because, just as a man might hide his things to keep them from being stolen by a thief, so it was the same principle to get around a publican: simply protecting your goods from being stolen by a thief. There are many other rules and regulations that we won't get into at this point.

And to this man he says at the end of verse 27: "*Follow Me.*" And normally when you have this kind of position you didn't simply get up and leave it. You would have to make other arrangements and find replacements. But Matthew recognises that the authority of the Messiah supersedes the authority of Rome. So in Luke verse 28 *he left everything behind, and got up and began to follow Him.* And this marks the point of Matthew's new birth. So what he decides to do is give himself a new birth birthday party. But what kind of people attend Matthew's new birth birthday party? Only other publicans and sinners, who are prostitutes. Both classes are there, but contrary to Jewish practice, Jesus and the other six disciples that he has at this stage are also there. This simply contradicts the rabbinic practice of that day. And so in Mark at the end of verse 16 they raise the objection: "*Why is He eating and drinking with tax collectors and sinners?*" And the point of the objection is that if he really were the Messiah he would not associate with this class of society.

Jesus responds by saying three things in Matthew verses 12 & 13.

1. First of all, it is not the people who are well that need a physician, but those who are sick. The Pharisees saw themselves as being spiritually healthy and declared the publicans to be spiritually sick. So should he not go to them as a spiritual physician to bring about some healing?
2. Secondly, he points out the Pharisees are characterised by much sacrifice, but lack mercy. Now being characterised by sacrifice shows they are very careful to keep the

external demands of the Mosaic Law. They were not as zealous to keep the internal demands of the Mosaic Law, such as showing mercy. And their lack of mercy is seen in their many rules and regulations against the publicans.

3. And thirdly, he didn't come to call the righteous to repentance, but the sinners. The Pharisees saw themselves as being among the righteous ones. The publicans were declared to be unique sinners, especially customs official publicans. So should not he go to them to bring them to repentance?

And this helps to set the stage for what happens until section 60. Everywhere he goes Pharisees are following and objecting, either to thing he says, or to things he does.

## 12. Messiah's Authority over Tradition, § 48, Mark 2:18-22, Matthew 9:14-17; Luke 5:33-39

Read Luke's account.

At this point Jesus enters into a unique period of conflict over a specific issue, because by this point of time in the history of Jewishness and Judaism a whole body of traditions developed that by first century Israel became sacrosanct, equal with Scripture, sometimes more important than Scripture. And the Pharisees expect Jesus to be in submission to all these new rules and regulations, but he consistently refuses to do so.

But to fully understand what the issues are we will have to do some background work.

You often hear people say that the reason the Jews rejected Jesus is that he would not overthrow Rome, but that is never given as a reason in Scripture. And the actual reason given for rejecting him is not his failure to overthrow Rome. Had they accepted him he would have overthrown Rome. The issues are elsewhere.

### *The Sophrim (Sopher) BC 450- BC 30*

When the Jews returned from the Babylonian Captivity, the Jewish leaders realized the reason for the captivity was disobedience to the Mosaic Law. Ezra from the book of Ezra began a School called the School of the Sophrim. Sophrim is a Hebrew word meaning scribes. Sophrim is plural and Sopher is singular.

The original intent of Ezra and the scribes was to give the people a clear knowledge of the Mosaic Law. Hosea the prophet declared, "The people perish for lack of knowledge". Therefore, the School of the Sophrim was established in order to overcome the lack of knowledge, give the people a clear understanding of what the law required, how to keep the law and avoid another divine judgement like that of the Babylonian captivity.

While Christians often think of the Law as having ten commandments, actually the Law contains a total of 613 commandments. That is how many commandments God actually gave to Moses: 613 specific commandments.

Now after Ezra's time the Sophrim made their goal to build a fence around the Torah, to build a fence around the Law. Now what did this fence consist of? It consisted of new rules and new regulations that could largely be derived from the original 613. Their thinking was that the Jews might break the laws of the fence, they might break rabbinic law, but that would keep them from breaking through the fence and breaking the Mosaic Law and bringing on divine judgement.

So Ezra's goals were correct, merely to expound the scripture as any Bible teacher would do today: expound the text from the original context and language, and so on. But now they became more serious and wanted to build this fence around the Law. And the principle they used was this: A Sopher may disagree with a Sopher, but cannot disagree with the Torah. The Torah, the Mosaic Law was given by God. It was sacrosanct. There was no basis for debating these issues. They could disagree among themselves until a decision was made by majority vote. Once the majority of rabbis voted on a specific new law, it became mandatory for every Jew in the world to follow it. And the kind of logic they used was called PILPUL. That is a Hebrew word meaning peppery or sharp, but it refers to a form of rabbinic logic that given an original statement, how many new ones can you logically derive from that one.

I'll give you an example of how that works. Among the 613 commandments given to Moses was the one which says you must not seethe a kid in the milk of its mother. You don't boil a baby goat in the milk of its mother. The purpose of the law originally was to avoid a common Canaanite practice. When a mother goat gave birth to its first born kid, the kid was taken away from the mother and the meat of the kid was boiled in the milk of the mother as a first fruits offering to the god of Baal. Jews could not practice that type of idolatry, and therefore you do not seethe a kid in the milk of its mother. God gave the law to Moses in about 1400 BC, now its about 400 BC. The original intent of that rule had been forgotten. And so the Sopherim raised the question: how do we make sure we never, never, never, ever, ever, ever seethe a kid in its mother's milk. That is how Pilpul logic began to work.

Now suppose you eat a piece of meat and with that piece of meat you drink a glass of milk. It is always possible that the milk may have come from the mother of the meat that you are eating. And they go down into your stomach and they seethe in your stomach and you break the Mosaic Law.

So you have one new rule: Jews could not partake of meat products and dairy products at the same meal. They must be separated by about 24 hours.

If you go to a Jewish neighbourhood in a place like New York or LA which has many orthodox Jews, and you go into their Jewish restaurants. If it says "Kosher" on it, they will either be serving dairy or they will be serving meat, but they will not serve both at the same time. Now in most places in Israel, though it is happening less and less now, in most places in Israel, all Hotels for example, follow these Kosher laws and no mixing of the meat and milk products. There was one restaurant in Jerusalem that served dairy and meat at the same time, but it is a two story restaurant. The ground floor was for meat, the upper floor was for dairy. Either you eat upstairs or downstairs. What you could not do is go up and down to eat in both places because they had people watching to make sure you did not do that.

To this day orthodox Jews separate dairy from meat. They will often have different parts of the refrigerator, or two refrigerators, and so on. But Pilpul logic goes even further. Suppose at lunch time you decide to have a dairy meal. You take a plate, and from this plate you eat a slab of cheese. Of course, after lunch you want to wash it. No matter how well you wash it and scrub it, you might not notice a small spec of cheese on that plate. And then in the evening you decide to have a meat meal and you take the same plate and you put your hamburger on it. If this is Kosher law it wouldn't be a ham-burger, it would be a beef-burger. You put the beef-burger on the plate and it picks up the small spec of cheese you did not see. No matter how remote the chance, the cheese may have come from the milk of the mother of the meat that you are eating. You swallow them both together and they seethe in your stomach and you break the Law of Moses.

So rule number two is: Jews must have two sets of dishes. And to this day all orthodox Jews have at least two sets of dishes: one used for dairy; and one used for meat. If by mistake you happen to use one for the other, you must either destroy the dish or give it away to a Gentile, but no Jew could eat from that plate ever again.

It went on and on and on, and to each of the 613 commandments God gave to Moses they issued hundreds, and sometimes thousands of new regulations.

The period of time is from about 450 BC until 30 BC. And that is when the School of the Sophrim came to an end.

### *The Tanaim BC 30 – AD 220*

But then came the second school of rabbis called the Tanaim, plural for Tana, a Hebrew word meaning teacher. And they looked upon the work of the Sophrim and guess what they said. There are still too many holes in the fence. And they continued the process of trying to plug up the holes in the fence. And their period of time was from 30 BC until AD 220. And so Jesus was coming on the scene in the Tanaim period.

Now from 450 BC until AD 220 none of these rules was written down, and so it is referred to as the oral law. Because when the Tanaim came into existence they took the laws of the Sophrim to be sacrosanct, equal with Scripture, sometimes even more important than Scripture. But they had to justify their teaching that the laws of the Sophrim are equal to the laws of Moses. And they came up with a teaching that all orthodox Jews still hold to today. And when Arnold was a student in the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York City, in Talmud class this is what I was taught: that what happened on Mount Sinai is that God gave Moses two separate laws; not one, but two. The first law is called the written law, and these are the commandments he wrote down in the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. And so the written law is the 613 commandments. But he also gave to Moses the Oral Law, oral because he did not write these thousands of other commandments down. He memorised them all. And by memory it was passed down to Joshua, who passed it down to the Judges, who passed it down to the Prophets, who passed it down to the Sophrim. The Sophrim did not innovate these new laws. They got it from the Prophets, who got it from the Judges, who got it from Joshua, who got it from Moses, who got it from God. And therefore they must be observed equally with Scripture. And in another section we will see that sometimes they went beyond that and the rules of the Sophrim take priority over the laws of Moses.

And it was oral indeed because from 450 BC until AD 220 none of these were written down. Certain rabbis had these laws memorised. In the gospels you read of Pharisees and scribes. What is the difference? All scribes were Pharisees. But the scribes were that segment of the Pharisees who had these laws memorised. If you wished to know what the tradition was about this or that, you would go and approach a scribe and he will pull it out from his memory.

By the time we come to third century Israel, there are fewer Jews around, the Jewish population is decreasing and there are fewer and fewer men around to memorise all these things. And so, by the rule of one rabbi called Judah HaNasi, Judah the Prince, finally all these rules were written down for the first time: a collection of more than six and a half centuries of material.

### *The Amoraim (Amora) AD 220 – AD 500*

Then came a third school of rabbis called the Amoraim, plural for Amora, an old Aramaic word meaning teacher. And they looked upon the work of the Tanaim, and guess what they said?

There are still too many holes in the fence! They repeated the process of trying to plug up the fence. And they went from AD 220 to about 500 AD trying to plug up the rules of the fence.

### *Mishnah, Gemara, & Talmud*

Now the work of the Sophrim and Tanaim together is now called the Mishnah, and the Mishnah in Hebrew is roughly about 1500 pages.

The work of Amoraim is called the Gemara, and that is about the size of the Encyclopaedia Britannica, a massive body of work.

When you put the two together, that makes up the Talmud.

Now, in this study we are not concerned about what the Gemara says. That is a later period. The main bone of contention between Jesus and the Pharisees is over the Mishnah, because, for a Pharisee, what was the Messiah supposed to be like? The Messiah would be a fellow Pharisee, and he would not only subject himself to both the Mosaic Law and the Oral Law, he would also help them in plugging up the holes of the fence. Jesus consistently rejects the authority of the Oral Law, only affirming the authority of the Mosaic Law.

From now on in our study we will be using certain words synonymously, or interchangeably: the Oral Law, Pharisaic Law, Rabbinic Law, and Talmudic Law. These are all various phrases for what we now call the Mishnah, or Mishnaic Law. And this will become the key area of contention between Jesus and the Pharisees.

## *Messiah's Authority over Tradition, § 48*

And it begins here in section 48, and Luke points out in verse 33 that the Pharisees followed the practice of fasting frequently, and the disciples of John followed the Pharisaic tradition. And by the way, the Pharisees fasted twice a week, Mondays and Thursdays. Every Monday and every Thursday were the two Pharisaic fast days. There will be another section later on where a Pharisee and a Publican go to the temple compound to pray. The Publican uses the time to pray for God's mercy, but the Pharisee used the prayer time to let God know how lucky God was to have him on his team. And he gives a testimony which ends up being a "bragimony", and he says "I fast twice a week", meaning Mondays and Thursdays.

But Jesus' disciples did not follow this tradition and they wanted to know why, and he responds by saying four things.

1. First of all, in verses 34 & 35 (of Luke's account): Jesus said to them: You don't come to a wedding feast to fast, you come to feast. The bridegroom was present, and as long as the bridegroom was present there will be no room for fasting. There will be fasting only once he leaves. Indeed, from the time he went public with his ministry at that first Passover, there is no record of Jesus ever fasting.
2. Secondly, he points out in verse 36 that you don't use a new patch of cloth to cover a hole in an old garment. An old garment has been washed many times and it has shrunk as much as it will shrink. If an old garment develops a hole in its old age and you use a new patch of cloth to cover the hole in the old garment, the next time you wash it the new patch shrinks and pulls the garment out of shape. His point here is that he hasn't come to help them patch up Pharisaic Judaism. He didn't come to close up these holes in the fence. He is presenting something that is quite different.
3. Now thirdly in verses 37 and 38 he points out that you don't use an old wineskin and fill it with new wine. An old wineskin has stretched as much as it will ever stretch. New wine is wine that has begun its fermentation process, but the fermentation process is still incomplete. If you fill up an old wineskin with new wine, as the fermentation process continues the wine will begin to expand. It will cause a rip in the skin and you will lose both the wineskin and the wine. And the point is that he did not come to put his teachings into the mould or the skin of Pharisaic Judaism. He is presenting something that is different. He is presenting something that is new.
4. His fourth point in verse 39 can be taken in two ways. The primary way that I prefer is: that in the end they will reject the new and stay with the old. The secondary possibility that the old wine is the wine of Old Testament Judaism. The new wine is Pharisaic Judaism. And the old wine was better and therefore it is better to stay with the Old Testament Judaism that is now being fulfilled by the Messiahship of Jesus, and not the new wine of Pharisaism which turned Judaism into ultimately a brand new religion.

This is the first of several examples of his conflict with the Pharisees over the authority of the Mishnah.

## **13. Messiah's Authority over the Sabbath, § 49 – 51**

(See also MBS036, & MBS176)

Now in your outline we come to section 49. Sections 49 to 51 together make up three sections on the conflict over the Sabbath. The Sabbath had been highly personified in the Judaism of the first century, and the personification continues to this day.

Now to the one commandment that God gave to Moses, remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy, the Pharisees added over 1,500 new Sabbath rules and regulations. It was personified both as a queen and as a bride: Jehovah's queen, Israel's bride. In the synagogue service on Friday night as the sun begins to set and the Sabbath begins, the synagogue doors are opened and they sing a song called Melkat Shabbat (spelling?) welcoming queen Sabbath into the service.

In the School of the Sophrim when they raised the question: why did God make Israel? The answer was God Made Israel for the Sabbath. Why did God make Israel? For the purpose of honouring the Sabbath.

#### *a. Through the Healing of the Paralytic, § 49, John 5:1-47*

Now the first of these conflicts in section 49 is through the healing of a paralytic. Here we have the second of John's seven discourses: the discourse on the works of God. You also have the third of John's seven signs.

#### *The Second Passover, v 1*

Now verse 1 says: *After these things there was a feast of the Jews.* And in Jewish writings, whenever a feast is mentioned without naming it, it is a reference to the Passover. So in keeping with the Jewish practice this would be a Passover and so at this point his ministry is exactly one year old. From the time he went public at the first Passover one year has passed.

#### *Miracle – public, not requiring faith, v 2-7*

And he goes into the pool of Bethesda. He is the one who initiates what happens here. He finds a paralytic. And of his own initiative he heals the paralytic. As the context shows, the man doesn't even know who Jesus was. Notice three things here.

1. Number one, Jesus sought the man out. He didn't come to Jesus. Jesus went to him.
2. Secondly, there was no requirement of faith. The man does not know who Jesus is, and there is no requirement of faith.
3. Thirdly, there is not even the knowledge of who Jesus claims to be.

At this point it was not essential for people to recognise who Jesus was to receive the miracle. At his point of time the miracles were performed to get them to believe. Again, these are signs to Israel to get them to make a decision. When we get to section 61 the purpose of his miracles will change. But at this stage they are still rather public and so at this point faith was not essential for these miracles to occur, as it will be after section 61.

### *Sabbath Controversy, v 8-14*

First he tells the man at the end of verse 8: *“Get up, pick up your pallet and walk.”* And *immediately the man became well, and picked up his pallet and began to walk.* What Jesus asks him to do does not violate the Sabbath in accordance with the Mosaic Law, but it does violate the Sabbath in accordance with the Pharisaic Law, because in the Pharisaic Law, the Mishnaic Law, you could not carry anything on the Sabbath day from a public place to a private place, or from a private place to a public place. He is carrying it from inside the Pool of Bethesda, a private area, into the streets which is a public area.

And Jesus knew he raised the issue. In verses 10: **Now** it was the Sabbath on that day. So the Jews were saying to the man who was cured, “It is the Sabbath, and it is not permissible for you to carry your pallet.” So why are you doing this? Why are you violating the law, not the Mosaic Law here, but Pharisaic law. And the man tells them: well the one who healed me told me to do this. Then they asked him who healed him, notice he doesn’t know who it was. He had to go back and find out who it was.

### *Claim to Deity, v 15-17*

Only after he finds out who it was and he finally tells them who it was, we read in verse 18: For this reason therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God. Notice that calling God his Father was enough to be claiming equality with God.

In cultic groups nowadays they deny the deity of Messiah. One of their arguments is that he is the son of God and the son is not equal to the Father. That might be true in Gentile reckoning, but it is not true in Jewish reckoning where the first born son is equal to the father. And that is the way he is understood by his own Jewish audience. The Jews, when they heard him claiming God as his Father, were not hearing him say he was something less than God, notice they understood him to be claiming equality with God.

### *Pharisees charges against Him, v 18*

So now they have two counts against him:

1. Number one: he breaks the Sabbath
2. Number two: he claims equality with God.



## *Jesus Defence of His Claim to Deity, v 19-29*

Now Jesus defends himself in four points in verses 19 to 29.

1. First of all in verses 19 to 21 he is doing the works of the Father. He is doing the kind of work only God the Father can do. So if he can do what the Father does, he must be equal to the Father.
  - a. In verse 19 there is an equal relationship, so what one does, so does the other.
  - b. In verse 20 there is equal love between the Father and the son. And the works that he does are the works that the Father gave him to do.
  - c. And in verse 21 there is equal power. He shares the Father's power to provide life.
2. Secondly, in verse 22 & 23 there is equal honour, and the son will end up judging all men. Now in the Old Testament God is the final judge of all men. If now he is the judge of all men, it means he must be God.
3. Thirdly, in verse 24, he has the power to provide eternal life. Here again, in the Old Testament they would know that only God had power to provide eternal life. So if he claims to provide eternal life then he must be God as well.
4. And fourthly, he will bring about the resurrection of the dead. Here again in the Old Testament only God had the power to provide the resurrection of the dead. Now here in verses 25 to 29, if he is the one who is going to provide eternal life he must be God.

Clear claims of his deity!

## *Two Titles*

Also notice two different titles, because at the end of verse 25 he calls himself the Son of God, focussing on his deity. But in verse 27, he calls himself the Son of Man, focussing on his humanity. He is the God-Man.

## *Two Resurrections*

Furthermore there will be two types of resurrections. There will be a resurrection of life for those who believe. And there will be a resurrection of judgement for those who don't believe.

## Witnesses

In the Jewish context, merely claiming these claims does not make it so, because Jewish people, in the history of the Mosaic Law, require witnesses. In the Mosaic Law two witnesses were sufficient. Three witnesses were better. At the testimony of two or three witnesses any truth will be established. But he goes one beyond that. He provides them with four witnesses. Whereas Moses required two, three were helpful, he will provide four.

1. The first witness happens to be John the Baptist in verse 33: *You have sent to John, and he has testified to the truth*. And John was the one who declared him to be the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.
2. Secondly also the works that he does in verse 36: *the very works that I do—testify about Me, that the Father has sent Me*. His miracles authenticate his claims. And by now he had performed one Messianic miracle: the healing of a Jewish leper.
3. Thirdly, God the Father bore witness of him: *the Father who sent Me, He has testified of Me*, because he publicly spoke at his baptism: this is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.
4. Fourthly we have the testimony of Scripture, the fourth witness. Verse 39: You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me.

## The Pharisees Problem

The problem is not that there is insufficient witness to his messianic and divine claims. The problem is elsewhere as we see in verse 46: *For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me, for he wrote about Me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?* He was accusing these very religious Jews of not believing Moses. That seems to be an odd accusation. That is like going up to a very orthodox Jew today and saying: you know, you don't believe in Moses. Who believes in Moses more than the Pharisees or today, who believes in Moses more than orthodox Jews do? It is a valid observation because of this. They believe Moses the way Moses has been reinterpreted through Pharisaic tradition and Mishnaic law. They did not believe Moses as it is written. They did not believe Moses as is simply spelled out in Scripture. They believed in the kind of Moses that had been reinterpreted through Pharisaic tradition. Had they simply taken Moses at his writings and no more, they would have less difficulty recognising him to be the Messiah. Because they were testing him through the prism of the Pharisaic system they failed to recognise him! But there is a four-fold witness to his messianic claims.

## Light & Darkness

One more thing in this section: In verse 35 you have another example of the sub-theme of the conflict between light and darkness common in John's gospel.

*b. Through the Controversy over Grain, § 50, Mark 2:23-28; Matthew 12:1-8; Luke 6:1-5*

Now Luke's account, verse 1 says: Now it happened that He was passing through some grain fields on a Sabbath; and His disciples were picking the heads of grain, rubbing them in their hands, and eating the grain.

The Pharisees came attacking because by so doing they had just broken four of these 1500 Sabbath rules and regulations inaugurated by the Pharisees. They broke four separate rules.

1. First of all, when they picked the wheat off the stalk they were guilty of reaping on the Sabbath day.
2. Secondly, when they rubbed the wheat in their hands to separate the wheat from the chaff they were guilty of threshing the wheat on the Sabbath day.
3. Thirdly, when they blew on their hands to blow the chaff away they were guilty of winnowing on the Sabbath day.
4. And fourthly, when they swallowed the wheat they were guilty of storing the wheat on the Sabbath day.

That is how extreme the situation had become. In the Pharisaic schools there was a debate about walking on grass. And many rabbis issued a ruling that you should not walk on the grass on the Sabbath day. If you ask the rabbi, "What's wrong with walking on the grass on the Sabbath day" his first answer will be "nothing, it is permissible to walk on the grass on the Sabbath day. But here is the problem (here we have the fence around the law again) – you may see only a grassy field, what you might not see is one wild stalk of wild wheat growing among the grass. And as you walk on the grass you might step on the wheat and separate the wheat from the stalk. You are guilty of reaping on the Sabbath day. Then your foot comes down and squeezes the wheat just enough to separate the wheat from the chaff and now you are guilty of threshing the wheat on the Sabbath day. As you keep on walking the hem of your outer garment might cause enough of a breeze to blow the chaff away and now you are guilty of winnowing on the Sabbath day. And fourthly, once you are gone a bird or a rodent might see this piece of wheat and swallow it and now you are guilty of storing the wheat on the Sabbath day. That's why we do not walk on the grass on the Sabbath day." See! That's how extreme some of these things had become.

Now Jesus responds by pointing out six specific things:

1. First of all, in verses 3 & 4 of Matthew's account: David also broke the Pharisaic law by eating the showbread. The Mosaic Law never said that a Levite could not give the showbread to a non-Levite, but Pharisaic law did say that. They could not claim that David lived before the Mishnah came into being because they were teaching that the oral law also came from Moses. So if David could break the oral law without being condemned by the Pharisees so can David's even greater son.
2. Secondly: The law of Sabbath rest did not apply in every situation. That is the point in verse 5 of Matthew. While everybody outside the Temple compound has to treat the Sabbath as a day of rest (staying at home to rest), that was not the case for those within the temple compound. For them it was not a day of rest but a day of labour. In fact they had to work harder on the Sabbath day than on any other day. There were daily sacrifices and rituals, but on the Sabbath all sacrifices had to be doubled, and on the Sabbath there were certain rituals done that were not done on any other day. And yet the people working in the temple compound were not viewed as breaking the Sabbath because they were not resting but working on the Sabbath day. So again the Sabbath commandment did not apply to every specific situation, and it did not apply to merely walking through a field with and picking some wheat for the purpose of eating. That was not a case of reaping it for the future.
3. Thirdly, in verse 6 of Matthew: The Messiah happens to be greater than the temple. Therefore, if the temple can allow work to be done on the Sabbath that did not violate Mosaic Law, so can he allow certain works to be done that did not violate the Mosaic Law. It might break Mishnaic Law, but it did not break Mosaic Law.
4. Fourthly, in verse 7 of Matthew certain works were always allowed on the Sabbath day, such as works of necessity and works of mercy. Now eating is a work of necessity. Healing is work of mercy. Such works should always be allowed on the Sabbath day.
5. Fifthly, Matthew verse 8, as the Messiah he happens to be the Lord of the Sabbath. Being Lord of the Sabbath He can allow what they disallow and disallow what they allow.
6. And sixthly: They have misconstrued the purpose of the Sabbath. They were teaching that God made Israel for the Sabbath, but in Mark 2:27 the opposite is true: God made the Sabbath for Israel, to give Israel a time of refreshment and rest. It was not for the purpose of enslaving Israel, and all of these additional Sabbath regulations had the practical effect of enslaving the Jew to the Sabbath instead of freeing the Jew to enjoy the Sabbath. So they misconstrued the purpose of the Sabbath.

Now this is rather hard on the Pharisees, but let me point out that the same kind of legalism and building fences around the law did not escape the Christian church either. And in different segments of the Christian church you have different types of legalisms. At least in Judaism all of these rules and regulations are uniform – no matter where you travel in the Jewish world they follow virtually the same rules and regulations with very small differences. But in the Christian church what you have is different rules by different denominations in different areas. Even the same denomination in different parts of the country can have different rules and regulations. For example, some churches say you must never drink

alcohol, you must never go to see a movie, you cannot dance any kind of dance, men and women cannot swim in the same ocean at the same time, and so on.

Arnold gives an example from his own experience:

My early years in a Christian College were at a rather legalistic school. As freshmen we had to sit in a lecture by the Dean of students to learn the rules we had to live by. If they simply said these are the rules you have to go by while you are in school, I could live with that. Every organisation has the right to have standards they want members to observe. That is fine. But that is not the way they presented the case. What they were saying is: if you are a Christian you don't do certain things. They made it a spiritual issue, not an issue of the standards for that school. One of the rules threw me a bit because the Dean says: if you are a Christian you never play with dice. And I remembered that in the Bible they cast lots for things and that sounded a bit like dice. So I raised my question and asked him: You said that Christians cannot play with dice, but where in the Bible does it say that. I don't recall reading it. And the Dean said, "Well it is not exactly in the Bible that way. What the Bible says is that you must avoid any appearance of evil. And because gamblers use dice, that is why we should not use dice: to avoid the appearance of evil." So, in my naivety I raised my hand a second time and said, "Let me just understand this. You say we should not use dice because gamblers use them." "That's right," he said, "We must avoid any appearance of evil." So I said, "In that case, shouldn't we be forbidden to drive cars because bank robbers use cars to get away with the stolen money? So shouldn't we avoid using cars for that reason?" The next day I was called into his office for a private lecture, one of several that I got throughout the year. The first week of school ended and I went to the student activity building where I noticed a monopoly game. And it had the stamp of approval of the school and that threw me because in the monopoly game at home you threw two dice and went around the board. So I took the lid off to see what they were doing, and they did remove the dice and in place of the dice they had a spinner. And you had to spin twice in place of throwing the dice.

They are simply building the fence around the law. The church has no more authority than the Pharisees have to pass new rules and regulations about the Scriptures. We judge other people's spirituality by the word of God and not by human traditions. So keep in mind that the church did not escape the same tendency to build a fence around the law.

*c. Through the Healing of the Man with a Withered Hand, § 51, Mark 3:1-6; Matthew 12:9-14; Luke 6:6-11*

In section 51 we have a third Sabbath controversy over the man with a withered hand. It is the synagogue where he was teaching, and both Mark and Matthew simply mention that the man was there with a withered hand. But again Doctor Luke is more specific and tells us that it was his right hand that was withered. He is always more specific.

And in verse 7 the scribes and the Pharisees were watching him closely to see if he would heal this person. And they wanted to have another basis for accusing him. But he reminds them that even in Pharisaic law, if a sheep has fallen into a pit on the Sabbath day they will pull the sheep out of the pit. And again, using the *qal va-chomer* argument: how much more important is a man's life than a sheep.

And he re-teaches a lesson he taught earlier in the previous section: works of necessity, works of mercy were always allowed on the Sabbath day. The healing was an act of mercy, therefore he proceeds and healed the man.

Now there are three specific results for these Sabbath controversies.

1. First of all in Luke's account, in verse 11: they *were filled with madness*. And again to be filled means to be controlled. They were controlled by their emotions and madness and anger.
2. Secondly, in Matthew verse 14: They began to counsel and conspire how they might destroy him, how they might get rid of him.
3. And thirdly, in Mark verse 6: they even carried out this conspiracy with the Herodians. And the Pharisees and the Herodians were at the opposite ends of the political spectrum. The Pharisees objected to Roman rule of any form. But the Herodians were willing to accept Roman rule if it was rule through the house of Herod. So these two groups that are at the opposite ends of the political spectrum come together against what they see as a common enemy, and that is Jesus.

The Sabbath controversy, more than any other controversy, is what motivated them to find a way to deal with him.

#### 14. Messiah's Authority to Heal, § 52, Mark 3:7-12; Matthew 12: 15-21

Now Section 52: His authority to heal. We are now moving into the earlier parts of the second year of his public ministry, and already he continues to receive a great amount of interest. And Mark verse 7 says: *a great multitude from Galilee followed; and also from Judea, and from Jerusalem*. This is all within the borders of the land. But also now notice that his reputation spreads to places outside the land: to Tyre and Sidon, now Lebanon. And because his reputation spread there we shall see an event between him and a Syro-Phonecian Canaanitish woman. And also into other territories of Idumea and so on. His reputation spread throughout the land and spread both inside and outside the borders of the land.

Furthermore, in verse 11, who he is continually being recognised by demons that he confronts. But as always he refuses to allow them to tell who he was and he continues to refuse any testimony from demons.

#### 15. The Choosing of the Twelve, § 53, Mark 3:13-19; Luke 6:12-16

Out of many many people following him, out of many people who would like to follow him more thoroughly, he chooses twelve. While he has many disciples, he now chooses twelve men who make up the apostolic group.

In Luke verse 13 notice, it was day and *He called His disciples to Him and chose twelve of them, whom He also named as apostles*. The word disciple simply means "learner", "one who learns". It does not carry any principle of authority. But the word apostle means "one who is sent" and these men carry the authority of those who sent them.

And there are three reasons why they were called into a smaller apostolic group found in Mark's account in verses 14 & 15.

1. Number one: that they might be with him all of the time. Disciples would be coming and going. Some disciples are called when necessary as we will see. While disciples were to be on call, coming and going, this group of twelve men were to be with him all of the time.

2. Secondly: that he might send them forth to preach. They would go out from city to city and from synagogue to synagogue to give the same message he was giving: that they must accept him to be the Messianic King.
3. Thirdly: they have the authority to cast out demons. And they will be active in casting out demons as evidence of their claims.

### *The Apostles*

1. Simon (Hebrew) or Peter (Greek), Cephas (Aramaic)
2. Andrew. Simon & Andrew are brothers, sons of John.
3. John (a different John)
4. James, actually Jacov or Jacob. As the language moved from Hebrew to Greek to Latin and English Jacov became James. In the Greek New Testament you will see it as Jakobos. And these two are sons of Zebedee and Salome which is the Hellenised form of Shulamit.
5. Philip means “a lover of horses”.
6. Nathaniel also goes by the name of Bartholomew. Bartholomew is not a name but a title. It is the Hellenised form of the two words Bar Talmai, meaning the son of Talmai. So he was Nathaniel the son of Talmai.
7. Thomas (Hebrew), or Didimus (Greek). Both words mean twin. He obviously had a twin brother.
8. Matthew, also called Levi the son of Alpheus. Alpheus is the Greek form for the Hebrew Chalphi.
9. James, the son of Alpheus, not the same Alpheus.
10. Judas, also called Thaddeus or Taddai. He is the brother of James the son of Alpheus.
11. Simon the Zealot. He was a member of the zealot party.
12. Judas Iscariot. Iscariot is from the Hebrew of two words, “Ish Kiriote” meaning “man of the village Kiriote.”

There are three sets of brothers: Simon & Andrew (1 & 2); John and James (3 & 4); and James and Judas (9 & 10). Judas is simply the Greek form for Judah by the way.

There are also two extremes here. Notice Matthew and Simon the Zealot. The Zealots were very energetic in opposing Roman rule, and while the mainline Pharisaism believed in passive resistance, the Zealots were those Pharisees that believed in active resistance. And often they would go around carrying a small dagger, and in a crowd they would often kill fellow Jews who were working for the Romans. They would often kill publicans. And so normally Matthew and Simon the Zealot would be enemies. And I always wondered what happened the first time Jesus asked them to sit together next to each other, and how carefully Matthew would want to watch his back at the first sitting.

Now if you have your harmony, turn to Appendix 5. Notice that there are four different records of the twelve apostles. Notice that

1. The first name is always the same, followed by James, John and Andrew.
2. The fifth name is always the same: Philip
3. And then the ninth name is always the same with the names below mixed. Judas always last because of his actions.

Now what this system shows is that within the apostolic group of twelve there were three different groups, each group containing four men, and each group had a leader. So Simon was the leader of the first group, Philip was the leader of the second group, and James the son of Alphaeus was the leader of the third group. And the names that were below Simon, Philip, and James are those that were under their authority.

## 16. Messiah's Authority to Interpret the Law, § 54, Matthew 5-7; Luke 6:17-49

Now we come to section 54, which is usually called the Sermon on the Mount because, as Matthew records, *he went up on the mountain*. And that title is appropriate enough because it describes where this event took place. But it says nothing about the content of the message. So in the outline we have given it the title: *Messiah's Authority to Interpret the Law*. This better expresses the content of the sermon.

Now just as the gospels are not merely collections of isolated events and teachings but are the record of a story unfolding with a theme, a purpose, a turning point and a climax, so we also find the Sermon on the Mount to be a well-structured message with a theme, a purpose, contrasts, a conclusion, and a climax.

### a. The Occasion, Matthew 5:1-2; Luke 6:17-19

Notice in Matthew verse 1 that it says he sat down – this is a rabbinic position, they always teach the Word of God from a sitting position. Now once again we see him sitting as he teaches.

Now before we survey the sermon as a whole, we need to do two things:

1. Discuss the historical background and what led to the sermon.
2. Answer the question: What is the sermon as a unit, as a package? Or, what is its purpose?

#### (1) Historical Background

First, this sermon occurred after intense interest in the person of Jesus was stirred up. By this time, He had gone all over the country proclaiming His Messiahship and authenticating His claims with many miracles, signs, and wonders. That is why Jewish people were there from all over the country and outside the country as well.

Secondly, this occurred after the selection of the Twelve Disciples. Jesus went up onto the mountain the previous evening and *spent the whole night in prayer to God*. Then *when day came, He called His disciples to Himself and chose twelve of them to be apostles*. Then He came down to a level place and gave this message.

Thirdly, it came after there had been several conflicts with the Pharisees over the authority of Pharisaic Judaism, the authority of the Mishnah, especially in the area of Sabbath observance.



Fourthly, it is a time of Jewish history when the Jewish people were looking for the messianic redemption, looking for the coming of the Messiah to establish his Messianic Kingdom. And the people knew from the prophets of the Old Testament that when the Messiah came righteousness will be the way of entering the kingdom. Righteousness was the ticket, the means of entry. And for four preceding centuries now Pharisaism had developed offering people a form of righteousness, but it is a wide way of righteousness, a wide road, because it meant, as we mentioned before, all Israel has a share in the age to come. Anyone born a Jew would make it into the kingdom.

Now Jesus was preaching that the kingdom is at hand and that He is the Messiah. And He has been performing signs that authenticate His claim. And He was proclaiming a rather narrow way, so narrow that you have to believe in his Messiahship to have the right to enter the kingdom, and so the question arises in the minds of the crowd: Who is right, Jesus or the Pharisees? And what is the righteousness that is prerequisite for entry into the kingdom? **Will Jesus ultimately authenticate Pharisaic righteousness, and if not what kind of righteousness is essential?**

This is the question addressed by the Sermon on the Mount. **Its theme is True Righteousness.**

**And the key verse to understanding the whole purpose of the sermon is found in Matthew 5:20:** *“For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.”*

With this one statement he rejects Pharisaism on two counts:

1. He rejects Pharisaism as having the correct interpretation of the righteousness of the Mosaic Law,
2. He rejects Pharisaism as having the kind of righteousness that will qualify them for the Kingdom.

## (2) What is the sermon as a unit?

The second question to deal with by way of introduction is: what is the sermon as a unit, as a package, what was its intent?

### i. First of all, what the Sermon on the Mount is not:

1. It was not intended to be the constitution of the future Messianic Kingdom. This has been a popular interpretation in pre-millennial and dispensational circles, but that is not really the intent. If that was the intent it would mean the re-institution of the 613 commandments of the Mosaic Law, and that will not happen again since the Messiah died. So it was not intended to give us a constitution of the kingdom.
2. It is not a way of salvation (for then salvation would be by works and not faith). This interpretation is more frequent in liberal Christian circles where they want to avoid the narrow thinking, as they would say it, of believing Jesus to be the only way of salvation. They say that if you keep the principles of the Sermon on the Mount such as the golden rule, you can still go to heaven even if you never come to believe in Jesus. The problem with the second view is that it would make a salvation by works and salvation is always by grace through faith apart

from works. It is a rule of life for somebody who is already saved, but not a means of earning salvation. It was not intended to be a way of salvation.

3. It is not intended to be Church ethics or Christian ethics for this age. And again I mean that as a unit. He does say things here that later do become church ethics for this age, and you know what does and what does not by observing what is recorded later in the gospels or by the apostles in the epistles. But as a package at the time it was given that was not its intent. If it was intended to be church ethics for this age, do you know what that would mean for you? Well, no more ham on rye. No more bacon and eggs. No more of all those oinky things the Gentiles have learned to love. But it goes beyond the eating laws. If you are wearing any clothing right now of mixed threads, you are violating the Sermon on the Mount. You could not wear that kind of clothing under the Mosaic Law. Or, if you are a man and you have a beard and your beard is not squared, but is rounded, you have broken the Mosaic Law. If you shaved you broke the Sermon on the Mount, for example. So if this is intended to be church ethics for this age, many of us are here in deep sin, even as I speak. But that is not its intent.

So these three things are what it is not: It is not the constitution of the kingdom; It is not a way of salvation; and it is not church ethics for this age.

## ii. What the Sermon on the Mount is:

In its context – in the Jewish frame of reference in which it was spoken – the Sermon on the Mount is the Messiah's interpretation of the standard of righteousness which the Law demanded, put in contrast with the Pharisaic interpretation of the kind of righteousness which the Law demanded.

And the basis for the distinction is that the Mosaic Law does not merely require external conformity, but it requires both internal and external conformity. The Pharisees believed the Mosaic Law required external conformity and constructed many additional laws to that end, but they neglected internal conformity. The Mosaic Law required both internal and external conformity.

So in His sermon Jesus contrasts the external appearance of righteousness required by Pharisaic law with the internal reality of righteousness required by the Law of Moses.

As you will see in a few minutes, He pulls out a Mosaic commandment from the written Law and shows a contrast between their interpretation of the righteousness of the command in the oral law and His interpretation of the righteousness of that command.

## b. The Characteristics of True Righteousness

From the prophets we know that the Messianic Kingdom was to be an age of righteousness. One of the purposes of the seventy sevens announced to Daniel (9:24b) is to bring in an age of righteousness. This age of righteousness is the Messianic Kingdom. The same point is made by Isaiah 1:26-27; 11:4-5; 32:17; Jeremiah 23:5-6; 33:15-16. And in Isaiah 60:21 we also see that the people themselves will be righteous.

Isaiah 1:26-27

26 "Then I will restore your judges as at the first,

And your counselors as at the beginning;  
After that you will be called the city of righteousness,  
A faithful city.”

- 27** Zion will be redeemed with justice  
And her repentant ones with righteousness.

Notice here that the city will be called the city of righteousness, and that Zion’s repentant ones will be redeemed with righteousness.

Isaiah 11:4-5

- 4 But with righteousness He will judge the poor,  
And decide with fairness for the afflicted of the earth;  
And He will strike the earth with the rod of His mouth,  
And with the breath of His lips He will slay the wicked.
- 5 Also righteousness will be the belt about His loins,  
And faithfulness the belt about His waist.

The Messiah will be characterised by righteousness and will judge the poor with righteousness.

Isaiah 32:16-18

- 16 Then justice will dwell in the wilderness  
And righteousness will abide in the fertile field.
- 17 And the work of righteousness will be peace,  
And the service of righteousness, quietness and confidence forever.
- 18 Then my people will live in a peaceful habitation,  
And in secure dwellings and in undisturbed resting places;

Here we see that righteousness will bring about peace, and quietness and confidence in God.

Jeremiah 23:5-6

- 5 “Behold, the days are coming,” declares the Lord,  
“When I will raise up for David a righteous Branch;  
And He will reign as king and act wisely  
And do justice and righteousness in the land.
- 6 “In His days Judah will be saved,  
And Israel will dwell securely;  
And this is His name by which He will be called,  
‘The Lord our righteousness.’

Again the Messiah is a righteous Branch and his very name will be “The Lord our Righteousness”

Jeremiah 33:15-16

- 15 ‘In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch of David to spring forth; and He shall execute justice and righteousness on the earth.
- 16 ‘In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will dwell in safety; and this is *the name* by which she will be called: the LORD is our righteousness.’

And the city of Jerusalem will be called by the name “The Lord is our Righteousness”.

Isaiah 60:21

- 21 “Then all your people *will be* righteous;  
They will possess the land forever,

The branch of My planting,  
The work of My hands,  
That I may be glorified.

Here the Lord is addressing Jerusalem and declaring that all her people will be righteous.

So we see that the Messianic Kingdom is an age of righteousness and the people themselves will be righteous. We also see in these passages some of the characteristics of righteousness. Righteousness will bring about peace, quietness and confidence in God.

## (1) The Characteristics of Those Who Attain True Righteousness

Now we come to the beatitudes in which Jesus describes the characteristics of the true righteousness that is required by the Law of Moses and that is required for entry into the Kingdom of Heaven. The Jews who are listening to him understand that righteousness is essential in the Kingdom. It will be the ticket for entry into the Kingdom. But they define righteousness by the Oral Traditions of the Pharisees. In the beatitudes Jesus is going to describe the characteristics of true righteousness, that righteousness which is required by the written Law, and which is essential for entry into the Kingdom of Heaven.

As we look at the beatitudes we will see that each one has two parts. The first part describes a characteristic of those who have true righteousness. And the second part gives the blessing or the reward for those described in the first part.

Furthermore we will see that just as the first part describes a characteristic of those who have true righteousness, so the second part describes a related aspect of entry into the Kingdom that will be enjoyed by those who are righteous.

### i. *In Relationship to God: The Beatitudes Part 1: Matthew 5:3-6*

The first four beatitudes deal with a right relationship with God.

1. *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.* (v3) To be *poor in spirit* is to have a right and proper evaluation of oneself before God. It is the opposite of pride. Those who are poor in spirit have a right evaluation of themselves before God, recognising they have no righteousness of their own and the righteousness that they have is because of faith in God, and it is the righteousness of God in them. This is the first characteristic of true righteousness. And the result will be entry into the Kingdom of Heaven; *for theirs is the kingdom of heaven*. Although they are poor in spirit now they shall possess the Kingdom of Heaven.
2. *Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.* (v4) To *mourn* means to develop a sensitivity to sin that leads to the confession of sins to God. Jeremiah describes in chapter 31 the regathering of Israel. In verse 9 he says *with weeping they will come*. They will be mourning their sin, particularly their national sin of rejecting their Messiah. Then Jeremiah 31:13 describes how their mourning will be turned into joy and they will be comforted:

*Then the virgin will rejoice in the dance,  
And the young men and the old, together,  
For I will turn their mourning into joy  
And will comfort them and give them joy for their sorrow.*

So the second characteristic of true righteousness is mourning that will be turned into joy and comfort in the Messianic Kingdom.

3. *Blessed are the gentle [meek], for they shall inherit the earth.* (v5) Meekness means to have a quiet confidence in God, and submission to God's authority. It is not cowardice, it is merely confidence that God can bring us through any situation. We can see in Isaiah 32:17b that *the service of righteousness will be quietness and confidence forever*. Here Jesus says that those who have this

quality and live a life of submission to God's authority will someday exercise authority over the earth when they inherit the earth in the Messianic Kingdom.

4. **Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.** (v6) Another characteristic of those who attain true righteousness is an internal desire for righteousness. They ***hunger and thirst for righteousness***. Again the prophets wrote of the Israelites being satisfied in the Messianic Kingdom. For example Jeremiah 31:14 says: *My people will be satisfied with My goodness*. And Jeremiah 31:25 says: *For I satisfy the weary ones and refresh everyone who languishes*.

ii. *In Relationship to Man: The Beatitudes Part 2: Matthew 5:7-12*

Then we have the characteristics of those who attain true righteousness in relationship to man.

1. ***Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.*** (v7) To be merciful means to show compassion and to respond to the need of others – to meet the needs of others as we are able. Ezekiel writes in 39:25: *Therefore thus says the Lord God, "Now I will restore the fortunes of Jacob and have mercy on the whole house of Israel; and I will be jealous for My holy name*. Jeremiah 33:26 says the same thing. Those who have a righteousness characterised by mercy will be found in the Kingdom where they will receive mercy.
  2. ***Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.*** (v8) To be ***pure in heart*** is to have a heart that is undivided, has no darkness, and has nothing to hide. It means to be honest and to operate and do good things out of a proper motivation, a love of God. The pure in heart will also be in the Kingdom of Heaven where they will see the Messiah who is God.
  3. ***Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God*** (v9) In Isaiah 32:17a we read, *the work of righteousness will be peace*. And James writes in 3:18: *the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace*. In his context he is talking about peace and unity between believers, not a political peace or a peace between nations. Such peacemaking is a characteristic of true righteousness and those who possess this quality ***shall be called sons of God***, and they too will be found in the Kingdom of Heaven.
  4. ***Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.*** (v10) Those who live consistently with the absolute standard required by the true righteousness of the Law will raise a sense of guilt among those observing them who are not believers. This in turn could bring on (and often does bring on) persecution. The apostle John gives the example of Cain who killed his brother because his own deeds were evil while his brother's deeds were righteous in 1 John 3:10-13.
- 10 By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother.
  - 11 For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another;
  - 12 not as Cain, *who* was of the evil one and slew his brother. And for what reason did he slay him? Because his deeds were evil, and his brother's were righteous.

**13** Do not be surprised, brethren, if the world hates you.

Those who live according to true righteousness can expect to be persecuted, but they are assured of entry into the Messianic Kingdom, *for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.*

5. In light of His coming on the scene and claiming to be the Messiah Jesus makes one more point. (v11-12) *"Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me"*. Now those who will accept His Messiahship will be rejected by the larger Jewish community. Before he came they would be persecuted only because of their consistent living in accordance with the Mosaic Law. Now those who believe in the Messiahship of Jesus are also going to attract persecution. But those who are willing to suffer the persecution will reach a level of spiritual happiness that others cannot attain. And, Jesus adds in verse 12: *their reward in heaven is great.*

These are the characteristics of those who attain the true righteousness required by the Law, both in relationship to God and in relationship to man. They will enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

**(2) The Characteristics of Those Who Fail: Luke 6:24-26**

Now Luke's account (in verses 24-26) gives the contrasting characteristics of those who fail to attain the true righteousness of the Law. In place of blessings they will have woes. He points out that they are characterised by four things:

1. *Woe to you who are rich, for you are receiving your comfort in full.* (v24) Instead of being poor in spirit they consider themselves to be rich. In Revelation 3:17-18 Jesus says to the church in Laodicea: *'Because you say, "I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing," and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked, I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire so that you may become rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your nakedness will not be revealed; and eye salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see'.* Although the Laodiceans considered themselves to be rich they lacked righteousness as represented by the white garments which they were advised to buy. In their pride the Pharisees also consider themselves to be rich in righteousness and in need of nothing spiritually. They also seek and obtain material wealth, but fail to lay up for themselves treasure in heaven. Jesus says they are receiving their comfort in full, in other words they are receiving their reward in this age and will not receive comfort in the Kingdom of Heaven.
2. *Woe to you who are well-fed now, for you shall be hungry.* (v25a) In contrast with the righteous who hunger and thirst after righteousness the Pharisees consider themselves to be righteous and therefore do not hunger and thirst for righteousness. And in contrast with those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, who will be satisfied in the Kingdom of Heaven, those who are well fed now will be hungry. In other words they will not find themselves in the Kingdom of Heaven.
3. *Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep.* (v25b) In contrast with those who mourn their sinfulness now and find comfort in the Kingdom of Heaven, those who do not have true righteousness laugh now but will weep and mourn when they find themselves excluded from the Kingdom of Heaven. We see this

illustrated later in the parable of the wedding feast in Matthew 22:11-13 where there was a man who was not dressed in wedding clothes. The wedding clothes represent true righteousness. And the unrighteous man is thrown into the outer darkness where *there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth*.

4. *Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for their fathers used to treat the false prophets in the same way.* (v 26) Here is a direct contrast with the righteous who are persecuted for righteousness sake (Matthew 6:11-12). The righteous are persecuted in the same way as the prophets who were before them. The unrighteous on the other hand have a good reputation with all men. Their fathers, while persecuting the true prophets, used to speak well of the false prophets. Instead of having the blessing of the Kingdom of Heaven these ones have woe because they will not see the Kingdom.

So in Luke's account Jesus provides some characteristics of those who fail to attain the righteousness of the Law, and he indicates that they will not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

### (3) The Characteristics of True Righteousness in Relationship to the World

#### The Beatitudes Part 3: Matthew 5:13-16

Then in Matthew's account Jesus goes on to describe the characteristics of true righteousness in relationship to the world, and he points out two things.

1. First of all in verse 13 he says: *"You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men.* Here he describes the Jews as the salt of the earth and he refers to salt that has become tasteless.

How can salt become tasteless? Salt as we know it is pure sodium chloride and cannot lose its saltiness. But in the Middle East of Jesus day salt was obtained from mineral deposits that were a mixture of several minerals and if it was exposed to rain or moisture from the earth the sodium chloride would be leached out of it and it would become tasteless.

Now just as their salt contained within it a salty flavoured component, so Israel contained within it a believing Remnant who were intended by God to be the flavour of righteousness in the world. They were to possess the characteristics of true righteousness for all the earth to savour. So the Jews were the salt of the earth.

But they had lost their flavour of righteousness because so many of them were following the Pharisaic tradition of righteousness instead of the true righteousness required by the Law. They had become tasteless. Such salt, Jesus says, *is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men.* This indeed is what has happened to the Jews. They were removed from their land and both they and their land have been trampled underfoot by Gentiles. In passing it is worth noting that this is not the final state of the Jews, but following that train of thought would take us away from our present study.



2. Secondly, in verses 14-16 he says:

- 14 “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden;  
15 nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house.  
16 “Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

Here Jesus describes those who attain the true righteousness required by the Law as **the light of the world**. And the prophet Isaiah describes the righteousness of Jerusalem in the Messianic Kingdom as a bright light for all the nations to see.

Isaiah 61:11-62:2

- 11 For as the earth brings forth its sprouts,  
And as a garden causes the things sown in it to spring up,  
So the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise  
To spring up before all the nations.  
1 For Zion’s sake I will not keep silent,  
And for Jerusalem’s sake I will not keep quiet,  
Until her righteousness goes forth like brightness,  
And her salvation like a torch that is burning.  
2 The nations will see your righteousness,  
And all kings your glory;  
And you will be called by a new name  
Which the mouth of the Lord will designate.

And so Jesus says, just as a city on a hill cannot be hidden at night, but its light can be seen from a long way off, and just as in a house we light a lamp and put it where its light will be useful, so those who attain true righteousness should allow their good works to be seen so that others will glorify their Father who is in heaven. He has already pointed out that the righteous will suffer persecution. Now he encourages them to persevere in their righteousness in spite of persecution. As a result others will glorify God, and come to faith in Him.

### c. *The Code of True Righteousness, Matthew 5:17-48*

In the beatitudes we saw Jesus describing the characteristics of true righteousness and then contrasting them with the characteristics of false righteousness. Then He showed how true righteousness relates to the world.

Now He addresses the question of the code of true righteousness. What is the standard to be followed by those who have true righteousness?

First He will clarify what that code of life is, next He will discuss the correct interpretation of that code, then He will go on to discuss the correct practice of that code.

#### (1) Introduction: Matthew 5:17-20

- 17 “Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill.

The Greek word translated *abolish* here is the word *katalyo*, and it means to divide, demolish, destroy, or throw down as a building or its materials. The ASV aptly translates it as destroy.

In these few verses Jesus spelled out His own relationship to the Law. He pointed out that He came for the purpose of fulfilling the Law; He did not come to destroy it. Indeed He proved to be the only Jew who ever kept the Mosaic Law perfectly.

By keeping the Law perfectly He could then, by means of substitution, take upon Himself the penalty of the Law for those who failed to keep it. Once He did this and shed His blood for it, He then rendered the Law inoperative so that with His death and resurrection the Law was no longer in effect (Ephesians 2:11-16). He came to fulfil it and bring it to an end, not to destroy it.

Have a look at Ephesians 2:11-16 (NASB).

<sup>11</sup> Therefore remember that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called “Uncircumcision” by the so-called “Circumcision,” *which is performed in the flesh by human hands*— <sup>12</sup> *remember* that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

<sup>13</sup> But now in Christ Jesus you, who formerly were far off, have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

<sup>14</sup> For He Himself is our peace, who made both *groups into* one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall,

<sup>15</sup> by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, *which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances*, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, *thus* establishing peace, <sup>16</sup> and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity.

<sup>17</sup> And He came and preached peace to you who were far away, and peace to those who were near; <sup>18</sup> for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father. <sup>19</sup> So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God’s household, <sup>20</sup> having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner *stone*, <sup>21</sup> in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the

Lord,<sup>22</sup> in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.

In verses 11 & 12 Paul addresses his Gentile readers and declares that they were *separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.*

In verse 13 he says the blood of Christ has brought them near. In verse 14 the word *for* at the beginning of the verse introduces the explanation of how it is that the Gentiles *have been brought near by the blood of Christ.*

In verse 14, He did it by breaking down the barrier or dividing wall. And how did He do that? The answer is in verse 15: *by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances.* Notice that the *dividing wall, or the enmity, is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances.*

Then notice in verse 16 that the reconciliation of Jew and Gentile into one body was achieved, Paul says, *through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity.* The enmity was put to death by the cross. And what is the enmity? In verse 15 he tells us the enmity is the law.

So we see that the Law was abolished or put to death by the cross. And here the word translated *abolish* is a different Greek word from the one used in Matthew's gospel. It is *katargeo* which means to render inactive, idle, useless, ineffective, to destroy, cause to cease, do away with, put an end to. Whereas the word Jesus used in Matthew's gospel conveys the idea of destroying as we might demolish a building, in Ephesians Paul uses a word that means to render inactive, cause to cease, do away with or put an end to.

Now, back in Matthew's gospel we read that Jesus said that He didn't come to destroy the Law, but to fulfil it. And notice in passing that Jesus fulfilled both the righteousness required by the Law and the penalty required by the Law for those who do not have that righteousness.

He came to fulfil the Law and then, as we read in Ephesians, to bring it to an end so that it is no longer active.

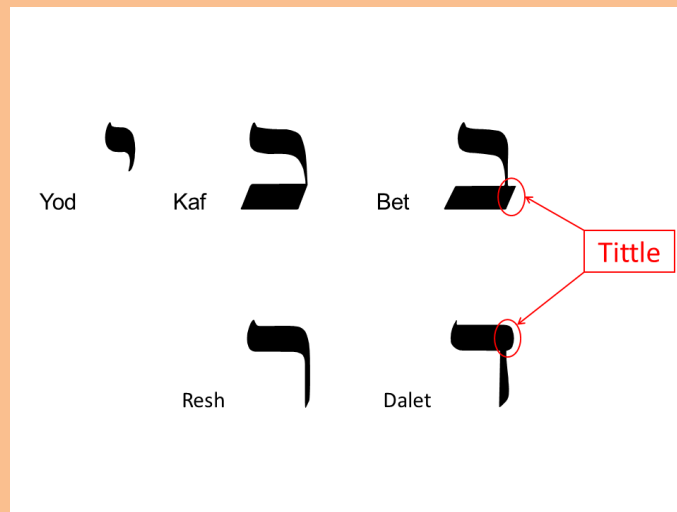
And Jesus' statement makes a direct contrast with Pharisaism because Pharisaism was destroying the Law by its many additions, reinterpretations and changes.

18     *"For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished.*

He will be the one who will fulfil every jot and tittle. What does that refer to?

The word jot actually refers to the tenth letter of the Hebrew alphabet, the letter yod. Yod is the smallest letter of the alphabet. It is about a quarter of the size of the other letters. The point of saying not one yod is that He will fulfil the Law down to the smallest letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

Now what is the tittle? Some Hebrew letters look very much the same, like the letter beth and the letter kaf. The only difference is a small thing protruding at one corner. That is the tittle. Another example is dalet and resh.



Tittle is the smallest part of a single Hebrew letter. And the point is: not only will he fulfil the Law down to the smallest letter of the Hebrew alphabet, he will also fulfil the Law down to the smallest part of a single Hebrew letter.

By using the letters in this way He points out that the Law He intends to fulfil is the written Law, the one Moses gave. He does not intend to fulfil the Mishnaic Law. And He will fulfil the Law of Moses perfectly down to every yod and tittle.

- 19 “Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

Notice that He also points out that all 613 commandments must be kept. People use this verse and focus only on the Ten Commandments, but he didn’t give only ten, he gave 613. What Jesus will deal with is not limited to the ten. He also deals with some of the other commandments.

The Law of Moses is one unit. Either it is all in or it is all out. The point of verse 19 is that at this stage it is all in and they have to keep even the least commandment – the least commandment of the Mosaic Law. Again the Law is in force until he dies.

And so he comes to verse 20.

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

Having stated His own purpose for keeping the Law He went on to repudiate the Pharisaic interpretation of the Law because Pharisaism was destroying the Law by means of its many added traditions. Often these traditions got around the keeping of the Law. With His statement in verse 20 He repudiated Pharisaism on two counts: First as the proper interpretation of the kind of righteousness demanded by the Law; and secondly, as the kind of righteousness required for entering the Messianic Kingdom.

The kind of righteousness they were offering is too wide a righteousness. His righteousness is a narrow type of righteousness. The kind of righteousness that will qualify you for God’s kingdom is the kind of righteousness that you will be given only if you accept Him as Messiah.

## (2) Examples of the Code of True Righteousness: Matthew 5:21-4

Following this introduction to the code of true righteousness, He then gave specific examples showing the difference between His interpretation of the kind of righteousness demanded by the Law and the Pharisaic interpretation of that righteousness. What Jesus did is this: He picked out six specific commandments of the Mosaic Law and then differentiated His interpretation from that of the Pharisees. The contrast was between mere external conformity and internal conformity. The Pharisaic interpretation was to declare that one was not guilty of violating the righteousness of the Law until He committed the act forbidden by the Law. However, Jesus taught that this was wrong. While one was not guilty of breaking the letter of the Law until he committed the act, he had violated the righteousness of the Law before that.

In the examples that follow we see Him using a pattern: “you have heard that it was said”, followed by a quotation from the oral Law, then followed by “but I say to you ...”, followed by His interpretation of the written Law.

When Jesus says, as He does in other contexts, “It is written....” He is speaking about the Mosaic Law, the written Law.

When Jesus says here, “You have heard it said...” He is speaking about the Mishnah. The Mishnah is the Oral Law and it is said out loud. It was not written until AD 220.

Jesus picks a Mosaic Law and compares their interpretation of it to His interpretation. Here in these six examples the focus is on interpretation.

### *i. The Law regarding murder: Matthew 5:21-26*

In the Pharisaic interpretation you were not guilty of breaking the righteousness of this command until you commit the act. The Messiah says this is a wrong interpretation. You do not break the letter of the command until you commit the act, you cannot be punished by the law until the act is committed, but the righteousness of the command is broken before that. He points out that before anyone commits murder he first of all develops inside of him an animosity towards the victim. Once the animosity is inside him the righteousness of this command has been broken.

“raca” is an Aramaic term meaning “you empty head”. Once you start calling people names, not in friendly jest, but in animosity, the righteousness of this command has already been broken. The Mosaic Law did not merely require external conformity; it required both external and internal conformity.

### *ii. The Law regarding adultery: Matthew 5:27-30*

Pharisees say you are not guilty of adultery until you commit the act.

Jesus says that is wrong: true righteousness requires a pure mind. Once the lust is there internally, righteousness has been broken.

Again, you do not violate the letter of the command until the act is committed, and you cannot be stoned to death until the act is committed. But the righteousness of the command is broken before the act is performed. Before a married man commits adultery he begins to lust after someone he is not married to. Once the lust is there inside him the righteousness of this command has already been broken. It is the

internal violation that could lead to the act of adultery. Whether it does or does not lead to adultery the righteousness of this command has been broken.

iii. *The Law regarding divorce: Matthew 5:31-32*

This will be discussed further in §122.

In Deuteronomy 24:1 there is a commandment concerning the issue of divorce. The Pharisees interpreted it to mean that one may divorce his wife for any and every reason. Even the mere burning of supper became grounds for divorce in the Pharisaic interpretation. Again Jesus said that was wrong because the kind of righteousness which this law of divorce was trying to perpetuate was to show that God hated divorce, and therefore the grounds for divorce were to be extremely limited. So He gave an example of limited grounds for divorce: fornication. To allow divorce for any and every cause went beyond what the Law allowed, so the righteousness of the Law was again violated.

iv. *The Law regarding taking of an oath: Mathew 5:33-37*

The rabbis developed proper ways of saying oaths such that, if you say it one way you have to keep it, and if you say it another way you don't have to keep it. But the person hearing you would not know that subtle difference. Jesus points out in this section that a believer should be recognised to be true to his word. If a believer says "yea" or "nay" it should be understood to be "yea" or "nay" and so a believer should not have to take an oath to be believed. And the character of a believer is to be trustworthy rather than needing oath taking. We definitely should not make promises we cannot keep or don't intend to keep.

v. *The Law of Retaliation or An Eye for an Eye : Matthew 5:38-42*

In the Mosaic context this was a judicial judgement that the punishment must fit the crime. It was to be carried out by a judicial court of law. But the Pharisees used this law as the basis for individual vengeance, ignoring the fact that God says in the Old Testament "Vengeance is mine", He will repay. So they totally misconstrued the purpose of this commandment.

vi. *The Law of Love : Matthew 5:43-48*

The Pharisees defined neighbour, not merely as being a fellow Jew, but a fellow Pharisee. They divided the Jewish world between a group called the *haverim*, those who are fellow Pharisees, and the *'am ha-aretz*, people of the land outside the Pharisaic circle. And by making that unnecessary division they limited the loving of neighbour only to fellow Pharisees.

The principle of the Law is that your neighbour is anyone who has a need that you can meet. And therefore that must be the approach.

#### *d. The Conduct of True Righteousness*

In this section there is a repudiation of Pharisaic action. Whereas in the previous section He repudiated the Pharisaic interpretation of the Law, here He repudiated the Pharisaic practices concerning the Law.

Again He first stated the principle, and then gave three specific examples.

##### *(1) Introduction – The Principle: Matthew 6:1*

Earlier in his sermon (5:16) He said: *Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.*

Now He says (6:1): *Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven.*

Here He points out that the practice of righteousness should not be done for the sake of merely being seen by men and to be approved by men, but rather it should be done for the sake of the Lord. Therefore these actions often need to be done in secret.

If anyone does good things to be honoured by men, then that itself is the ultimate reward they will receive.

Our purpose in doing good things is to meet the needs of others or for the good of others. Our motivation should be to do this for love of God and not for the honour we may receive from it.

##### *(2) Examples of Conduct of True Righteousness: Matthew 6:2-18*

###### *i. In Alms Giving*

Are you giving to impress an audience? Then that is all the reward you will receive. When the Pharisees gave, they gave with trumpet blasts. One should give in secret.

###### *ii. In Prayer – Three Lessons: Matthew 6:5-15*

###### *1) Pray in Secret, Matthew 6:5-6*

Do not use public prayer as an opportunity to show off oratory skills. One should pray in secret. In areas of Pharisaic Judaism prayer tended to be public with Pharisees congregating together in public to pray three times a day. Frequently the purpose of meeting three times a day was only to show how holy they were. Those who pray publicly to show off their spirituality and their oratory skills have already received their reward. But the purpose of prayer is to communicate with God.

###### *2) Do not use Vain Repetition, Matthew 6:7-8*

We should not use prescribed prayers. None of the Gentile religions had extemporaneous prayer; all prayer was prescribed through prayer books. And by this point in time Judaism had deteriorated to the point of becoming like a Gentile religion because all prayers were prescribed through a prayer book – daily prayer books, Sabbath prayer books. To this day the synagogue uses prayer books. The problem with prayer books is that you are merely mouthing words that somebody else wrote. And the uniqueness of our biblical faith is extemporaneous prayer, we speak our own words, we speak to our God and spell out our needs.

### 3) *Use the Model Prayer Outline, Matthew 6:9-15*

While prayer should not be prescribed, it should also not be haphazard. So Jesus gives us a specific outline of a model prayer to follow. Notice He says *pray, then, in this way* or *in this manner*. He does not say *pray this prayer*. Many churches do this and it is vain repetition! He has just told us not to resort to vain repetition and yet week after week they repeat these same words.

He gives us a six part outline of how to organise our prayer life. This does not rule out other prayers during the day, but in our quiet time this is a good outline to follow.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. <b>Our Father who is in heaven</b>                                       | Address God the Father, not the Son or the Holy Spirit. We don't have any examples in Scripture of prayers addressed to the Son or to the Holy Spirit. All prayers which are truly prayers are addressed to God the Father.  |
| 2. <b>Hallowed be Your Name</b>   | Set God apart in such a way that we are focused on Him. Reflect upon the various attributes of God, how each attribute shows the uniqueness of God, and what practical ramifications it has for believers living today. Focus on who and what God is.  |
| 3. <b>Your Kingdom Come, Your Will be done, On earth as it is in Heaven</b> | Pray for the Kingdom Program with all its facets including His return, evangelism, salvation of family members or other unbelievers, work of pastors, missionaries, maturing believers ... All these things are part of God's Kingdom Program. This is also the time to pray for the Lord's soon return; this is the time to pray, Maranatha (I Cor. 16:22), even so come Lord Jesus (Rev. 22:20), "come quickly, Lord Jesus." This is the time to pray for the peace of Jerusalem (Psalm 122:6) and for the salvation of the Jewish people. |
| 4. <b>Give us this day our daily bread</b>                                  | Pray for your own daily needs: finances, personal crisis, etc. Pray for both personal needs and the needs of the ministry with which you are associated.   |



5. **Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those  
who sin against us**

Pray for forgiveness of our sins and forgive others. This is the time to confess our sins. The tendency is to think that confession of sins should come first so the slate can be wiped clean before one makes any requests known unto God. However, that is not the order given in this outline. After having addressed prayer to God the Father, after God has been sanctified, after praying for the Kingdom Program, and after praying for our own daily needs, it is time to wipe the slate clean. It is at this point that one can see that in order to have these requests answered, one needs to confess every sin of which one is aware since the previous confession. This is the time to ask the Lord's forgiveness for even unknown sins and for the sin-nature with which believers have to contend. This is the time to apply I John 1:9: *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

6. **Lead us not into  
temptation but  
deliver us from evil**

Spiritual warfare concerning spiritual conflicts of the world, the flesh and the devil. The prayer ends with spiritual warfare because when the prayer is concluded the spiritual warfare begins in earnest.

4) *Re Forgiveness, Matthew 6:14-15*

At the end of this section about prayer Jesus pointed out something else. In order for the one praying to be heard by God, he should have a forgiving spirit toward fellow saints. If he is not willing to forgive those who have offended him then he should not expect to receive family forgiveness from the Lord.

In this context the issue is not salvation but fellowship; not salvation forgiveness but family forgiveness. Salvation forgiveness is the means by which one enters into God's family, and the only way of receiving salvation forgiveness is by grace through faith apart from works. But once one is in the family, sin in the believer's life can cause a breakup in the relationship within the family of God. And it can break one's fellowship with God the Father. The way a believer receives family forgiveness of sins is by means of confession according to 1 John 1:9.

The point Jesus is making here is that asking for forgiveness will not restore fellowship with God unless we are also forgiving towards others.

5) *Re praying in His Name*

At this point, He did not say to end the prayer in His name. Remember, in this context He was teaching the standard of righteousness which the Law demanded and the kind of prayer, which the Law demanded. So He is dealing with the standard of righteousness within the scope of the Law of Moses, and praying in His name is something that only came with the new Law, the Law of the Messiah. Since, in this context, Jesus is concerned only with the Law of Moses, He did not state that one should ask in His name. At this point, He was only explaining the righteousness, which the Law demanded.

*iii. In Fasting: Matthew 6:16-18*

In the Pharisaic practice of fasting, whenever one went through a period of fasting, he made sure everyone knew it. He would continually refer to his extreme hunger. If someone offered him food, he would say, “Oh no, I can’t eat now; I am separated to the Lord by means of fasting.” It became evident that the fasting was not to receive honour from the Lord; the fasting was to receive honour from men. Again, this illustrates the principle difference between doing it for the public and doing it in secret for the Lord. Believers are never commanded to fast. Fasting is purely an option, but if a believer chooses to fast, he must do so to honour the Lord and not to receive honour from men. So if a believer chooses to go through a period of fasting, he should not go around bragging about it. As soon as it begins to show that he is fasting, it is time to eat again.

### e. *The Practice of True Righteousness*

In this section Jesus gives five more lessons in the practice of true righteousness.

#### (1) Regarding Money, Matthew 6:19-24

Regarding our treasure he points out first of all that *where your treasure is, there your heart will be also*. Now why did he say this? Jeremiah describes the heart in Jeremiah 17:5-11. In verses 5 and 6 Jeremiah describes *the man who trusts in mankind and makes flesh his strength, and whose heart turns away from the Lord*. In verses 7 and 8 he contrasts this with *the man who trusts in the LORD and whose trust is the LORD*. Then in verse 9 he says *the heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; who can understand it?* Perhaps the heart can be understood by looking to see what it treasures. The point Jesus is making here is that a man's heart will determine what his treasure is.

Then in verses 22 & 23 he points out the importance of what we are looking at or what we focus on. In the context, if we focus on wealth and material things then we will have darkness. If we are looking to God we will have light.

In verse 24 the principle is that we cannot serve two masters, and the question is: in which master do we trust for our security? The word mammon is a common rabbinic term for what the world offers materially. If we give ourselves to serving money we will fail to serve God. If we serve God and do what we have to do then our needs will be provided, and we will know how to use the mammon when it comes to us.

How do I know where my heart is? By looking to see what it treasures. And why does this work? Because we cannot serve two masters, and the one we serve will influence our heart, which in turn will determine where our treasure is.

#### (2) Regarding Anxiety, Matthew 6:25-34

Verse 25 begins *for this reason*. For what reason? Because we *cannot serve both God and mammon*. What follows is founded on the fact that we cannot serve two masters, and obviously we should be serving and trusting God.

We should not be anxious for our basic needs, because, as he points out (in verses 25-31), God takes care of the birds of the heavens, and he takes care of the flowers of the field. No matter how worried we get we cannot change the situation. Notice also the argument from the lesser to the greater. How much more will God care for us? There are three basic things we can trust God to provide in normal times (periods of persecution are an exception): A roof over our heads; Clothing for our body; & Food on the table.

In verse 32 Jesus gives two reasons why they should not worry.

1. First, *the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things*. They should not be like the Gentiles who don't know God.
2. Secondly, *your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things*. They can trust God who knows their needs.

Then in verse 33 he comes to the very point of his sermon. The conduct of true righteousness teaches: **seek first His kingdom and His righteousness**, be concerned about doing the righteousness of God, **and all these things**—food, clothing, and shelter—**will be added to you**. They will be provided. Again, the contrast here is between His kingdom and His righteousness and that of the Pharisees. He emphasises the contrast between God's righteousness and that of the Pharisees.

### (3) Regarding Judging, Matthew 7:1-6

People often use this verse out of context to say that believers should not judge other believers. That is not what the issue is because the Bible tells us to confront people living in sin and the issue of church discipline spelled out in Matt 18 requires measures of judgement.

In verse 2 the emphasis is upon **your standard of measure**. *The point here is:* Do not use manmade standards, such as the Mishnah, to judge Jewish loyalties.

The Pharisees judged the Judaism of other Jews according to how they conformed to the oral law and rabbinic traditions.

Those who judge others on the basis of added rules and regulations are like those who try to take a mere piece of sawdust from a person's eye, not realising that they have a plank of wood in their own eye. Both the sawdust and the plank are made of the same thing, wood, and differ only in size. The sawdust will merely irritate the eye, but a plank will cause the eye to be blinded. So those who are using unbiblical standards to judge others are the ones who have the planks.

The point is we cannot use a manmade criterion to judge others. We judge others only on one criterion, the divine criterion, which in this case is the Mosaic Law. If we use man made standards God will ultimately show us that we ourselves do not meet up with these manmade standards.

Then verse 6 says that when you teach the Word of God you need to use some wisdom as to who you teach what. If people are coming together for no other reason than to make fun of you, to reject you, and to ridicule you, then you don't give them the jewellery of the Word of God. Give them the basic Gospel. That's all you can do. But the gems of the Word of God must be given to those willing to learn and willing to accept it.

### (4) Regarding persistence in prayer, Matthew 7:7-11

Concerning prayer he teaches one more lesson here, and that is persistence. Ask, seek and knock until the problem is resolved or until you have been released from the burden. In the Greek this is in present tense – keep on asking, keep on seeking, and keep on knocking.

This is not vain repetition – as long as it is still your burden it is still your prayer, it is not praying through a prayer book which is vain repetition. Praying a prayer over and over again that is a real concern of yours is here not only permissible, it is encouraged. Keep on asking, keep on seeking, keep on knocking – there should be persistence in our prayer life as well.

Later Jesus will teach to pray in His name, but at this time the Jews were still under the Law of Moses.

## (5) The Golden Rule: The Core of the Practice of True Righteousness, Matthew 7:12

Notice the structure of this statement: In everything, therefore, do something, for this reason.

*In everything...* He is summing up.

*Therefore...* Why is the therefore there? What follows is linked to what He has just finished saying. Because of the characteristics of true righteousness, because of the code of true righteousness and its interpretation, because of the outworking of true righteousness in practice, indeed because of true righteousness, *treat people the way you want them to treat you*. And why?

*For this is the Law and the prophets.* In the area of actions this summarises the Law and the Prophets. The Law contained commandments in relationship to God and commandments in relationship to man. As long as we keep the commandments in relationship to God we will keep the commandments in relationship to men. If we fail to keep our commandments in relationship to men we are also failing to keep our commandments in relationship to God. This is the core of the Law and the Prophets.

### f. The Warnings Concerning True Righteousness

Now He finishes by giving special instructions for those seeking the kind of righteousness they will need to enter into the Kingdom. There are four warnings, each of which deals with a contrasting pair.

#### (1) Two Ways: Matthew 7:13-14

The first pair concerns the two ways. There are two ways by which one could try to enter into the Kingdom.

1. The Wide Way is the Pharisaic Way. It is a wide road because they taught that all Israel has a share in the age to come. But the wide road of Pharisaism will not lead to righteousness, it will lead to destruction.
2. The correct way is the narrow way, which is the standard of righteousness demanded by the Mosaic Law, which now included accepting Jesus to be the Messianic King.

#### (2) Two Trees: Matthew 7:15-20, Luke 6:43-49

The second pair is the two trees. Each interpretation of the Law will produce its own kind of fruit.

1. Bad fruit or fruitlessness. To follow the Pharisaic interpretation of the righteousness of the Law, which was only external conformity, will produce bad fruit or fruitlessness. False prophets may say many things, but there is no good fruit involved.
2. Good fruit or fruitfulness. If they follow the Messiah's interpretation of the Law, which had to do with internal conformity that will in turn lead to external conformity and they will produce good fruit.

### (3) Two Professions “Lord, Lord”: Matthew 7:21-23

There are two professions and both may use the name of the Messiah. When the Judgment Day comes, many will make a profession: *Did we not prophesy by your name, and by your name cast out demons, and by your name do many mighty works?*

Here he points out that not everybody who says to Him “Lord, Lord” is actually a believer. Often these people use the name of Jesus, but it is a counterfeit Jesus. Notice what they are able to accomplish in the name of a counterfeit Jesus:

1. Able to prophesy events which came to pass
2. They cast out demons
3. They did many mighty works such as miracles and healings

Yet he will say to them in that day “I never knew you” which proves that they were never believers to begin with.

What this principle shows for them, and also for us today is that the existence of the miraculous does not prove it is the work of God because Satan can duplicate many of these things. For example some of the miracles of Moses were duplicated by the Egyptian magicians. Where did they get their power from? Not from God, but from Satan. And so when Moses changed water into blood, they did the same thing. When Moses brought frogs up from the dust of the ground, they did the same thing. At that point Egypt did not need any more frogs. But the principle is that while Satan can duplicate a divine miracle, he cannot remove a divine miracle. If the magician wanted to show his superiority he should have removed the frogs that Moses brought up. Instead they simply created more frogs which the Egyptians had to suffer from. At that point I suspect the Egyptians were ready to croak themselves.

Satan can duplicate many of these miracles. The test is not the existence of miracles. The test is: is what is being done, taught and said consistent with the written Word of God. Does it correlate with the written word of God. Merely proving things by the supernatural isn't sufficient.

People who go after experience and not after the text of the Word of God are open to deception.

So there will be two professions:

1. Those with the mere external ability to do great things.
2. Those who really have internal regeneration, who stress consistency with the Word of God, and are doing the will of God the Father.

Also notice He says, *depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness*. The Pharisees, by means of all their oral laws, were in fact practicing lawlessness! And some of their laws, as we shall see in a later section, actually enabled them to circumvent the Law of Moses.

#### (4) Two Builders: Matthew 7:24-27

The fourth pair is the account of the two builders in Matthew 7:24-27. In this final pair, Yeshua presented the Jewish people with a choice:

1. They could continue building on the Pharisaic interpretation of the Law, but that would be building on a foundation of sand. The structure built on that foundation would collapse, and they would fail to enter the Kingdom. Or, on the other hand
2. They could build upon the Messiah's interpretation of the standard of righteousness that the Law demanded, and that would be building on the solid foundation of rock. These are the ones who will attain the righteousness that the Law demanded, and they are the ones who will enter into the Messianic Kingdom.

During the sermon he has spelled out his interpretation of the Law in contrast to the Pharisaic interpretation. Now the people must make a choice.

#### *g. The Conclusion*

The crowds recognised the obvious contrast between his teaching and that of the Pharisees. They recognised two things.

1. First, He taught in a different manner than the Pharisees did. When the Pharisees taught they always quoted previous rabbinic authorities. Jesus, however, quoted no rabbi. He taught as one having the authority to interpret the Law and did not base His teaching on previous rabbinic teaching. As the Messiah who gave that law he would certainly have that authority.
2. Secondly, the crowds also recognised that there was a difference in content. They were amazed at His teaching. They clearly understood exactly what He said and where He differed from the scribes and Pharisees.

When this Sermon was concluded, the crowds then had to make a decision: Whom would they follow? Would they follow this new Shepherd, or would they follow the old ones?

A minority would choose to accept His Messiahship and follow Him. The majority would decide to follow the Pharisees thus setting the stage for the national rejection of the Messiahship of Jesus.

As a unit, the Sermon on the Mount is:

The Messiah's interpretation of the true righteousness of the Law  
contrasted with  
the Pharisaic interpretation of the righteousness of the Law.

It is also Jesus' public rejection of the authority of the oral law in Pharisaism.

He will fulfil the Mosaic Law down to every jot and tittle but He has no intention of fulfilling the Pharisaic interpretation of the Law.

And this rejection of their Pharisaic Judaism will lead to the Pharisees' official rejection of Jesus' messianic claims.

## 17. Recognition of Authority in Capernaum, § 55, Matthew 8:5-13; Luke 7:1-10

Here we see Jesus' authority recognised by a Gentile. A Roman Centurion sent the Jewish leaders to Jesus to ask him to heal his servant.

A Centurion was an officer of the Roman army with authority over 100 men. In Luke's account in verses 6 & 7, he finds himself unworthy to approach Jesus himself or to have Jesus come under his roof. He recognised that as a Gentile he was unworthy for this to happen. Therefore he sent the elders of the Jews.

Now normally Jews and Gentiles did not get along. Why are these elders willing to make a request on behalf of the centurion? Notice in verse 4 of Luke's account, they say he is worthy for Jesus to grant him his request. Why is he considered worthy? Two reasons: We read in verse 5 that he loves the Jewish nation. This centurion is different from other centurions because he loves the Jewish nation. And secondly, he financed the building of their synagogue with his own money. Therefore he will fall under the blessing facet of the Abrahamic covenant in Genesis 12:3, I will bless those who bless you. Later, in the book of Acts (chapter 10) we read of another centurion, Cornelius, who also loves the Jewish people, therefore he becomes the first Gentile to enter the church, the body of the Messiah, also experiencing the blessing facet of the Abrahamic covenant.

Now when Jesus was approaching the centurion's house, he sent friends to say that he is not worthy for Jesus to come under his roof. Then he adds in verse 8: *For I also am a man placed under authority, with soldiers under me*. He has officers over him, and he has soldiers under him. He simply has to give a command to any one of his soldiers and they will obey his command immediately. And the point is that Jesus did not have to come to the house, he simply had to give the command and his servant would be healed.

This shows the centurion's recognition of who Jesus is. And this is a pre-view of what will happen on a national scale. When Jesus heard this he said to the crowd (Lk 7:9), *I say to you, not even in Israel have I found such great faith*. This Gentile Roman soldier, part of the subjugating army, has shown more faith than any Jewish person has shown so far.

And because of Matthew's concern for the kingdom, notice what Matthew adds in verse 11 of his account: *I say to you that many will come from east and west, and recline at the table with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven; but the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth*. He points out that when the kingdom is established, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob will be there enjoying the benefits of the kingdom. As a result, people will come from all over the world to recline at table with the patriarchs. So many Gentiles will be in the kingdom, but in verse 12 the sons of the kingdom will be cast out. The sons of the kingdom, of course, are the Jewish people. But merely being sons of the kingdom will not bring them into the kingdom; they must be believers to enter the kingdom. So, many Gentiles will end up inside the kingdom and many Jews will end up outside the kingdom.

In Matthew, verse 13, *Jesus said to the centurion, "Go; it shall be done for you as you have believed."* And the servant was healed that very moment.

## 18. Recognition of Authority throughout the Land, § 56, Luke 7:11-17

He now comes to the town of Nain, which is a town in Galilee, almost directly south from Nazareth, across the valley. As he comes, he comes to a funeral procession where a mother had lost her only son. So in the economy of first century Israel she has lost her only means of



support. Her husband has gone, and she has no other sons. The son is responsible for supporting his mother, but now he has passed away.

As he approaches the procession, he touches the bier, which would have been forbidden to someone who was a Levite. But he was not a Levite and therefore he could touch the casket. He then orders the son to be raised from the dead. And so a resurrection occurs with three specific results:

1. In verse 16, fear gripped them all and they glorified God.
2. The second result is the recognition that *“A great prophet has arisen among us!”* and, *“God has visited His people!”* They recognise a divine result here. They recognise him to be a prophet, but that is not enough. He is more than a prophet. What they are failing to conclude is that he is the Messiah.
3. Thirdly, *this report concerning Him went out all over Judea and in all the surrounding district.* His reputation simply continues to spread. While the Pharisees are rejecting him, he still has a rather large following among the people. The conclusion of verse 17 is the conclusion of the people and not the leaders.

### III The Controversy over the King, § 57 – 71

Now we come to the third major division in his life, which is the Controversy over the King, comprising sections 57-71. It begins with the rejection of the herald, and ends with the death of the herald.

#### A. The Rejection of the Herald, § 57, Matthew 11:2-19; Luke 7:18-35

##### 1. John's Question

Now John has been in prison for some time and his disciples reported to him what was happening (Lk 7:18). He could tell that the leaders of Israel were not responding to Jesus, and even many of the people were not responding, failing to acknowledge his Messiahship although they were willing to call him a prophet. And so, as often happens with believers, even mature ones, a measure of doubt sets in, and the point of his doubt is that he may have missed the Messiah and pointed out the wrong man as the Messiah. So he sends his disciples to raise the question found in Matthew in verse 3: *"Are You the Expected One, or shall we look for someone else?"* The messengers arrived in the context where Jesus was curing many of diseases and plagues. Many miracles were performed, including the healing of lepers, and the giving of sight to the blind.

So Jesus says to John's disciples to go back and tell him about two things:

1. *What you hear*, and what they hear is that he claims to be the Messiah.
2. And what you *see* – the works that they observe being done. The works that they see will be both messianic and non-messianic miracles, and these miracles authenticate his messianic claims.

##### 2. Jesus' Tribute to John

Now when the disciples of John leave to report back to John, we have Jesus evaluating his forerunner. Notice the five points he makes.

1. Matt v7, Lk v24. He was not a reed shaken by the wind. He was not wishy-washy. He always knew where he stood on certain issues and did not mince words.
2. V8, Lk v25. He was not accustomed to luxurious living. He dressed like Elijah and lived in the wilderness.
3. V9, Lk v26. He was a prophet, and his prophetic office was authenticated by the fact that he received direct revelation from God.
4. V9-10, Lk v26-27. He was more than just a prophet; he was the forerunner of the Messiah in fulfilment of Malachi 3:1, which Jesus quotes.
5. V11, Lk v28. John is the greatest of the Old Testament saints. It is hard for us to really appreciate what he says here because the gospel writers rightly spend most of their time on Jesus and only mention John in the early stages of his ministry. But John had a rather effective ministry throughout the land. While he stayed mostly in one place, people from all over the land came to him. And many made a commitment in their baptism by John to believe whoever John points out the Messiah to be. And in fact, much later, as in Acts 19:1-8, Paul runs into believers who are baptised by John the Baptist, yet had not heard that the Messiah whom John was announcing had been identified. They came into the land, were baptised, and left the land before John said,

“Behold the Lamb of God”. And therefore, even a couple of decades later, there were still people following the baptism of John and who had yet to be told about Jesus. [And in the land of Syria today there are only two towns that still speak the language of Aramaic, and where they still honour John the Baptist as the prophet, not yet recognising the Messiahship of Jesus.]

Jesus went on to say in v11 of Matthew’s account (verse 28 of Luke’s), that although there is no one greater than John the Baptist, *Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he*. He now makes the contrast that although John was the greatest of the Old Testament saints, superseding people like Abraham, Moses, David, and others, yet the least member of this new body is greater than John. The church is not equivalent to the kingdom of God, but the church is part of God’s Kingdom program, and that is the focus here. And those who are members of the body of the Messiah have a higher position in the kingdom than the greatest of the Old Testament saints. And this already indicates that John will die before the church comes into being.

Then in Matthew’s concern for the Jewish details he says in verse 12, *From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and violent men take it by force*. From the time that John began preaching about Jesus, the kingdom of heaven has been suffering violence – violence primarily from Pharisees, but also from others like Sadducees and Herodians. They tried to block individual Jews from entering the kingdom by believing in Jesus.

Then in verse 13 of Matthew, *for all the prophets and the Law prophesied until John*. John is the last of the Old Testament style prophets. After this will come NT prophets, which are of a different category. And the prophets who preceded John by centuries announced the coming of the Messiah and John was the last of those prophets of the Old Testament and he identified who that Messiah was. Again, all prophets previously merely proclaimed the coming of the Messiah, John identified who that Messiah is.

And in verse 14, *and if you are willing to accept it* [the kingdom of heaven], John himself is Elijah who was to come. [see Footsteps p 130-134.] Here is another correlation between John and Elijah. Now previously we learned that John came in the spirit and power of Elijah (Lk 1:17); that he dressed like Elijah; and thirdly, he denied being Elijah (John 1:19-23). When we discuss the transfiguration we will add a fourth point. But for now the main point is this: if they were willing to receive the message that John proclaimed then John would have fulfilled Elijah’s function. Again, if the Jewish people had accepted Jesus as Messiah, and the messianic kingdom, then John would have fulfilled Elijah’s function. But they did not accept the kingdom, they did not accept the Messiah, and therefore John did not fulfil Elijah’s function, and so Elijah is yet to come.

So again, if the kingdom offer had been accepted, John would have fulfilled Elijah’s function, and because it was rejected John did not fulfil Elijah’s function.

This does not mean that John’s ministry was a failure, because, as we saw initially, his calling was to have a people prepared to accept the Messiahship of Jesus. And again, those who were baptized by John were making a commitment to believe on him whom John points out the Messiah to be.

### 3. Responses

And now look at Luke's account in verse 29: When all the people and the tax collectors heard this, they acknowledged God's justice, having been baptized with the baptism of John. Notice that those who had been baptized by John had no trouble identifying Jesus to be the Messiah. Indeed John did have a body of people ready to accept the Messiah once he became public.

But in verse 30: But the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected God's purpose for themselves, not having been baptized by John. The Pharisees who had rejected the testimony of John also ended up rejecting the testimony of Jesus.

### 4. Reasons for Rejection

Now in verses 16 & 17 of Matthew's account, Jesus compares that generation of Jews with children in a market place who play a tune and expect the onlooker to dance to their tune. But John would not uphold Pharisaism. And so while they played, John refused to dance. The real reason that John was rejected was that he would not support Pharisaism.

But the given reason, the reason given by the leaders (verse 18), is that he was demon possessed: *For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon!* John was characterised by fasting and total abstention from alcoholic beverages and they used that to teach that he was demonised.

On the other hand, in verse 19 of Matthew, Jesus came neither fasting nor abstaining from alcohol, and they rejected him for the same reason, so regardless of how you live your life, if you reject Pharisaism they will reject you on the basis of demonism.

Now again, note this carefully. The real reason why John was rejected is that he would not support Pharisaism, but the given reason was that he was demon possessed. And so we see once more: what happens to the herald will happen to the king.

## B. Curses on the Cities of Galilee, § 58, Matt 11:20-30

### 1. The Condemnation of Unbelief

In verses 20-24 he condemns three cities because most of his miracles were performed in these cities. He performed miracles elsewhere, but the majority of his miracles were performed within these three cities, and in spite of all these miracles, both messianic and non-messianic, they chose to reject him. The three cities are Chorazin and Bethsaida in verse 21, and Capernaum in verse 23. Now we have records of what he did in Bethsaida and what he did in Capernaum, but we have no record of any miracle performed in Chorazin. There is not even a record of him going there or leaving there. And yet, based upon this verse he must have been there many times and performed many miracles there. This again verifies what John writes at the end of his gospel, that it would have been impossible for anybody to write about everything that he said and did, and the gospel writers had to be selective in what they would choose to report and write about.

Also this passage shows that there are going to be degrees of punishment in the Lake of Fire. While all unbelievers will end up in the Lake of Fire, they will not all suffer to the same degree. So in verse 22 he says, *it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you.* And in verse 24, *it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for you.* And so the fact is that there will be degrees of punishment. And those who had the most exposure to the light and rejected the light will suffer greater degrees of punishment. In some cases the judgement is due to the degree of sinfulness, but in other places, like here, the amount of light they had and chose to reject.

## 2. The Explanation of Unbelief

In verses 25-27 he gives the explanation of their unbelief, in that those who saw themselves as wise and full of understanding (pride!) are the ones who ended up failing to see the truth. And those who were more ignorant were the ones who recognised the truth. And the simple responded.

## 3. The Invitation to Belief and Discipleship

Finally, in verses 28-30 you have an invitation to belief and discipleship. He begins with the words, *Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.* That involves believing on him which will result in salvation. (Isaiah 55)

And in verse 29 he says *take My yoke*. As Robertson notes in his footnote, “Take my yoke” was a rabbinic figure of speech meaning to come and learn, come to a school. And so rabbis would often pick certain people and say, “take my yoke”, “come to my rabbinic school and learn my teachings”. Jesus uses that same rabbinic expression, “take my yoke”. Now, after becoming believers we have to learn of him. We have to learn what he expects of us. And so, following salvation which is simply an act of faith, discipleship requires a level of study and commitment.

Verse 30: *For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.* By way of contrast with the heavy burden of Pharisaic Judaism, the teaching of Jesus is easy or light.

## C. The Reception of a Sinner, § 59, Luke 7:36-50

Here a woman plays a role, and notice that Luke is the only one to give us an account of this event.

And now a Pharisee invites Jesus over for dinner, and how nice it is for a Pharisee to invite Jesus over for dinner. But the context shows he had ulterior motives: to find other reasons for rejecting him. And that's when a sinner (again a euphemism for prostitute) comes in, and she begins to shed tears on his feet and wiping them with her hair. And the Pharisee says to himself in verse 39: *If this man were a prophet* (not even the Messiah, but just a prophet) *He would know who and what sort of person this woman is* and he would not allow her to touch him.

That is why Jesus gives him a parable to show why the woman was so lavish in her love - because those who are forgiven little love little; and those who are forgiven much love that much more. He reminds the Pharisee that, while he was invited into his home, the Pharisee failed to give him even the minimum requirements of hospitality in that day.

1. He failed to give him water to wash his feet, but this woman has been washing his feet with her tears.
2. He gave him no kiss, but she kisses his feet.
3. He did not anoint his head with oil, but she anointed his feet with perfume.

So he tells this woman in verse 38: *Your sins have been forgiven.* Again he is claiming to have the authority to forgive sin in a salvation sense. And again this results in a negative attitude on the part of the Pharisees in verse 49. They *began to say to themselves, “Who is this man who even forgives sins?”*

And he says to the woman: *Your faith has saved you; go in peace.* The things she was doing were the outworking of her faith.

Notice that it is Luke alone who provides some of these details about the role of women in his ministry and life, because Luke has the concern for Jerusalem, Gentiles, and women.

#### **D. The Witness to the King - Ministering Women § 60, Luke 8:1-3**

Here we have the third preaching tour around the country – the last one before Israel’s rejection that will come up in section 61.

Again he goes about from city to city, from synagogue to synagogue, proclaiming his Messianic claims, and offering to Israel the establishment of the kingdom, but the prerequisite is to accept him as the Jewish Messiah. This time, notice that he travels with the twelve apostles who are with him all of the time.

But now we read of certain women, and again this is Luke’s account and Luke always brings in the female role. Luke mentions that certain women who have been healed by him or had demons cast out of them also follow him. Among these is Mary Magdalene and Susanna, which would be Shoshanah in Hebrew.

Then he mentions how Jesus ministry was financed. It was financed by several wealth women.

Now at this point we come to a major turning point in his public ministry, and I’m not going to deal with it today.

## E. The Rejection of the King by the Leaders, § 61-62

Last time we began the third major division of Jesus' life: The Controversy over the King, which begins with the rejection of the herald and will end with the death of the herald. And now between these two events we come to a group of sections, § 61-64, where we have the major turning point in his public ministry. And if we don't clearly understand what happens in these four sections then the second half of his ministry doesn't quite seem to make a lot of sense.

### 1. The Unpardonable Sin, § 61, Mark 3:20-30; Matthew 12:22-37

There are two parallel passages for this account, one in Mark and one in Matthew. Matthew gives the most detail because he is writing to a Jewish audience where it has the most significance. So we will stay mostly with Matthew's account because of his details, but a couple of points have to be made from Mark's version. Two things in particular.

- i. First of all in Mark 3:21: *When His own people heard of this, they went out to take custody of Him; for they were saying, "He has lost His senses."* Notice those who are his friends and those who have been hearing him and listening to him are recognising that something different is taking place. They misinterpret the situation. They think he needs to be saved from himself because his zeal seems to border on insanity and they are afraid he is beside himself. They do recognise something different is happening here, but they misinterpret the situation.
- ii. The second thing to notice in Mark is verse 22: *The scribes who came down from Jerusalem*. What this shows is that while the event takes place up in the Galilee, it was instigated by priests who travelled to the Galilee from Jerusalem, which again is a three days journey. What it shows is that the period of interrogation is now complete, they have reached their decision, and they are looking for a public opportunity to make that decision itself public. And the opportunity comes with the event of the casting out of the dumb or mute demon.

So with these two details from Mark, we will stay with Matthew because Matthew contains everything else that Mark has, but then adds some more details.

#### a. The Rejection, Mark 3:22; Matthew 12: 22-24

The event begins in verse 22 of Matthew when he casts out the demon that caused the person to be both blind and dumb. Dumb meaning that he was a mute, so he could not speak.

Now the act of casting out demons was itself not all that unusual in that day and age. Even the Pharisees, and the Rabbis, and their disciples were practicing the casting out of demons. But the Pharisees carried out a ritual that had three basic steps:

1. First of all he would have to establish communication with the demon. When the demon speaks he uses the vocal chords of the person he controls.
2. Secondly, after establishing communication with the demon he would have to find out the demon's name.
3. Thirdly, once he knew what the demon's name was he could use the name to command the demon to go out.

These were the three steps of the ancient Jewish procedure. On another occasion, in Mark 5, Jesus used the standard Jewish approach. He asked the demon, "What is your name?" and

the answer was, “My name is Legion”. Because of this three step procedure there was one kind of demon they could do nothing about: the kind of demon that caused the person controlled to be a mute so he could not speak. And because the person could not speak, there was no way of establishing communication with this kind of a demon, no way of finding out the demon’s name, and so in the framework of Judaism it was reckoned impossible to cast this kind of a demon out. But the common teaching was that whenever the Messiah comes he will cast out dumb demons.

Now we have already mentioned the first Messianic miracle, the healing of a Jewish leper. There are two more, and here is the second one, the casting out of a mute or dumb demon.

So keep in mind that from a Jewish background the casting out of other demons was not uniquely Messianic. When he cast out other kinds of demons the question raised then was, by what authority did he cast out demons. But to cast out a dumb demon was unique and that raised a different question. This was something the Messiah was supposed to be able to do.

Here is the question this raises in verse 23: *All the crowds were amazed, and were saying, “This man cannot be the Son of David, can he?”* Notice, they are not asking by what authority does he cast out demons, as they did in section 42. Now the issue is, is this the son of David? As you should know, this is a Messianic title. What they are asking is: could this be the Jewish Messiah? He is doing what Messiah alone was supposed to be able to do.

Now, while they are willing to raise the question, could this be the son of David? What they are not willing to do is answer the question for themselves. They are looking to the leaders to make that decision for them. Throughout Jewish history the people have laboured under a complex Arnold calls “the leadership complex”. Whichever way the leaders go, the people are sure to follow. We see this frequently in the pages of the Old Testament. When the king did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, the people followed. But when he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, they also followed. Even in our day, when we witness to our Jewish contacts, eventually they always raise the same objection: if Jesus was the Messiah, how come our rabbis don’t believe on him. That is the leadership complex. In New Testament times because of the stranglehold Pharisaism has upon the masses, because of the application of Mishnaic Law, as we detailed previously, this leadership complex was very strong. So again, while they are willing to raise the question, could this be the son of David, they are not willing to answer it for themselves. They are still looking to the leaders to make that decision for them.

In view of what is happening the Pharisees have only two options. The first option would be to proclaim him to be the Jewish Messiah, but as we have already seen, this they don’t want to do because of his rejection of Pharisaic traditionalism. The second option would be to simply reject his messianic claims, however, if they choose this option they will have to explain how it is possible for him to do these special miracles never done before.

In verse 24 notice they go with the second option and they do reject his Messiahship. But then to explain away his unique abilities, they claim that he himself is possessed, not by a common demon, but by the prince of demons, Beelzebul. (Originally, by the way the name was not Beelzebub, It was Beelzebul with an “L” at the end. And that means the Lord of the Royal Palace. Beelzebul was among the gods of the Philistines. But the Pharisees began mocking some of these gods, and they changed the last letter from an L to a B, and changed the meaning from “the Lord of the Royal Palace” to “the Lord of the Flies.”) This became the official Pharisaic reason for rejecting his Messiahship: he is not the Messiah on the basis of



demon possession. Now this is not only found in the gospels, it is also found in the rabbinic writings of the Talmud. There are two passages in the Talmud that reflect the events of verse 24. One passage says this: The reason they had to execute Jesus on the Passover, though it contradicted Jewish law to have executions on Passover, had to do with the nature of his crime, and that was this: he seduces Israel by practicing sorcery. There is a close connection between sorcery and demonism. Now a second passage in the Talmud says that when he was still living in Egypt he made these cuts inside the skin of his flesh and inscribed into his skin the four letters of God's name. In Hebrew God's name comprises four letters that would correspond to our Latin letters YHWH. This is given as the reason that he could perform his miracles. Neither here in the gospels, nor in the rabbinic writings do they deny the fact of his miracles. There are too many witnesses to those miracles. But in both places they ascribe it to a supernatural or demonic source.

So keep in mind, to understand the nature of the unpardonable sin, the given reason why they rejected him is that they rejected him on the basis of demon possession.

**b. *The Defence, Mark 3:23-27; Matthew 12:25-29***

Now small b, the defence in verses 25-29.

Now Jesus defends himself against this charge by making four specific points.

1. V 25-26. This accusation cannot be true because it would mean a division in Satan's kingdom.
2. V 27. They themselves were teaching that the gift of exorcism was a gift of God. And therefore to accuse him of this at this point in time would be inconsistent with their own theology.
3. V 28. This miracle actually authenticates the message, and authenticates the claims of Jesus to be the Messiah.
4. V 29. It shows that he is stronger than Satan and not subservient to Satan.

**c. *The Judgement, Mark 3: 28-30; Matthew 12:30-37***

Now Jesus goes on to pronounce a judgement against Israel in Matthew 12:30-45. In the middle of His pronouncement He is interrupted by the scribes and the Pharisees who ask Him for a sign. He responds briefly to them and then He continues His judgement.

In order to have His whole judgement in mind, read Matthew 12:30-45. And as you read take note of the questions that come to mind.

This passage raises many questions and is not often well understood, but it is actually the key to understanding the rest of the gospel story, and the story of the book of Acts, and indeed the letters of the apostles.

Perhaps the first issue we need to look at is found in Jesus' statement that *whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven Him*. Now when we read a statement like that it appears to be a universal statement, one that applies to all individuals in all times. But is it?

Imagine a scene near here in our own time. At the Mountain Trails campsite a busload of children have just arrived to enjoy several days or a week of outdoor activities, and as part of the orientation talk one of the leaders shows the campers the campsite boundaries and says

to them, “Whoever wants to go across that boundary must first come and ask a leader for permission.”

Taking only those very words, you would conclude that anyone, of any age, at any time, whether camper, or leader, or anyone else, would need to come and ask permission before crossing that boundary. But we don’t understand it that way because of the context in which the statement was made. We understand that the statement applies only to the campers at the time of the camp.

And so, when we see Jesus making similar statements that may sound like generalisations with a universal application, it is very important to look closely at the context in order to understand just what He was intending His listeners to understand.

This issue actually highlights a very important principle of interpretation found in the Golden Rule of Interpretation, which you can find in Appendix 1 of your harmony.

When the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense;  
therefore, take every word at its primary, ordinary, usual, literal meaning,  
unless the facts of the immediate context,

studied in the light of related passages and axiomatic and fundamental  
truths,  
indicate clearly otherwise.

This rule reminds us to consider the immediate context of each statement, and also to take into account other related passages.

In the example of the statement made to the campers we found that the facts of the immediate context influenced our understanding of the statement. And so it will be as we consider what Jesus is saying here, that the facts of the immediate context will influence our understanding of what He is saying.

Now with that principle in mind, let us consider some of the questions that arise in this passage and gather the facts of the immediate context. And as we gather these facts, they will be like the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle that we arrange on a board and fit together to make the picture come into view. And so we will understand what Jesus is saying here.

### (1) A Scattering

The first question arises from verse 30: <sup>30</sup>“He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me scatters.

The first part of this statement is fairly plain. They cannot be both for Him and against Him at the same time. If they are not for Him they are against Him. The questions arise from the second half of this verse. What is the gathering? And, what is the scattering that He talks about?

The implication of His statement is that those who are with Him will gather with Him, but those who are against Him will scatter. Now what is the gathering, and what is the scattering?

Turn in your Bibles to Deuteronomy 28:63–64. In chapter 28 of Deuteronomy, Moses first sets before Israel the blessings they will receive if they diligently obey the Lord their God. Then he sets out the curses they will have if they disobey the Lord their God. In the midst of the consequences of disobedience he says this:

<sup>63</sup> *"It shall come about that as the Lord delighted over you to prosper you, and multiply you, so the Lord will delight over you to make you perish and destroy you; and you will be torn from the land where you are entering to possess it."* <sup>64</sup> *"Moreover, the Lord will scatter you among all peoples, from one end of the earth to the other end of the earth; and there you shall serve other gods, wood and stone, which you or your fathers have not known."*

Here, right in the very covenant He gave them, God warns them that one of the consequences of their disobedience will be a scattering. They would be scattered among all nations over all the earth.

And in all their history this had not yet happened. In the Babylonian captivity they were taken captive into one nation. But in AD 70, about 40 years after Jesus spoke these words, the Romans destroyed the city of Jerusalem and the temple. At that time:

- i. Those who accepted His Messiahship and heeded His warnings were gathered together in safety outside of the war zone and not one of them perished.
- ii. But those who rejected His Messiahship were either killed or scattered all over the world by the Romans!

These words of the covenant would be familiar to His audience. And so we can see that Jesus is making reference to this statement from the covenant. And the implication is that the time for that scattering is at hand.

As a consequence of what the Jewish leaders have just said, the scattering of the Jews all over the world is about to take place.

In other words, He is pronouncing a judgement against them. They have rejected Him on the basis of demon possession, and now they will be scattered as a consequence.

## (2) Blasphemy

Now, the second question arises from verses 31 and 32 of Matthew's account, and it is this: why does He talk about blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, or speaking against the Holy Spirit here?

As we have already noticed in earlier sections, Jesus was lead by the Spirit and filled with the Spirit, which means that He was controlled by the Holy Spirit. And in verse 28 He says that He *cast out demons by the Spirit of God*, which means He cast them out in the power of the Holy Spirit, or the Holy Spirit was the agent who brought it about.

Therefore, when they declared that *He casts out demons only by Beelzebul the ruler of demons*, they were attributing the work of the Holy Spirit to the devil.

And thus they were speaking against and blaspheming against the Holy Spirit.

And in doing this they rejected the Holy Spirit's testimony that Jesus is the Messiah. And ultimately their sin is the wilful rejection of the person of the Messiah, while He was present with them offering Himself to Israel as their Messiah, on the grounds that He was demon-possessed.

### (3) Unforgivable

Why does He say, *whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven Him?*

In the process of investigation of His messianic claims there were two stages, First, the observation stage, and then the interrogation stage. The purpose of the investigation was to determine if His claims are true, whether or not He is the Messiah. And during the course of this interrogation stage they would be questioning Him and challenging Him, and even speaking against Him. This was acceptable and would be forgiven them.

But now they have reached their conclusion. The investigation is complete. Their decision has been made: He is not the Messiah, and the power enabling Him to perform His miracles is that of the prince of demons.

So He makes the contrast. While they were speaking against Him, whatever they said would be forgiven them. But now they have reached their decision they will be judged on the basis of that decision, and the consequent destruction of the city and the temple and the scattering of the Jews is now inevitable. Thus their decision is unforgivable.

### (4) Unique to that generation of Israel

This also means that Jesus is dealing with a specific national sin. He is not dealing with a sin committed by an individual, but a sin committed by the nation.

Furthermore it was committed by a particular generation of Jews, and in the next section we see the emphasis in His judgement is on *this generation*, the generation of Jesus day. It was to this generation that he came, offering himself as the Messiah, offering to set up the Messianic kingdom. And it was this generation that rejected him. So from now on in the gospels we are going to see two words coming up frequently: this generation.

### (5) Individually forgivable

In verse 3 Jesus said, <sup>31</sup> *"Therefore I say to you, any sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven people, but blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven."*

Here the word *people* is the word that means a man or woman, an individual of the human race, a person.

So, before He points out that their decision, as a nation, is unforgivable, He is careful to point out that individuals can be forgiven.

Also, regarding individuals, one thing the Bible makes clear is that any sin is forgivable to an individual who will come to God through the blood of the Messiah, and the nature of the sin is irrelevant. On the cross he did not die for some types of sin and not for others. He died for every type of sin, which renders every type of sin forgivable to any individual that will come to God through the blood of the Messiah. (John 3:14-16, 36; 5:24; 6:40, 47; 7:38; 11:25-26; 20:31)

## (6) A Point of no return

But for the nation as a nation, and for that generation, it is now unpardonable. Let's look at that more closely.

In God's dealings with his covenant people, once a particular generation has gone beyond a point of no return, no amount of repenting can change the fact of coming physical judgement. The judgement is irrevocable because they have gone beyond the point of no return.

The events of section 61 are actually the third time this has taken place.

- i. The first time we see this happening is in Numbers 13 & 14, the sin of Kadesh-barnea.

Kadesh-barnea is an oasis right on the border of the Promised Land. And from that oasis Moses sent out 12 spies into the land, who came back 40 days later, all agreeing on one point: the land is all that God called it, a land that flows with milk and honey.

Then came the key point of disagreement. Only two of the men said, "God is with us, we can take it". But ten men said no, because of the numerical strength of the Canaanites and their military forces there is no way we can take the land.

As people often do today, they make the faulty assumption the majority must always be right, and there was a massive rebellion against Aaron and Moses. The two men were almost killed, but God intervened.

At that point God entered into judgement with the Exodus generation. And the decree was that they would have to continue wandering in the desert until 40 years passed. In that 40-year period, all who came out of Egypt will die out except for the two good spies and those below the age of twenty.

So 40 years later there was a new nation, a nation that was born free men in the wilderness, and not as slaves in Egypt, that could enter the land under Joshua.

What happened is that God withdrew the offer of the Promised Land from the Exodus generation, just as here in § 61 he will withdraw the offer of the kingdom from this generation.

The land was re-offered to the wilderness generation that did accept it and therefore entered the land under Joshua. And in the future the Tribulation generation will accept the Messiah and they will enter into the messianic kingdom.

Now to repeat: once the point of no return has been reached, no amount of repenting can change the fact of coming physical judgement.

And Numbers 14 does say the people repented. Verse 20 even says God did forgive their sin. The judgement did not affect anyone's salvation, but they had to pay the physical consequences of going beyond the point of no return, which was physical death outside the land.

And keep in mind that even Moses had to die outside the land because of a sin he committed. But it did not affect his own individual salvation.

Here we are dealing with the physical consequences of going beyond the point of no return.

- ii. The second time this happened was in the days of Manasseh. The details are in 2 Kings 21 and 2 Chronicles 33.

Manasseh was the cruellest king Jerusalem ever had and a great quantity of the blood of the remnant was shed in his day. The temple that was built by Solomon for the glory of God was turned into a centre of idolatry. He resorted to human sacrifice.

And finally a point of no return was reached, and God decreed the Babylonian destruction of the city and the temple and 70 years of Babylonian captivity.

Now here again, once a point of no return is reached no amount of repenting can change the fact of coming physical judgement. And the Bible tells us that towards the end of his life Manasseh did repent. He became a saved man.

He was followed in his reign by the righteous king Josiah who brought revival throughout the land, but God simply said he would not bring on the calamity in Josiah's day, but the calamity itself was inevitable.

The point of no return had been reached.

Not long after Josiah's death the Babylonians came and Jerusalem was destroyed, and the 70 years of captivity occurred.

- iii. And now for the third time, here in section 61, a particular generation goes beyond the point of no return.

What it means is: no matter how many Jews will believe, and, as we will see, myriads will come to believe, it cannot change the fact of coming physical judgement. The AD 70 judgement is now inevitable, and it will strike the nation.

There was now a physical judgement hanging over that generation that could not be revoked and would come in AD 70.

#### (7) Either in this age or in the age to come

Why did He say, ... *it shall not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come*.

And why does Mark record Him saying, ... *never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin*.

Both are referring to the same thing. First notice that Mathew's terminology is particularly Jewish. The Jewish people of the first century saw two ages: the present age, the one in which we now live; and the age to come, which was always the messianic age – the messianic kingdom period. That is the way Jewish people use this terminology.

So Jesus is telling them that the consequence of this sin will be experienced by this generation both in this age, the age in which we now live, and in the age to come, the messianic kingdom.

And what is the consequence of this sin? This generation has rejected Jesus as their Messiah on the basis that He is demon-possessed. The consequence is that His offer to establish the messianic kingdom has been withdrawn from this generation to be offered to a future generation. And so this generation will not see the kingdom established in their own time, and they will not see it when it is finally established in the future, either in this age or in the age to come.

As individuals, those who refuse to change their mind about His Messiahship will either perish in the Roman destruction of AD 70 or be scattered throughout the world in this age. And when the kingdom comes they will not see it because they died in unbelief.

Those who do change their minds about His Messiahship, of course, will escape the coming judgement of AD 70, and will also be in the kingdom when it comes.

#### (8) The Unpardonable Sin Defined

Now in the light of the foregoing discussion of the facts of the context let us define the unpardonable sin.

**The unpardonable sin is the national rejection  
by Israel  
of the Messiahship of Yeshua,  
while he was present on earth,  
on the basis of His being demon possessed.**

#### (9) Results of the unpardonable sin

There were two results of the unpardonable sin.

- i. First, the offer of the Messianic Kingdom was withdrawn from that generation. It would not be established in their day, but it will be offered to a future Jewish generation that will accept it, the Jewish generation living in the days of the Tribulation, something we will see when we talk about Matthew 24 & 25.
- ii. Secondly, the judgement of AD 70 was certain, and nothing could alter it.

If we see the unpardonable sin clearly, we will also see its effects in the rest of His ministry on earth, in the story that unfolds in the book of Acts, in the letters of the apostles, and in the continuing history of the Jewish nation.

#### (10) The importance of words

In verses 33-37 Jesus points out that just as *the tree is known by its fruit*, so *the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart*. Therefore *in the day of judgement* the very words that they are speaking will be used as evidence of the nature of their hearts. And they will be justified or condemned on the basis of that evidence. Their justification or condemnation is actually determined by the condition of their hearts, but the condition of their hearts is revealed by the words they have spoken.

So Jesus is warning them as individuals that the words they have just spoken are an indication of the condition of their hearts and will have eternal consequences in the day of judgement!

## 2. The New Policy Concerning Signs, § 62, Matthew 12:38-45

Now the scribes and the Pharisees have been listening to his words of rebuke and they interrupt Him, in verse 38, to ask him for another sign, as if he had not done anything so far to authenticate his messianic claims. From the time of His first public miracle at the first Passover, until this point of time in which a year and a half has passed, he performed numerous miracles including those same miracles which they themselves called messianic. In spite of this they rejected him. And so now he announces a new policy concerning the purpose of his signs in verse 39 and 40.

Until this time the purpose of his miracles was to serve as signs for Israel to get them to make a decision, and now they have made their decision and made it irrevocably. The unpardonable sin is just that, unpardonable, they have gone beyond the point of no return.

And so he announces a new policy in regard to his miracles. He says in verse 39 of this *evil and adulterous generation* that *no sign will be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet*. In other words, for that generation there will be no more miracles to serve as signs that he is the Messiah, except for the sign of Jonah.

From now on, while he will continue to perform many miracles, the purpose of his miracles will be to train the twelve disciples for the new kind of work they will have to conduct because of this rejection, the kind of work we will find them conducting in the book of Acts.

But for the nation, no more signs will be given except one sign: the sign of Jonah, the sign of resurrection.

### a. The Sign for that Generation

He will give them one miracle publicly: the sign of Jonah, the sign of resurrection, and, as we learn both from the history recorded in the gospels and from prophecies regarding events still future, that will come to Israel three different times.

1. First will be the resurrection of Lazarus.
2. Secondly will be the resurrection of Jesus.
3. Thirdly will be the resurrection of the two witnesses during the tribulation.

What is common in all of these resurrection accounts is a three day period of time.



### *b. The Judgement of that Generation*

Now notice that, having dealt with the interruption by announcing His new policy concerning the purpose of his signs, he returns to the theme that was interrupted: the theme of judgement. And notice also the emphasis here on this specific generation. Read verses 41-42.

Verse 41: *The men of Nineveh will stand up with this generation and will condemn it.*

Verse 42: *The Queen of the South will rise up with this generation at the judgment and will condemn it.*

He now brings in two Gentile examples from the Old Testament: the men of Nineveh, and the Queen of Sheba.

What is the significant point about both of these Gentile examples?

These were Gentiles who had much less light to respond to, but they did respond to it, so at the Great White Throne Judgement these Gentiles will be able to stand and witness against the Jewish generation for being guilty of rejecting the greater light, and being guilty of the unpardonable sin.

The theme of judgement finally comes to a close in verses 43 to 45 with a story involving a demon. Read verses 43-45.

What details does Jesus give us about this man's life, and what is the climax of his experience?

He talks about a demon that was indwelling a person but then chose to leave. He was not cast out. He left of his own free will looking for a better apartment in which to live. He searches for a while, but when he can find no vacancies he decides to go back to the person he was indwelling earlier.

When he finds him again we are told in verse 44, he finds him swept, he finds him garnished. The Greek word is Kosmeo, meaning to order, to set in order, to adorn, to decorate, to garnish.

But also notice he finds him still empty, because in this interval, when the man was freed of demonic indwelling, he was not indwelt by some other spirit, be it the Holy Spirit or a demonic spirit.

So because he remained empty this demon is able to go back in. But he doesn't want to live by himself any more, so he invites seven of his buddies to join him and Jesus says in verse 45: *the last state of that man becomes worse than the first*, because at first he only had one demon in him, and now because he remained empty he now has eight demons in him.

But the point of the story is made in the last part of verse 45: *That is the way it will also be with this evil generation*. Once again the emphasis and focus is on this specific generation. What are the points of similarity between the man and *this evil generation*?

When this generation began, it began with the preaching of John the Baptist. The purpose of John was to speak to them to get them to accept the Messiahship of Yeshua, and by means of the preaching of John this generation was swept and this generation was garnished.

But now with the rejection of his Messiahship they also remain empty. And because the generation remains empty, the last state will be worse than the first.

At the first they were under Roman domination. They had to pay annual tribute to Rome. But Rome allowed them to retain their national identity. Jerusalem was standing. The temple was functioning with its Herodian glory. They even had a semi-autonomous government in the Sanhedrin.

Forty years after these words are spoken the legions of Rome will invade the land. After a four year war and a two year siege the city will be destroyed, the temple torn down until there was not one stone on top of another, and the Jews dispersed all over the world.

The last state of that man did become worse than the first. And to this day the worldwide dispersion is still with us. There are still more Jews outside the land than are inside the land.

## F. Revelation in view of Rejection, § 63 - 68

We will discuss § 63 at this stage, but keep in mind that it really belongs in the middle of § 64. In § 64 he tells first of all public parables and secondly private parables, and the story of § 63 belongs in the middle of § 64 between the public and the private parables. That's where it fits chronologically.

### 1. The Repudiation of all Earthly Relations, § 63, Mark 3:31-35; Matthew 12:46-50; Luke 8:19-21

What happens here is the repudiation of all earthly relationships in favour of the spiritual ones.

Now, while he was yet speaking to the multitudes in Matthew verse 46, and contextually that would happen after speaking the first few parables, his mother and his half-brothers tried to approach him and tried to rescue him out of the situation. And someone mentions to him that his mother and his brothers wanted to get to him.

But in verse 48-50: *Jesus answered the one who was telling Him and said, "Who is My mother and who are My brothers?" And stretching out His hand toward His disciples, He said, "Behold My mother and My brothers! "For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother."* With this statement he rejects earthly ties in favour of spiritual ones in light of the unpardonable sin.

What we have here is something that was prophesied by Hosea the prophet. The Jewish people were "Ammi" meaning "my people", and "Ruhamah", those who obtain mercy. For a long period of time they will be "Lo Ammi" meaning "not my people", and "Lo-Ruhamah" meaning "not having obtained mercy". (Hosea 1:9, 1:23) But in the future they will again become "Ammi", my people, and "Ruhamah", "receiving mercy". Essentially that's what has happened here.

Now covenantally the Jewish people have always been the people of God, but they do not receive the benefits of being the covenant people - the disciplines yes, but not the benefits – until they finally come back to him. And so what happens here is a rejection of earthly ties in favour of spiritual ones.

## *Changes in Jesus' Ministry*

As a result of the unpardonable sin the ministry of Jesus changes. It changes radically. It changes in four important areas.

1. And the first area has to do with the signs.

We already mentioned this previously. We mentioned that up until this point the purpose of his miracles was signs for the nation to get them to make a decision. And now they have made the decision irrevocably. And so for the nation he points out there will be no more signs except that one sign, the sign of Jonah, the sign of the resurrection. He will continue to perform many miracles after this event, but the purpose of his miracles will be to train the twelve disciples for the future work of the book of Acts.

We can summarise it this way: Signs now go from the nation to the apostles.

2. The second change is in the miracles themselves, and there are two facets to the second result

- a. The first facet is this: until the events of § 61 he performed miracles for the benefit of the masses. He did not require them to have faith first. And a good example of this is the one where we saw him healing the man at the Pool of Bethesda (§49, John 5:1-17). We notice that Jesus simply healed him of his own initiative. The man didn't even know who Jesus was. And when they asked him, "Who healed you?" he had to go back and find out. He did not know who Jesus was. He did not know who he claimed to be. There is no faith on the part of the man at all. At that point faith was not essential for miracles to occur. Again, the miracles were there to get them to believe.

But now after § 61 that will change. From now on he will perform miracles only by responding to needs of individuals, and now he will require them to have faith first. We summarise it this way: Miracles go from the masses without faith to individuals with faith.

- b. The second facet of the second result is this:

Until § 61, when he healed someone he would tell them: "go and proclaim what God has done for you". For example, in Luke 5:14 after the Jewish leper has been healed he is told to go and show himself to the priests *as a testimony to them*.

After § 61 every time he heals someone he will tell them: "don't tell anyone what God has done for you". (We will see this for example in Matthew 9:30 in § 68 where he heals two blind men.)

He won't apply the prohibition to Gentiles he heals, as we will see. But as for the Jews he heals, they must follow the policy of silence, and those who benefit from his messianic power are forbidden to tell anyone about it.

We can summarise it this way: His miracles go from tell all to tell no one.

3. The third result deals with the message he and his apostles will proclaim.

Until Matthew 12, as we already saw previously, both he and they went all over Israel, city to city and synagogue to synagogue, proclaiming Jesus to be the messianic king, offering to Israel the kingdom of the Jewish prophets.

But now after § 61 he will also forbid the apostles to tell anyone who he is. And we will see in a later section, when Peter makes his famous confession and says, “you are the Messiah, the son of the God, the Living One”, Messiah says to Peter: “Don’t tell anyone I am the Messiah”. And they too must follow the policy of silence until that is rescinded with the Great Commission of Mathew 28.

We can summarise it this way: He goes from proclamation of his Messiahship to silence about his Messiahship.

4. And the fourth result is his method of teaching.

Until these events of § 61 onward, whenever he taught the people publicly, he did it clearly and distinctly in ways that they could and did understand. (Also § 42 Mark 1:22, 27; Luke 4:32, 36) And we saw when we looked at the Sermon on the Mount, when he was finished, we noticed what Matthew pointed out (§ 54 Matthew 7:28-29): the people did understand what he was saying, and also understood where he differed from the Scribes and the Pharisees.

But now, after § 61, and beginning in § 64, he teaches them only in parables. And as we will soon see, the purpose of his parabolic teaching primarily is to hide the truth from the masses, to teach them in ways they could not and would not understand. Because by now they have received sufficient light to respond correctly, they responded incorrectly with the unpardonable sin, and no further light would be given to them.

And so whenever he teaches publicly now it is only in parables, so no one understands. Even the apostles, as we will see, would not understand until he explains the parables to them.

We can summarise it as: Jesus went from clarity in his teaching to parabolic in his teaching.

Now what happens is this: the unpardonable sin sets the stage for several things, four altogether.

1. It sets the stage for the second half of his ministry. Now we will begin to see why he says to people, “don’t tell anyone what I have done for you”, “don’t spread the news about the miracles”, “don’t spell out the Messiahship”, why he speaks in parables to the masses, and so on. This only begins after the unpardonable sin is committed.
2. It sets the stage for the events coming up in the book of Acts. We will summarise these things at the end of a future study. But the events of the book of Acts are set based upon what happens in § 61 – 64.
3. It sets the stage for a new entity to come into being, the Ecclesia, the Church, the Body of the Messiah. It is his rejection that will lead to the birth of the new entity as of Acts 2.
4. It sets the stage for Jewish history for the next 2,000 years. It is a very crucial turning point.

## 2. The Course of the Kingdom Program in the Present Age, § 64, Mark 4:1-34; Matthew 13:1-53; Luke 8:4-18

Read Matthew 13:1-3a.

### *Background*

We have just seen the leaders of Israel reject Jesus as their Messiah and explain that He preforms his miracles in the power of the prince of demons. And we saw that Jesus responded by pronouncing a unique judgement upon that generation.

He was interrupted in the middle of His judgement when the scribes and Pharisees asked Him for another sign. He responded by announcing His new policy regarding signs. Until that time the purpose of His signs was to authenticate His message that He is the Messiah, and to get them to make their decision about His Messiahship. Now they have made that decision, and as a consequence He will give them no further signs except one, the sign of Jonah, which is the sign of resurrection.

Now in this section we see the beginning of His parabolic teaching. He now begins to teach them in parables.

### *On that day*

Matthew begins, *on that day*. On what day? On the very same day that the rejection occurred. On the day the unpardonable sin was committed. On that day, verse 3 says: *He spoke many things to them in parables*. So his parabolic method of teaching begins with the rejection of the Messiahship of Jesus. And it begins as a result of the unpardonable sin.

### *Disciples' question*

Now notice the reaction of the disciples. Read Matthew 13:10-17, 34-35.

How did the disciples respond to the fact that Jesus was now teaching the crowds using parables? They ask Him, *why do you speak to them in parables?*

What does this question show us? It shows us that the disciples were not accustomed to Him teaching in this manner. As we have seen, up until the events of section 61, when Jesus spoke to the crowds He spoke in clear language that all could understand. His teaching at the Sermon on the Mount is a good example. As a result of this sermon they understood what He said and clearly understood where He differed from the Scribes and Pharisees.

But now, the very same day when the leadership of Israel rejected His messianic claims, He begins to teach in parables. This takes them by surprise, so they ask Him why He is speaking to them in parables because they want to understand why He has changed from speaking plainly to speaking in parables.

### *Jesus' answer*

In His answer Jesus gives three main reasons for this change in His method of teaching.

- i. He begins: *to you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven.*

So the first purpose of His parables is to illustrate the truth to the disciples. The content of the truth is *the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven*, which we will discuss in detail shortly. Here Jesus points out to them that the reason for His parables is that it has been granted to them to know the truth that He is speaking about.

- ii. Then He continues, *but to them it has not been granted*.

It has not been granted to those who have rejected Him to know about *the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven*.

And the reason follows in verse 12. In rejecting His Messiahship they rejected the light that they had. And if one rejects the light that he has, he will not be given any more light. Even the light that he has will be removed from him.

So for the crowds the purpose will be to hide the truth, to teach them in terms they cannot and will not understand.

- iii. The third reason was to fulfil prophecy. Jesus quoted Isaiah 6:9-10 and declared that *in their case the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled*. Isaiah prophesied that the Messiah would speak to the Jewish people in such a way that they would not understand.

Matthew repeats this point in verses 34-35 where he emphasises that Jesus *did not speak to them without a parable*, and quotes from Psalm 78:2, which foretold that the Messiah would end up speaking in parables.

By speaking to them in parables He was fulfilling Old Testament prophecy and thereby proving His very Messiahship which they had rejected.

These, then, are the three purposes of His parabolic method of teaching: to give more light and understanding to the disciples; to hide that light from the unbelieving crowd; and to fulfil prophecy thereby proving His Messiahship.

Mark adds, at the end of verse 34 of his account, that He was explaining everything privately to His own disciples. This indicates that even the disciples didn't understand the parables, but afterwards, when He is alone with them, he will explain the meaning of the parables to them, because for them the purpose is to illustrate the truth.

#### *The content of the parables*

That is the purpose of the parables and answers their question about why He is speaking to the crowds in parables. But, in His answer to their question, Jesus also comments on the content of the parables. Did you notice what He says about the content of the parables?

Matthew 13:11: *To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven*.

Mark 4:11: *To you has been given the mystery of the kingdom of God*.

What He is speaking about in His parables is the kingdom of God or the kingdom of heaven. And those two terms are used interchangeably. They are synonymous.

Matthew uses the term, *kingdom of heaven*, because he is writing his gospel to Jews, and they are sensitive to using the name of God vainly. They would try to avoid using the term when they were writing or speaking and tended to use the term only in the synagogue or other religious meetings. In place of saying "God", they would say "the name" or "heaven". Therefore Matthew used the term *kingdom of heaven* so that it would be readily acceptable to his Jewish readers.

However Mark wrote to Romans, and Luke wrote to Greeks, who did not have these sensitivities, and therefore they used the expression, *the kingdom of God*.

Both expressions mean the same thing and they are synonymous.

## Mystery

Now, what did He mean by the word mystery?

The term “mystery” is not used in the New Testament in the same way as we use it in English. In English we use it for something we don’t yet have an answer for – something we don’t yet have a solution for such as on the program “Unsolved Mysteries”. That is not its meaning in the New Testament.

To see what Jesus means by the word mystery here, read again verses 17 and 35 of Matthew’s account.

Matthew 13:17: *For truly I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.*

Matthew 13:35: <sup>35</sup> *This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet: “I WILL OPEN MY MOUTH IN PARABLES; I WILL UTTER THINGS HIDDEN SINCE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD.”*

In verse 17, Jesus says that the things He is revealing to the disciples are things that many prophets and righteous men desired to see and hear, but it was not shown to them or spoken to them.

And in verse 35 Matthew points out that Jesus was fulfilling prophecy by uttering *THINGS HIDDEN SINCE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD*.

So the things Jesus was speaking in the parables and which He describes as mysteries are things that were not revealed until He spoke of them. Which means that they were not revealed in the Old Testament. And we can define the word mystery as something not revealed in the Old Testament but revealed for the first time by the New.

This can also be seen in Ephesians 3:1-10 and Colossians 1:25-27, where Paul speaks of *the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God who created all things, and the mystery of Christ, which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit*. Paul uses the word in the same way that Jesus used it.

To repeat the definition: A mystery is something that was not revealed in the Old Testament, but is revealed for the first time in the New Testament.

## Kingdom

Now Jesus tells His disciples that it has been granted to them to know the mystery of the kingdom of God, and His parables are explaining this mystery to them.

The Scriptures reveal many things about God’s Kingdom, and so that we can see the full significance of what Jesus is revealing for the first time here, we first need to review what was already known.

The word kingdom refers to the rule of a king, so the kingdom of God may be defined as God’s rule. It is the sphere over which the sovereign God rules. And when we look at what the Scriptures reveal about the rule of God, or the kingdom of God, we find that there are actually five different facets of God’s Kingdom Program. Four of them were already known in the Old Testament times, and the fifth facet is the mystery that Jesus reveals in His parables.

## *Five Facets of God's Kingdom Program*

### 1. The Eternal or Universal Kingdom

- a. This facet refers to God's rule in providence and in sovereignty in that God is always in control. Everything that happens in this entire universe is always within the control of God. So things happen either because of his permissive will, such as the fall of man, or by his directive will, such as the worldwide flood, but nothing happens outside his will. Nothing catches God by surprise. God never looks down upon the earth and sees what people are doing and says, "I can't believe they did that". He never says this. He knows what they are capable of, and he knew very well what they would do.
- b. The different names only emphasise different aspects of this kingdom. The term eternal emphasises the timeless aspect. The fact is God is always in control, in time past, present and future.
- c. The term universal emphasises the sphere and the scope, that no matter where things exist, everything is within the sovereign will and control of God.
- d. 1 Chron. 29:11-12; Psalm 106; Daniel 4 (God raises up kings, he puts down kings, he even has the basest of men to sit on thrones);

### 2. The Spiritual Kingdom

- a. The Spiritual Kingdom is God's rule in the heart of the believer.
- b. It consists of all believers, and only believers from Adam until the end of human history.
- c. In the present age, and only in the present age, the church and the Spiritual Kingdom are synonymous (because all who are members of the Spiritual Kingdom are also members of the church, but that is only true in this present age). But the Spiritual Kingdom existed before the church was born in Acts chapter 2, and will continue to exist after the church is gone at the rapture.
- d. This is the kingdom Jesus is referring to in Matt. 6:33 when He exhorted His hearers to *seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness*; and as He told Nicodemus in John 3:3-16, the way to enter this kingdom is by the new birth which is given to those who believe in Him.



### 3. The Theocratic Kingdom

- a. This was God's rule over Israel, because Israel was a theocracy.
- b. It refers to God's rule by means of and through a theocracy over one nation: Israel.
- c. It was established under Moses at Mt. Sinai with the Mosaic Law serving as the constitution of the kingdom. At Mt. Sinai the people of Israel became the nation of Israel. (1450 BCE)
- d. It underwent two distinct phases in its history:
  - i. The Mediatorial Kingdom where God ruled His theocracy through mediators: Moses, Joshua, and all the Judges until Samuel. And Samuel becomes a transitional character. He is the last of the Judges, and the one who anoints David to be king over Israel.

- ii. The Monarchial Kingdom where God ruled His theocracy through the House of David.

- e. The theocratic kingdom ended when Zedekiah, the last Davidic king was removed from the Davidic throne with the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem. (586 BCE)

And when he was removed from the Davidic throne the theocracy ended and the "Times of the Gentiles" began. And the Times of the Gentiles will continue until once again we have a theocracy with a Davidic king, the Messiah sitting upon the throne of David.

- f. The scriptures for this facet of the kingdom start in Exodus 20 and go all the way through the historical books until 2 Chronicles 36. This is the history of the theocratic kingdom.
- g. In the closing eras of the theocratic kingdom, as the theocratic kingdom began to decline, through the prophets God began to announce a new facet of His kingdom program: the Messianic Kingdom. And that becomes the fourth facet of God's kingdom program.

#### 4. The Messianic or Millennial Kingdom

- a. The name Messianic is more popular in Jewish circles, and Millennial is more popular in Gentile circles.
- b. Definition: The Messiah's rule over Israel and over the world from Jerusalem and from the throne of David.
- c. The term "Messianic Kingdom" emphasises that in this kingdom the Messiah Himself will rule directly. The Messiah Himself rules it personally.
- d. The term "Millennial Kingdom" focuses on the timing element. How long will this kingdom last? It will last for a whole millennium, for 1,000 years.
- e. The basis of this kingdom is found in the Old Testament – two things in particular:
  - i. The Davidic Covenant, where God promised David an eternal descendant who will rule upon the throne of David over a saved Israel. 2 Sam. 7:11b-16; 1 Chron. 17:10b-14.
  - ii. The Messianic Kingdom is a major subject of Old Testament prophecy.
- f. This was the kingdom that was offered through the ministry of John and Yeshua, Jesus, and it was this kingdom that they rejected with the unpardonable sin.

And the offer of this kingdom was withdrawn from that generation. But it will be given to a future generation of Israel.

#### 5. So now in the parables of the kingdom Jesus introduces the fifth facet of God's kingdom program, the Mystery Kingdom. These parables describe the Mystery Kingdom.

- a. And it is referred to as the Mystery Kingdom because it is an aspect of God's Kingdom Program that was not revealed in the Old Testament, but is revealed for the first time here in the New Testament.
- b. Definition: It can be described by the word "Christendom" and means people anywhere in the world who claim loyalty to Yeshua, both false and true loyalty – not so much Christianity, but Christendom, derived from the words Christ and kingdom.
- c. It describes conditions on this earth while the King is absent from the earth and is in heaven.
- d. The timing element: the mystery kingdom is between the first and second coming, but to be more precise: It began with Israel's rejection of the Messiahship of Yeshua in § 61 through § 64 and will end with Israel's acceptance of the Messiahship of Yeshua.

So, the mystery kingdom extends from the rejection by Israel until the acceptance by Israel of the Messiahship of Jesus.

- e. The parables of § 64 simply give us the outworking of the mystery kingdom.

## *The Parables of the Mystery Kingdom*

### *Parable defined*

By way of definition, a parable is a figure of speech in which a moral or spiritual truth is illustrated by analogies drawn from every day life and experience. Parables are based on the principle of going from the known to the unknown and from the figure to the reality. The figure drawn from every day life and experience is the known. The reality is the unknown.

### *Purpose of a parable*

Parables are designed to solve a problem or to answer a question. What is the question? What is the reality they are describing? The question answered by these parables is: What is going to happen now that the King has been rejected and the Kingdom in its Messianic form will not be established until the Messiah returns at His Second Coming?

### *One major point*

Now each parable makes one major point, and it might have some sub-points. If it does they will be clearly pointed out.

### *Understanding a parable*

Before we can understand the reality described by a parable, we first need to understand the figure drawn from every day life and experience. In other words, the known must be understood before the unknown can be understood. We need to understand the literal figure before we can understand its spiritual significance.

### *Symbols in these parables*

Now in these parables Jesus uses a number of symbols. The meaning of some of these symbols is already known from the Old Testament, but some of the symbols are brand new and those He defines Himself. Then when these same symbols are used in later parables we know what they mean based on His own previous definition of them.

### *The key parable*

Look for a moment in Mark's account in verse 13: *And He said to them, "Do you not understand this parable? How will you understand all the parables?"* And the point of this verse is that understanding this parable happens to be the key to understanding all the other parables. Therefore he himself gives a detailed explanation of both the first and third parables, defining what these symbols mean. Therefore when they are used again later we will know the meaning of these symbols.

So let us look at these parables one by one, and then we will summarise them all together.

a. *The Parable of the Sower, Mark 4:1-9, 13-20; Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23; Luke 8:4-8, 11-15*

Read this parable and the explanations that Jesus gives to the disciples.

The figure of this parable has more elements than most. What is the figure Jesus draws from every day life, and what are its elements?

The figure of the sower is readily understood. The elements appearing here are: the seed, the four different soils, and three different forms of opposition to the growing of the seed: the birds, the rocky places, and the thorns.

And what are the realities represented by these elements of the figure?

1. The seed, we are told, is *the word of God*.
2. The soil into which the seed is sown is the heart of the one who hears the word of God. And there are four different preparations of the heart and four different responses of the heart to the word of God.
3. The birds represent Satan and his agents who *snatch away what has been sown in his heart* (Matthew).
4. The rocky places represent a *time of temptation* (Luke), or *affliction or persecution that arises because of the word* (Matthew).
5. The thorns represent *worries and riches and pleasures of this life* (Luke), and *the worry of this world and the deceitfulness of wealth* (Matthew), and *the desire for other things* (Mark).

This is an example of a parable with several sub-points, each of which Jesus explains. But before we delve into the sub-points it is important to remember that each parable has one major point. What is the major point made in this parable?

Jesus gives the answer in verse 11 of Luke's account. *Now the parable is this: the seed is the word of God*. The major point made by this parable is that the period of the mystery kingdom will be characterised by the sowing of the seed, which is the word of God.

He goes on to say that this seed, the word of God will find four different preparations of the soil, meaning four different preparations of the heart and consequently four different responses. And it will face three different forms of opposition. These are the sub-points He makes, but the major point is that during the age of the mystery kingdom God will plant His word in the hearts of men.

Now we'll look in turn at each of the four different soils and the four different responses to the seed that is sown.

1. The first response is called the wayside response.

They hear the word of God, but their heart is like the soil beside the road. The word does not penetrate it and Satan comes and snatches it away with the end result, at the end of Luke's verse 12, *they will not believe and be saved*.

So this refers to people who have actually heard the gospel but choose not to believe.

2. The second response is the rocky ground response.

When these people hear the word, they receive it with joy, but they have no firm root. They do believe, we are told in Luke verse 13, but *when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately they fall away.* (Mark verse 17)

And the reason they fall away is that *they have no firm root.*

These people do believe and as a result they are born again. But they never mature in the faith. They don't go from milk to meat. They are never rooted in the Word of God. They are wishy-washy, tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine, and usually going from one supernatural event to another trying to meet their spiritual needs.

They lack knowledge, and they never produce the kind of fruit that believers are supposed to produce.

3. The third response is the thorny ground response.

These are also people who do believe. But *the worries of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.* (Mark verse 19).

Unlike those whose hearts are like rocky soil, who are unfruitful because they are not rooted in the word of God, the ones whose hearts are like thorny ground are unfruitful because they are involved in the cares of the world. They may even know their Bibles well, but the word is choked by their concern for the things of the world and by the deceitfulness of riches.

So there are two different groups of people who are saved. Both receive the gospel. But some do not mature because they are not well grounded in the Word. And others do not mature because they fail to apply the Word in daily living.

On the one hand we must study the text of Scripture and study the Word of God. But knowledge alone does not provide spiritual maturity. There must be the application of what we learn to daily life.

This group are also unfruitful, and they are unfruitful because they fail to overcome the world.

4. The fourth response is the good ground response.

These are the people who believe and are rooted in the word of God, and they overcome the world, and as a result they are productive in their spiritual lives.

Luke says they *have heard the word in an honest and good heart, and hold it fast, and bear fruit with perseverance.*

Notice also that there are three different forms of opposition to the seed, which is the word of God,

1. In those with hearts like wayside soil it was opposed by the devil.
2. In those with hearts like rocky soil it was opposed by persecution that arose because of the word.

3. And in those whose hearts are like thorny ground it was opposed by the cares of the world.

***b. The Parable of the Seed that is sown, Mark 4:26-29***

Now the second parable is found only in Mark's account: the parable of the seed that is sown. And the main point is that the seed will spring to life and grow of its own accord, inexplicably. The growth of the seed does not depend upon the sower. The sower doesn't even know how it grows, and there is nothing he can do to make it grow. All he can do is harvest it when it is ready.

And that is the mystery of regeneration. A simple gospel message accepted suddenly changes the person. He is born again and we see major changes in his or her life. We can observe these changes, but we cannot explain them.

***c. The Parable of the Tares, Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43***

The third parable is the parable of the tares. Read both the parable and Jesus' explanation of it.

*Elements of the figure*

What are the elements of this parable, and what does Jesus say they represent?

1. The sower of good seed is the Son of Man, Jesus Himself.
2. The enemy who sowed the tares is the devil.
3. The field is the world.
4. The good seed are the sons of the Kingdom, the believers.
5. The tares are the sons of the evil one.
6. The harvest is the end of the age, just before the beginning of the Messianic Kingdom.
7. The reapers are angels.

*The meaning of the parable*

This parable makes three main points.

1. And the first point that it makes is that a false counter-sowing will follow the true sowing. There will be a counter-sowing of false believers. They claim to be believers, but are not.
2. Secondly there will be side-by-side development of believers and unbelievers as a result of the two sowings. And so in every church we will have people we are sure are believers, who do not end up being that, although they have all the terms and outward appearance of believers.
3. Thirdly, the judgement at the end of the Mystery Kingdom age will separate the two, with the wheat entering the Messianic Kingdom, represented by the barn, and the tares being excluded and thrown into the fire.

**d. The Parable of the Mustard Seed, Mark 4:30-32; Matthew 13:31-32**

Now what is the figure drawn from everyday life here in this parable?

*Elements of the figure*

A man takes a mustard seed and plants it in his field. The word for field is *agros*, meaning area of cultivated ground.

The mustard seed is the smallest of seeds, but when it is fully grown it is larger than the garden plants and Matthew says it becomes a tree and Mark says it forms large branches.

The word for *garden plants* is **λάχανον *láchanon***; which means literally a plant in tilled ground, hence a garden plant, herb. So it conveys the idea of a plant or herb growing in a tilled garden.

*The Contrast*

What is the contrast made in this parable? The word *but* in Matthew's account points it out to us: Although it begins as the smallest of seeds, the mustard plant grows to the size of a tree, *larger than all the garden plants*. It becomes huge.

*The Result*

And what is the result? The words *so that* at the end of the passage point it out: *So that THE BIRDS OF THE AIR COME and NEST IN ITS BRANCHES*.

*The point made in the figure*

That is the figure drawn from everyday life: a plant that grows to monstrous proportions and becomes a nesting place for birds.

*The reality*

What are the realities represented by the elements of the parable?

1. The man who sowed the mustard seed is again the Son of Man, Jesus Himself.
2. The mustard seed is the Mystery Kingdom, Christendom.
3. The field is the world, as it is in the third parable.
4. The birds of the air, Jesus tells us in the first parable, are the agents of Satan.

*The meaning of the parable*

What, then, does this parable tell us about the Mystery Kingdom?

1. The first point is that there will be an abnormal external growth of the mystery kingdom until it becomes a monstrosity.
2. And secondly, this monstrosity becomes the nesting place for the agents of Satan.

Within Christendom we will find not only the true Bible believing church, but also various cultic groups such as Jehovah's Witnesses, Christian Science, and Mormonism. They all claim to believe in Jesus, but each cultic group has one essential truth which they deny. They too, we are told, are within Christendom or the Mystery Kingdom.



*e. The Parable of the Leaven, Matthew 13:33*

The fifth parable is the parable of the leaven.

What is the example taken from everyday life? A woman takes leaven and kneads it into three measures of flour, until it is all leavened.

So the elements here are the woman, leaven, and three measures of flour.

What happens to the leaven? The woman works it into the flour until it is all leavened. In other words all the flour is influenced by the leaven. This is the point made by the everyday life example.

Now what does it represent?

*A Woman*

Whenever a woman is used symbolically she represents a religious entity, which could be good or bad. For example, Israel is the wife of Jehovah, and the church is the bride of Messiah. These are good elements. On the bad side you have the Jezebel of Revelation 2:20, and the great harlot of Revelation 17:1-8, both representing false religious systems.

Here in this parable it is used negatively. The point represented by the woman is that a false religious system will be introduced into the mystery kingdom.

*Leaven*

When the word leaven is used symbolically it is always symbolic of sin, and in Matthew's gospel a specific type of sin: the sin of false doctrine.

So the point of this parable is that false teaching will be introduced into the mystery kingdom resulting in corruption of doctrine.

*Three measures*

Furthermore there are three measures of wheat because Christendom eventually divides into three major divisions: Roman Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy, and Protestantism. All three divisions will have lesser or greater degrees of false teaching. There will be some degree of inward doctrinal corruption in each division of Christendom.

**f. The Parable of the Hidden Treasure, Matthew 13:44**

The sixth parable is the parable of the hidden treasure.

*The figure*

The example taken from everyday life of the first century is that treasure would be hidden in a field for security. In this case a man discovered some treasure that had been hidden in the field, and he hid it again, *and from joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.*

*Elements of the figure*

The elements of the figure are the man, the treasure, the field, and all that he had.

*The point made in the figure*

The point made by the figure is that the man was overjoyed to find treasure in the field and so, at the cost of all that he had, he purchased the field. He purchased the field for the sake of the treasure that it contained.

*The reality*

What are the realities represented by the elements of the parable?

*Treasure*

The Old Testament reveals to us what God considers to be His treasure. Read the following passages.

Exodus 19:5 (ESV)

<sup>5</sup> *Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine;*

Deuteronomy 14:2 (ESV)

<sup>2</sup> *For you are a people holy to the Lord your God, and the Lord has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.*

Deuteronomy 26:18 (NASB95)

<sup>18</sup> *“The Lord has today declared you to be His people, a treasured possession, as He promised you, and that you should keep all His commandments;*

Psalms 135:4 (NASB95)

<sup>4</sup> *For the Lord has chosen Jacob for Himself, Israel for His own possession, or His own special treasure.*

The word that is translated *possession* in these verses means **treasured possession**, something for which the owner has a special affection, or which holds a special value for him.

So we see that Israel is God’s treasured possession.

### *The Man, the field, and the price*

Now read Hebrews 12:1-2 with this parable in mind and notice what Jesus did.

Hebrews 12:1–2 (NASB95)

<sup>1</sup> *Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, <sup>2</sup> fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

For the joy set before Him, He endured the cross! Surely He gave all that He had, His own life, to purchase the world.

The man is Jesus the Messiah.

The field is the world.

And the price of the field is His own life, all that He had!

### *The meaning of the parable*

What, then, does this parable tell us about the Mystery Kingdom?

Jesus, the Messiah, found His treasured possession, Israel, hidden in the world. And from joy over His treasure, He purchased the whole world with His own life by dying on a cross.

The man's joy was over the treasure, and in order to have the treasure he purchased the field. And in like manner, Jesus' joy is over Israel, and in order to have His treasure, Israel, he purchased the whole world.

### *The main point*

And the main point of the parable is that there will be many in Israel who will become believers. In spite of Israel's rejecting the Messiah, there will still be a remnant coming to faith.

And there will always be a number of Jews, small or large, who come to believe in the Messiahship of Jesus. And the messianic Jewish community in our day, numbering about 150,000 strong at the present time, will be the testimony to this.

***g. The Parable of the Pearl of Great Price, Matthew 13: 45-46***

*The figure*

The everyday life figure of this parable is very similar to the previous one. Here a man finds a pearl of great value, sold all that he had, and bought it.

*Elements of the figure*

The elements of the figure are the man, the pearl of great value, and all that he had.

*The point made in the figure*

The point made by the figure is that when the man found a pearl of great value, he sold all that he had, and bought it. And the pearl becomes his possession as a result of the purchase.

*The reality*

What are the realities represented by the elements of the parable?

Again the man is Jesus the Messiah.

And all that He had is His own life.

*The Pearl*

But what about the pearl?

While the Old Testament reveals clearly that the treasure represents Israel, it doesn't state anywhere what the pearl represents. And therefore we must determine the meaning in some other way.

Knowing that both Jews and Gentiles become believers in this age and therefore the mystery kingdom contains both Jews and Gentiles, it is very likely that, just as the treasure in the previous parable represented the Jews, so the pearl in this parable represents the Gentiles.

Furthermore, the pearl originates from the sea, and what the Bible does make clear in places like Daniel 7:1-3; Revelation 17:1, 15; 13:1; and Isaiah 17:12-13 is that the sea represents the Gentile world.

*The meaning of the parable*

And so this parable points out that there will also be many among the Gentiles who come to faith in the Messiahship of Jesus.

#### ***h. The Parable of the Net, Matthew 13:47-50***

The eighth parable is the parable of the net. And with the parable we are given the explanation of its meaning.

##### *The figure*

In the figure we have a dragnet gathering fish from the sea. And when the net is filled, the fish are separated into two groups, those that are kept in containers and those that are thrown away.

##### *The sea*

The sea is again prominent in this parable, and again it represents the Gentile world. So the net is gathering Gentiles.

##### *The reality*

The reality pictured here is that the mystery kingdom age will end with a judgement of the Gentiles. The righteous Gentiles will enter into the messianic kingdom, and the unrighteous will be excluded from that kingdom and thrown into the fires of hell.

What about the Jews you may be wondering? Why does this judgement only include the Gentiles? We know from other passages that by the time of this judgement at the end of the age, the Jews have already been judged. Two thirds of them have perished, and without exception, every living Jew is a believer.

The judgement depicted here is the same judgement of the Gentiles found in Joel 3:1-3 and in Matthew 25:31-46.

#### ***i. The Parable of the Householder, Matthew 13:51-52***

The ninth parable is the parable of the householder.

##### *The figure*

The figure here is of the head of a household who brings out of his treasure both new things and old things. The elements of the figure are the head of the household, and his treasure.

##### *The reality*

The head of the household is a *scribe who has become a disciple of the kingdom of heaven*. The treasure of the scribe is his knowledge of the Word of God.

So the reality depicted by the parable is that the scribe in the kingdom will bring out of the Word of God things both new and old in relationship to the mystery kingdom.

##### *The meaning*

And the point He makes is that some aspects of the mystery kingdom have similarities with the other facets of God's kingdom program, and other aspects are completely new, never found before - hence the mystery.

## *Summary of the Parables*

Now I will give a one-sentence summary of each of these nine parables to show the overview of the mystery kingdom age.

1. The sower:

There will be the sowing of the gospel seed throughout this age.

2. The seed growing of itself:

This seed which has been sown will have an inner energy so that it will spring to life and grow of its own accord.

3. The Tares:

The true sowing will be imitated by false counter-sowing.

And because of the false counter-sowing two things follow:

4. The Mustard Seed:

The Mystery Kingdom will assume huge outer proportions until it becomes a monstrosity harbouring the agents of Satan.

5. The Leaven:

It will be marked by inward doctrinal corruption.

Nevertheless, because the seed is sown and grows of itself two other things follow:

6. The Treasure:

The Lord will gain a remnant from Israel.

7. The Pearl:

God will gain a people from among the Gentiles.

Then:

8. The Net:

The Mystery Kingdom age will end with the judgement of the Gentiles; the unrighteous will be excluded from the Messianic Kingdom, and the righteous will be taken in.

And:

9. The Householder:

The Mystery Kingdom has both similarities and dissimilarities with the other facets of God's Kingdom Program.

## *Distinction between the Mystery Kingdom and the other facets of God's Kingdom Program*

Let's see how the Mystery Kingdom is distinct from the other four facets.

1. It is not the same as the Universal Kingdom or Eternal Kingdom because the Mystery Kingdom is limited in time from the rejection until the acceptance of Jesus as the Messiah and therefore it is not eternal.

And the Mystery Kingdom is not universal because it is limited to the earth only.

2. It is not the same as the Spiritual Kingdom because the Spiritual Kingdom consists of believers only, from Adam until the end of human history, but this kingdom has both believers and unbelievers in it.
3. It is not the same as the Theocratic Kingdom, which was God's rule over Israel only. The Mystery Kingdom is not limited to one nation, the nation of Israel, but has both Jews and Gentiles in it.
4. It is not the same as the Messianic Kingdom because the Messianic Kingdom does not qualify to be a mystery. There are far more details about the Messianic Kingdom in the Old Testament than in the New Testament. But the Mystery Kingdom qualifies to be a mystery: It was not revealed anywhere in the Old Testament.

Nor is the Mystery Kingdom the same as the Church. The church is part of the Mystery Kingdom. It is the wheat segment, the believing segment of the Mystery Kingdom. But it is not equivalent to the Mystery Kingdom, which is more extensive than the church.

## *Conclusion*

So, with these points Jesus introduces a new facet of God's Kingdom Program that will come into being because of the nature of the unpardonable sin.

### **3. Power over Nature, § 65, Matthew 8:18; Mark 4:35-42; Luke 8:22-25**

In section 64 and in response to His rejection by the leaders of Israel we saw Jesus announcing a new form of the Kingdom of God, the Mystery Kingdom. And, beginning with this section, we will see that the miracles He performs from this point on will illustrate his new policy concerning his miracles and teaching.

He changes the focus of His teaching. No longer is He addressing Israel the nation. Now he begins to teach the disciples to depend on him. And His miracles are part of that teaching.

#### *On that day*

First of all, notice how Mark begins in verse 35: *On that day, when evening came*. The same day that has been around since section 61. It has been a very long day. And he is finally alone with his apostles.

#### *What happens?*

And what happens? As they are going across the Sea of Galilee *there arose a great storm on the sea*, and the waves were beating against the boat and washing over it, and they were in danger.

And the extremity of the situation is at the end of Luke's account in verse 23: *they began to be swamped and to be in danger*. Their lives are now at stake.

As for the Messiah, he wasn't being shaken at all by these events. Mark verse 38 says he was just down in the stern of the boat, asleep on a cushion.

#### *The disciples' response*

How did the disciples respond to this situation?

According to Luke, they *woke Him up, saying, "Master, Master, we are perishing."* And I'm sure there was a sense of urgency in their voices. When Jesus responds to them we learn that they were afraid.

And according to Matthew, they *woke Him saying, "Save us Lord; we are perishing!"* So in their fear of perishing they come to the Messiah and ask Him to save them.

#### *Jesus' response*

How does Jesus respond to their request?

All three accounts tell us that He rebuked the wind and the sea. And the Greek word here has the meaning "to restrain or to muzzle". He literally muzzled the wind. And Mark points out in verse 39: *the wind died down and it became perfectly calm*. And this was all instantaneous. Suddenly the wind ceased to blow, and just as quickly the scene is as calm as it can be.

#### *Jesus' questions*

And He said to them in Mark verse 40: *"Why are you afraid? How is it that you have no faith?"* And Matthew records it, in verse 26, as: *"Why are you afraid, you men of little faith?"* And in Luke He says: *"Where is your faith?"*

What point is Jesus making by asking these questions? To begin to answer that, let's contrast Jesus and the disciples in the storm.

Jesus was asleep, exhausted, and confident in His Father. He knows who He is. He knows why He is on earth. He knows His Father's purposes for Him will be accomplished. And He knows that no storm can defeat those purposes.

The disciples understand their danger from their human perspective, and based on their experience of the sea, they are about to perish.

What do they know of Jesus?

In section 28 where they began to follow Him they acknowledge that He is the Lamb of God; He is the Messiah, the King of Israel; He is the Son of God; He is the Son of Man; He is the one of whom Moses in the Law, and also the prophets, wrote.

They witnessed the miracle at the wedding at Cana, and they believed. Since then they have witnessed many other miracles, including two messianic miracles. They saw Him take possession of the temple. And they have listened to Him preach and teach.

That very day, after watching Him cast out the mute demon, they saw Him rejected by the Jewish leadership, and they heard His response. They heard Him pronounce judgement upon



that generation. And they listened to Him teaching them about the new facet of God's kingdom that will come about as a result of the unpardonable sin.

Then, in the midst of the storm, when they are fearful for their lives, they turn to Him and ask Him to save them. This actually demonstrates their faith! They applied what they knew about Him and called on Him to save them. Then they trusted Him to do that.

What, then, is the purpose of Jesus' question?

Jesus is telling them that, since they know who He is, they should also know that no storm is going to cause Him to perish!

The point of His question is that they actually had enough knowledge of Him that they did not need to be afraid of the storm. There is no way it could have caused Him, or them, to perish. The issue is not that they needed more faith, but that they need not have feared!

#### *The disciples' reaction*

How did the disciples respond to the miracle and the question? We are told they responded with fear and amazement. This is a different kind of fear from the fear they had in the storm, and a different Greek word is used. In the storm the word was *deilos*, meaning fear in the sense of being timid or cowardly. Now the word is *phobos*, meaning fear, terror, reverence, respect, honour. It includes the idea of astonishment and amazement.

In response to the miracle they were in awe of God. And they recognize that it is God who has worked the miracle, unlike the Pharisees who explain His miracles as the work of Satan.

#### *The lesson learned by the disciples*

And what did the disciples learn from this event? *Even the winds and the sea obey Him.*

With this miracle Jesus teaches them that He has power and authority over nature.

### **4. Power over Demons, § 66, Matthew 8:28-24; Mark 5:1-20; Luke 8:26-39**

After the very long day in which He was rejected by the Pharisees, and in which He began to teach in parables about the nature of the mystery kingdom that would come as a result of the unpardonable sin, in the evening He set out in boats with His disciples to cross the Sea of Galilee from the north west side to the north east side. And in that day the north east side was Gentile territory. The Jewish territory went all the way from Bethsaida down to Magdala. And then from Tiberias all the way round and up again was the Gentile side of the lake.

So this is one of the few times He crossed over into Gentile territory to get away from the Jewish crowds to be able to teach his disciples privately.

#### *Gadarene or Gerasene?*

Now you will notice that Matthew says they came *into the country of the Gadarenes*, while Mark and Matthew say it was *the country of the Gerasenes*. Some have considered that to be a contradiction arguing against the inspiration of the text. However, that argument only reveals their lack of knowledge of the geography of the day.

On the eastern side of the Jordan River and the Sea of Galilee was an area of Gentile territory called Gedara. It was primarily Gentile with a small Jewish population. Within the region of Gedara were several cities, two of which play a role here. One was the city of Gedara. So the word Gedara can refer to either a city or a region, similar to New York in the United States.

When I say New York do I mean New York City or New York State? Only by the context can you tell. The same thing applies here. Gedara might refer to a region, or it might refer to a city.

Essentially Matthew is giving us the region. He is not giving us the city. Another city within the region of Gedara was the city of Gergasa. And so the event described here takes place in Gergasa in the region of Gedara. So there is no real contradiction here.

### *The demoniac*

Read Mark, verses 2-5.

Now notice that although He has cast out demons before, we were simply told what a demon did: he made him blind, he made him dumb, he made him deaf, and so on. But now on this occasion, only after He Himself has been accused of being demonised, for the first time we have a detailed description of an extreme demonic state. And what he describes here is a very extreme form of demonism. Not all demonised people were as extreme as this.

This is a situation where the One who has been accused of being demonised will now be facing a legion of demons and this event shows that he has power over them, but they do not have power over Him.

Also notice that Mathew records that there were two demon-possessed men, but both Mark and Luke choose to focus their attention on one of them.

### *What demons know*

Read Mark, verses 6-7. Here we see what demons commonly know.

1. First of all they have no problem recognising who Jesus is. They recognise that He is the Messiah, *the Son of the Most High God*.
2. Also notice that they know their future doom. In Matthew's account in verse 29 they say: *Have You come here to torment us before the time?* They know they are destined to go into the lake of fire at the appointed time. Originally the lake of fire was not intended for fallen humanity, but for fallen angels. But now it will also be for fallen humanity.

So they recognise who Jesus is. And they also recognise their future.

### *Legion*

Read Mark, verses 8-10.

Here Jesus uses the traditional Jewish method for casting out demons. He asks them: *What is your name?*

And he says *My name is Legion, for we are many*. Notice the change of pronouns from "my" to "we". A legion of demons was anywhere from three thousand to six thousand. A small legion was three thousand. A full legion was six thousand. So in this demonic state there are at least three thousand demons.

### *Abyss*

Read Luke verse 31: *They were imploring Him not to command them to go away into the abyss*.

The Abyss is a section of Sheol of Hades, and is a place for the temporary confinement of fallen angels or demons. And we'll have more to say about it in a future section. When a demon was cast out he must spend some time in the Abyss and then be released again. And here they asked Jesus not to be sent into the Abyss.

### *The herd of pigs*

Read Luke, verses 32-33.

Instead of being sent into the Abyss, they ask to be sent into the pigs. And Jesus *gave them permission*.

And when the demons enter these pigs, they all run into the Sea of Galilee in a mass suicide and drown themselves.

Why did He grant the demons' request? Was He having compassion on them?

The reason He allowed them to go into the pigs was not likely to be compassion for them, but for the reaction of the herdsmen that followed.

### *The results*

Read Luke verses 34-37a.

Here we see three results of this event.

1. The herdsmen run and tell everything in both the city and the country.
2. *The man from whom the demons had gone out was sitting down at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind.*
3. *All the people of the country of the Gerasenes and the surrounding district asked Him to leave them, for they were gripped with great fear.*

### *The healed man*

Now read Luke 8:37b-39.

In verse 35 we saw the man *sitting down at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind*. This is a picture of the man listening to Jesus' teaching.

Now, as Jesus is getting into the boat to leave, the man begs Jesus to be allowed to accompany Him. He wants to become a disciple of Jesus, but Jesus would not accept Gentile disciples at this stage. He says in verse 19 of Mark: *"Go home to your people and report to them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He had mercy on you."* And he went away and began to proclaim in Decapolis what great things Jesus had done for him; and everyone was amazed.

Decapolis was a union of ten Greek speaking Gentile cities, nine of which were on the east side of the Jordan. Only one, Scythopolis, which in New Testament times was a Gentile city, was on the west side of the Jordan.

### *Two policies*

We see two things here:

- i. At this point Jesus is not accepting Gentile disciples, and as a result the man cannot become His disciple at this stage.
- ii. And the policy not to tell people about what he has done applies to Jews but not to Gentiles.

#### *Results in Decapolis*

And Mark adds that *everyone was amazed*. And when we come to the section about the feeding of the four thousand, we will see the success of this man's ministry.

For now Jesus is asked to leave. Next time he comes he will be welcomed.

### **5. Power over Disease and Death, § 67, Mark 5:21-43; Matthew 9:18-26; Luke 8:40-56**

Now for the disciples the events in this section would be a lesson of Messiah's power. For the woman and Jairus it would be a lesson of faith.

#### *Jairus*

Read Mark verses 21-23.

Jesus is now back on the Jewish side of the Sea and a synagogue official *fell at His feet and implored Him earnestly, saying, "My little daughter is at the point of death; please come and lay Your hands on her, so that she will get well and live."*

This shows us two things: his personal need, and his belief in Jesus.

Before His rejection the miracles Jesus performed were signs to authenticate His message that He is the Messiah. Now we are going to see that from the time He was rejected Jesus will respond to personal needs on the basis of faith.

And Luke, the physician, points out that she is 12 years old at this time, and she was very close to death. He says *she was dying*.

#### *Crowds pressing against Him*

Read Luke verses 42b-44.

Both Mark and Luke point out here that *the crowds were pressing against Him*. The Greek word used by Luke, ***sumpnígō***, means: To choke or throttle and thus to suffocate. Figuratively it means to crowd, or press upon. In view of what we are about to read, it is important to note this because it means that a lot of people were touching him at this stage.

#### *A woman with a haemorrhage*

Along the way He encounters *a woman who had a haemorrhage for twelve years*. She had had some kind of blood infirmity for the same amount of time that Jairus' had daughter lived. She is twelve years old and the woman had twelve years of a blood disorder. Which, by the way according to the Law in Leviticus chapter 15:19-32, made her permanently unclean, ceremonially unclean.

Now it is interesting to note that Luke the physician simply says *she could not be healed by anyone*. In some manuscripts, such as the one used for the ASV, Luke adds that she *had spent all her living upon physicians*. And Mark points out that she *had endured much at the hands of many physicians, and had spent all that she had and was not helped at all, but rather had grown worse*.

Mark points out two things: firstly she had suffered much at the hands of many physicians, and secondly she had spent all that she had but was not healed.

But Luke is a doctor and shows some professional courtesy here. So he will admit that she spent all her living and she couldn't get any better, but he drops the phrase about having suffered at the hands of many physicians.

Now in verse 28 of Mark she was saying to herself: *"If I just touch His garments, I will get well."* And when she does so she is healed instantaneously. Luke, in verse 44, points out that *she touched the fringe of his cloak*. The word fringe refers to tassel. These were the tassels that were commanded by the Mosaic Law. And because Jesus kept the Mosaic Law perfectly he had these tassels on the borders of his garments. And she could not hold him because of her uncleanness, but she could hold a tassel and she feels that by holding the tassel she will be healed and she assumes that it is the holding of the tassel that will heal her.

#### *Rabbinic cures*

Now, in dealing with the leper I mentioned that in the Rabbinic writings there are many cures for many diseases, but leprosy was not one of them. But they do have a way of curing a woman with blood disease and here is what they suggest you do, and this passage is quoted from rabbinic writings:

*In order to heal a woman with a blood disease:*

*Take of gum of Alexandria, the weight of a zuzee, and alum, the weight of a zuzee, and a crocus hortensis, the weight of a zuzee; let them be bruised together, and be given in wine to the woman that hath an issue of blood.*

*But if this does not benefit: take of Persian onions thrice three logs, boil them in wine, and give it to her to drink, and say, arise from your flux.*

*But this does not prevail: Set her in a place where two ways meet, and let her hold a cup of wine in her hand; and let someone come up behind her and scare her, and say, arise from your flux.*

*But if that does not do any good: take a handful of cumin and a handful of crocus; let these be boiled in wine, and give them to her to drink, and also say, arise from your flux.*

*If this does not help: then let them "Dig seven ditches, in which let them burn in them some cuttings of trees that have not yet been circumcised (meaning not yet four years old); and let her take in her hand a cup of wine, and let them lead her away from the first ditch and make her sit down over that, let them then remove her to the second ditch to sit down over, and all seven ditches, and say, arise from your flux. And then if there is no cure from that, there is no cure for ever.*

So this woman may have undergone some of these treatments and spent all her money and suffered at the hands of many physicians.

#### *Healed*

Now again in Mark verse 29: *Immediately the flow of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her affliction*. She recognises that she was instantaneously healed.

#### *Jesus' question*

Jesus' first response is to ask a question. Read Mark verses 45-50.

Mark points out that He was aware *that the power proceeding from Him had gone forth*. So He asks, *who touched My garments?* Why do you think He asked this question?

For the disciples this was a frustrating question. And they say to him in verse 31: *"You see the crowd pressing in on You, and You say, 'Who touched Me?'"* meaning: a lot of people touched you. What do you mean who touched you?

But now He has their attention. And that was His purpose: to catch the attention of the disciples.

Notice verse 32: *And He looked around to see the woman who had done this*.

The ordinary Greek verb meaning to see is *blepo*. But here Mark chooses to use the word *eidon* which means:

- i. To behold, look upon, contemplate .
- ii. To see in order to know, to look at or into, examine.
- iii. To see face to face, to see and talk with, to visit, i.e., to have personal acquaintance and relationship with.

(Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament*. Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers)

It shows He knew who it was. He knew exactly who did the touching, but the purpose of the question is to catch the apostolic attention so they learn the lesson of faith – faith is now required.

#### *Faith*

And Luke records in verse 47 that when the woman saw that He recognised what she did, she *declared in the presence of all the people the reason why she had touched Him*. And we read in verse 28 of Mark that she was saying to herself: *"If I just touch His garments, I will get well."*

Notice what He says to her in Luke verse 48: *"Daughter, your faith has made you well."*

He corrects her theology. It was not her touch of His garments that healed her. It was her faith that healed her. Her touching His garment was merely the outworking of her faith.

And the power to heal did not issue from his clothing, it issued from Him.

#### *Jairus' daughter dies*

Now this incident causes a delay as they travel to the house of Jairus.

Read Luke verses 49-50 to see what happens.

A message comes to the party that the daughter has died. And therefore don't trouble the master any further. But he says to them at the end of verse 36: *"Do not be afraid any longer, only believe, and she will be made well."*

#### *The policy of privacy*

Read Mark, verses 37-40 and notice how he emphasises that the miracle was done in private.

- i. In verse 37 he says Jesus *allowed no one to accompany Him, except Peter and James and John.*
- ii. In verse 38 *they came to the house.*
- iii. And in verse 39 *they entered in.*
- iv. In verse 40 He *put them all out.* He put out all the people.
- v. Then, at last, also in verse 40, *He took along the child's father and mother and His own companions, and entered the room where the child was*

Jesus no longer performs miracles for the sake of the public, and so he has everybody else removed from the house. The only ones he brings in are three of his apostles and the parents. His purpose is to teach the disciples, and here they learn about His power over death.

His policy now is to perform miracles privately, in response to personal need, and on the basis of faith.

### *Healing*

Now read Mark verses 41-43.

He says to her, "*Talitha kum!*" Talitha is an Aramaic female name. That was her name, "*Talitha kum*", meaning rise up. And as a result she is resurrected from the dead.

### *Policy of silence*

And now notice His new policy in verse 43: *And He gave them strict orders that no one should know about this.* And Luke also records that *He instructed them to tell no one what had happened.*

Nevertheless, as Matthew points out in verse 26, his fame continues to spread.

## **6. Power over Blindness, § 68, Matthew 9:27-34**

### *Two blind men*

This section also describes two events: the healing of two blind men, and the casting out of a mute demon.

Read verses 27 to 31.

### *Personal need*

What is significant about what the blind men call out in verse 27? First they express a personal need: *Have mercy on us.*

### *Son of David*

And secondly, they call upon Jesus by His messianic title, *Son of David.*

How does Jesus respond to that? He does not respond to them! They are asking for a miracle of healing on the basis of His messianic character! But He has been rejected as the Messiah by the leaders of Israel. And so, on that basis He can do nothing for them. Therefore He ignores them and enters the house.

### *The policy of privacy*

When He enters the house, the blind men follow Him, and there, away from the crowds and in the privacy of the house Jesus questions them and heals them. So the miracle will be a private one.

### *The policy of faith*

Their personal need is obvious, but what about their faith? So he asks them in verse 28: *“Do you believe that I am able to do this?”* Remember, there is no record of Him asking this kind of question before section 61, but now he raises these questions about faith. And when they say “yes”, then they are healed.

And in healing them He emphasises the importance of faith by telling them: *It shall be done to you according to your faith.*

### *The policy of silence*

And notice the new policy of silence here in verse 30: *Jesus sternly warned them: “See that no one knows about this!”*

But they went ahead and spread the news anyway, in spite of Him telling them not to.

### *Another dumb demon*

Read verses 32-34. Another mute demon-possessed man is brought to Him and He casts the demon out.

Matthew says, *“As they were going out, a mute, demon-possessed man was brought to Him.”* So the healed blind men went out of the house, but Jesus remained inside and the demon-possessed man was brought to Him there. So the healing was performed in private.

However, when he went out again and was able to speak the crowds could see and hear what had happened, and they were amazed.

I guess that it is hard to heal such a man, even in private, without the fact becoming public knowledge.

But He is following His policy. The man was healed in private in response to his need, and not in public as a demonstration of His messiahship.

Then, of course, Matthew makes his point that the crowds were amazed and were not yet following their leaders’ rejection of Jesus.

### *The crowds are not following their leaders*

Here Matthew focuses on the two different responses to this miracle. He draws a contrast between the response of the crowds and the response of the Pharisees.

The crowds *were amazed, and were saying, “Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel.”* But the explanation of the Pharisees remains the same. They *were saying, “He casts out the demons by the ruler of the demons.”*

Notice that the people are not yet following the leaders. We will eventually see this change.



## G. The Final Rejection in Nazareth, § 69, Mark 6:1-6; Matthew 13:54-58

Read Mark 6:1-6.

In section 39 we had the initial rejection in Nazareth, where they sought to cast Jesus off a cliff after he proclaimed that He was the fulfilment of Isaiah 58:6. Now we have the final rejection in Nazareth.

And what happens locally in Nazareth is going to happen nationally.

We had the initial rejection of the Messiahship of Jesus by the nation in section 61. When we get to section 119 we will see the final rejection by the nation (John 11:45-54).

### *Jesus' family*

In these passages we learn that Jesus and his foster father were carpenters, so he followed his foster father's profession. And we learn that the names of Jesus' four half-brothers were James, Joseph, Judas and Simon. We also learn that there were at least two sisters that were resident in Nazareth. So Jesus had at least 6 half siblings, or more. So Mary became rather productive after Yeshuah was born contrary to the theology which teaches that Mary stayed a virgin.

Joseph, His foster father, is not mentioned at all in the time period of Jesus' ministry, so we can deduce that he has died some time before it began.

### *Unbelief*

Once again Jesus is met with rejection, and many are offended with Him. And so in Matthew 13:58 it says: And He did not do many miracles there because of their unbelief. Jesus is now only doing miracles that are founded in faith, so He heals only a few people. And He marvels at their lack of faith (Mark 6:6) here amongst his own people and relatives.

## H. Witness in view of Rejection, § 70, Mark 6:6-13; Matthew 9:35-11:1; Luke 9:1-6

### 1. Introduction, Mark 6:6; Matthew 9:35-38

Now we come to section 70 where we see the kind of ministry made necessary by the rejection of section 61. And we will find that it is a little different than it was before.

Read Matthew 9:35-38.

#### *Jesus' ministry*

Matthew explains the three-fold ministry of Jesus:

- i. *Teaching in their synagogues*
- ii. *Proclaiming the gospel of the Kingdom, but now the gospel emphasises the mystery kingdom.*
- iii. *Healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness.*

#### *Sheep without a shepherd*

In verse 36 Matthew says Jesus *felt compassion for the people, because they were depressed and dispirited like sheep without a shepherd.*

In spite of the fact that the leaders of Israel have rejected His messianic claims, the people are not yet following their leaders in that claim. We noted this in section 68 after the casting out of another mute demon. *The crowds were amazed, and were saying, "nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel." But the Pharisees were saying, "He casts out demons by the ruler of the demons."* Later on the people will follow their leaders in this rejection.

But for now they are not following their leaders, and therefore they are like sheep without a shepherd.

The debate among the people is this: should we follow the old shepherds, or should we follow this new one? And therefore, in their time of indecision they are like sheep without a shepherd. And that is the focus of the ministry.

### 2. The Ministry of the Twelve, Mark 6:7; Matthew 10:1; Luke 9:1-2

#### *Message and authority*

Read Luke 9:1-2.

Now He sends out the twelve. And Mark notes that He sent them out in pairs.

He sends them out to proclaim the message of the Mystery Kingdom.

And they are given delegated authority to authenticate their message by performing healing and casting out demons.

In verses 2-4 Matthew lists the names of the twelve.

### 3. Practical Instructions for the Mission, Mark 6:8-11; Matthew 10:5-15; Luke 9:3-5

Before sending them out, Jesus gives them some practical instructions for their mission. And He instructs them on five things. Read verses 5-8a.

#### 1) *To Jews only*

Notice first of all, in verses 5-6 he gives the territorial assignment, which is, only to Jews. Jesus instructs the apostles to *go only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel*. And until the time of the book of Acts their ministry is limited to a Jewish audience, and not even the Samaritans are to be targeted. But they are to *go only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel*.

Notice that earlier the people were described as *sheep without a shepherd*. Now He describes them as *the lost sheep of the house of Israel*. These are the ones they are to go to.

#### 2) *The Message*

Secondly, in verse 7 and 8a, they are to preach, and

- The content of the message is that *the kingdom of heaven is at hand*. This of course is the mystery kingdom which He has just been explaining to them. And
- The message is to be authenticated by the miracles they perform.

#### 3) *Provisions*

Read verses 8b-10 in Matthew.

He also instructs them, as they move on, not to take any wealth or funds with them, or any extra provisions like a second coat or an extra pair of sandals, as God would provide all their needs.

Rabbis did not get paid for teaching. And just as they receive freely, they should be able to give freely.

(An apparent contradiction regarding a staff is easily explained. In Mark He says to take nothing *except a mere staff*. In Matthew and Luke He instructs them not to take a staff. The Greek word for staff, like the English, can refer to a walking stick, or it can refer to a weapon used for fighting such as a quarterstaff - two different kinds of staff. The staff they are to take with them is not an aggressive staff, but only a walking staff.)

In verse 10 of Matthew, the worker is worthy of his support, meaning that God will provide for their needs as they proceed.

So the principle is that they are to trust God to provide for their needs, and they are to give freely from what God provides.

#### 4) *Believers*

Read verses 11-13 in Matthew.

When they go to a city they are to find and stay with someone who is worthy.

The word *worthy* in the Greek is *axios*, which means worthy in the sense of having inherent value as contrasted with *timios*, which means worthy because of attributed value, or esteemed, honoured, or valued.

This indicates that they are to find someone who actually believes. And they are to make their home with a believer, and to give him a blessing of peace.

So, while the nation as a nation is rejecting Him, the focus of their ministry is to individuals and families who believe.

#### 5) *Unbelievers*

Read verses 14-15 in Matthew.

When they find those who are not worthy, those who will not receive them nor heed their words, He says *as you go out of that house or that city, shake the dust off your feet*. And Mark and Luke add that it is *for a testimony against them*. The act of shaking the dust off their feet is a symbolic action of witnessing against them. It is a sign of judgement, as Matthew emphasises.

And while judgement will come upon the city, the worthy one within the city will be spared.

These are the five elements of practical instruction given to the twelve, but notice that the focus of their ministry is to be on the believers, the remnant of that day.

### 4. Instructions in View of the Coming Persecution, Matt. 10:16-23

In verses 16-23 Jesus gives them some instructions in view of coming persecution.

#### *Persecution's purpose*

Read verses 16-18.

First of all he points out the coming persecutions. He is sending them out as sheep in the midst of wolves. And therefore, while they are to be as wise as serpents, they are to be as innocent as doves. They should be ready to be taken before counsels and synagogues, and be ready to be scourged.

And this is not just for their immediate ministry, but for their future ministry. Notice that while the synagogues are Jewish places, the governors and kings would be Gentile places.

Notice also that the reason for these persecutions is given at the end of verse 18: *for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles*. These persecutions happen for Jesus' sake, and their purpose is to be a testimony to two groups of people: *to them and to the Gentiles*. In other words to the Jews and to the Gentiles.

So he begins by instructing them not to go to Gentiles, but he promises that they will someday also have a Gentile ministry.

*It will be God who speaks*

Read verses 19-20.

Here He points out that they need not be concerned for what they will say. When the time comes to defend themselves God will give them what to say for *it is the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you*. This is not dealing with Bible lessons or sermons. It is dealing with defending oneself in a court of law because of your faith in Jesus.

*Division in the family*

Read verses 21-22.

He points out that they will even be persecuted by family members. *Brother will betray brother to death*, and so on. Normally the Jewish family is a very close knit unit, but because of the rejection of the Messiahship of Jesus, He now becomes a point of division in the Jewish family unit.

*Flee to another city*

Read verse 23.

And He says, when you are persecuted in one city, just go to another.

He says at the end of verse 23: *you will not finish going through the cities of Israel until the Son of Man comes*. Some take this to be the second coming, and normally that is what it would refer to. But in this immediate context it is probably a reference to the triumphal entry. They will not get through all the cities of Israel before His triumphal entry into Jerusalem.

## **5. Instructions in View of Rejection, Matt. 10:24-33**

Next He gives them some instructions in view of rejection.

Read verses 24-33.

*Rejection*

In verses 24-25, Jesus warns the apostles that they will be rejected on the same basis that He was rejected - on the basis of demon possession. So they should be ready for this.

*Do not fear them*

In verses 26-27 He tells them not to be afraid, but to boldly proclaim all that He has taught them.

Then, in verse 28, He encourages them not to fear those who can kill the body, but only to fear God who is able to send the soul to hell.

And, in verses 29-31, He speaks words of comfort to them of God's great care for them, even to the tiniest details of their being - the hairs on their head are numbered. And the result is that they should not fear.

*The key issue*

Then, in verses 32-33, He points out the key issue for that generation: *Therefore everyone who confesses Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven.*

And the individual members of that generation have to make this choice: either affirm Him or deny Him. If they affirm him on earth, they will be affirmed in heaven. If they deny him on earth, they will be denied in heaven.

#### **6. The Results of Rejection, Matt. 10:34-39**

In verses 34-39 He describes some of the results of the rejection of His Messiahship. Read verses 34-39.

##### *Division*

In the messianic kingdom which He had been offering them they would have had true peace and a unity within each household. But the prerequisite to establishing that peace in the Kingdom was their accepting Him as Messiah. This they failed to do.

And so now in place of peace it is a sword. In place of unity it is now division: man against son, daughter against mother, and so on. And He himself would now become the symbol of acceptance or rejection just as Simeon told Mary at the time of the presentation when He was 40 days old (Section 13, Luke 2:29-36).

### Identity

In verse 38: What does Jesus mean when He said, *he who does not take his cross and follow Me is not worthy of Me*? What does it mean to take up a cross and follow Him?

It was the Roman custom to make convicted criminals carry their own crosses to the place of crucifixion. So bearing a cross meant carrying their own execution device while facing ridicule and humiliation along the way to death.

Therefore to take up a cross and follow Him means to chose to identify with Him, knowing that the consequence may very well be rejection and humiliation, and even death.

### Eternal consequences

And in verse 39 He points out the eternal consequences of making the choice between following Him and not following Him. If we try to preserve our life here by not identifying with Him we end up losing it. But if we are willing to lose it, and even if we do lose it, we will actually find it!

### Even today

Even now when a Jewish person becomes a believer they face persecution from their family, and ultimately, separation from their loved ones. Jewish relatives may count them dead and reject them entirely.

### Not worthy of Me

Why does He say that those who do not identify with Him are *not worthy of Him*?

Again the word, *worthy*, is the Greek word *axios*, which is talking about inherent value. The inherent value demonstrated by those who identify with Him, even in rejection and suffering, is their belief in Him. Those who do not identify with Him are demonstrating that they do not have this inherent quality of believing in Him.

## 7. Rewards for Individuals Who Accept, Matt. 10:40-42

In verse 40 He says that those who receive the apostles are receiving Him, and those who receive Him are receiving the One who sent Him, that is, the Father.

The actions described in verses 41-42 are the outworking of the inner quality of believing in Him, which is described in verse 38 as worthiness.

And He says there will be rewards for those individuals who accept Him. And even giving them a cup of water will result in a reward.

## 8. The Fulfilment, Mark 6:12-13; Matt. 11:1; Luke 9:6

Read Luke's account.

Here we see that they went out preaching the gospel and healing, just as He told them to at the beginning of this section.

Mark adds that they *preached that men should repent*. And the word repent means to change one's mind. What they are telling the Jewish people is: They need to change their mind about Jesus. He is not demon possessed, He is the Messiah. And that will give them eternal life.

And while the 70 AD judgement is now inevitable, it has not closed the door to individual salvation. And so individuals who come to faith will receive eternal life, though the kingdom will not be established at this point of time.

## I. The Death of the Herald, § 71, Mark 6:14-29; Matthew 14:1-12; Luke 9:7-9

John the Baptist had been in jail for almost two years. This was for a longer time than he had been in active ministry - which had been for 12 - 14 months. His total time for ministry was three years, just like Jesus.

He had been put in jail for criticizing the marriage of Herodias to Herod Antipas.

Herod Antipas was one of the sons of Herod the Great, who had ordered the death of all children under the age of 2 in Bethlehem.

And Herodias was the granddaughter of Herod the Great to another son, one of the sons Herod killed. She was first married to her uncle, which of course violated the Mosaic Law. She then left her uncle and became mistress to her step-uncle. And then she married Antipas while her first husband, Philip, was still living, which also violated the Mosaic Law.

And marrying his brother's wife is a violation of Leviticus 16:18; 20:21. The uncle – niece marriage was also a violation of Leviticus 18:12-14; 20:19-20.

Altogether she was guilty of triple adultery and guilty of incest: Two counts of incest and three counts of adultery.

Because of John's proclamations against her marriage she convinced her husband to have him arrested, but she could not talk him into having John executed. In Mark verse 20 Antipas knew that John was a righteous man and a holy one. Therefore he simply kept him in prison.

What changes is that he has a birthday party and the daughter of Herodias by a previous marriage did a dance that Herod Antipas liked and he made a commitment without thinking it through. He was also probably a bit drunk at this stage and promised her she could have anything she wanted.

Historically her name was Salome, the Hebrew name was Shulamit. When she asked for the head of John the Baptist Antipas tried to avoid it, but he was trapped by his own commitment. As a result John the Baptist was beheaded.

Keep in mind that John was killed for personal reasons, but the public charge was political, according to Josephus' writings.

One more time then, what happens to the herald will happen to the King.

Discussion topic: What do you think about the timing of John's death as it relates to his message and purpose? John's role was to herald the King, to pave the way for Israel to accept Yeshua as Messiah. Now that the nation had rejected Yeshua and lost the chance to enter the Messianic Kingdom at that point in time, John's mission was complete.



## IV The Training of the Twelve by the King, § 72-95

Now we come to the fourth major division of the Messiah's life where the focus is on the training of the twelve by the King. And now He is training them for their future mission which we find recorded in the book of Acts. This training will continue until we reach section 95 where He journeys to Jerusalem. He begins in section 72 with the feeding of the 5,000.

### A. The Feeding of the 5,000, § 72, Mark 6:30-44; Matthew 14:13-21; Luke 9:10-17; John 6:1-13

#### *Occasion*

What was the occasion for this miracle? Read Luke 9:10 and Mark 6:30-32.

After being sent out in pairs to proclaim the message of the mystery kingdom, the apostles return to Jesus and give an account of *all that they had done and taught*.

Mark adds in verse 31 that there were so many people coming and going that they didn't even have time to eat. So Jesus, taking the apostles with Him, went away in a boat to a secluded place at a city called Bethsaida on the other side of the Sea of Galilee.

#### *The Crowd*

Now read what happens next in Mark 6:33 and John 6:2.

A large crowd actually ran around the sea to arrive ahead of Jesus in the boat!

The fact that it is a large crowd here indicates that the interest of the people is still quite high in spite of their leaders' rejection of Jesus.

John gives us some insight into their motivation in verse 2. They are following Him primarily because of *the signs which He was performing on those who were sick*. We will learn more about their motives in section 76, the discourse on the Bread of Life, where we will see that they are following Him for the wrong motive.

#### *Jesus response to the crowd*

How does Jesus respond to them? Read Mark verse 34 and Luke verse 11b.

Mark says that *He felt compassion for them*. And he gives the reason: *because they were like sheep without a shepherd*. They have not yet made a decision as to whom they should follow: the old shepherds, or the new one. We saw the same response in section 70 when Jesus sent the apostles out in pairs. And because the people are not yet following their leaders in rejecting Jesus, and they are in a state of indecision about His Messiahship, they are like sheep without a shepherd.

Therefore, as Luke says, *He began speaking to them about the kingdom of God and curing those who had need of healing*.

#### *Feeding*

Jesus also recognises their personal need to be fed. And the ministry he performs is the typical ministry of a rabbi where He is teaching, tending, and feeding.

The events that follow, we learn from Mark, Matthew, and Luke, occurred as the day was drawing to a close and the sun began to set.

*They are responsible to feed the people*

Read Mark verses 35-37

Now the disciples ask Jesus to send the crowds away to the surrounding villages to buy food for themselves. And Jesus responds by saying to them: *They do not need to go away; you give them something to eat.*

So He makes them responsible to feed the people. *You give them something to eat.*

*Private*

Now read John verses 3-6.

First of all, notice that Jesus goes up on the mountain and sits down with His disciples. So, although there is a crowd of at least five thousand, the conversations with His disciples are quite private, and the lesson He is teaching is specifically for them.

*Passover*

Secondly, notice that John says: *Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was near.*

This is the third Passover to occur during Jesus' ministry. And since His ministry began at the time of Passover, this event marks the beginning of the third year of His ministry.

*Therefore ...*

Then John continues with the word *therefore*. What does that indicate?

It means that the miraculous feeding of the crowd which is to follow is going to happen because the Passover is near. Now why would that be?

This crowd has been following Him all day without food and so they would be quite hungry. Not only that, it is a three day journey up to Jerusalem where they are about to go for the Passover. And they would need a good meal before they begin that journey.

*Philip's test*

And why did Jesus ask Philip the question: *where are we to buy bread, so that these may eat?*

John says that Jesus *Himself knew what He was intending to do*. He knew He was going to miraculously provide food for the crowd. So the purpose of the question was not to find out where there was bread, but to test Philip, as John also records. In fact, He is pointing out that there just isn't enough bread to be bought!

So by asking this question He is drawing their attention to the lack of bread and to the lesson He is about to teach them.

And for the apostles the purpose of this miracle is to teach them the nature of the ministry He will be entrusting to them, and to instruct them concerning divine provision for that ministry.

### *They are incapable of doing it themselves*

Now why was the question directed specifically to Philip?

This is his home territory, and so Philip knows that there just isn't enough food available to be bought for the crowd.

Now read verses 7-9 in John's account to see Phillip's response.

He says it would cost more than 200 denarii and there still wouldn't be enough bread! One denarius was one day's wages, so to feed all these people would cost more than 200 day's wages.

Then Andrew pipes up and says that they have *five barley loaves and two fish, but what are these for so many people*.

So, Jesus has made them responsible to feed the crowd, but all they have is two fish and five loaves. And they are incapable of doing it themselves.

### *The miracle*

Now Jesus performs the miracle to feed the crowd. Read Luke's account here, verses 14b – 17. And notice how He does it.

Then Jesus gave thanks, and broke the bread and fish and kept giving it to the disciples who distributed it to the people until they were all satisfied. He provided and gave to them the food, which they in turn gave to the people.

Here we see that He gives the apostles the responsibility to distribute what He provides.

### *Twelve baskets full*

All four gospels record that the people were filled or satisfied and when they gathered the left-overs it turns out that there were twelve baskets full of the pieces of bread and fish. It began with just five loaves and two fish and there ends up being twelve basketsful left over.

And Matthew 14:21 points out *there were about five thousand men who ate, besides women and children*. So the crowd was much bigger than 5,000.

### *Jesus' purpose*

We see here that Jesus had two purposes in performing this miracle. And when we get to section 76, where He gives a discourse on the Bread of Life, we will see that there was also a third purpose.

Firstly, Mark tells us that He had compassion on the people, so one of His purposes was to feed the people.

But secondly, He used the miracle as an object lesson for the disciples, drawing their attention to three things they were to learn from it.

1. First of all, they are responsible to feed the people (Luke 9:13).
2. Secondly, they are incapable of doing it themselves (John 6:5-9).
3. And thirdly, they are responsible to distribute what He provides (Matthew 14:19).

## B. Messiah's Rejection of the Galileans Offer to make Him King, § 73, Mark 6:45–46; Matthew 14:22–23; John 6:14–15

### *Disciples sent away*

Read Matthew verses 22-23.

Matthew and Mark both begin *immediately*. As soon as the baskets full of left over pieces of bread and fish had been collected, He sent the disciples away in a boat to cross over to the other side of the sea.

And Mark adds that they were to go to Bethsaida. But, you ask, were they not already at Bethsaida? Yes! In fact there are two Bethsaida's. The one where the five thousand were fed is in Gentile territory on the north western side of the Sea of Galilee. And the one they are now going to is on the North eastern side of the sea in Jewish territory, near Capernaum. And we will see in the next section that John gives their destination as Capernaum.

### *King!*

Read John's account, verses 14-15.

Here John describes the response of the people to the miracle where they were fed.

He begins saying, *therefore*. What is he pointing back to as the reason for what follows? The people have just eaten as much bread and fish as they wanted, until they were filled. And Jesus miraculously provided all this food for them.

And what is their response to this?

They now want to make Jesus the king of Galilee. And, as John points out in verse 15, they intended to make Him king by force.

But He rejects the offer and departs for the mountains to pray.

### *Reasons*

He rejected the offer for three reasons.

1. The unpardonable sin has already been committed. The nation has passed the point of no return and the unpardonable sin remains unpardonable. His offer to establish the Messianic Kingdom has already been withdrawn from this generation.
2. The Messiah was to be enthroned in Jerusalem, not in the Galilee.  
  
Psalm 2:6, for example says: "But as for Me, I have installed My King upon Zion, My holy mountain."
3. Their motivation is wrong as we will see more fully in section 76 which records Jesus' discourse on the Bread of Life.

So it was the wrong time, it was the wrong place, and it was the wrong motive.

## C. The Training through the Storm, § 74, Mark 6:47-52; Matthew 14:24-33; John 6:16-21

In this section we have the fifth of John's seven signs. And as we will see, this is a lesson for the disciples about dependence on the Messiah.

### *The situation*

Read John 6:16-18; then Mark verse 47 and Matthew verse 24; and notice the circumstances in which the disciples find themselves.

1. We see in John 6:16-17 that they started to cross the sea when evening came, that is at about sunset.
2. John notes that it was already dark. And Matthew says they were *a long distance from land*.
3. Then a storm suddenly blew up, as is typical of this sea. And the boat is being *battered by the waves*.

Now read Mark verse 48.

4. Mark and Matthew both record that it was now the fourth watch of the night. That would be between 3 and 6 in the morning. They set out in the first watch. And a watch is 3 hours long. So, if they are now in the fourth watch they have been on the sea for about 9 hours.
5. Now Mark says that Jesus saw them *straining at the oars, for the wind was against* them.

Actually the Greek is far more graphic than our translation indicates. The word for straining is *basanizo*, which is the verb form of the noun, *basanos*, which means an examination by torture or torment. So the verb means to torture, afflict with pain, vex, or harass. It is also used metaphorically as it is here, and indeed, as Matthew uses it when we read that the boat was being *battered by the waves*. Literally, that would be *the boat was being tortured by the waves*.

And Mark's expression would literally be, *Seeing them being tortured at the oars...*

And John notes that they had only *rowed about three of four miles*.

### *Jesus comes, walking on the water*

Now Mark, in verse 48, says that seeing them in this situation, *Jesus came to them, walking on the sea; and He intended to pass them by*. Notice that this is His response to their impossible situation and urgent need of help. He intends to come to them, *walking on the sea*, and to *pass them by*.

Why, do you suppose, He intended to pass them by?

Surely He meant it to be an encouragement and a help to them. But how would it do that?

Remember, He is teaching them and training them for the ministry that lies ahead for them after Pentecost. He has already shown them, in an earlier storm, that He has power over the winds and the waves. And they have just come from the feeding of the five thousand, where He demonstrated to them that He will provide for them, and He taught them that they will have a future ministry where they are responsible to feed the people what He provides for them.

Surely He meant to remind them of these things by His presence, walking on the water. And **the lesson He is teaching them here is to depend on the Messiah in the face of impossible circumstances**.

### *Disciples' response*

How did they respond? Find out in verses 49 and 50.

They didn't recognise Him and they thought they were seeing a ghost and they were terrified.

So Jesus tells them, *take courage; it is I, do not be afraid.*

### *Peter walks on water*

Now see how Peter responds in Matthew, verses 28-31.

When Peter saw Jesus walking on the water, in faith he asked permission to duplicate the miracle. And Jesus said to him, *"Come!"* And he was able to get out of the boat and he was walking on the water. And as long as he kept his eyes on the Messiah he was able to do it rather well.

But, when he took his eyes off the Lord and looked at the wind and the waves he began to sink. He cried out to the Lord, *"Lord, save me!"* And Jesus did.

### *Peter's lesson*

What is the lesson here for Peter? Jesus' question, *"O you of little faith, why did you doubt?"* gives us a clue.

The lesson has to do with faith and doubt, which is the opposite of faith. As long as Peter was believing Jesus he was able to obey Him and walk on the water. But when he began to focus on the wind and the waves he began to doubt, became frightened, and began to sink. It was his believing Jesus that enabled him to do the impossible.

So one aspect of the lesson, then, is that he must not only start out in faith, he must also continue in faith and dependence on Him.

Now Jesus commanded Peter to come to Him, but He did not remove the wind and the waves. Not only was Peter going to do what was ordinarily impossible, but the fearsome wind and waves remained a constant distraction to his faith.

The lesson here, both for Peter and for us today, is that **we can depend on Him to enable us to obey His command regardless of the circumstances as they appear from our perspective.** Our focus needs to be on the Lord and not on the circumstances.

Peter learned his lesson well, for in Acts 12:6 we find him sleeping soundly, chained to two guards in prison the night before Herod expects to publicly execute him. The angel needs to hit him hard in the side to awaken him.

### *The miracle*

Now read the accounts of what happened next.

*When Jesus and Peter got into the boat, the wind stopped, and, John adds, immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going.*

### *Disciples' response*

Read about the response of the disciples in both Mark and Matthew.

Mark points out that *they had not gained any insight from the incident of the loaves, but their heart was hardened*. They should have understood from the miracle of the loaves that He would provide for them, and He would protect them. And the fact that He has a future mission for them means that they would not be destroyed by the storm.

But their heart was hardened and therefore they didn't gain any insight from that lesson.

Matthew records that when Jesus got into the boat and the wind stopped they *worshiped him, saying, "you are certainly God's Son!"*

Notice that they have good theology here. They recognise that Jesus is the Messianic Son of God.

However they have not yet learned to apply that theology in their daily living. Consequently they were filled with fear.

### *Summary*

So in summary and to reiterate, Jesus purpose in this miracle is to teach His disciples to depend on Him in the face of impossible circumstances.

## **D. The Reception in Gennesaret, § 75, Mark 6:53–56; Matthew 14:34–36;**

Read Mark's account.

Now he is back on the Jewish side of the lake, at Gennesaret.

### *Personal need and faith*

There are those there who believe in Him, and their faith is shown by their response to His presence. They *ran about that whole country* bringing the sick to where He was, and they were *imploring Him that they might just touch the fringe of His cloak*.

And, just as it was for the haemorrhaging woman, touching the hem of His garment was the outworking of their faith. And not the touching of His garment, but their faith healed them.

We see again here that they were coming to Him with personal needs for healing, and they were coming in faith.

As a result, they were healed.

### *Tassels*

And again the reference to the fringe of His garment again is to the tassels which Jesus wore in obedience to the Mosaic Law.

## E. Instruction Concerning the Bread of Life, § 76, John 6:22–71

This section is the third of John's seven discourses, the discourse on the Bread of Life. It is also the first of the seven I AM's. In verse 35 he says "*I am the bread of life*". Let's look at how the conversation unfolds.

### *The crowd seeking Jesus*

John begins by setting the scene for the discourse. Read what he says in verses 22-25.

Here we find the crowd seeking Jesus.

John tells us that it is *the next day*. The next day after what?

It is the day after Jesus fed the five thousand and sent the disciples away in a boat to return to Galilee.

And John tells us that the same crowd that had been miraculously fed the loaves and fishes come looking for Jesus. He also tells us several things that they noticed that motivated them to go looking for Him. What were they?

They notice that He is no longer there, that He did not enter the boat with His disciples, and that there was no other boat for Him to have used. So, when other boats arrive from Tiberias they get into them and go to Capernaum looking for Him.

And when they find Him they can't understand how He got there so soon so they ask Him, "*Rabbi, when did You get here?*"

### *Jesus' response*

See how He responds to their question in verses 26 and 27. Read verses 26 - 27.

### *Truly, truly, I say to you*

He begins with the words, *truly, truly, I say to you*. These words serve to focus their attention on what He is about to say. He will use them four times in the course of this discourse, and each time they highlight something that is pivotal in the development of His argument. Think of them as a spotlight shining on the words that follow to make sure you notice them.

### *Their motive – His starting point*

Now Jesus ignores the words of their question and He begins His lengthy discourse by telling them about their motive for seeking Him.

This is His starting point. And as we have seen Him do before, we are going to see Him use what is known and well understood in their everyday lives to explain a spiritual principle they do not yet understand. We have seen Him do this for Nicodemus, and for the woman at the well in Samaria.

Notice that Jesus tells them two things about their motive for seeking Him. What are they?

### *Signs*

First, He tells them they are not seeking Him because they *saw signs*. Which signs is Jesus referring to?

The signs He did to verify His Messiahship. So they are not seeking Him because they saw His signs and believed.



### *Bread that satisfies*

Then He tells them that they are seeking Him because He provided bread for them and they were satisfied.

### *Two kinds of bread*

Now He has their attention focused on what really matters to them, He introduces the idea that there are actually two kinds of food, and in verse 27 He draws a contrast between them.

The food they are seeking is food that they have to work for, and it perishes.

But the food He tells them to seek is freely given to them by the Son of Man, and it endures to eternal life.

### *Work*

Jesus is directing their attention away from food that perishes and for which they need to work, to food that is available as a gift and endures forever. But they miss the point, as we see in verses 28-29. Read verses 28-29.

Instead of focusing on the food, what are they focusing on? Work!

So Jesus tells them, *This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent.*

This, in fact, is the subject and purpose of the whole discourse.

And notice here a salvation by work! What kind of work saves and results in eternal life? Only faith! Believing in the Messiah whom God has sent is the only work that will result in eternal life.

### *Request for a sign*

Now how do they respond to His statement that they must believe in the Him whom God has sent? Read verses 30-33.

They ask for a sign! He began the discourse pointing out to them that they did not come seeking Him because of the signs by which He authenticated His Messiahship. In spite of these many signs, they now ask for a sign so that they can believe in Him!

Moreover, they ask to be fed miraculously, just as their fathers were fed manna in the wilderness.

How does Jesus respond to them?

### *The Bread of God*

Again Jesus focuses their attention on the answer He is about to give with His words, *truly, truly, I say to you.*

Then He contrasts what Moses has given and what God, the Father, gives. And the contrast is between ordinary bread and *true bread*.

Then He gives the reason for the contrast: *For the bread of God is that which comes down out of heaven, and gives life to the world.*

Of course, He is describing Himself. He is the One who came down from heaven and *gives life to the world*.

### *The Bread of Life*

Read verses 34-35.

Now they want this life giving bread that He is talking about, and they want it, not only now, but always.

So He declares to them: *I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst.* The bread of life satisfies both hunger and thirst. This is reminiscent of His statement in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5:6; *Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied.*

### *Unbelief*

Read verses 36-40.

In verse 36 He points out their unbelief. Although they have seen Him, they do not believe.

### *The will of God*

Then in verse 37 He declares that there will be those who come to Him. And those who come to Him are those who believe in Him. The close relationship between believing in Him and coming to Him is introduced in verse 35 and will be developed in what follows. And Jesus has more to say about this at the end of the discourse. Coming to Him is an outward expression of a heart that believes in Him.

And those who come to Him are all those that the Father gives Him. None of those will be left out, or cast out. They will all come and they are secure in Him.

In verses 38-40 He gives the reason why He is so confident that there will be those who believe and come to Him. This is the very will of God! This is the very purpose for which God sent Him and for which He came! *For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I myself will raise him up on the last day.*

The point of these verses is this: In spite of their unbelief, and in contrast with it, He will accomplish the mission for which He was sent, and there will be those who believe, and He will not lose one of them, and He Himself will raise them up on the last day! This is the will of God the Father who sent Him!

### *Grumbling*

Now verse 41 begins, *therefore*. Read verses 41-42, where we see the response of the Jews to what He is saying to them. How did they respond?

They were grumbling. This is an onomatopoeic word (γογγύζω, gongyzo) derived from the sound made when murmuring or muttering in a low and indistinct voice with the idea of complaint. It means murmuring, muttering, complaining, or grumbling.

Where have we seen this before? In spite of the manna that God provided in the wilderness the Israelites murmured. And now God has provided heavenly bread, the bread of life, and still they murmur. The correlation should not be missed.

Instead of believing, they are murmuring.

### *Taught of God*

Read verses 43-46 where we see Jesus' response to their grumbling.

He continues the thought He has already expressed, those who come to Him are those who are given to Him (verse 39) and drawn to Him (verse 44) by the Father, and they are secure in Him. He will keep them to the very last day when He will raise them up.

Then He comes to the key idea in His response to their grumbling, in verse 45, where He quotes from Isaiah 54:13, speaking of Israel in the Messianic Kingdom: *All your sons will be taught of the Lord*. Jeremiah also expresses the same idea in different words in Jeremiah 31:34 and 38:34.

And then He applies the words of the prophets to the present situation by saying: *Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father, comes to Me*.

Here He is saying that everyone who has learned from God will believe in Him and come to Him. And this stands in direct contrast to the response of these Jews to His teaching. As He already pointed out to them in verse 36, they do not believe.

And the main point here is this: The very fact that they do not believe indicates that they have not been taught of God. They have not heard and learned from the God the Father. And the unstated question implied here is: if it is not the Father they have heard from, then who are they following?

Then He reminds them that He is the only one who has seen the Father. He is the one who has come down from heaven, who has seen the Father, who has been sent by the Father. And He is the one who will receive those the Father gives Him and will raise them up on the last day.

### *The Parable of the Bread of Life*

And then, in verses 47-51, we find His next *truly, truly, I say to you*. Read these verses.

Here He turns His verbal spotlight onto the parable of the Bread of Life. Remember that a parable is always based upon real life. A parable is an analogy taken from everyday life and experience which teaches an ethical, moral, or spiritual truth.

Here in this section the eating of bread is the real life experience He is using as an analogy.

And the point made by this real life experience is that eating bread sustains our life until we die. The patriarchs ate manna in the wilderness, and they died.

The key elements of the parable are the bread which is eaten, the act of eating the bread, and the outcome of the eating, which is life sustained until death.

What are the spiritual realities represented by these elements?

1. Jesus already declared that He is the bread.
2. The act of eating the bread is the act of believing that He is the Messiah.

At this point in time they do not have to believe that He died for their sins and rose again for that has not yet happened. But they do have to believe that He is the Messianic person and if they believe that then they will have this new kind of life He is offering.

3. And the outcome of eating the bread of life is that the one who eats will not die, but will live forever. He will have eternal life. Those who believe in Him will not die, and as we will learn when we get to John chapter 11, they will live even if they die. (John 11:25)

The spiritual truth taught by this parable is that those who believe in Him have eternal life and live forever.

### *The question*

John 6:52. <sup>52</sup>*Then the Jews began to argue with one another, saying, "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?"* Clearly, the Jews do not understand the parable, and this is one of the reasons He uses parables.

### *The parable restated*

He answers their question in verses 53-58, but He continues to speak in terms of the parable.

Read verses 53-58.

Again He begins, *truly, truly, I say to you* in order to highlight what He is about to say. Then the end of verse 53 is the negative statement of the parable and verse 54 is the positive statement of it.

Now notice the parallel between verse 40 and verse 54.

<sup>40</sup> *everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day.*

<sup>54</sup> *He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.*

These two verses say the same thing: everyone who does a given thing will have eternal life and Jesus will resurrect him on the last day.

In verse 40 it is those who behold the Son and believe who will have eternal life.

In verse 54 it is those who eat His flesh and drink His blood who have eternal life.

So this is the element of the parable and its meaning:

Eating His flesh and drinking His blood is the element of the analogy taken from everyday life, and in the spiritual reality it means to believe in Jesus as the Messiah who was promised.

When He says that those who eat His flesh and drink His blood have eternal life He is saying that those who believe in Him will have eternal life.

### *Elements of the parable*

In verses 55-56 He points out three elements of the parable.

1. His flesh, He says, represents true food.
2. His blood represents true drink.
3. And the act of eating His flesh and drinking His blood represents abiding in Him.

In verse 57 He further explains that the life we receive by believing in Him and abiding in Him comes from Him. He uses His relationship with the Father as an illustration of our relationship with Him. Just as He lives because of the Father, so we who believe in Him *will live because of Him*.

### *Concluding contrast*

Jesus concludes by returning to the contrast between the manna and the living bread. The former will not result in eternal life, but the latter will.

### Response of His disciples

Then John records the response of His disciples. Read verses 59-60.

The disciples referred to here are the larger group beyond the twelve. Many of these also grumbled in unbelief, and Jesus asked them if His teaching causes them to stumble.

Isaiah 8:14-15 prophesied that, for those who don't believe, the Messiah would be a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence. (This is also referred to in Romans 9:31-33; 1 Corinthians 1:23-24; 1 Peter 2:5-8.)

Because they don't understand that He is speaking to them in a parable, they think He literally means them to eat His flesh, and so they are offended and grumble.

### Spiritual life

Now see how Jesus responds to the grumbling of His disciples. Read verses 61-63.

Aware of their grumbling, He asks them: if this causes you to stumble, what will you make of it if you see Me returning to heaven where I came from? In other words, if they only understand His words literally, how will they accomplish the eating of His flesh when it is removed from them as he ascends into heaven?

So He argues that a purely literal interpretation of His statement doesn't make sense.

Then in verse 63a He points out that the life He is talking about comes from the Spirit and not from the flesh. This is just what He told Nicodemus at the outset of His ministry. *That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.* (John 3:6.) Although the statement is generalized, *the flesh profits nothing*, surely He is making a particular application to His own flesh, which by now is uppermost in their minds.

So again He argues that the literal interpretation of His statement is not intended.

And in 63b He says that life comes from the words that He has spoken to them. His words are the way in which the Spirit can and will convey to them the eternal life He is speaking about. In the parables of the kingdom we learned that the word of God is sown like a seed into the hearts of men. And it has a life of its own, and in the heart of the believer it will germinate and grow of its own accord.

Now here He expresses the same idea when He says, *the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.*

In verses 61-63, then, He is pointing out to them that His statements cannot possibly be taken literally, and that the source of eternal life is not found in His flesh, but in His words. That is: "It is not My flesh, but My words that will bring you life!"

### Consequences of unbelief

Then He continues with the word *but*, which introduces a contrasting idea. Read what He says in verses 64-65.

Here He points out that some of them do not believe. His words will bring life to those who believe, but some of them do not believe!

Then He tells them that their unbelief has not taken Him by surprise because He knew from the beginning of His ministry who did not believe, and who would betray Him.

He continues, *for this reason*. For what reason? Because *there are some of you who do not believe*.

And because some of them do not believe He said to them *that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him from the father*.

And the implication is that it won't be granted to those who do not believe, but only to those who believe. In other words, it is only those who believe who will come to Him.

### The results

Now John records three results that follow from His discourse on the Bread of life. Read verses 66-71.

1. In verse 66 there is a response from many of the disciples outside the apostolic group.

<sup>66</sup> *As a result of this many of His disciples withdrew and were not walking with Him anymore.*

2. Secondly, there is a reaffirmation of faith on the part of eleven of the twelve apostles.

<sup>67</sup> *So Jesus said to the twelve, "You do not want to go away also, do you?"* <sup>68</sup> *Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life."* <sup>69</sup> *"We have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God."*

Peter acknowledges what Jesus was declaring in verse 63, that Jesus has the words of eternal life. And he declares that, unlike those who are leaving, eleven of the twelve apostles have believed in Him.

3. Thirdly, Jesus already knows who will betray Him.

<sup>70</sup> *Jesus answered them, "Did I Myself not choose you, the twelve, and yet one of you is a devil?"*

<sup>71</sup> *Now He meant Judas the son of Simon Iscariot, for he, one of the twelve, was going to betray Him.*

### *Truly, truly, I say to you ...*

Four times in this discourse Jesus used the words, *truly, truly, I say to you*, to focus the crowd's attention on what He was about to say. Now that we have looked in detail at what He said, let's go back to these words to see how He develops His argument.

1. The first one is in verse 26, where He begins by pointing out that their motivation for seeking Him. They are not seeking Him because they saw the signs that authenticate His Messiahship, but they are seeking Him because they ate the bread and were satisfied.

Then He points out that bread perishes, but the food the Son of Man provides endures to eternal life.

2. The second one comes in verse 32, where He says that true bread is given by the Father, gives life to the world, and is satisfying of both hunger and thirst.
3. The third one comes in verse 47, where He points out that those who believe have eternal life, and that He Himself is the one they must believe in.
4. The fourth one comes in verse 53, where He says that those who believe in Him will have eternal life and He will raise them up on the last day.

### *Review*

In this discourse He is teaching the crowd in parables because His Messiahship has been rejected by the leaders of Israel. He speaks in parables so they won't understand, and even many of His disciples don't understand and stop following Him.

With one exception, the apostles understand and believe. But in Judas we find the beginnings of his apostasy.

The key message of the discourse is that eternal life is given to those who believe in Him. And this is in fact the very purpose for which He was sent by the Father, a purpose that will be accomplished. In spite of their unbelief, there will be those who believe and receive eternal life, and they who believe are secure in Him and will be raised up on the last day.



## F. Instruction Concerning Defilement, § 77, Mark 7:1-23; Matthew 15:1-20; John 7:1

### *Walking in Galilee*

The events of section 76 where He teaches about the Bread of Life are another turning point in Jesus' ministry, as we see here.

Read John 7:1

<sup>1</sup>*After these things Jesus was walking in Galilee, for He was unwilling to walk in Judea because the Jews were seeking to kill Him.*

John's account points out that Jesus no longer walked in Judea because there were constant conspiracies to try to kill Him. He now mostly stays in the Galilean area unless He travels outside the borders of the land of that day, as He does in the next two sections.

### *Pharisees from Jerusalem*

Read Mark 7:1-5 to see what happens next.

Both Mark and Matthew point out that the Pharisees and scribes came to Him from Jerusalem. That is a three day journey to try to entrap Him. Now they are travelling north because He is not travelling south.

They have already collected a number of issues against Him. Can you recall them?

1. He has gone against their tradition of frequent fasting.
2. They already accused Him of being demonised.
3. They declared Him to be a sinner because He rejected the authority of the Mishnah, and
4. the issue of the proper way to observe the Sabbath rest.

At the trial of Jesus they will have one more major issue: His claim to be the Son of God.

And now they travel from Jerusalem to challenge Him on another issue.

### *Mark gives added detail*

Both Matthew and Mark tell us about this event, but notice that Mark gives us more detail. Why would that be?

Since Matthew is writing to Jews He does not have to specify in detail what the issue is. But Mark is writing to Gentiles who do not know these Jewish traditions, and so he provides more background details to help them understand the issue.

### *The issue*

And what is the issue they are concerned about?

Mark points out, in verse 3, the fact that they are very careful to fulfil the laws of the washing of hands, *thus observing the traditions of the elders*. The terms Pharisaic Law, Rabbinic Law, and Mishnaic Law are all interchangeable, but the New Testament refers to it as *the tradition of the elders* or *the tradition of the fathers*.

In verse 5 the question is: *Why do Your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders?* And the evidence is: *they eat their bread with impure hands.*

Why is it *the traditions of the elders* they are concerned about? They do not have any reason to accuse Him of violating the Mosaic Law. He keeps it perfectly down to every jot and title. Therefore the only basis they have for accusing Him is the Mishnaic Law. And sometimes the Mishnah was viewed not only as equal with Scripture but as having greater authority than Scripture.

These accusations never make much of an impression on Him because He will readily admit to breaking Mishnaic Law, and as we shall see in a later section, He sometimes goes out of His way to do so.

### *Jesus response*

Now He responds by pointing out three things.

#### *1. Hypocrisy*

The first point is in verses 6-7 of Mark. Read these.

<sup>6</sup>*And He said to them, "Rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: 'THIS PEOPLE HONORS ME WITH THEIR LIPS, BUT THEIR HEART IS FAR AWAY FROM ME.*

Why does He call them hypocrites?

The true nature of their traditionalism is hypocrisy.

And what makes it hypocritical is found in verse 7: *BUT IN VAIN DO THEY WORSHIP ME, TEACHING AS DOCTRINES THE PRECEPTS OF MEN.*

We often think of worship only in terms of praising God or singing, but worship includes, Biblically, obedience to the commandments of God. And the commandments of God are found in the Word of God and not in the traditions of men!

The Pharisees believe they are worshiping God by obeying their traditions, but it is vain and it is empty.

That is His first point.

#### *2. Neglecting the commandment of God*

The second point is in verse 8:

<sup>8</sup>*"Neglecting the commandment of God, you hold to the tradition of men."*

Sometimes in order to keep a tradition it is necessary to ignore a divine commandment. And that can be simply an error of omission. They are *neglecting the commandment of God.*

#### *3. Setting aside the commandment of God*

But for the next point He goes from passive omission to the active commission of disobedience. Read verse 9.

<sup>9</sup>*He was also saying to them, "You are experts at setting aside the commandment of God in order to keep your tradition.*

Sometimes to keep a tradition they have to actively disobey or set aside a divine commandment.

## Corban

He provides an example of how they do this using the principle of corban.

Read verses 10-13.

The word corban means something that is dedicated, something that is given. The way the system works is this. At any point in time a Pharisee could wave his hand and say, “corban”.

The meaning of this act is that everything that he owns at that time becomes dedicated and he could do one of two things with it: he could give all or part of it to the temple treasury; or he could keep it for his own private use. But what he could not do with it is to give it away to someone else for their private use. That was not an option.

Now many Pharisees were converts to Pharisaism but their parents were not Pharisees. And there was a reluctance to share things with non-Pharisees, even if those non-Pharisees happened to be their parents.

The Mosaic Law quoted by Jesus here says to *honour your father and your mother*. And part of honouring the parents is helping to take care of their welfare when they become too old to take care of themselves physically or mentally.

If a Pharisee saw his father approaching and knew his father was having certain difficulties, before the father arrives he could say, “corban”, dedicated. So that when the father comes in and states his need, his son could say I wish you had seen me earlier, I've already decreed my present possessions as corban and by law I cannot give it away to anyone else to use.

But the intent would not necessarily be to give part of all of it to the temple treasury, because he still had the option to use it for his own private use. So by means of a tradition he actively broke a divine commandment, or as Jesus puts it: they were *thus invalidating the word of God by your tradition which you have handed down*.

## Many things such as that

In verse 13 Jesus adds: *and you do many things such as that*. There are many other examples you can find just by reading the rabbinic writings. Here is one more example.

## The Sabbath commandment

Let's look at the Sabbath commandment. The way the Mosaic Law said to keep the Sabbath is not as a day of corporate worship which is a common misconception today, but a Sabbath was to be a day of rest. You were not to travel on that day, but you were to stay home on that day. And they developed a concept that you don't go more than a Sabbath day's journey which was roughly a modern day kilometer.

Now Pharisees liked to be in the temple area during the Sabbath to observe the special sacrifices on that occasion. But sometimes they would have to carry on business in a place like Bethlehem about 8-10 kilometres south of Jerusalem. For them to be in Bethlehem on time they would have to leave Jerusalem on Saturday afternoon. But how could they travel on Saturday afternoon which was still the Sabbath?

So when the school of the Sophrim considered that issue they began by asking the question: how do you define what a home is? And the answer they came up with is: home is where your possessions are. And that solved the problem.

If a Pharisee had to travel to Bethlehem on the Sabbath day he could send out 8 of his slaves to stand one kilometre apart along the road to Bethlehem. So as he travelled along the road he was never more than a Sabbath day's journey from his possessions and so he was never more than a Sabbath day's journey from his home. And so by means of a tradition they broke a divine commandment.

#### *Examples of their rules*

To give you some idea of how seriously they took the issue of the washing of hands, let me give you some of their rules on this.

1. It is better to walk 4 miles to find water to wash your hands than to incur guilt by neglecting hand washing. In other words if you want to eat even just a small seed and the closest body of water was 4 miles away, take a hike! Don't dare eat it until you wash your hands.
2. One who neglects hand washing is as bad as a murderer.
3. The one who neglects hand washing is as one who went into a prostitute.
4. To eat with unwashed hands is like eating non-kosher food, that is, not in accordance with the Mosaic dietary law.
5. One who eats without washing hands is to be uprooted.
6. Three sins bring poverty after them, one of which is neglecting hand washing. In other words if you don't want to die poor, make sure you wash your hands before you eat.

#### *Parable*

Now read verses 14-16.

Here Jesus gathers the crowd together and tells them, as Matthew puts it: *It is not what enters into the mouth that defiles the man, but what proceeds out of the mouth, this defiles the man.*

#### *Consequences of the unpardonable sin*

Now one of Matthew's interests in his gospel is to deal with the consequences of the unpardonable sin which occurred in section 61. So he adds some details that were not relevant to Mark's audience.

Read Matthew verses 12-14.

The disciples tell Jesus in Matthew verse 12 that the Pharisees were offended by what He had to say. In response Jesus points out three things about Pharisaism.

1. They are plants which are not planted by God. Therefore they need to be uprooted. And the apostles are to *let them alone*.
2. They are blind guides that lead the blind.
3. Both will fall into a pit. The pit will be the AD 70 destruction.

### Policy

Read verse 17 in Mark's account.

In verse 14 He called the crowd to Himself. And then He spoke to them a parable which no one understands. Even the apostles didn't understand as we see here.

This has been His policy since He was rejected in section 61: publicly He speaks in parables and nobody understands. The apostles don't understand. But when He is alone with them He will explain the meaning of the parables because for them the purpose will be to illustrate the truth.

### Explanation of the parable

Then we come to His explanation of the parable. Read verses 18-23.

What is the issue He addresses here? The question is: Where does defilement come from? Where does it really begin?

In Pharisaism you were defiled only when you violated the rule. For example, the Mosaic Law forbids the eating of pork and the Pharisees say you are not defiled until you eat that pork.

But Jesus says no, the defilement begins earlier. Before a Jew under the Law eats the pork he will first of all make a decision to do so, and once that internal decision is made, the defilement has begun. And the act of eating the pork is merely the outward expression of the internal defilement that is already there.

And so defilement begins in the heart of man and the external action is merely carrying out what was already in the heart. So He says at the end of verse 23, *all these evil things proceed from within and defile the man.*

### Peter

Notice two more things in this section.

In verse 15, Matthew records that it was Peter who asked Jesus to explain the parable to them. And although it was Peter who asked the question and received an answer, the lesson didn't sink in just yet, and in Acts 10, God will have to teach Peter this lesson all over again.

### All foods are clean

And Mark points out at the end of verse 19 that *thus He declared all foods clean*. How can He do that when the Mosaic Law declares certain foods unclean?

Part of His mission will be to bring the Mosaic Law as a rule of life to an end. And as a result it will cease to be the rule of life for the believer. And that will remove the distinction between foods that are clean and foods that are not clean.

## G. The Reception in Tyre and Sidon, § 78, Mark 7:24–30; Matthew 15:21–28

### *Tyre and Sidon*

Read Matthew verse 21.

For the third time Jesus moves into Gentile territory. (He was in Gentile territory for the healing of the Gerasene demoniac, and for the feeding of the five thousand.)

Now He goes to the *district of Tyre and Sidon*. These cities are part of the Promised Land, but Israel has never had possession of them.

This is the same area where Elijah was sent by the Lord when he left Israel and went to stay with a widow at Zarephath (1Ki. 17:9).

As we will see, His popularity had also spread to this area which today is Lebanon.

### *Privacy*

Read the second part of Mark verse 24.

What was Jesus' purpose in going to this region?

Mark tells us that He was trying to escape notice. His intention is to have a private time with His disciples.

### *The SyroPhoenician woman*

Read Mark verses 25-26 and Matthew verses 22-25.

Here in Mark verse 26, the word translated Gentile is Hellenis, which literally means Greek. She is a Greek woman of the SyroPhoenician race.

Matthew introduces her as a Canaanite woman. The term Canaanite was a general term and there were many specific Canaanite tribes, such as the Perizzites and Jebusites. And the Phoenicians were a branch of the Canaanites. But by this time it was a Greek speaking area and not Canaanite speaking.

She is a Gentile and that is the key thing to note for what happens here.

### *Her request*

What is she asking Jesus to do for her? – as Mark records, she requests Him *to cast the demon out of her daughter*.

Notice the extra detail that Matthew gives here because he is writing to a Jewish audience.

### *Son of David*

How does she make her request in verse 22?

When she hears of His presence, she comes to Jesus and says: *“Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is cruelly demon-possessed.”*

What does it mean that she addresses Him this way, as *Son of David*?

This is a Messianic title. So it means that she is addressing Him as Messiah and is asking for a miracle based on His messianic character.

### Repeated asking

Mark says she *kept asking Him*. And Matthew says she *began to cry out*. The Greek here actually indicates a continuous or repeated action. She is repeatedly asking Him in these terms, but as Matthew records, *He did not answer her a word*.

Why is that? Why doesn't Jesus answer her until the disciples implore Him to send her away?

There are two reasons:

1. Israel has rejected His Messiahship, and so on that basis He can do nothing for her. He will not act in His role as Israel's Messiah because He has been rejected.
2. His Messiahship was intended for Israel, not for the Gentiles. For He says, *I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel*.

For these two reasons He can do nothing for her.

### Changed request

Notice how she changes her request in verse 25. What is different about it now?

Matthew says: *she came and began to bow down before Him, saying, "Lord, help me!"*

*To bow down* here is a Greek word meaning to worship, and it is usually translated that way. (See for example in John 4:20-24.)

So now she worships Him. And how does she address Him?

She no longer addresses Him as *Son of David*, but simply as *Lord*. The Greek is *Kurios*, and is equivalent to the Hebrew *Jehovah*.

And her request is simply, *help me!* This is a personal request for help.

So now she is not coming on the basis of His Messiahship, but on the basis of personal need.

### A parable

Read how He responds to her new request in verses 26-27.

To make sure she has learned the point and also to see if she has faith He responds to her with a parable.

The word for *dogs* in the Greek means puppies. Just as food intended for the children should not be given to pets with the result that the children go hungry, even so it is not proper to take what was promised to Israel, the Jewish people, and give it to the Gentiles.

Her answer continues the metaphor of the parable and shows that she understood what He was teaching her: *Yes, Lord; but even the dogs feed on the crumbs which fall from their masters' table*.

In other words she is not asking for what belongs to the Israel, she is only asking for what did extend to the Gentiles. Even the Jewish Covenants (Genesis 12:3) promise that some of the benefits will extend to the Gentiles.

So she is now showing that she has passed the test. She understands the truth and believes.

### *The miracle*

Now Jesus acknowledges her faith and grants her request. Read verse 28.

<sup>28</sup>*Then Jesus said to her, "O woman, your faith is great; it shall be done for you as you wish." And her daughter was healed at once.*

So not on the basis of His Messiahship, but on the basis of her personal need and her great faith He heals her daughter.



## H. The Reception in Decapolis, § 79, Mark 7:31–8:9; Matthew 15:29–38

### *Gentile territory*

Now Jesus leaves the region of Tyre and travels south again.

Read Mark verse 31, and notice where He goes, and where He does not go.

He carefully keeps away from Galilee which is the territory of Herod Antipas. Herod Antipas had control over Galilee and Perea. And Pontus Pilate had control of Samaria, Judea, and Idumea.

So Jesus travels from Sidon down the eastern side of the Jordan River until He reaches Decapolis.

Decapolis is a union of 10 Greek gentile cities of which only one was on the west side of the Jordan, city of Scythopolis (Old Testament - Beth-Shan).

So Jesus remains in Gentile territory, and this is His third withdrawal from the Jewish areas.

### *A Jewish community*

This section focuses our attention of two events, one a Jewish event and the other a Gentile event. Even though the Decapolis is a union of 10 Greek gentile cities there were small Jewish communities within these cities.

### *A Jew healed*

We'll follow Mark's account first, to see the Jewish event that he records. Read Mark verses 32-37.

How do we know this man who came for healing was a Jew?

We deduce that he was a Jew because we see Jesus implementing His policy toward Jews which He has adopted since section 61 when He was rejected by them. In verse 36 *He gave them orders not to tell anyone*. So this is most likely a Jew who was brought to Jesus by other Jews.

These ones who brought the deaf man beseech Jesus to heal him by the laying on of hands. The man had a two-fold problem, he was deaf and because of being deaf he also had an impediment of speech.

Since there were Jews present in the multitude, and because of His policy not to do the miracle in public, He takes the man aside *from the crowd* to heal him privately. Remember there are no more signs for the general population but He does respond to personal need on the basis of faith.

### *The healing*

He is asked to lay hands on the man, but instead He performs a six step process which is unique in Scripture.

1. He put His fingers in the man's ears to deal with his deafness.
2. He spits.
3. He uses His own saliva on the tongue to deal with the man's impediment of speech.
4. He looks up to heaven for the Father's help.
5. He sighed.
6. Then He commanded the healing, and the man could both hear and speak.

### *The result*

And then, as we already noted, *He gave them orders not to tell anyone!* So we continue to see His policy being carried out.

However, those who saw the miracle proclaimed it widely! So the news about Him continued to spread.

And Mark records in verse 37 that they were utterly astonished.

### *Matthew's perspective*

Matthew, writing to the Jews, has a different perspective from Mark. And interestingly, while Mark writes about the Jewish event for the Romans to read, Matthew is more interested in telling the Jews what happened among the Gentiles.

### *Fruit of demoniac's ministry*

What happened when Jesus first came to the region of Decapolis? He healed the demonic who had a legion of demons. And as a result the local inhabitants asked Him to leave them (section 66).

And remember that He sent the man back to his people to report to them *what great things the Lord has done for him. And he went away and began to proclaim in Decapolis what great things Jesus had done for him; and everyone was amazed.*

And now in this section we will see the results of this man's ministry.

Read Matthew verses 30 and 31.

Instead of asking Jesus to leave as they had before, they are coming to Him in large crowds bringing to Him those who need to be healed.

And these Gentiles are glorifying the God of Israel.

So now the Gentiles are accepting the Jewish Messiah because of the testimony of the former demonized man, and Jesus is reaping where the other man did the sowing.

And Matthew's point is that while the Jews have rejected His Messiahship, the Gentiles are accepting Him.

### *Feeding four thousand*

Now we come to the feeding of the four thousand.

Read Mark's account, verses 1-9.

### *Gentile crowd*

While there are a lot of similarities between this event and the feeding of the 5000, the two events are quite different. And one key difference is that the feeding of the 5000 had a Jewish crowd; and the feeding of the 4000 has a mostly Gentile crowd. This crowd is coming as a result of the testimony of the demonized man who was cleansed back in section 66.

### *Training the twelve*

Once again what He does here is part of their training in preparation for the ministry they will have after His ascension.

What was the lesson that Jesus taught the disciples with the feeding of the five thousand?

He taught them that they are responsible to feed the people, that they don't have the resources to do it, and that they are responsible to feed the people what He provides for them.

Did they learn that lesson?

No! When He tells them that He has compassion on the crowd and wants to feed them, they respond that they don't have enough bread, and they isn't even enough bread *in this desolate place to satisfy these people*.

Their response shows that they failed to learn the lesson of the feeding of the five thousand (section 72), that Jesus can provide in these situations.

### *The miracle*

Once again He takes the loaves and the fish, gives thanks, breaks them, and gives them to the disciples to distribute to the crowd until they were all satisfied.

This time there are seven large baskets full of left over pieces and the crowd numbered 4,000 men besides the women and children.

### *The lessons for the disciples*

This lesson repeats the earlier lesson that they are responsible to feed the people, they do not have the resources to do it themselves, and they are responsible to distribute what He provides.

But this is not merely a repetition of the earlier lesson. There is also an extra lesson this time. This time they learn that the Gentiles are to benefit from His ministry. And this is a strong indication that they will be ministering to the Gentiles at a later time, and yes, the Gentiles will also benefit from the coming of the Messiah.

## I. The Rejection in Magadan, § 80, Mark 8:10–12; Matthew 15:39–16:4

### *Return to Galilee*

Read Matthew's account 15:39 – 6:4.

After feeding the four thousand, Jesus sends the crowd away, and He and His disciples return to Jewish territory at Magadan (in the region of Dalmanutha) which is probably near Gennesaret, south of Capernaum.

### *Pharisees and Sadducees*

Notice that the Pharisees and the Sadducees are now united in their endeavor to catch Jesus out. They came tempting Him and asking to be shown a sign from heaven.

### *A sign from heaven*

They are demanding an authenticating sign. Even after they have rejected Him in section 61 they still come and ask Him for a sign.

But notice it is a qualified request. They want a sign from heaven! Where do they say His signs come from? Every time He gives them a sign they say it comes from Hell, from Beelzebub.

### *Signs of the times*

Jesus chastises them because they know how to forecast the weather by reading the signs in the sky, but they do not understand the signs of the times.

### *The sign of Jonah*

Then He restates His policy on signs.

*An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign; and a sign will not be given it, except the sign of Jonah.*

This is the same answer He gave them in section 62, when they asked for a sign immediately after they had rejected Him.

For the nation there will be no more signs except the one sign, the sign of Jonah, which is the sign of resurrection. And to repeat, this sign will come to Israel on three occasions:

1. Resurrection of Lazarus
2. Resurrection of Yeshua
3. Resurrection of the two witnesses of Revelation 11.

## J. The Warning against Rejection, § 81, Mark 8:13-26; Matthew 16:5-12

Now Jesus leaves the Pharisees and Sadducees at Magadan and crosses the Sea of Galilee again into Gentile territory. And on the way He gives them an important warning.

*Watch out and beware*

Read Matthew 16:5-12.

What happens here?

Jesus uses the word leaven symbolically, saying: *Watch out and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees*. But the disciples take it literally, discussing among themselves that they have no bread.

Then He asks them why they are talking about not having bread. Didn't they learn from the feeding of the five thousand and the feeding of the four thousand that He will provide bread when it is needed?

Then in verse 11, in view of what they should have learned from these miracles, He asks them how is it that they didn't know that He wasn't speaking literally.

Then, at last, they realise that He was warning them about the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

*Leaven*

Whenever leaven is used symbolically it is always a symbol of sin. And within the gospels it is specifically the sin of false doctrine or false teaching.

*Three types of leaven*

And in this warning Jesus warns them about three types of leaven or false teaching. Matthew mentions the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and Mark adds the leaven of Herod, or the Herodians. So He warns them about three kinds of leaven: that of the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Herodians.

These three groups are spreading a leaven or false teaching about Jesus, and the disciples are to be careful not to believe any of the material that they are hearing from these groups. And each of the three leavens has a different content:

1. The leaven of the Pharisees is that Jesus is demon possessed.
2. The leaven of the Sadducees is that He is against the temple worship system. Probably this is in light of the fact that Jesus drove the money changers out during the first Passover of His ministry.
3. The leaven of the Herodians is that He is opposed to Roman rule through the house of Herod. The Herodians are in favor of Roman rule, as long as it is through the house of Herod.

### *A blind man*

Now read Mark's account of what happened when they arrive in Bethsaida. Read Mark verses 22-26.

### *Policy of privacy*

So they come again into Bethsaida which is Gentile territory, but also contains a Jewish community.

And notice that Jesus takes the man by the hand and leads him out of the village, so that He can heal him privately. Once again this is in keeping with His policy since section 61 where Israel's leaders rejected Him as their Messiah.

### *A two stage healing*

Also notice that this man is not healed immediately. Jesus heals him in two stages. And this is the only miracle recorded in the gospels that He performs in two stages.

1. In the first stage he spits on the man's eyes and then lays His hands on him, and as a result the man has partial sight. He can now see, but his vision is blurred and he sees men looking like trees walking around.
2. Then Jesus touched his eyes a second time and his sight was fully restored so that he was able to see everything clearly.

Why wasn't the man healed the first time Jesus touched his eyes? Surely He was able to heal him the first time!

### *Application to the disciples*

There is a parallel between this miracle and the developing understanding of the apostles.

1. Section 82 will show that they have partial sight, and section 83 will show that they are still partially blind.
2. By the time of Pentecost with the coming of the Holy Spirit they will have full sight and no blindness.

### *Application to Israel*

There is another parallel with the nation of Israel.

1. Israel has partial sight now - there is a remnant who believes.
2. But they will have full sight when all Israel will be saved after the fullness of the Gentiles is complete.

Read Romans 11:25 - 27, noticing the word "until": *a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.*

Partial blindness corresponds to the partial hardening. And because it is partial there will always be Jewish people who believe. And when the fullness of the Gentiles has come in then the Jews' blindness will be totally removed and they will see clearly and all Israel will be saved.

### *Policy of silence*

Notice again in verse 26, *He sent him to his home, saying, "Do not even enter the village."* The policy of silence continues.

## K. The Confession of Peter, § 82, Mark 8:27–30; Matthew 16:13–20; Luke 9:18–21

Now we come to another milestone in Jesus' ministry. Its exam time for the apostles, and we will see His questions and their answers, and what He says to them as a result.

And this section will illustrate the partial sight of the disciples that was illustrated by the two-stage healing of the blind man in the last section.

### *Background context*

But before we continue it will be helpful to take note of the context in which this conversation occurs. And there are two elements of context that are essential to our understanding of what Jesus says here. One is about the geography of the location where this event takes place. And the other is about some Greek words that are used here.

#### *Caesarea Philippi*

The first thing to notice is that this event takes place in Caesarea Philippi (Matthew 16:13). This is not in Jewish territory but in Herod Philip's Gentile territory, north of the Sea of Galilee.

Caesarea is also at the foot of Mt Hermon, the highest peak, at 9,166 feet, in the holy land. Caesarea is built at the base of a massive cliff rock at the southern edge of Mt. Hermon. The town was built from this cliff and outward.

Now at the base of the cliff rock is a cave that you can still see today. A river used to pour out of the cave, but an earthquake about 100 years ago changed its course. Today the river is called Banyas. It is one of the four sources that make up the Jordan River. In Jesus' day the river used to gush out from this cave, but now it comes out to the right of it.

And as it shoots out it breaks off little stones and pebbles, and as you look down at the stream it is full of little stones and pebbles that were broken off from the cliff rock where it came out.

Yeshua will say a number of things that relate directly to this geography of the immediate area, so it will be important in our understanding.

#### *Petra and Petros*

The second thing that will be important to our understanding of what Jesus says concerns the Greek words that He will use, or that Matthew will use to record what He says.

The Greek word for "huge cliff-rock" is *petra*. The Greek word for "small stone" or "pebble" is *petros*. So *petra* means a "huge, massive cliff-rock" like the one that overshadows Caesarea-Philippi, and *petros* means "small stone" or "pebble" like the ones in the bed of the stream that shoots out from the base of the cliff-rock.

We'll need to be aware both of these Greek words and the geography of Caesarea Philippi as we listen to Jesus talking to Peter later in this section.

### *Exam time*

Now Jesus has been teaching His disciples for a period of time, including the warning against three types of leaven which we saw in the previous section.

And now it is exam time. If you like, it is the end of the school term. Can they pass the test?

In this examination Jesus asked them two questions.

1. Read Matthew 16:13-14 where we will find the first question and the apostles' answer.

The first question is: *Who do people say that the Son of Man is?*

They answered that there was no single opinion about the Person of Jesus, but among the masses there were different opinions.

- a) Some believed that Yeshua was John the Baptist, resurrected from the dead.
- b) Others believed He was Elijah, the one who was to come according to Malachi 4:5-6.
- c) A third opinion was that Jesus was Jeremiah the Prophet.
- d) Fourthly, still others believed that He was one of the prophets, perhaps Isaiah or Ezekiel.

One thing is very clear: in general, the people recognized His supernatural authority; they connected Him with one of these significant characters of the Old Testament, or with John the Baptist of the New Testament.

However, they failed to clearly discern who He really was. He was not John the Baptist; He was not Elijah; He was not Jeremiah; He was not Isaiah or any other prophet.

Specifically, He was Yeshua the Messiah, and no one else.

So concerning the first question of this examination, people generally felt that Jesus had supernatural authority and must therefore be a special Person, but they all guessed wrong in that they did not discern Him to be the Messiah Himself.

2. This leads to the second question. Read verses 15 - 16.

He said to them, *"But who do you say that I am?"*

In the Greek it is more emphatic, and it reads: ***but you, who do you say that I am.*** In contrast to the crowds, who do you say that I am?

Peter spoke for the disciples and answered the second question correctly. *Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."*

The Greek is much more emphatic here also. The Greek literally reads:

***You are the Messiah, the Son of the God, the Living One!***

The disciples concluded the correct answer; they passed the examination; they learned their lessons. They knew Jesus to be not merely a supernatural character; they knew Him to be the Messiah Himself.



## The Response of Jesus

Since they have passed the test, Jesus now tells Peter five things. Read verses 17 – 19 and then we will discuss each point in turn.

### 1. The Source of Peter's Knowledge

What is the point Jesus is making in verse 17?

This is His first point: what Peter understood was a result of divine illumination, not something he learned from mere human reasoning.

### 2. The Rock and the Church

The second statement He made to Peter is in verse 18a:

*I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church;*

#### Context

As we look for the meaning of this statement, remember three things.

- a) Remember where it was made and what they were looking at as He spoke.

They were standing at the base of a huge cliff-rock, out of which there flowed a stream of water that broke small stones from the cliff-rock, and these stones could be seen in the bed of the stream.

- b) In Greek, which Matthew was writing, the stones are called *petros*, and the rock from which they were broken is called *petra*.

- c) Remember why Jesus was saying it. Peter had just passed Jesus' exam question with flying colours by saying: *You are the Messiah, the Son of the God, the Living One!*

In this setting He says to Peter:

This was revealed to you, not by human reasoning, but by My Father who is in heaven.

And then He adds,

*You are Petros (a small stone), and upon this Petra (this huge rock) I will build My church.*

#### Meaning

Now, what do you think Jesus meant when He said that?

In the stream in front of them are small stones broken off from the huge cliff rock.

Peter, He says, is a small stone broken from a particular huge rock – not any rock, but *this rock*.

Which rock?

In the previous sentence Peter's statement that Jesus is *the Messiah, the Son of the God, the Living One* is the object in view. It is God the Father who revealed it to Peter.

And in this sentence, Peter's statement is still the object in view. *This rock* in this sentence, and *this*, which was revealed by the Father, in the previous sentence both refer to the fact that Jesus is *the Messiah, the Son of the God, the Living One*.

Why does Jesus use this illustration to describe Peter?

Jesus describes him as a small stone broken from this huge rock because the Father has revealed Jesus' Messiahship to him and he has believed it. The rock is the fact that Jesus is the Messiah, and Peter's belief that Jesus is the Messiah makes him a small stone chipped from that rock.

Then He adds that this fact, this rock, is the foundation upon which He will build His church.

### *Rock*

This use of rock as a symbol is consistent with its use throughout the Scriptures. Whenever rock is used symbolically in the Scripture, it is always a symbol of the Messiah. So the church is to be built, not upon Peter as some suppose, but upon the Messiah. And even more specifically, it is to be built upon what Peter has just said about the Messiah: *You are the Messiah, the Son of the God, the living one.*

### *An incorrect interpretation*

Catholicism uses this verse to teach that the church was built upon Peter, and they conclude that Peter was the first Pope. And by means of Papal succession all of the popes were the true representatives of God, having received authority from pope to pope all the way from Peter. As a result they say that the Roman Catholic Church is the only true church.

When they define this to be the meaning of verse 18, they are implying that Matthew, who wrote of the event, did not know some very simple rules of Greek grammar, which anyone in Greek 101 would quickly learn.

*Petros* is a masculine noun, and *Petra* is a feminine noun, and the simple rules of Greek grammar are that a masculine modifies a masculine and a feminine modifies a feminine, and a neuter modifies a neuter.

What you cannot have in Greek grammar is a feminine modifying a masculine or vice versa. That is not the way Greek grammar works. So grammatically it cannot possibly mean that the church is being built upon Peter.

Now Jesus was not speaking Greek at the time but Hebrew. And exactly the same rule applies in the Hebrew grammar.

### *Contrast*

Jesus is contrasting Peter with Peter's own statement. Peter you are a small stone like the ones in this stream, but upon the massive cliff rock out of which you are cut, I will build my church. I will build My church upon the statement you have just made about My Messiahship.

So the church is going to be built on the foundation of the Messiahship of Jesus.

### 3. The Gates of Hell

Then in verse 18 Jesus says: *and the gates of Hades will not overpower it.*

The expression "*gates of Hades*" refers to physical death. This is clearly what it means in places such as Job 38:17; Psalm 9:13; 107:18; Isaiah 38:10; and Jonah 2:6, where it is translated as "gates of death."

What is Jesus saying here?

Physical death itself will not be able to defeat His building of the Church.

When Jesus died it may have appeared that His program for the church was a failure, but it was by His very death, followed by His resurrection, that the foundation of the Church was laid.

His death and resurrection proved His Messiahship, thus establishing Him as that massive rock that serves as the chief cornerstone of the foundation itself.

#### *Will build*

Notice He did not say, "I am building My Church," as though the process were already started. He used a future tense, "I will build my church." It was future, it had not yet begun. In fact, the Church only began to be built in Acts 2. (This contradicts the Covenant or Replacement theology teaching that the church has existed since Adam and therefore the true church was always the true Israel, and not ethnic physical Israel.)

#### *Death will not defeat God's purpose*

Jesus' death and resurrection is the foundation upon which the Church is built. The death of Jesus did not prevail against the Church, but rather it laid the foundation for it.

And neither did the death of the apostles and the subsequent deaths of believers throughout the centuries succeed in defeating the Church.

The Church prevailed and God's intended program will be fulfilled.

### 4. The Keys of the Kingdom

Matthew 16:19a. *I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven.*

It is this statement that has originated all the stories, cartoons, and jokes about Peter's standing at the "Pearly Gates," determining who would or would not be allowed to enter into Heaven. However, that is not the meaning of this passage. Peter does not have the authority to decide who will or who will not enter into Heaven. On the contrary, that decision is made upon the basis of the acceptance or rejection of Jesus.

What are keys used for? The purpose of the keys is to open and close doors. The emphasis here is on the opening of the door.

Which door are the keys to open?

In this context, it is the opening of the door of the Church (v. 18). Peter was given "the keys of the kingdom," that is, the keys of the mystery kingdom or the Church.

What does it mean that Peter was given these keys, and how did he use them? We can discover the answer to this question by reading the book of Acts.

He was to open the door to three groups of people living in his day: the Jews, the Samaritans, and the Gentiles. It was Peter's responsibility to open the door to each one of these groups. And once he opened the door to that particular group, it stayed open for that group. Peter used the keys to open the door for all three groups in the Book of Acts.

1) First, the door was opened to the Jews.

In Acts 2, Peter preached his first sermon after being baptized by the Holy Spirit and many Jews believed. And it is by Spirit baptism that the Church came into being. This is the reason that all believers are baptized into the Church, the Body of the Messiah, by the Holy Spirit when they believe (1 Cor. 12:13).

In Acts 2, Peter opened the door of the Church to the Jews and, from then on, it stayed open for the Jewish people.

2) Next, he opened the door for the Samaritans in Acts 8.

What is interesting is that the first one to preach the gospel to the Samaritans was not Peter, but Philip. Although Philip preached the gospel, and although many of the Samaritans believed it and were baptized by water, none of them were baptized by the Spirit. Thus none of them were able to enter into the Church.

What is the problem? The problem was not that they were not spiritual enough. Far from it! Rather, the problem was that, even though Philip preached the gospel, he did not have the keys.

Later, the Jerusalem Church sent Peter to Samaria and, by the laying on of hands by the Apostle Peter, the Samaritans were baptized by the Holy Spirit and able to enter into the Body of the Messiah. From then on, the door stayed open for the Samaritans.

In Acts 8, Peter used his keys to open the door of the Church to the Samaritans.

3) Finally, the door was opened for the Gentiles.

In Acts 9, Paul was saved and commissioned to be the apostle to the Gentiles. While Paul received the commission to be the apostle to the Gentiles, Paul did not have the keys.

In Acts 10, Peter preached the gospel to the House of Cornelius, a house of Gentiles. As he was preaching, they believed his message, were baptized by the Holy Spirit into the Body of the Messiah, and became members of the Church.

At that point, Peter opened the door to the Gentiles by the use of his keys. From then on the door stayed open to Gentiles.

Now the way was open for Paul to fulfill his commission. Beginning in Acts 13 and throughout the remainder of the Book of Acts, there is the record of Paul's activities as the apostle among the Gentiles.

Peter had the keys, which meant that he was responsible for opening the door:

- 1) first to the Jews, which he fulfilled in Acts 2;
- 2) then to the Samaritans, which he fulfilled in Acts 8;
- 3) and then to the Gentiles, which he fulfilled in Acts 10.

## 5. Binding and Loosing

The fifth and final statement Jesus made to Peter at this time is in Matthew 16:19b: ... *and whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven.*

At this point, Peter was given the right to bind and to loose, though later it was given to the other apostles as well.

### *Bind and Loose*

What do the terms "bind" and "loose" mean?

Notice that in this context, it has nothing to do with the binding or the loosing of Satan, as some are in the habit of doing today.

From the Jewish frame of reference, the terms "bind" and "loose" were used in two ways among the rabbis. It was used in a judicial sense and in a legislative sense.

|                  | Judicial Sense | Legislative Sense |
|------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| Asur (to bind)   | To punish      | To forbid         |
| Mutar (to loose) | Not to punish  | To permit         |

In a legislative sense, to bind meant "to forbid something," and to loose meant, "to permit something." The Pharisees took upon themselves this authority. They claimed to have the authority to permit that which the Law may have forbidden and to forbid that which the Law may have permitted.

When it was used in a judicial sense, to bind meant "to punish," and to loose meant, "to release from punishment."

### Examples

By way of illustration, in ancient times when there were weddings, both the bride and groom would wear a garland, a crown of flowers, and the bride would be carried in a special litter, like an enclosed wagon carried by men on poles. That is no longer permitted in orthodox weddings today. In the Talmud in Sotah 4:19 it spells out exactly when it was forbidden, and notice the terminology that it uses.

"During the war with Vespasian, they bound garland of bridegrooms, and the playing of bells."

So from that time on two things were forbidden. It was forbidden for bridegrooms to wear crowns and the playing of bells was forbidden at weddings.

During the war of Vespasian they also bound that no one should teach his son Greek. In the Bar Kochba war they bound the bride's rides about the village in a litter, so it was forbidden after the second Jewish revolt.

Also in the Talmud, in a section dealing with the subject of vows (*Nedarim* chapters 6:5-7), it says:

"If a person makes a vow to abstain from meat he is loosed to eat broth, water that was cooked with meat in it."

"If a person makes a vow to abstain from wine he is loosed to eat that which is cooked in wine."

### *Apostles*

What Jesus gave to Peter here, and later to the other apostles, was something uniquely given to the apostles. They had the authority to bind and to loose both in the area of legislation and in judicial punishment.

### *Legislative*

First, legislatively, the apostles were given the authority to permit and to forbid. This is the authority they exercised throughout their epistles. In the New Testament Epistles, the apostles used their authority to forbid things, which formerly were permitted, and to permit things which were formerly forbidden.

### *Judicial*

An example of the judicial use of this authority is found in Acts chapter 5 where Peter bound Ananias and Sapphira for punishment because they lied to the Holy Spirit. They were killed because Peter bound them for punishment, using his apostolic authority.

### *Unique to apostles*

This authority to bind and to loose in the areas of both legislation and judicial punishment was part of their authority as apostles.

Later generations of the Church have no right to this kind of authority, even though the Roman Catholic Church has often claimed this type of authority for itself. Apostolic authority was never intended to be passed on in succession.

There is only one area where the church is given authority to bind and to loose, and that is in the area of church discipline as described in Matthew 18:16-20. And in this area, to bind would mean "to excommunicate" and to loose would mean, "Not to excommunicate."

### *Policy of silence*

Now read verse 20 of Matthew's account. *Then He warned the disciples that they should tell no one that He was the Christ.*

Notice the continuation of His policy introduced after His rejection in section 61. Even they are forbidden to proclaim His Messianic claims at this time.

### *The importance of this section*

The confession of Peter and the response of Jesus prepared the way for the establishment of the Church and the recording of New Testament Scriptures through apostolic authority.

### *Partial sight*

This section shows that the disciples do have partial sight. They understand that Jesus is *the Messiah, the Son of the God, the Living One*. The next section will show that they are also partially blind, and their understanding was incomplete at this time.

## L. Instruction Concerning the Death of the King, § 83, Mark 8:31–37; Matthew 16:21–26; Luke 9:22–25

*From that time*

Read Matthew verse 21.

Notice that it was *from that time* that Jesus began to teach His disciples about His coming death and resurrection. What time is Matthew referring to?

It is only after Peter's confession that Jesus is *the Messiah, the Son of the God, the Living One* that Jesus begins to spell out His program of death and resurrection. This is the first time He begins to deal with that specific aspect of His mission.

Remember He is now in His last year. The feeding of the five thousand in section 72 marked the beginning of the third year of His ministry. So this milestone, where we see Peter's confession of His Messiahship followed by His beginning to teach them about His death and resurrection, occurs during the third year of His ministry.

*Stated plainly*

And Mark adds here that *He was stating the matter plainly*.

As we continue through the gospels we shall see that He will say this in more and more detail as the time for the cross draws closer.

We will also see that as much as He tells them, and as often as He tells them, and with all the detail that He gives them, they never understand what He is saying.

So when these things finally do happen it catches them totally by surprise.

*Four points*

At this point Yeshua keeps it simple by pointing out four steps:

1. He must go to Jerusalem.
2. There He must suffer and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes.
3. He will be killed.
4. The third day He will rise again.

Notice that Matthew and Luke record that He said *on the third day*, and Mark records that He said *after three days*. As far as Jewish writers are concerned, these terms carry exactly the same meaning. He will arise on the third day; He will arise after three days. We will see how this fits when we talk about His resurrection later on.

In all three accounts the three days is emphasised by putting it first in the word order.

### *Peter's rebuke*

Now read Peter's response in Matthew verses 22-23.

Here we see that Peter's understanding was incomplete. His sight was only partial.

The first time Jesus described the program of His death and resurrection, Peter, who has just passed the test in the previous section with flying colours, fails the test in this section.

He took Jesus aside and *began to rebuke him*. The Greek word for rebuke is a very strong word. It means: "to reprove, to censor, to prevent an action from happening, even the use of physical restraint." So you can picture Peter taking hold of Jesus to restrain Him, and rebuking Him, saying: *"God forbid it, Lord! This shall never happen to you."*

Notice the paradox in this situation. Immediately before this Peter said to Jesus: *you are the Messiah, the Son of the God, the living one*. And now Peter rebukes the Messiah, the Son of the God, the Living One. Who goes around rebuking the Messiah? Peter, that's who!

### *Get behind me Satan*

Jesus' response is in verse 23: *But he turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me Satan!"*

Now Jesus didn't suddenly have a memory lapse and forget Peter's name. So why does He address Peter this way?

The point is that Peter, in trying to keep Messiah from the Cross, is doing exactly what Satan is trying to do. Satan does want to see Jesus dead, but he doesn't want Him to die at the proper time (at Passover) or in the proper way, which was by crucifixion. So Peter, in trying to keep Jesus from the Cross, is doing the work of Satan.

### *Lessons on discipleship*

Then speaking to the Apostles as a group, He teaches them three lessons in discipleship. Read Matthew verses 24-26.

#### *1. Identify with Him in His rejection*

The first lesson is in verse 24.

What does it mean to take up a cross and follow Him?

It was the Roman custom to make convicted criminals carry their own crosses to the place of crucifixion. So bearing a cross meant carrying their own execution device while facing ridicule and humiliation along the way to death.

Therefore to take up a cross and follow Him means to chose to identify with Him, knowing that the consequence may very well be rejection and humiliation, and even death.

Anyone wishing to be His disciple must identify with Him in His rejection.

The Scriptures draw a clear distinction between salvation and discipleship. Salvation is the mere act of faith exercised in believing that He died for our sins, was buried, and rose again. And that is the only way of salvation given in Scripture.

But discipleship involves a lot more than simply believing in Him, and the first point He makes here is that the disciple must fully identify with His rejection.



2. The second lesson is in verse 25.

Anyone who tries to save his life by not identifying with Him will actually lose his life, and anyone who loses his life as a result of identifying with Him will actually find it. In other words he will live even though he dies!

3. And the third lesson is in verse 26.

The attempt to gain all the world's riches may well cost a man his very soul. And all the riches of the world are insufficient to purchase a man's soul.

Conversely, true believers who become disciples will find both true safety and true riches.

## M. Instruction Concerning the Kingdom, § 84-85

### 1. The Promise of Revelation, § 84, Mark 8:38–9:1; Matthew 16:27–28; Luke 9:26–27

Read Mark's account, 8:38-9:1.

#### *This generation*

Notice the emphasis on that particular generation in verse 38: *For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of man also shall be ashamed of him, when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.*

The emphasis is on that particular generation. And, even among His believers, those who become ashamed of Him, will find that the Messiah will be ashamed of him at the second coming. This is not a loss of salvation, but the loss of the his place of reward in the Messianic Kingdom.

#### *Glory*

Also notice that when He comes, He will come *in the glory of His Father*.

The Greek word is *doxa*, which means “brightness,” “brilliance,” or “splendour”. So He will come in the brightness, brilliance or splendour of His Father. This, of course refers to the Shechinah Glory.

#### *Shechinah Glory*

The usual title found in the Scriptures for the Shechinah Glory is: the glory of the Lord.

The Hebrew form is *Kvod Adonai*, which means “the glory of the Lord,” and describes what the Shechinah Glory is.

The Greek title is *Doxa Kurion*, which is also translated as “the glory of the Lord.” And again, *doxa* means “brightness,” “brilliance,” or “splendour”. So the Greek form describes how the Shechinah Glory appears.

Other titles give it the sense of “dwelling,” which portrays what the Shechinah Glory does. The Hebrew for Shechinah, from the root *shachan*, means “to dwell.” The Greek word *skeinei* means “to tabernacle,” and is derived from the Hebrew Shechinah.

#### *Promise*

Then Jesus makes another point: that some of his disciples will not die until they see the glory He will have in that Messianic Kingdom. His emphasis is on seeing the power of that kingdom, the glory of that kingdom. The promise made in this section is fulfilled in the next section with the revelation of the kingdom at the transfiguration.

In the next section we will see that the ones who are to see His glory are the three apostles: Peter, James and John. And this promise will be fulfilled to them in the next section.

### 2. The Transfiguration: The Revelation of the Kingdom, § 85, Mark 9:2–8; Matthew 17:1–8; Luke 9:28–36a

Now we come to the section that describes the transfiguration. Read Luke 9:28.

#### *Timing*

In regards to timing, Mark and Matthew say *after* 6 days, and Luke says *approximately* 8 days.

How can we resolve this difference?

Perhaps Luke includes the day of departure and the day of return so as to tell us that they were on the mountain approximately eight days after the sayings of the previous section, while Mark and Matthew record the time of their departure to the mountain.

### *The mountain*

Peter, James and John (the two brothers) are chosen to accompany Jesus onto a mountain, which Luke refers to is as a particular mountain, *the mountain*.

Which mountain would that be?

Because Mark and Matthew say it was a high mountain, and Luke refers to is as *the mountain*, and because of where they were at the time, Caesarea Philippi, which was at the foot of one of the ridges of Mt Hermon, this high mountain could be no other mountain than Mt. Hermon.

Mt. Hermon is 9,232 feet above sea level, and 8, 632 feet (2,631 metres) above Caesarea Philippi.

However, if you go to Israel today they will take you to the Church of the Transfiguration that has been built on Mt Tabor. This Mt. Tabor site is about 45 miles from the Mt. Hermon site. It was not a high mountain but was a fortified place, for it guarded one of the seven entrances into the Jezreel Valley.

Mt. Hermon fits both geographically and contextually and is a place where they would be alone, without crowds around them. That would not have been true at Mt Tabor.

### *Transfiguration*

Now to see what happened here, read the next paragraph from all three gospel accounts.

What is happening here?

As Matthew says, *his face shone like the sun, and his garments became as white as light*. Putting all three descriptions together, both His clothing and His face were changed.

- i. His clothing became radiant, intensely white, as white as light, and they were dazzling.
- ii. And His face shone like the sun.

### *Shekinah*

This is similar to the experience of Moses at Mt. Sinai in Exodus 32-34, where he saw the *Shekinah* glory of God and his face began to shine. His face was shining with reflected glory or light and it was not the source of the light, just as the moon is a reflector and not the source of light. But in Jesus' case He is the *Shekinah* glory, and the shining of His face was much brighter than that of Moses.

What these three apostles see is the *Shekinah* glory that Jesus will have in the Messianic Kingdom, and this is what was promised to them in the previous section.

The physical body of Jesus acted as a veil to veil the brightness of His glory. But here at the transfiguration His glory is unveiled.

### *Moses and Elijah*

Now read what happens next in the next paragraph from Luke's account, verses 30-32.

Suddenly there are two men standing with *Yeshua*, men who are spoken of in the Jewish Scriptures, Moses and Elijah.

### *The topic of discussion*

While all three gospels tell of their appearance, only Luke tells us the content of the conversation which took place. What were they speaking about?

The topic of their discussion was Jesus' coming death in Jerusalem.

The word for *departure* here is *exodos*, the same word used for the departure or exodus from Egypt. And just as the departure of Israel from Egypt meant liberation from slavery, so His departure by death will mean liberation in two ways.

- i. For Jesus it will liberate Him from the limitations of His Humanity; and
- ii. For the believer it will liberate him from his enslavement to sin, the world, and the devil.

### *Promise fulfilled*

At the end of verse 32, when the disciples were fully awake, they saw His glory, fulfilling His promise in section 84.

### *Tabernacles*

Now read about Peter's response in Luke's account, verse 33.

Once again Peter speaks up, and he makes a suggestion to Jesus: *Let us make three tabernacles; one for you, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah.*

Now why would he say that? What do you think could be going through his mind as he says it?

If we consider what Peter knows and understands at the time, we will see that his response actually makes sense. So what is it that he understands at that time, and what is it that he does not yet understand?

### *What Peter understands*

He does understand three things that lead him to suggest he build three tabernacles.

- i. Jesus is the Messiah, and that
- ii. he is seeing the glory the Messiah will have in the kingdom as was recently promised.
- iii. He also knows that the Feast of Tabernacles will be fulfilled in the Messianic Kingdom when it will be celebrated each year by all nations.

Read Zechariah 14:16–19:

*<sup>16</sup> Then it will come about that any who are left of all the nations that went against Jerusalem will go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to celebrate the Feast of Booths. <sup>17</sup> And it will be that whichever of the families of the earth does not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, there will be no rain on them. <sup>18</sup> If the family of Egypt does not go up or enter, then no rain will fall on them; it will be the plague with which the Lord smites the nations who do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Booths. <sup>19</sup> This will be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all the nations who do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Booths.*

What does Zechariah tell us about the feast of Booths in the kingdom?

It will be celebrated in the kingdom by every nation. By the way, the words *booths* and *tabernacles* are interchangeable.

So, applying what he knows

(that Jesus is the Messiah,  
that he is seeing the Messiah's glory as it will be in the kingdom,  
and that the Messianic Kingdom is the fulfillment of the Feast of Tabernacles),

Peter concludes that the Messianic Kingdom is about to be established.

In this case it would be perfectly appropriate to build tabernacles to celebrate the fulfillment of the Feast of Tabernacles.

### *What Peter does not yet understand*

But there are some things that Peter does not yet understand, things that would have told him that it wasn't yet time to establish the kingdom.

And his timing is out by at least 2,000 years because of what he doesn't yet understand.

- i. He doesn't yet understand the death and resurrection program.
- ii. He doesn't yet grasp that there will be two comings of the Messiah.
- iii. He doesn't understand that the Feast of Passover must be fulfilled before the Feast of Tabernacles can be fulfilled.
- iv. And that Passover will be fulfilled by Messiah's death.

Had he understood these things, he would have realised that it was not yet time to establish the kingdom and therefore not yet time to celebrate the feast of tabernacles.

But given the things that he did not understand and the things that he did understand, his response was quite appropriate.

### *Bat Kol*

But God hasn't finished.

Read Luke verses 34-35 and then Matthew verses 5-8.

As Peter is speaking, the Shechinah glory cloud that was once on Mt Sinai comes upon this mountain overshadowing all three persons, and for the second time God the Father speaks audibly out of heaven.

The rabbis called this a bat kol, a voice from heaven.

In the gospels, the first time God the Father spoke audibly was at Jesus' baptism, and now the second time He speaks audibly is at the transfiguration.

### *Listen to Him*

He says the same thing that He said back then only now He adds one small clause, and Matthew records it. Can you spot it?

#### *Listen to Him.*

What is the significance of this in the context of the setting in which it was made?

First of all, look again at the setting. Who are Moses and Elijah?

Moses is the one who wrote down the Law and gave it to Israel. And Elijah is the prophet who was taken into heaven in a chariot of fire.

Both the Law and the Prophets speak about the coming Messiah. And here are Moses and Elijah *speaking of His departure which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.*

So Moses represents the Law and Elijah represents the Prophets. And they are standing there with Jesus when God the Father says to the apostles, *Listen to Jesus.*

The significance of this is that they have heard the Law and they have heard the Prophets, now they must listen to Him.

### *Final revelation*

He will be the final revelation of God to man. Hebrews 1:1-3a also indicates this. Let's read Hebrews 1:1-3a.

<sup>1</sup> *In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways,* <sup>2</sup> *but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe.* <sup>3</sup> *The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. (NIV)*

The NIV brings out the contrast quite well. And the contrast is between the past when God spoke *at many times and in various ways*, and the present when He spoke to us once and in one way, *by His Son.*

Again, these apostles have heard the law and the prophets and now they are told they must listen to Jesus, God's beloved Son and Chosen One.

And to emphasize that point, in Matthew verse 8, when the cloud lifts, they saw only Jesus. Moses is gone, and Elijah is gone. And only Jesus remains.

Now they have heard the Law and the Prophets and they are gone, for Moses represents the Law and Elijah represents the Prophets, and now God's instruction is: hear Jesus of whom the Law and Prophets spoke.

### *Theological implications*

Let me give you the five theological implications of the transfiguration.

#### 1. *Messiah*

The transfiguration authenticated the Messiahship of Jesus.

He was rejected by men, but accepted by God the Father. His Messiahship was authenticated here both by the Shekinah glory and by the voice of God the Father.

#### 2. *Kingdom*

It anticipated the coming of the earthly Messianic Millennial Kingdom.

As promised in section 84, they saw the glory He will have in the kingdom.

While at the time Peter thought the kingdom was coming then and there, he later understood this event to be a pre-view of the Messiah's power and majesty in the coming Messianic Kingdom, and he would describe it in his preaching. He wrote in 2 Peter 1:16-18 (NIV):

*<sup>16</sup> For we did not follow cleverly devised stories when we told you about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in power, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. <sup>17</sup> He received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." <sup>18</sup> We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain.*

#### 3. *Prophecy*

The transfiguration is a witness testifying to the fulfilment of all Scripture, and because it is God's witness it guarantees the fulfilment of all Scripture.

Moses represents the Law and Elijah represents the Prophets. And the content of their discussion was His coming death which is also the content of the writings of Moses and the Prophets.

The presence of Moses and Elijah with Jesus discussing His coming death represents the fact that the Old Testament speaks of His death and that Jesus came to fulfil all that the Law and the Prophets said.

In other words He is the Messiah who was to come, and He will fulfil all that was written about the Messiah.

The point being made here is that the fulfilment of prophecy is certain because the content of prophecy is actually a record of God's intention. And because it is His intention, He will carry it out just as He has described through the prophets.

This is also Peter's deduction, as we read in II Peter 1:19-21 (NIV):

<sup>19</sup> *We also have the prophetic message as something completely reliable, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.*

<sup>20</sup> *Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation of things.* <sup>21</sup> *For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.*

The coming of the Messianic Kingdom is certain, and all the prophecies of Scripture are certain to be fulfilled because this is God's intent.

#### 4. *Life after death*

The transfiguration is a pledge of life beyond the grave.

Moses and Elijah are there, Moses was someone who did die, Elijah is someone who did not die. Moses represents the saints that are to be resurrected from the dead. Elijah represents those that will be translated alive.

Either by resurrection or by translation there is life beyond the grave.

Notice that Luke records that Moses and Elijah *appeared in glory*. They have already been glorified. Elijah will come again, but he cannot die again because he has already been glorified. So he is not one of the two witnesses of Revelation.

#### 5. *A measure of His love*

It is a measure of His love for us.

It shows what it cost Him to come. He had to veil His glory twice, first at the incarnation and secondly as He comes down from this mountain.

Only with His ascension was His glory unveiled forever.

When John sees Jesus in his vision of Revelation 1:12-16 (Matthew 24:31-46). He sees Him in the fullness of His Shechinah glory, no longer veiled.

When Jesus returns at His second coming, it too will be with His unveiled glory. He will come with power and great glory in the clouds of heaven. The clouds themselves represent the Shekinah glory.



## N. Instruction Concerning Elijah, § 86, Mark 9:9–13; Matthew 17:9–13; Luke 9:36b

Now we'll listen to their conversation as they come down the mountain. Read Mark 9:9-10.

### *Policy of silence*

Now, as they come down from the mountain, Jesus takes the opportunity to give them a command. What does He tell them?

They are to tell no one what they have seen, until He has risen from the dead. So He continues His policy of silence concerning His Messiahship.

Did they obey this order? Read Luke 9:36b.

So they did understand that they were to tell no one about the event on Mt. Hermon.

### *Rising from the dead*

But His command did cause them some confusion as we see in Mark verse 10. What is it that they didn't understand?

They didn't understand *what rising from the dead meant*.

And this shows that they do not understand that the Messiah must come twice.

### *Elijah?*

So they ask Him a question about Elijah.

Read Mark verses 11 – 13.

*They asked him, saying, "Why is it that the scribes say that Elijah must come first?"* In other words: You're here Messiah, but I didn't notice Elijah! Wasn't he supposed to come first?

It was the teaching of the scribes and the Pharisees that Elijah must come first and restores all things. And this is a correct deduction from Malachi 4:5-6:

<sup>5</sup> *"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes.*

<sup>6</sup> *And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction."*

The promise of this scripture was that Elijah would come before the second coming.

But He was not promised before the first coming!!

Malachi 3:1 did prophesy an unnamed forerunner to come before the first coming, but chapter 4 talks about Elijah before the second coming.

<sup>3:1</sup> *"I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come," says the Lord Almighty.*

However, they do not yet understand that there will be two comings of the Messiah. Hence their question in Mark verse 11, *"Why is it that the scribes say that Elijah must come first?"* .

### *Elijah does come first*

Notice that Jesus affirms the scribes teaching because it is a correct understanding of Malachi 4:5-6. In verse 12a: "*And he said unto them, Elijah does come first to restore all things*".

But, in keeping with Malachi's prophecy, it is the second coming of the Messiah that Elijah will come before.

### *Son of Man's suffering*

Then, having affirmed that Elijah will indeed come before the second coming, Jesus ask them a rhetorical question to make an important point. What is His question in the last part of verse 12?

<sup>12b</sup> *And how is it written of the Son of Man that he should suffer many things and be treated with contempt?*

What is the point Jesus is making here?

What would be the consequence if Elijah came and did his work of restoration before the Messiah's first coming?

It would mean that the Kingdom would be established at Messiah's first coming and that the prophecies about His sufferings would not be fulfilled!

But, as Jesus points out, the Messiah must first *suffer many things and be treated with contempt*. Then some time later Elijah will come and restore all things, and then the Messiah will return to set up the Kingdom.

### *John the Baptist*

But then Jesus appears to contradict Himself in verse 13 of Mark's account: *But I tell you that Elijah has come, and they did to him whatever they pleased, as it is written of him*.

Matthew helps us to understand what Jesus means here. Read verse 13 of Matthew.

<sup>13</sup> *Then the disciples understood that he was speaking to them of John the Baptist*.

What does that mean?

John is a type of Elijah in that he was a forerunner of the first coming and Elijah will be the forerunner of the second coming.

### *Review John & Elijah*

Let's review what we have learned about the connection between John the Baptist and Elijah the prophet.

1. In section 26, when John was asked if he was Elijah, he said "*I am not*." So John denied being Elijah the prophet.
2. In section 4, when the angel announced the coming birth of John, he said that John would be a forerunner of the Messiah in the spirit and power of Elijah (with the same spirit that Elijah had).
3. In section 57 Jesus taught that had the kingdom offer been accepted, John would have fulfilled Elijah's role, which was to restore all things. But since he was rejected he did not fulfill Elijah's function and therefore Elijah himself must come to do so at the appropriate time.

4. And in this section we learn that John is a type of Elijah because he was a forerunner of the first coming just as Elijah will be the forerunner of the second coming.

#### *Summary of events*

Now, to summarize the order of events concerning the Messiah's coming:

1. The unnamed forerunner and herald in Malachi 3:1 comes in the person of John the Baptist.
2. Jesus' first coming, which fulfils His role as the Passover lamb.
3. The person of Elijah, who did not die, will come back to earth to fulfil his role in Malachi 4:5-6.
4. Jesus will return to the earth to begin the Messianic Kingdom promised to Israel, fulfilling His role as King.

## O. Instruction Concerning Faith, § 87, Mark 9:14–29; Matthew 17:14–20; Luke 9:37–43a

We've been listening to their conversation as they come down the mountain where the transfiguration occurred. Now as they return to the other nine disciples, what will they find?

### *What they find*

Read Mark verses 14-19 to find out.

What do they find?

In verse 14, Mark notes two things that they find.

1. They find a large crowd round the other disciples. And
2. They find there are scribes arguing with them. It will be the scribes who instigated this argument.

We can learn how this came about from the verses that follow. What happened?

These disciples had tried to cast out a demon and were unable to do so, and now the scribes were arguing with them. What would they be arguing about?

No doubt the scribes were using the disciple's inability to cast out this demon to refute Jesus' claim to be the Messiah.

### *The demon*

The demon was described as a violent demon, and Matthew adds in verse 15 that the boy was a lunatic. In Greek usage the word for lunatic is equivalent to being epileptic, afflicted with epilepsy, the symptoms of which were supposed to have become more aggravated during certain lunar periods.<sup>iii</sup> And Matthew adds that he often falls into the fire and also into water.

In Luke verse 39 a spirit suddenly takes him and he cries out, it tears him, he foamed at the mouth, and it crushes him. The word translated maul means to break in pieces or to crush.

This is an extreme example of demon possession. It includes epilepsy, and also suicidal proneness.

### *O unbelieving generation!*

In Mark verse 19, notice Jesus' emphasis on that generation: "*O unbelieving generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I put up with you?*" This is the generation that has rejected Him.

### *Healing*

Next we see how Jesus heals the boy. Read Mark's account, verses 19b – 27.

### *Privacy*

How does Jesus begin?

He begins by instructing them to bring the boy to Him, which they did at the beginning of verse 20. And bringing the boy to Him means bringing him away from the multitude as is His policy after His rejection in section 61.

### *The demon's response*

The demon recognizes that he is about to have to leave and makes one last effort, and the spirit threw him into a convulsion and he fell to the ground and wallowed foaming.

In verse 21, Jesus asked the father how long this has been happening and the father responds: *from childhood*. The demon often attempted to cast him into the fire and water to kill him.

#### *Personal need*

Then notice the expression of personal need at the end of verse 22: *but if You can do anything, take pity on us and help us!*

#### *Faith*

So he expresses a personal need, *take pity on us and help us*. But the expression "*if you can*" is not an expression of faith but one of doubt. And that doubt must be removed before the miracle can be performed.

So in verse 23, Jesus says to him: *If you can! All things are possible to him who believes*.

Immediately the father cries out: *I do believe; help my unbelief*. And this is an exercise of faith.

#### *Privacy*

Notice how verse 25 begins.

<sup>25</sup> *When Jesus saw that a crowd was rapidly gathering, He rebuked the unclean spirit.*

Remember that Jesus had the boy and his father removed from the crowd. Now, when He saw the crowd running toward him, and before they arrived, He casts the demon out.

Again the miracle is not for the benefit of the masses anymore, so He does the miracle privately on the basis of personal need and faith.

#### *Disciples' dilemma*

All is settled, but not for the disciples. As we will see, they come to Him privately with a question.

Read verses 28 – 29 of Mark's account.

What they want to know is: *why could we not drive it out?*

Remember they have already been able to cast out demons, so why could they not cast him out this time?

Jesus gives them two reasons:

##### *1. The wrong method*

In Mark verse 29, He replied, *"This kind can come out only by prayer."*

Here He says there is only one method to cast out this kind of demon.

In other words they used the wrong method.

### *This kind*

Unfortunately most preachers and commentaries focus on the last three words, "*only by prayer*". The point they make is that we should be praying more. But they are missing the real point of what Jesus is telling them. Notice how He begins: "*this kind ...*".

That raises the question: what kind was it? Look at the end of verse 17 of Mark. It was a mute demon. And in verse 25, Jesus addresses the spirit as *you deaf and mute spirit*.

Remember that the casting out of a dumb demon was one of the messianic miracles that only the Messiah would be able to do. The Pharisees could cast out all kinds of demons except dumb or mute demons. So by this statement Jesus verifies that dumb demons are different from other demons.

### *By prayer*

This was the first time that the disciples had dealt with a dumb demon. The others they could cast out in Jesus' name. For all the other demons that method is sufficient. But a dumb demon is one you don't cast out, or order out, you simply pray him out!

So the first reason they could not cast it out is that they used an improper method.

## 2. *Faith*

Matthew gives us the second reason. Read verses 19-20 of Matthew's account.

The use of the wrong method was evidence of their littleness of faith. And in verse 20 Jesus gives *the littleness of [their] faith* as the reason why they could not cast out the demon.

But He didn't stop there. He goes on to explain this to them, and again He highlights His words with *truly I say to you*.

*for truly I say to you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you.*

### *This mountain*

Notice that it is not any mountain they should be able to move, but a specific one: *this mountain*. And the Greek is very emphatic. It literally says: *the mountain – this one*.

Which mountain do you think He is referring to?

If he means a literal mountain, He would be referring to Mt. Hermon, the mountain that He has just come down from. That is the mountain in the wider context here.

But if He were not referring to that literal mountain what would He be referring to?

When the word mountain is used symbolically, it is always used as a symbol of a king, kingdom or throne.

In the immediate context, is there a king of kingdom in view?

Yes! In dealing with the dumb demon they had just had a war with the kingdom of Satan.

So in the immediate context *this mountain* most likely refers to the Satanic Kingdom and not a physical mountain like Mt. Hermon.

*for*

Notice the word, *for*, linking the two parts of Jesus statement here. And it connects their littleness of faith with the fact that they could have moved the mountain of Satan's kingdom.

Even the smallest amount of faith would be sufficient if they used the proper method.

Their choice of the wrong method was the outworking of their little faith, but even their little faith was sufficient to move the mountain that confronted them.

## **P. Instruction Concerning the Death of the King , § 88, Mark 9:30-32; Matthew 17:22-23; Luke 9:43b-45**

### *Private travel*

Now Jesus travels through Galilee privately with His disciples.

Read Mark 9:30-32.

What reason does Mark give for Jesus not wanting anyone to know about their presence?

### *His coming death and resurrection*

This is the second time He makes a clear statement concerning His death and resurrection. And for the second time they do not understand.

This is another example of partial sight and partial blindness on the part of the disciples.

### *Disciples' grief*

Matthew in the end of verse 23 says *they were deeply grieved*. But why were they grieved?

Luke gives more detail in verse 45:

<sup>45</sup>*But they did not understand this statement, and it was concealed from them so that they would not perceive it; and they were afraid to ask Him about this statement.*

It was concealed from them and they were afraid to ask Him about the saying. So their being grieved is not because they understood that He would die, but because they didn't understand and were afraid to ask.

So when these events eventually happened they caught the disciples by surprise.

## **Q. Instruction Concerning Sonship, § 89, Matthew 17:24-27**

Now they arrive at Capernaum, His headquarters. Read Matthew 17:24-27 to see what happens there.

### *Temple tax*

Now they are back in Jewish territory. So they are again under Jewish law in a Jewish jurisdiction. And we read: *Those who collected the two-drachma tax came to Peter and said, "Does your teacher not pay the two-drachma tax?"*

This refers to the annual temple tax that was based upon Exodus 30:11-16. The tax was half a shekel which is the same as two drachmas and amounted to two days wages. Every year, every male in Israel had to pay the half-shekel tax to help maintain the temple ministry.

### *Overdue*

Now the temple tax was to be paid around March every year at Passover. However by the time section 89 takes place it is close to the feast of tabernacles which means that Jesus is about 6 months overdue in paying His temple tax. And that is why the tax collectors came and asked Peter, *"Does your teacher not pay the two-drachma tax?"*

### *Peter's answer*



Without checking with Jesus first, Peter doesn't know what to do and therefore blurts out his answer on his own, and he says "yes" and let it go at that.

#### *A lesson*

But Jesus knows what has taken place, so in verse 25, when Peter came into the house Jesus has a special private lesson for him and begins it by asking him a question: *"What do you think, Simon? From whom do the kings of the earth collect customs or poll-tax, from their sons or from strangers?"*

Peter answers: *"from strangers"*. Then Jesus says *"Therefore the sons are exempt."*

His point is that Roman citizens do not pay taxes. Furthermore, when Roman rulers ruled, or other kings ruled, they would collect tribute from subjugated peoples, and therefore from strangers, not from their own sons or citizens. So Roman citizens did not have to pay taxes and the Roman government was financed by tribute, tolls and taxes collected from subjugated people.

Now this was not a Roman tax. This half-shekel or two drachmas was to be paid as a temple tax.

But, as the Messiah, Jesus is the Lord of the Temple and therefore exempt from paying the tax. Believers are His sons spiritually speaking. Therefore believers are also exempt from having to pay the temple tax. So Jesus did not bother to pay His temple tax six months earlier, and He did not tell His disciples to pay it either.

#### *However*

In verse 27 He says: *However, so that we do not offend them ...*

There is no need to cause undue stumbling. It is one thing to reject man-made rules and regulations, but here we are dealing with a Mosaic issue, not a Mishnaic issue. And although under the Mosaic Law the Messiah Himself would not have to pay the temple tax, there is no need to cause undue stumbling.

#### *A miracle*

So Jesus provides a miraculous payment, and He tells Peter to go back to His old job as a fisherman for just a very short time, and he will catch a fish, and when he opens the mouth of that fish he will find a full shekel coin. With it Peter is instructed to go and pay the temple tax, both for himself and for Jesus.

#### *The lesson*

The lesson for the disciples to learn from this is that they are the sons of the King and He is the Lord of the Temple.

## R. Instruction Concerning Humility, § 90, Mark 9:33–37; Matthew 18:1–5; Luke 9:46–48

Now we're about to see what was happening among the disciples as they travelled. Remember, they have been travelling through Galilee on their way back to Capernaum from Caesarea Philippi.

Read the first paragraph from all three accounts here. Matthew and Luke are clearly summarizing the story, for Mark gives us more detail. But each adds some detail that the others omit.

Read Mark 9:33–37, Matthew 18:1 and Luke 9:46–47a.

What do we find happening here?

As Luke says, *an argument started among them as to which of them might be the greatest*.

Why do you suppose this happened?

*At that time ...*

Notice that Matthew associates their question with a particular time. He begins: *At that time ...*

At what time?

The same time that the shekel was paid for the temple tax of Jesus and Peter. And so this lesson follows the previous lesson that was given to Peter.

And Jesus did not pay the temple tax for all of His apostles, but only for Peter.

Perhaps they argued whether this made Peter greater than the others.

*On the way*

Perhaps this event only added fuel to an argument they were already having. Mark records that they were *discussing* this question *on the way*.

What happened just before their journey that might have provoked this argument?

Three of His apostles saw the transfiguration on the mountain.

*In the kingdom*

Notice that Matthew also points out that the dispute is about *who is greatest in the kingdom of heaven*, that is, in the coming Messianic Kingdom. Remember that they are still expecting that He will soon set up the Messianic Kingdom.

So their concern is about which of them will have the greatest position in the Messianic Kingdom.

*In their heart*

Now Mark records that Jesus *began to question them*, “*What were you discussing on the way?*”

Do you think He was unaware of what they were discussing?

He was with them as they travelled and argued. He already knows what they were discussing, and furthermore Luke points out that He knew *what they were thinking in their heart*.

The argument is actually a symptom of their heart condition, and Jesus knew *what they were thinking in their heart*.

And what was in their hearts?

Questions and feelings of superiority among them leading to conflict and argument.

So He asks the question because He wants to draw their attention to the lesson He is about to teach them.

### *The greatest in the Kingdom*

Notice in Mark's verse 35 that Jesus sits down and calls the twelve. This is the typical teaching position for a rabbi.

Then what does He say to them?

*If anyone wants to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all.*

What does this mean?

It means that the person who will have the first of greatest position in the kingdom when it comes is the one who is the servant of all now.

So if one really wants to receive a superior place in the kingdom, he must strive in this life not to receive the highest position, but the lowest, and at the same time to be ministering to all in general. And to be a master in the kingdom you must be a servant now.

### *An object lesson - childlike*

Then He gives them an object lesson, the lesson of being childlike.

Read Matthew verses 2-3.

<sup>3</sup> *and said, "Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.*

The word *converted* literally means to *turn about*. Figuratively it means to turn into something, meaning to convert or change, to become another kind of person.

So, in order to enter the Kingdom, they must be changed from what they are and become like children.

### *Trust*

What does it mean to be like children?

Children are dependent on their parents and have a trust which we are to emulate. What brings salvation and therefore entry into the kingdom is a childlike faith in God.

### *Humility*

Now He turns more directly to the disciples' question.

Read verses 4-5 of Matthew.

*Whoever then humbles himself as this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.*

So while only a childlike trust in God is necessary to enter the kingdom, those who are greatest in the kingdom are those who humble themselves as a child.

What does it mean to humble oneself as a child?

The child lives in the family in dependence upon his parents and in subjection to them and having no rights of his own. This too is how the believer needs to be if he is going to be greatest in the kingdom.

#### *Receiving Him*

Jesus' next statement is interrupted as we shall see in the next section. He says, <sup>5</sup> *And whoever receives one such child in My name receives Me;*

This will be the focus of the next section.

#### *focus*

The focus in this section has been on the necessity to be childlike.

In the next section the focus will be on receiving those who are childlike.

#### *Summary*

So to summarize what He teaches them here:

1. Entrance into the kingdom is by means of a childlike faith in God
2. This should be followed by a childlike humility. Greatness in the kingdom is achieved by humbly living in dependence on and submission to God now. Children are not concerned about their position or status within the home.
3. To have the first place in the kingdom the disciple must have the lowest place now and must be a servant of all.

#### *Our present belief and behaviour determine our future*

Notice also how our present belief and behaviour influence our future in the Messianic Kingdom.

1. What we believe now determines whether or not we will enter the Kingdom.
2. What we do now as believers determines our position in the kingdom.

## S. Instruction Concerning Exclusiveness and Pride, § 91, Mark 9:38–50; Matthew 18:6–14; Luke 9:49–50

The lesson of section 90 was to be childlike, both in our faith and in our humility, and the lesson for 91 is to receive those who are childlike.

### *John's interruption*

But first we find John interrupting Jesus.

Read Luke 9:49-50.

In the previous section Jesus rebuked the apostles for their argument about which of them would be the greatest in the kingdom. And here they clearly attempt to change the subject.

### *Exclusiveness*

However, what does John's statement reveal about the apostles' attitude?

Once again it shows their concern with their status.

And whereas their previous argument concerned their status within the apostolic group, this question concerns their status in relation to others. It concerns their exclusiveness or pride.

Now the person John was referring to may have been a disciple of John the Baptist, who now showed faith in the person of Jesus.

John pointed out that *he does not follow along with us*. That does not mean he was not a follower of Jesus, but rather that he was not member of the apostolic group of twelve.

And because he was not a member of the apostolic group, and because they thought that only they had been given authority to cast out demons, the apostles felt that he should be forbidden to do so.

This therefore reveals their feeling of superiority. Only they could cast out demons. Others who believed in Jesus could not cast out demons.

### *Another rebuke*

So they have earned themselves another rebuke.

Read Mark's account where we see more detail – verses 38-40.

What is the point Jesus is making in verses 39-40?

The point He makes here is that a person can do great things for God without having to be in the inner circle of the Apostolic twelve. Others outside the apostolic group will also be able to perform miracles.

### *Pride*

Then Jesus moves from teaching about exclusiveness to a lesson about pride.

Read Mark verse 41.

He says: *For whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because of your name as followers of Christ, truly I say to you, he will not lose his reward.*

Even the most humble works, like giving a cup of cold water because one is a disciple of Jesus, will be rewarded. Even the smallest service done for Jesus will be rewarded. It is not necessary to do miracles; even a cup of water will bring its reward.

### *Stumbling blocks*

Now John and the others did indeed offend this man by discouraging him from doing what they themselves had no authority to tell him to stop doing. And furthermore, the man was doing it on Jesus' behalf.

Read what Jesus says about this in Mark verse 42.

Who are *these little ones who believe*?

Remember that He has set a child before them, and immediately before John interrupted Him, He was referring to a child as an example of faith and humility. So He is referring to the child as an illustration of those who believe in Him.

What is the point He makes here?

The point is that there will be punishment for those who cause a believer to stumble, and such punishment that it would have been better for the one who causes stumbling if he had died before he caused the stumbling.

### *Stumbling blocks from the world*

Now Jesus turns to the source of stumbling. Read what He says in Matthew verse 7.

Stumbling blocks will inevitably come from the world, but not from believers, and that there will be punishment for the one who causes stumbling.

So the disciples' attitude of pride is the attitude of the world and not of a true believer in the Messiah.

Those who cause little children to stumble will be punished, and as leaders they must be careful not to cause unnecessary stumbling.

### *Internal causes of stumbling*

Then, having warned them about causing others to stumble, and having pointed out that stumbling blocks will inevitably come from the world, He goes on to talk about internal causes of stumbling within the believer.

Read Matthew verses 8-9 to see what He says about this.

Does this sound strange to you? Is He really teaching the value of self-mutilation?

This passage sounds very strange and inexplicable when it is read out of its context. But in its context we can see that He has already warned them about stumbling blocks they might put in the way of others, now He is teaching them about the stumbling blocks people make for themselves.

And the reference to stumbling and to the members of the body here is metaphorical.

What then is He teaching?

Jesus is dealing with the root of the problem, not its external appearance.

And His point is this: Whatever it is in our life that is causing us to stumble must be put away. It is far better to remove all stumbling blocks and come to faith than to persist in stumbling and end up in hell!

### *Hell*

What do we learn about hell at the end of Matthew verse 8 and in Mark verse 48?

Matthew records Jesus describing hell as *the eternal fire*.

Mark describes it as the place *where THEIR WORM DOES NOT DIE, AND THE FIRE IS NOT QUENCHED*. Jesus is quoting from Isaiah 66:24 here.

This is the destination of all unbelievers. And those who cause stumbling will end up with greater judgment than those who don't.

Believers, on the other hand, will not go to hell, but they will suffer punishment or discipline in this life and a loss of rewards in the next life.

### *Application*

Next Jesus gives the application of what He has been teaching.

Read Matthew verses 10-14.

The application He gives to them in verse 10 is: *See that you do not despise one of these little ones*.

### *Angels*

And the reason is: *their angels in heaven continually see the face of My Father who is in heaven*.

What is the significance of this?

*Their angels*, those that watch over them, have direct access to God Himself.

And these guardian angels report what people do to believing children that causes them to stumble.

And as a result of the angelic report, if unbelievers cause children to stumble they will have greater judgment in the lake of fire.

However if believers cause these children to stumble, then they will fall under divine discipline in this life and suffer greater loss of rewards in heaven.

#### *The lost sheep*

God's concern for children, and His rejoicing over the salvation of each one is illustrated in Mathew verses 12-14.

Read these verses, Matthew 18:12-14.

And the conclusion is in verse 14: *So it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones perish.*

*To perish* means to be deprived of eternal life and therefore exposed to eternal death.

And just as the shepherd rejoices over the lost sheep that is found, so our Father rejoices over each little one who believes.

#### *Summary*

To summarize the points He makes here:

1. A person can do great things for God without being in the inner circle of apostleship.
2. Even the most humble service will be rewarded.
3. Those who cause stumbling will be punished.
4. We should put away whatever causes us to stumble.
5. Children have guardian angels with direct access to God.
6. God rejoices over the salvation of each child and is not willing that any of them should perish.



## Salt

Now Mark adds something Jesus said about salt.

Read Mark verses 49-50.

What is He saying here?

## Salted with fire

He begins by saying that *everyone will be salted with fire*. This is a reference to the fact there is a day when believers will be refined by fire, a fire that will test the quality of each one's work and consume the wood, hay and straw, and purify the gold silver and precious stones. (1 Corinthians 3:12-15)

## The parable of salt

Jesus has referred to salt that loses its flavour before. How is it that salt can lose its flavour?

Salt as we know it is pure sodium chloride and cannot lose its saltiness. But in the Middle East of Jesus' day salt was obtained from mineral deposits that were a mixture of several minerals and if it was exposed to rain or moisture from the earth the sodium chloride would be leached out of it and it would become tasteless.

## Have salt in yourselves

How does Jesus apply this to the disciples?

The disciples' jealousy and pride found expression both in their argument over which of them was the greatest, and also in their trying to stop someone else from casting out a demon.

Instead, He says, they should have the kind of salt in themselves that causes them to be at peace with one another.

What would that salt be?

Just as salt enhances the flavour of food, so the fellowship of the disciples should be enhanced by the salt within them resulting in a type of fellowship that makes life worth living.

The salt here represents the righteousness of God that they are to have within them. And one of the outward effects of God's righteousness within them will be that they are *at peace with one another*.

And just as it is impossible for salt that has lost its flavour to be made salty again, it will be impossible to have the flavour of true fellowship if they do not have the righteousness of God within them.

## Conclusion

So who will be greatest among them? They should be living in peace with each other, and not be jealous if one is elevated above another. And this will come about if they have the salt of the righteousness of God within them.

## T. Instruction Concerning Forgiveness, § 92, Matthew 18:15-35

Read Matthew 18:15-17.

### Church

Notice the reference to the church here. This is the second time the word *ecclesia* or church has been used in the gospels.

We came across its first use quite recently. Do you remember it?

After Peter declared to Jesus, *you are the Messiah, the son of the God, the living one* Jesus told him *you are petros and on this petra I will build My church*.

And there Jesus was speaking of the universal church which He will build on the foundation of His Messiahship.

Here in this passage He is referring to the local church.

### Church discipline

And what is Jesus describing in this passage?

Here He describes the procedure to be used for church discipline in a situation where one brother offends, or sins against, another. In other words a situation where there is a personal issue between two brothers.

(When the issue is a moral sin there is a different response beyond what Jesus is talking about here. Elders have authority to deal with a moral sin, as Paul does in the Corinthian church with the one who is involved in gross sexual immorality, someone has his father's wife. This is found in 1 Corinthians 5:1-5.)

### The Procedure

Jesus teaches four stages regarding local church discipline. What are they?

1. It is the responsibility of the offended person to confront the offender privately, one on one. If he talks to anyone else in advance then he has already broken the principle.
2. If there is no response, take one or two more witnesses. So there will be a total of 2 or 3 witnesses.
3. If there is still no response, in Matthew 18:17, tell the problem to the church.
4. If there is still no response, the offender is to be treated *as a Gentile and a tax collector*.

### Excommunication

What does it mean to treat someone *as a Gentile and a tax collector*?

In a Jewish context, to be *as a Gentile and a tax collector* means to be untouchable. It means to be excommunicated from the assembly.

And so the church has the authority to excommunicate the offender from the assembly.

Exactly what this means is demonstrated in 1 Corinthians 5:1-5. Paul says: *to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus*. This means that the person is put back under Satan's authority for the destruction of the flesh.

### *The death of a believer*

And what does that mean?

As a general rule Satan has no authority of physical death over believers.

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14.

<sup>13</sup> *But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope. <sup>14</sup> For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus.* (NASB)

<sup>13</sup> *Now we do not want you to be ignorant, brothers, concerning those who have fallen asleep, so that you will not grieve as also the rest, who have no hope. <sup>14</sup> For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, thus also God will bring those who have fallen asleep through Jesus together with him.* (LEB)

In this context Paul is teaching that believers fall asleep or die *through Jesus*, that is, Jesus is the one who brings about the believer's death.

That is the normal situation, but there is one exception to the rule.

If a believer has been excommunicated he has been put back under the authority of Satan and then Satan has the authority to put him to physical death.

When someone believes in Jesus he is transferred from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of Light, out of Satan's kingdom into God's kingdom. And consequently Satan no longer has authority over him. However, if he is excommunicated, Satan is given authority to put him to death physically, but only physically.

### *Still saved*

Paul is careful to point out to the Corinthians that his spirit is still saved.

He says the purpose and the end result of the excommunication is *so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus*. In other words, when such a one dies his spirit will still be saved. It does not affect his salvation, but only his physical life.

### *Sin unto death*

This is what John refers to in 1 John 5:15-16 as the *sin leading to death* that a believer commits. The *sin leading to death* is whatever sin caused him to be removed from the local fellowship.

### *Verses often quoted out of context*

Now we come to several verses that are often quoted apart from their context, and consequently taken to mean more than they were intended to mean.

Read the next three verses, 18-20.

### *Judgement recognised in heaven*

<sup>18</sup> *"Truly I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven.*

Verse 18 is often quoted by people speaking about spiritual warfare, but the binding and loosing here have nothing to do with spiritual warfare.

As we saw earlier, when used in a judicial sense, as is the case here, "to bind" and "to loose" mean "to punish" and "to not punish".

So what is Jesus saying here?

The church has the judicial authority to order excommunication, and, if the church does it correctly, the excommunication order will be recognized by heaven. And therefore heaven will consequently allow Satan to put this believer to death.

If a believer does not respond in the first three stages of discipline then the fourth stage is excommunication. And that decision is recognized in heaven.

#### *Witnesses agree*

Verse 19 is also commonly misused by Christians.

<sup>19</sup> *"Again I say to you, that if two of you agree on earth about anything that they may ask, it shall be done for them by My Father who is in heaven."*

It is taken out of context to teach a principle of prayer: that if two believers ask the Lord for anything He will do it. But the context here is church discipline, not prayer.

What, then, is He talking about?

The two or three of verse 19 is the same two or three of verse 16. They are the two witnesses at whose testimony the church passed the excommunication order.

So Jesus is saying that the judgements made on the basis of two or three agreeing witnesses will be carried out by God the Father.

If someone is excommunicated as a result of agreeing witnesses God will allow Satan to put him to death.

#### *Jesus verifies their testimony*

Likewise, verse 20 is not meant to be a definition of what a church is, although people have used it that way.

<sup>20</sup> *"For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst."*

When you have two or three believers gathered together, what you have is two or three believers gathered together. You don't have a local church.

A local church is more complex than two or three people - a biblical church has elders, deacons, and it is organised with lines of authority and things of that nature.

So, what is Jesus talking about here?

Again the two or three of verse 20 are the same two or three of verse 19 and verse 16. They are the same two or three witnesses at whose testimony the church excommunicates the sinning brother.

And Jesus is there, right in their midst, verifying their testimony, which is why God can permit Satan to put the offender to death.

### *Putting this all together*

So, having considered all of this, let's put these three verses together in one sentence:

Jesus is saying that the judicial decisions of the church to excommunicate an unrepentant brother

1. are recognised in heaven, and,
2. if they are correctly made on the basis of two or three witnesses they will be carried out by His Father in heaven,
3. because the testimony of the witnesses is verified by Jesus Himself.

### *Context*

Once again we see the importance of understanding the context when we look for the meaning of what was said.

### *Peter's question*

Now at that point Peter raises a question about forgiveness.

Read Matthew 18:21-22.

Supposing my brother continues to sin against me, even after responding appropriately as in verse 15? He never gets to the fourth stage because he always responds appropriately at the first stage. How many times should I forgive him?

Peter is actually being generous in terms of the rules of that day, because in Pharisaic Judaism you are obligated to forgive someone three times. But you are not required to forgive him after that. Here Peter is offering forgiveness double what the Pharisees offer plus one extra time.

Now Jesus says, *I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.*

If you take this very literally you can say you have to forgive 490 times.

But seven is the number of completeness and you are to forgive as often as they seek forgiveness with no counting of numbers. The act of counting shows only external forgiveness and not internal forgiveness from the heart.

Interestingly there is another place in Scripture where seventy sevens are mentioned. Do you remember where it is? Daniel 9:24-27. There Daniel was told there would be seventy sevens of years that would extend until the end of the Age of the Gentiles and the beginning of the Messianic Kingdom.

So, if Jesus statement is a reminder of these things, how long do you forgive?

Longer than your life time, until the end of the age, forgive perpetually!

## Parable

Then Jesus tells a parable to illustrate forgiveness.

Read verses 23-35.

The servant of the king is forgiven a debt of 10,000 talents by the king, and then refuses to forgive another servant a debt of 100 denarii. Now a talent was equivalent to 3,000 shekels or 6,000 days wages and a denarius was one day's wages.

So the first servant was forgiven a debt that was 600,000 times greater than the one he was unwilling to forgive. (60,000,000 / 100) (In Canberra in 2011 the average total earnings amounts to about \$320 per day. So the two debts would be \$19,200,000,000 and \$32,000 respectively.)

|            |               |
|------------|---------------|
| 1 talent   | 3,000 shekels |
| 1 shekel   | 2 days wages  |
| 1 denarius | 1 days wages  |
| 1 talent   | 6,000 denarii |

What are lessons we should learn from this parable? There are three:

1. Firstly, we ourselves have been forgiven a greater debt by God. So we should be willing to forgive our sinning brother.
2. Secondly, we should imitate the forgiving Father.
3. Thirdly, an unforgiving person cannot expect that he will be forgiven himself.

This is not salvation forgiveness because salvation forgiveness has only one requirement: to believe.

This is family forgiveness.

When we sin the fellowship within the family is broken. Our fellowship with God and with other believers is broken.

When we are forgiven the fellowship is restored.

The means of receiving forgiveness for believers who sin is found in 1 John 1:9: *If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

For that reason we confess our sins.

However, if we don't have a forgiving attitude towards our sinning brother we shouldn't anticipate receiving family forgiveness ourselves.

While we cannot extend forgiveness to someone until they seek it, our attitude towards him must always be to forgive him no matter what.

## U. The Challenge by the Brothers, § 94, John 7:2-9

### *Luke's order*

Now we are going to consider sections 94 and 95 of Robertson's harmony before section 93 because he departs from Luke's order. And since Luke claims to put his material into chronological order we will stick to his order.

### *His brothers' challenge*

In section 94 we have the challenge by the brothers.

Read John 7:2-9.

### *The Feast of Tabernacles*

Now John points out that the Feast of Booths was near. The Feast of Booths is the Feast of Tabernacles.

What is the significance of the Feast of Tabernacles? Remember we looked at this when we were considering Peter's response at the transfiguration.

It was common knowledge among the Jews, based upon the prophecy of Zechariah in Zechariah 14:16-19, that the Feast of Tabernacles will be fulfilled in the Messianic Kingdom when it will be celebrated each year by all nations.

### *The brothers' challenge*

In view of this and in view of the fact that His brothers were not believing in Him, what is the significance of the challenge of His brothers here?

They are challenging Him to go to Jerusalem at this festival and show Himself to the world as the king He claims to be. In other words, go up to Jerusalem make Himself king at the feast.

### *Jesus' response*

And what is Jesus saying to them by His response?

He responds that He will not go up to Jerusalem for that purpose.

In fact He will go to Jerusalem during the Feast of Tabernacles, as we will see, but He is not going to go there for the purpose of making Himself king on this occasion. His time is not yet fulfilled for this.

## V. The Journey to Jerusalem, § 95, Luke 9:51–56; John 7:10

Read John's account and then Luke's account of section 95.

As John points out, only after the brothers leave, does He begin to head towards Jerusalem.

### *Samaria*

And this time He wants to go through Samaria rather than going through Perea along the Jordan valley.

What happens along the way?

As we mentioned in connection with the Samaritan woman, the Samaritans did not bother Jews leaving Jerusalem, but they objected to Jews travelling through Samaria to get to Jerusalem. So they refused to welcome Him *because He was traveling toward Jerusalem* (Luke 9:53). This was quite a common incident in first century Israel.

### *James and John*

So James and John ask if they could rain fire from heaven and wipe out these Samaritans, not exactly showing love for them. Their response was showing anti-Samaritanism.

Jesus rebuked them.

### *They move on*

And they proceeded to a different village.

We don't know which way Jesus went. He may have gone on to another Samaritan village, or He may have chosen to go via Perea along the Jordan valley.



## W. Instruction Concerning Discipleship,

§ 93, Matthew 8:19-22; Luke 9:57-62

### *Three lessons on discipleship*

As they travel along the road the people they encounter provide Jesus with opportunities to teach lessons on discipleship. And three of them are recorded for us here in section 93.

#### 1. *Count the cost – self denial*

Read Matthew 8:19-20 to see the first lesson.

<sup>19</sup> *Then a scribe came and said to Him, “Teacher, I will follow You wherever You go.”*

<sup>20</sup> *Jesus \* said to him, “The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.”*

Why does Jesus respond this way? What is the issue He is pointing out to this man?

Before one commits himself to discipleship he needs to count the cost of following Jesus. And the cost is self-denial. There will be no assurance of a comfortable lifestyle.

This man was simply TOO QUICK and too hasty in what he said, because he hadn't considered the cost.

#### 2. *Don't delay – immediate surrender*

Read Luke 9:59-60 to see the second lesson.

<sup>59</sup> *And He said to another, “Follow Me.” But he said, “Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father.”* <sup>60</sup> *But He said to him, “Allow the dead to bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim everywhere the kingdom of God.”*

### *Let me bury my father*

Now what is this all about? Why wouldn't Jesus let him bury his father? Isn't that part of honouring your parents?

In the Jewish context, the situation here was not that the father had already died and was about to be buried. Rather, the father was still living.

The Pharisees taught that the first born son must continue living at home until the father dies, because, in Jewish practice, after the father dies, every week for a year you must say a special prayer in the service called a Kaddish. This is a special prayer to God honouring those who have died.

So, although this man wished to become a disciple, he also wished to remain at home until his father died and then stay another year to say the Kaddish prayer.

### *Don't delay*

In view of this, what is the meaning of Jesus' reply to him?

He makes a contrast between the behaviour of the dead and what He commands this man to do.

- i. *Allow the dead to bury their own dead.*

Here the word *dead* is used in two different senses. Let the spiritually dead bury their own physically dead.

In other words, let those who are spiritually dead worry about those things.

- ii. *but as for you, go and proclaim everywhere the kingdom of God.*

The way Jesus contrasts this man with *the dead* implies that this man is spiritually alive.

He also contrasts the behaviour which is acceptable for the dead with the behaviour expected of the living.

Instead of delaying, he is told to *go and proclaim everywhere the kingdom of God*.

And by making this proclamation he will be identifying with the person and the message of the Messiah. And he is to do it now.

So the second principle is this:

Once you have counted the cost,

once you have answered the question of how much you are willing to invest to become a disciple, and He demands everything,

and once you have made the commitment,

don't delay in fulfilling it.

And while the first man was too hasty to make his decision, this one was TOO SLOW and too hesitating in fulfilling his commitment.

The lesson for him is to take up his cross by identifying with the Messiah and *proclaiming everywhere the kingdom of God*.

### 3. *Don't look back – follow through*

Now we come to the third encounter.

Read Luke 9:61-61.

<sup>61</sup> *Another also said, "I will follow You, Lord; but first permit me to say good-bye to those at home."* <sup>62</sup> *But Jesus said to him, "No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."*

What is the lesson here?

The third lesson is that there should be no division of loyalty.

Once you have made the commitment, follow through with it and don't go back. Sever all ties that would hold you back from the commitment you made to discipleship.

So, while the first was too hasty and the second was too slow, this one was TOO EASY and he was divided in his loyalty.

The principle for him is: let him follow me.

#### *Summary*

In summary then, the lessons on discipleship are these:

1. let the one who would follow Jesus deny himself, counting the cost of discipleship,
2. let him take up his cross, identifying with the person and message of the Messiah,
3. and let him follow Him, with undivided loyalty.

## V THE OPPOSITION TO THE KING, § 96-111

Jesus and His disciples have been travelling along the road from Capernaum to Jerusalem, and their encounters along the way provided the opportunity for the teaching about discipleship that we saw in the previous section.

His arrival in Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles marks the beginning of the fifth major division of the Messiah's life.

### Review

Let's review very briefly the first four divisions of His life.

1. The first division looked at the events surrounding His arrival.
2. In the second division we saw His authentication.

Authentication is the process of proving that He is who He claims to be, that He is the authentic Messiah.

We saw the belief of the first disciples, and the acceptance of His person in Judea, Samaria, and Galilee.

And we saw the demonstration of His authority both in what He said and in what He did.

He began by taking possession of the temple and throwing out the money changers and those selling lambs. He spoke to a leading Pharisee about the need to believe in Him. He taught about the correct interpretation of the Law of Moses. And He performed many miracles to verify His claims to be the Messiah.

3. This demonstration of His authority gave rise to the controversy which marked the third division of His life. And this controversy over the King led to His rejection by the leaders of Israel.

This was a major turning point in His ministry, and consequently He changed His policy regarding the proclamation of His Messiahship in Israel, and His policy regarding signs for Israel.

And He changed the way He taught and the way He performed miracles.

And He began to teach the apostles about the Mystery Kingdom that was now about to begin as a result of His rejection.

4. Then the feeding of the five thousand marked the beginning of the fourth division of His life, where His focus has been the training of the twelve to prepare them for the work they will have in view of His rejection.

The major milestone along the road in this training was the pronouncement of Peter, *You are the Messiah, the Son of the God, the living one.*

Following this Jesus began to teach His disciples about His coming death and resurrection, and many other things they will need in order to lay the foundation of the church that He would build.

### *Preview*

And now, as they arrive in Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles, we come to the fifth major division of His life, which is characterised by opposition to the King. It begins in section 96 of the Harmony, and continues to section 111.

### *Sheep begin following the false shepherds*

In this division we will see that the crowds begin to accept their leaders' explanation that He is demon possessed.

Up until now the opposition has only been coming from the leaders.

The people have not been sure which way to go, and Jesus described them as sheep without a shepherd.

But now the sheep are going to begin following the false shepherd.

The common people begin to accept the pharisaic explanation that He is demon possessed. And the charge that He does His work in the power of Beelzebub will begin coming from the multitudes and not just from the leaders.

### *And there was a division*

And the key phrase which you will notice occurring several times now is: *and there was a division*. There begins to be a division among the people.

### *Three months*

This is a three month period that comes between the Feast of Tabernacles in October and the Feast of Dedication in December.

It is reported by only two of the Gospel writers, John and Luke, and while John focuses on His ministry in Jerusalem, Luke focuses more on His ministry in the countryside.

## A. The Conflict at the Feast of Tabernacles, § 96, John 7:11-52

Now, with that introduction, we come to the Feast of Tabernacles in John 7 where John records the fourth of his seven discourses, the discourse on the Water of Life.

But, before we read on, we need to know something about the two key ceremonies that take place during the Feast of Tabernacles. They are key because knowing about them will open the door of our understanding. Jesus will respond to both of these ceremonies, and we'll be better able to understand what He says if we know about them.

### *Outpouring of water*

The first ceremony is the Outpouring of the Water.

Every day for seven days the priests came down from the temple compound to the Pool of Siloam at the bottom part of the City of David.

They would fill pitchers with water from the Pool of Siloam.

Then they hiked back up into the temple compound and into the outer court, carrying the water.

To go from the outer court to the inner court they would need to ascend 15 steps. And on each step they would sing a Psalm, one of those Psalms described as "A Song of Ascents". So they would sing a total of 15 Psalms, the Psalms 120-134.

Then they went inside the inner court where they poured out the water at the base of the Brazen Alter.

And the outpouring was followed by such great rejoicing that the Mishnah says:

"He that has not seen the rejoicing of the Out Pouring of the Water has not seen rejoicing in all of his life."

Why was this the cause of such rejoicing?

The Rabbinic interpretation of that ceremony is that it represents the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon Israel in the last days, because five times in the prophets the prophets prophesied that the Spirit would be poured out on the whole nation. (See Appendix 7 in the Harmony for details– Appendix 3 in the first edition.)

### *The kindling of lampstands*

The second key ceremony was the Kindling of the Lampstands.

Huge lampstands were placed within the temple compound, each one having four very large lamps.

At dusk the junior priests would kindle these lampstands which were placed in both the inner and outer courtyards.

And the Mishnah said that there was so much light coming from the temple compound that there was not a private courtyard anywhere in Jerusalem that did not receive light from the temple compound.

What is the significance of this ceremony?

The Rabbinic interpretation of the Kindling of the Lampstands is that it represents the Shekinah Glory light, which is God's visible presence.

## 1. Messiah's Authority Questioned, John 7:11-15

Now we are ready to begin reading. Turn to section 96 and read what happens in John 7:11-15.

### *Jews*

Notice the word *Jews* here. Weren't they all Jews? Who then is John referring to as *Jews*?

John will use the term *Jews* a total of 71 times. But he uses it in three different senses.

- i. Sometimes he means Jewish people in general, the sons of Abraham, Isaac & Jacob.
- ii. Sometimes he will mean Judeans in contrast to Galileans.
- iii. And sometimes he will use it of the Jewish leaders.

And how can we know which way he is using it?

The context tells us in which way it is being used.

Now what do we find in this context? In which way is he using it here?

Here it is used in contrast to the crowds and the Jewish people in general, and it clearly refers to the Jewish leaders.

In the first segment we have the Messiah's authority questioned.

### *Division among the people*

Also notice in this paragraph that John tells us the reactions to Jesus both among the people and among the Jewish leaders.

How are the people responding to Jesus at the feast?

In verse 12 we see a division among the crowds. Some were saying one thing and others were saying another. Some believe He is the Messiah, and some believe He is a false teacher. They already knew that their rulers had rejected Him.

### *Fear of the Jews*

But even those who believed were not *speaking openly of Him for fear of the Jews*. They were afraid of the leaders because they had rejected Him.

### *The Jews*

And how are the leaders responding to Him?

In verse 15, they *were astonished, saying, "How has this man become learned, having never been educated?"*

The point they are making is that Jesus never went to any rabbinic academy. He had received no rabbinic training whatsoever. So where is He getting all this knowledge He is propagating?

## 2. Messiah's Explanation, John 7:16-24

Now Jesus hears their question and He answers it in the next paragraph.

### *The source and authority of His teaching*

Read what He says in John 7:16.

In answer to their question, He makes a two-fold claim in verses 16.

1. First of all, where did His teaching come from?

His teaching is received from God, it is not His own.

2. Secondly, by what authority does He teach?

He was sent by God to teach what God has given Him to teach.

*How will they know His teaching is true?*

Read verses 17-18.

How can they know that His teaching is from God?

First, only those who are willing to do God's will can know whether His teaching is of God or of His own making.

Then He gives the principle that those who are willing to do the will of God can use.

Is Jesus seeking His own glory, or the glory of the One who sent Him? And because He is seeking the glory of the One who sent Him, those who are willing to do the will of that One will recognise the teaching as true and the Teacher as righteous.

*They don't keep the Law*

Read verses 19-20.

And while He is keeping the Law perfectly, He points out their failure to keep the Law.

Their failure to keep the Law, of course, shows that they are not willing to do the will of God.

And their failure to keep the Law is seen in their desire to kill Him.

*The crowd's accusation*

Notice the response of the crowd.

Now, as John pointed out in the previous paragraph, there is a division in the crowd. But here we see that the explanation of the Pharisees, who said that Jesus works His miracles in the power of the devil, is being repeated by one part of the crowd.

So the crowds are beginning to accept the Pharisaic explanation, and they too begin to reject His claim to be the Messiah.



### *Jesus' response*

Now read how Jesus responds in verses 21-24.

Verse 21 would be better translated: *Because Moses has given you circumcision ... you circumcise a man on the Sabbath.*

In these verses Jesus is showing them why they marvel that He was healing on the Sabbath day.

What is at the heart of their problem?

The problem is not that He has become a Law violator, as they accuse Him, but they have simply misconstrued the purpose of the Sabbath.

Because they misunderstood how God intended the Sabbath to be kept, they made the faulty assumption that Jesus' healing on the Sabbath violates the Sabbath. But it does not.

And He uses the practice of circumcision to illustrate this fact.

A male child is to be circumcised on the eighth day. And even if the eighth day is a Sabbath day, they will still circumcise him on the eighth day.

This demonstrates that certain work was allowed on the Sabbath day, including the work of healing.

If it is permissible to circumcise on the Sabbath day, and circumcision is a form of mutilation, how much more is it permissible to make a man whole on the Sabbath Day!

### **3. Messiah's Person Questioned, John 7:25-27**

Read verses 25-27.

At this point the people of Jerusalem question why their leaders haven't silenced Him. Could it be that they really believe Him to be the Messiah?

And from the questions the people raise it is obvious that they do not understand His divine origin.

They think that no one will know where the Messiah comes from, but they know where Jesus is from.

### **4. Messiah's Explanation, John 7:28-30**

Then Jesus responds to their questions. Read what He says in verses 28-30.

What is the point He is making here?

He points out to them that while they understand His human origin, they don't understand His divine origin.

Do they understand what He is saying?

Their response in verse 30 shows that they do.

And because He claimed divine origin, *they were seeking to seize Him.*

But notice that their attempt failed! And why did it fail?

*Because His hour had not yet come.* As we will see, all attempts to kill Him prematurely will fail.

## 5. The People's Response, John 7:31-36

Again we see a division in the crowd. We have just seen the response of those who are seeking to kill Him.

Now read verses 31-36 to see the response of the other division of the crowd.

This part of the crowd are saying that surely He is the Messiah. Look at the works He is performing.

When the Pharisees hear of this they send some of the temple police to have Him arrested.

Notice that when Jesus responds to them the, the Jews do not understand what He is saying.

Why is this?

Because He is speaking to them in parabolic terms about His coming death and resurrection.

## 6. Messiah's Invitation, John 7:37-44

*Now on the last day, the great day of the feast*

Now before we read on it will help understand the significance of what John describes in verse 37 as *the last day, the great day of the feast*.

*Seven times around the altar*

The last day will be the seventh day of the feast. And it was a special occasion, because on the other days when they came into the temple with the water they marched only once around the altar. On this day they marched around the altar seven times.

*Prayer for rain*

Also on this day they begin praying for rain because the feast of Tabernacles falls in the time of transition from the dry season to the rain season.

The Talmud records the question: "Why do we begin to pray for rain on the seventh day? Shouldn't we pray for rain on the first day?" And the Rabbis gave a logical answer. They point out: "don't forget that we have seven days of Tabernacles and during that time we have to live in these tabernacles. The roof is made up of branches which provide shade but you can see through it and you can see the stars at night. Now suppose we prayed for rain on the first day of the feast and suppose God answered the prayer on the first day of the feast. We would be rained out. We have to live in these booths for seven days. We have to eat and sleep in them." And so to avoid being rained out they wait until the seventh day.

So the seventh day was the day of praying for water.

*Messiah's invitation*

Now with this background, listen to what Jesus says. Read verses 37-39.

<sup>37</sup> *Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink."* <sup>38</sup> *"He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.'* " <sup>39</sup> *But this He spoke of the*

*Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.*

This is Jesus' response to the first ceremony.

And He gives the same interpretation as the Rabbis do: the water represents the Holy Spirit.

And He gives an application for the individual. Those individuals who believe in His Messiahship will have the Holy Spirit indwelling them, providing them with satisfaction of their spiritual thirst.

The Spirit was not yet given because He was not yet glorified, and of course the Spirit will not be given until Acts 2, after His ascension. (Other references to living water are found in: Jeremiah 2:13, 17:13, and John 4:10, 11.)

### *Division in the crowd*

Now read verses 40-44 to see the response of the crowd.

What do you see happening here?

His invitation leads to a discussion among the Jewish people about who He is, and the question they discuss is: is He who He claims to be?

And we see in verse 43 the recurring motif of this section: *so a division occurred in the crowd because of Him.*

Some think He is a prophet, some think He is the Messiah, and some think He was born in Galilee and therefore ineligible to be the Messiah.

And some of them wanted to seize Him, but of course, they were unable to do it.

## **7. The Pharisaic Response, John 7:45-52**

Now we see the response of the Pharisees. Read verses 45-52.

### *Temple police*

The Temple police come back empty handed and the Pharisees ask them why they did not arrest him. How do they respond?

Their response is in verse 46: *“Never has a man spoken the way this man speaks.”* They did not understand what He had to say, but they were impressed with the way He said it.

### *Pharisees*

How do the Pharisees respond to this?

The point they are making is that no intelligent Jew would accept this person as the Messiah, and these Temple police have simply been deceived or *led astray*. But *none of the Pharisees has believed in Him.*

### *Nicodemus*

But there was one Pharisee who has begun moving toward faith, the one we met earlier in our study, Nicodemus. This is the second time Nicodemus appears in John’s gospel. There will be one more time we will see later. He is not yet a believer, but he is willing to defend Jesus’ right to a hearing before being condemned. He reminds them that Pharisaic Law teaches this. <sup>51</sup> *“Our Law does not judge a man unless it first hears from him and knows what he is doing, does it?”*

### *Pharisees*

Now the other Pharisees respond emotionally in verse 52. *They answered him, “You are not also from Galilee, are you? Search, and see that no prophet arises out of Galilee.”*

This is an overstatement because we know some prophets that came from the Galilee, such as Hosea, Jonah, and Elisha.

Notice also that they accuse Nicodemus of being a Galilean. When a Judean called a fellow Judean a Galilean, he was calling him stupid and uneducated.

## B. The Conflict Over the Law, § 97, John 7:53–8:11

The story of the woman who was caught in adultery is actually an attempt by the Pharisees to trap Jesus into saying something that violates the Law of Moses.

Because He keeps the Law of Moses perfectly, even down to the smallest part of a Hebrew character – every jot and tittle, the only basis they have been able to use to bring an accusation against Him has been their Mishnaic Law.

We have seen them accuse Him of not keeping the traditions of the elders, and of breaking the Sabbath laws. These are charges that He has violated the Mishnaic Law.

But these charges never disturb Him. He readily admits breaking the Mishnaic Law, and He even teaches against it.

So now the Pharisees attempt to set up a situation that will cause Him to contradict the Law of Moses. If He will do that then they will be able to dispute His claim to keep the Law of Moses perfectly

### *The situation*

First of all take note of the situation they choose for this attempt. Read John 7:53 – 8:2.

The seven days of the Feast of Tabernacles are over. It is now the eighth day of the assembly. It is an eighth day required by the Mosaic Law, a separate holy day, distinct from Tabernacles.

After spending the night at the Mount of Olives, Jesus is in the temple court teaching the people again.

So we see that they wait until He is teaching publicly because they are looking for an opportunity to discredit Him publicly.

### *Attempted entrapment*

Now look at what happens. Read verses 3-6.

The Scribes and Pharisees bring a woman to Him. And John points out that this was simply an attempt to entrap Him.

Can you see how this is quite obvious from what they do and say?

### *Caught in the very act*

In order to stress that there is not doubt about this woman's guilt, they say she was caught in the very act of adultery! And with that they have given their game away because surely the very act of adultery requires two people!

Where is the male partner in this act? Clearly their concern is not with enforcing the Law.

### *But you, what do you say*

And notice how they challenge Him in verse 5.

*"Now in the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women; what then do You say?"*

In the Greek it is even more emphatic, literally they say: You then, what say you.

They are actually expecting Him to contradict Moses. *"Moses commanded us to stone such women, but you, what do you say we should do?"*

So it is rather obvious that they are attempting to provoke Him to speak in violation of the Mosaic Law.

### *Finger*

Now Jesus' response is very interesting.

Initially He does not say anything, but He stooped down and with a finger wrote on the ground.

Now why do you think He did that?

It is fascinating to read the commentaries trying to tell us what it was that He was writing on the ground, as if after two thousand years there is something left in the dust that we can still decipher.

However, in the Greek text the focus is not upon the writing but upon the finger.

In the Greek language you can say the same thing in different ways, even using the same words and changing the order of the words. And when you want to emphasize or focus attention on something, you put it first in the sentence or clause.

In this case it is His finger that is first in the clause. It literally reads: *But Jesus stooped down, His finger writing into the ground.*

So John is focusing our attention on the finger which was writing in the ground.

Now why would he do that? What is significant about the finger writing in the ground?

Of the 613 commandments God gave to Moses, 603 were written on a parchment with the pen of a man. But ten were inscribed into tablets of stone, and that includes the law against adultery.

Furthermore the ten inscribed in stone were not chiseled out with the chisel of a man. But four times we are told they were written with the finger of God. See Exodus 31:18, 32:15-16, and Deuteronomy 4:13; 9:10.

And the focus on the finger is to point out that He is the author of that command. He knows exactly what the law said about this command and its punishment. He knows all that the Mosaic Law said about this sin and its punishment.

### *The first stone*

What happens next? Read verses 7-8.

So when they press Him for an answer, He gives them one. Then once more He stooped down and wrote on the ground.

And what was His answer?

*"He who is without sin among you, let him be the first to throw a stone at her."*

### *Common misuse, out of context*

Now what is this statement often taken to mean, or how is it often used?

Often people pull this statement out of its context to make it teach something that it was not intended to teach.

Often it is used to point out that we should not be judging others because we are all sinners and therefore we should not condemn anybody else.

### *Violates other principles*

But that would violate other principles that we are taught.

Sometimes we have to judge. We saw earlier the four principles of church discipline. That requires judgment. We confront believers with sin. That requires judgment. Sometimes we have to issue judgment.

### *Violates Mosaic Law*

Furthermore, if He were saying that only if you are sinlessly perfect should you cast the first stone, then that itself would violate the Mosaic Law and they would have grounds for accusing Him.

The Mosaic Law did not require sinless perfection before a sinner could be executed. Otherwise execution for sins would be impossible, because no one qualifies to carry it out.

And certain sins required execution and adultery is one of them.

So to repeat the point we are making here: if He were saying that only a sinlessly perfect person should you cast the first stone, then He would be violating the Mosaic Law, and they would have a basis for accusing Him.

### *The issue*

So then, if our common interpretation of His statement is invalid, and it is, what is He saying here?

The focus of this context is the Mosaic Law.

And the point of His statement is that if we judge on the basis of the Mosaic Law, we should judge on the basis of all that the Mosaic Law said about this sin and its punishment.

And yes, the Mosaic Law does say anyone guilty of adultery must be stoned to death. But that is not all that Moses said about it.

Moses also said that no one could be stoned to death except at the testimony of two or three witnesses.

This much they do have, because they claim she was caught in the very act. And so presumably, they have their two or three witnesses.

Even so, that is not all that Moses wrote.

Moses also said that the two or three witnesses at whose testimony one is condemned to death are responsible to cast the first stone. The first stone must be cast by the actual accusers.

Even so, that is not all that Moses said.

But one other point is made in the rabbinic interpretation of two passages on witnesses, found in Deuteronomy 13 & 17.

The two or three witnesses at whose testimony one is condemned to death, and who are responsible to cast the first stone, must not be guilty of the same sin of which the accused is accused.

They must not be guilty of the same sin. (Deuteronomy 19:15)

So He reminds them, the witness who is not guilty of the same sin, let him cast the first stone.

### *The result*

Guess what happened next!

Read verse 9.

One by one they stroll away.

This implies that the witnesses and accusers were not innocent of the same sin. And perhaps among them is the one with whom she was supposedly caught in the very act.

So eventually she is left alone with Him.

### *The woman*

Now read what He says to her in verses 10-11.

<sup>10</sup> *“Woman, where are they? Did no one condemn you?”* <sup>11</sup> *She said, “No one, Lord.” And Jesus said, “I do not condemn you, either. Go. From now on sin no more”.*

When He says, *I do not condemn you*, He is not excusing her sin. In fact He goes on to warn her to go and sin no more.

The issue was that the condemnation was illegal, based upon the Mosaic Law. And because the two or three witnesses were not willing to cast the first stone, there were no legal grounds for condemning her.

### *Entrapment failed*

This was the one attempt the Pharisees made to get Him to say something that would contradict the Mosaic Law.

And it failed. They won't try that again.

From this point on they will go back to accusations of breaking Mishnaic Law.



## C. The Conflict Over the Light,

### § 98, John 8:21-59

This section and the next together are known as the fifth of John's seven discourses, the discourse on the Light of the World.

And it is the section where we find the second of Jesus' I am's: *I am the Light of the world.*

*Jesus again spoke to them ...*

But before we read this paragraph, notice how John begins it: *Then Jesus again spoke to them.*

In other words, at this point Jesus returned to the main theme of what He has been saying at this feast.

Look back for a moment to what He has been saying.

#### 1. *The source and authority of His teaching*

Look at verse 16 in section 96.

The Jews were astonished at His teaching and were saying, *How has this man become learned, having never been educated in our rabbinic schools?*

And Jesus answered, *My teaching is not Mine, but His who sent Me.*

With this He declared that God was both the source and the authority of His teaching. His teaching came from God, and it was God who sent Him to proclaim it.

#### 2. *His divine origin*

Then in verses 28-29 He declares His divine origin, which of course they don't understand.

#### 3. *His invitation to drink the water of life*

Then, in verse 37, on the great and final day of the feast, the day when the water was carried seven times around the altar before it was poured out, He stood and cried out an invitation to all who are thirsty:

*If anyone is thirsty, let Him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scriptures said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.'*

And He was speaking metaphorically of the Holy Spirit, whom those who believe in Him were to receive.

So, to repeat,

He has declared the divine source and authority of His teaching,

He has declared His divine origin, and

He has invited all who will believe in Him to come and receive the Holy Spirit who will satisfy their spiritual thirst.

### *The Kindling of the Lampstands*

Now, John writes: *Then He said again to them...*

Read what He says in verse 12.

This is Jesus' response to the second key ceremony of the Feast of Tabernacles, the Kindling of the Lampstands.

How does a knowledge of that ceremony add to our understanding of what Jesus says here?

Each evening a great many very large lamps in both the inner and outer courtyards of the temple were kindled, and they would give light to all of Jerusalem.

In the understanding of the Rabbis, the light produced by the lamps represented the Shechinah Glory, which is God's visible presence.

An example of the Shechinah Glory is the pillar of fire by which God led the people at through the wilderness at night, and the pillar of cloud by day.

And by claiming to be the Light of the world in this context He claims to be that Shekinah Glory.

### *Light and Darkness*

Then He added: *he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life.*

What is the significance of this statement?

Just as the pillar of fire provided light for the Israelites in the wilderness, both showing them the way and giving them light by which to walk, so He proclaimed that those who followed Him *will not walk in the darkness, but will have the light of life.*

And the light will lead them and light up their path so that they will not stumble in the darkness.

### *Conflict*

Now read verses 13-17.

What objection do the Pharisees make to His claim?

The Pharisees object that His testimony could not be true because He alone testifies of it.

### Jesus' response

Jesus responds by saying two things. What are they?

#### 1. *Judgment*

First, in verses 14-15, He deals with the issue of judgment.

Jesus is fully aware of both His divine origin and His goal or destiny, the purpose for which He was sent. The Pharisees, on the other hand, do not know either His divine origin or His purpose.

Therefore, He says, they *judge according to the flesh*, that is, without considering the spiritual reality. And therefore their judgment is invalid.

And the Greek word for *judge* here is *krino*, which can mean both to judge and to condemn. It can mean *to form or give an opinion*. And it can be used in a judicial sense: *to sit in judgment, or to pass judgment either condemning or vindicating*.

The Pharisees are in fact passing judgment, and condemning Him.

He, on the other hand is not doing this. As He said to Nicodemus in 3:17, *God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him*.

#### 2. *Witness*

Having dealt with the issue of judgment, He responds directly to their charge of His self-witness, in verses 16-18.

*Even in your law ....* Their law was the Mishnaic law which Jesus has been refuting throughout His ministry, and by which the Pharisees are condemning Him.

But even in their law is the requirement for two or three witnesses. (Deuteronomy 17:6)

And Jesus points out that He is not alone in His witness, but God the Father also testifies about Him.

He, as the unique *I am*, is qualified to be a witness. And His Father is the second witness.

And on an earlier occasion, after healing the paralytic in section 49, He actually gave them four witnesses: John the Baptist, His works, His Father, and the Scriptures.

And the Father spoke audibly from heaven at His baptism where many heard His witness.

So He says to them that both He, the unique I am, and His Father are two witnesses to His claim to be the Light of the world.

### Where is your Father?

And how do the Pharisees respond to this?

Read verses 19-20.

Their reply is no doubt scornful: If God the Father is a witness, let him appear in court. Where is He?

And Jesus points out that their problem is that they know neither Him nor His Father.

Again John records that *no one seized Him, because His hour had not yet come*.

## D. The Conflict Over His Person,

§ 99, John 8:21-59

### 1. Messiah the True Object of Faith, John 8:21-30

Then again Jesus takes up His discourse. Let's see what He says. Read verses 21-24.

Ever since His rejection, when He speaks in public, He has been speaking to them in parables that most of His audience do not understand.

And here He is speaking to the unbelieving part of the crowd.

*Where is He going?*

He says: *I go away, and you will seek Me, and will die in your sin; where I am going, you cannot come?*

What does He mean when He says He is going to depart for a place where they cannot come?

He is referring to His death and resurrection. He is from heaven, and He will return to heaven.

*They will die in their sins*

But they cannot come with Him, they will die in their sins.

Why does He say they will die in their sins?

He explains in verse 24: *Unless you believe that I am, you will die in your sins.*

Most translations add an extra word here, *unless you believe that I am He*. But the word He is not in the Greek text.

Jesus is using the name of God that He gave to Moses when He said *"Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'"*

So unless they believe that He is the Messiah, who is God, they will die in their sins.

*Of this world*

What does He mean by what He says in verse 23?

He is not only contrasting the material world with the spiritual one, He is also contrasting the dominion of Satan, *this world*, with the dominion of God, *not of this world*.

And He will come back to this point later in His discourse.

*Who are You?*

But they are not understanding Him. Read verses 25-26.

He tells them that ultimately He will be the one to judge them. He has *many things to judge concerning them*.

And then once again He tells them that His message has a divine origin and authority.

He speaks to the world the very things that He heard from the One who sent Him. And the One who sent Him is true.

### *The Father*

But still they don't understand.

Read verses 27-29.

They don't realize that He has been speaking to them about God the Father.

And so He tells them two things here.

First He tells them when they will recognise Him, and then He tells them yet again the authority by which He speaks.

#### i. *Lifted up*

When will they recognize who He is?

When they lift Him up. And this is a reference to His crucifixion.

Although thousands of them did recognize recognise Him soon after He was crucified and raised again, it will not be until the end of the Great Tribulation that all Israel will recognize Him and call for Him to return.

#### *I am*

And again He uses that name of God given to Moses: *you will know that I am*.

#### ii. *The Father*

Then what does He say about His relationship with God the Father?

- a. The initiative for what He does comes from the Father.
- b. His teaching comes from the Father.
- c. He was sent by the Father.
- d. The Father is with Him.
- e. He always does what is pleasing to the Father.

So the authority for what He says and does comes from the Father.

### *Many believe in Him*

Now see the result of what He has been saying in verse 30.

Despite their not fully understanding Him, many believed in Him as He was speaking.

### *Conclusion*

In this paragraph, then, He emphasises that He is the Messiah sent from the Father, and unless they believe in Him they will die in their sins.

## **2. Messiah the True Deliverer, John 8:31-59**

And having told them that the Messiah is the true object of faith, He goes on to say that the Messiah is the true deliverer from three things.

a. *From Sin, John 8:31-40*

*The truth will make you free*

Let's look at His first point and the crowd's response.

Read verses 31-33.

How does the crowd react to Jesus' statement that *the truth will make you free*?

They make two points. What are they?

- i. First they say they are descended from Abraham.
- ii. Then they say they *have never yet been enslaved to anyone*.

Now is that true?

Yes, they are the biological descendants of Abraham. That part is true.

But throughout history they have often been either slaves or a vassal state subject to another world power: beginning with Egypt, then Assyria, Babylonia, Media-Persia, Macedonia, Egypt again and Syria, then finally at the time they were speaking they were subject to Rome.

So why did they say they *have never yet been enslaved to anyone*?

Obviously they are not making a statement about their history.

So their meaning is elsewhere.

Remember the context for their statement is the Feast of Tabernacles. And the Feast of Tabernacles was given to them by God as a continual reminder of their experience in the wilderness after they were delivered from bondage in Egypt.

Unlike the Zealots, the Pharisees did not regard political liberty as the test of freedom.

Turn in your Bibles to Deuteronomy, and read Deuteronomy 14:1-2.

<sup>1</sup> *"You are the sons of the Lord your God; you shall not cut yourselves nor shave your forehead for the sake of the dead. <sup>2</sup> "For you are a holy people to the Lord your God, and the Lord has chosen you to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.*

Based on this passage, they regarded themselves as sons of God, a holy people, God's own possession. And this was for them the meaning of being free.

And, according to the rabbis, just as the people of Israel had earlier escaped the bondage of Egypt, so being circumcised was their guarantee that they would escape the bonds of Gehenna (which is the Lake of Fire) (*Exod. Rab.* 19:81; 15:11).

So, by saying that they *have never yet been enslaved to anyone*, the crowd is reflecting the teaching of the Pharisees that because they were sons of Abraham they were automatically free from the judgment to come.

But that simply is not true, and they are contradicting what Jesus has just pointed out to them.

He has just told them that only those who are truly His disciples will be free, meaning, as He soon points out, free from sin.

### *Knowing the Truth*

And by continuing in His word they will prove to be His disciples, *and [they] will know the truth and the truth will make [them] free.*

And knowing the truth is more than simply a head knowledge that some doctrine or statement is correct.

The word used here is *ginosko*, to know, and it is the same word used, for example, in the Greek translation of Genesis 3:5,7 and 4:1.

<sup>5</sup> *For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."*

<sup>7</sup> *Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.*

<sup>1</sup> *Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain ...*

And in John's gospel, *ginosko*, to know, is used to denote personal fellowship with God.

In John 17:3 Jesus says:

<sup>3</sup> *"This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.*

To know (*ginosko*) the Father and the Son, is to have their life, which is eternal life.

And to have eternal life is to be free from sin.

### *Continue in My word*

Now, to review what He said to them here, look again at verse 31, noticing its structure.

There is one thing they are to do, and three consequences of doing it.

What are they to do?

They are to continue in His Word.

And what are the three consequences of continuing in His word?

- i. First, it is the proof that they are His disciples. Those who truly believe in Him will be found continuing in His Word.
- ii. Secondly, being His disciples, they will know the truth. That is, they will know God.
- iii. And thirdly, knowing the truth, the truth will make them free. Because they will have the eternal life of God they will be free from sin.

In other words, those who are truly His disciples are those who continue in His word, and because they are truly His disciples they will know the truth, and because they know the truth they will be free from sin.

### *Their response*

And in response the crowd, who do not understand what He is saying, say they are Abraham's descendants, and they have never been enslaved to anyone.

Now Jesus responds to both of these claims, and He answers the second one first.



### *Truly, truly, I say to you*

And He highlights His next statement with those words: *truly, truly, I say to you*.

The word *truly* here is the Greek word *amen*, which is actually a transliteration of a Hebrew word meaning to be firm, steady, or trustworthy.

And Jesus is the only one in the New Testament to use the word at the beginning of a sentence. And it could be rendered, “I who am the Amen [Truth itself] tell you as a most certain and infallible truth.”<sup>iv</sup>

### *Slaves of sin*

And what does He tell them as a most certain and infallible truth?

Read verses 34-36.

Jesus points out to them that, contrary to their claim, they are in fact slaves to sin, and that if the Son makes them free they will be free indeed.

### *Descendants of Abraham*

Then He addresses their first claim.

Read verses 37-40.

What is He telling them here?

He says that although they are Abraham’s descendants, Abraham is not their father spiritually.

They are trying to kill Him, but in contrast, Abraham *believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness*. (Genesis 15:6)

Their deeds reveal who their father is, just as Jesus’ deeds reveal who His father is.

And He will have more to say about this in the next paragraph.

### *Unbelievers*

Notice also that while He began speaking to those who believed in Him, He ends up addressing those who still do not believe.

### *Summary*

To repeat the main points here:

- i. Those who sin are slaves to sin, and the Messiah is the one who can deliver them from slavery to sin.
- ii. His disciples will be found continuing in His word and they will know the truth and the truth will make them free from sin.

**b. *From Satan, John 8:41-48***

Now He has just been telling them that they are in fact slaves to sin, and that, while they are descended from Abraham, they are not spiritually children of Abraham because they are doing what Abraham would not have done.

*Satan's children*

Next, He tells them who their father is.

Read verses 41-42.

First they claimed that Abraham was their father. Now they claim that God is their father.

How does He answer them?

*God is not their father*

First He refutes that God is their father.

If their claim were true, if God were their father, then instead of trying to kill Him they would be loving Him.

And why?

Because He came from the Father's presence and He came at the Father's initiative, not His own. He was sent by the Father.

If God were their father, they would have recognised Him and loved Him.

*The devil is their father*

Then He tells them who is their father.

Read verses 43-45.

Who is their father?

He points out that the devil is really their father.

How does He prove this to them?

The devil is obviously their father because they want to do the desires of their father.

And then He gives two examples of the devil's desires that they are carrying out.

- i. The devil is a murderer from the beginning.

And the fact that they are trying to kill Him shows that they have a murderer's spirit.

- ii. The devil is the father of lies. He is by very nature a liar, and all liars share his nature.

And they are lying about Him, which shows that the devil is their father.

And since they do the acts of the devil, they are the devil's children, and the devil is their father.

And for that reason, Jesus says, they do not understand Him and they do not believe Him.

*He is free of sin*

Next He issues them a challenge.

Read it in verses 46 - 47.

*Which one of you convicts Me of sin?*

Here is the opportunity. Can they raise one sin He is guilty of, a sin based upon the Mosaic Law, not rabbinic traditions?

They could not find even one!

So He reiterates that He speaks the truth and they do not believe Him because they are not of God but of the devil who is the father of lies.

*Crowds now following their leaders*

Now read their response in verse 48.

*The Jews answered and said to Him, "Do we not say rightly that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?"*

Notice that the accusation of being demonized is now coming from the multitudes. They are beginning to follow the leaders here.

*Samaritan*

How does the word *Samaritan* fit in this context?

It might simply be the negative attitude of the crowd towards Him.

But in light of the fact that it is followed by the clause *and have a demon*, there is something else involved here.

In rabbinic demonology there was a leading demon called Shomroni. And in Hebrew the word Shomroni could mean Samaritan, or it could be the name of this demon.

And Shomroni was the father of Asmodai who was the prince of demons.

So by calling Him a Samaritan they are not referring to the ethnic group of that name, but to the demon Shomroni.

And in this context, where He has just told them that the devil is their father, their response is the retaliation that He is of Shomroni. In other words, that is His father is Shomroni.

c. *From Death, John 8:49-59*

*No demon*

Read His response to them in verses 49-50.

What is He saying to them here?

He does not have a demon.

On the contrary, He is honouring His Father and not seeking His own glory, while they are dishonouring Him.

He also warns them about the judgment to come.

*Free from death*

Then once again He highlights what He is about to say with: "I who am the Amen [Truth itself] tell you as a most certain and infallible truth."

Read verses 51-53.

And what is this most certain and infallible truth?

He says, *If anyone keeps My word he will never see death.*

Who are the ones who keep His word?

In verse 47 He said: *He who is of God hears the words of God.*

And in verse 31 He said: *If you continue in My word then you are truly disciples of Mine.*

Clearly, the one who keeps His word is the one who is truly His disciple, the one who believes in Him.

And what does it mean to *never see death*?

He is speaking of spiritual death.

Those who believe in Him are those who will keep His word, and they will have eternal life and so they will not see death.

But the Jews do not understand Him, and they think He is talking about physical death.

*Response of the crowd*

Notice in verse 52 that the charge that He is demon possessed again comes from the people and not just from the leaders.

And look at verse 53 where they ask Him two questions:

- i. *Surely You are not greater than our father Abraham, who died?*
- ii. *And whom do You make Yourself out to be?*

*Jesus' answers their question: whom do You make Yourself out to be?*

Read how He responds in verses 54-55.

He begins with their second question by directly refuting the idea that He is making Himself out to be somebody. He is not glorifying Himself. Rather it is His Father, the same God that they claim is their father, who is glorifying Him.

Then He says that while they do not know the Father, He does know Him.

And the contrast is even greater in the Greek, because He uses two different words for the verb, *to know*:

- i. *ginōskō*, which means to know experientially, and frequently suggests the inception or progress in knowledge, and
- ii. *oída*, which suggests fullness of knowledge, or intuitive knowledge, that is, I know what I know because I am what I am.

When He says they *have not come to know Him*, He uses the word *ginōskō*. And when He says that He knows Him He uses the word *oída*.

So what He says here could be written as follows:

“You never had the initial or progressive experience of knowing Him;  
but I intuitively know Him because I am God as the Father is God:  
and if I should say that I do not intuitively know Him, I shall be a liar like you:  
but I know Him intuitively, and keep His word.”

The last clause here adds the thought that Jesus did the will of His Father not only through obedience, but because He is God as the Father is God.

Here Jesus, the Messiah, points out that His knowledge of God was not acquired and progressive, but it was intuitive and full because, as He will say later, He and the Father are one (John 10:30) and the Father is in Him and He in the Father (John 14:10, 11).<sup>v</sup>

*Jesus' answers their question: Surely You are not greater than our father Abraham, who died?*

Then He turned to their first question: *Surely You are not greater than our father Abraham, who died?*

Read verses 56-59.

Why did Jesus say: *Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad?*

There are two points to note here: the rejoicing and the seeing.

i. *Seeing*

Why did He say that Abraham saw His day? And when did he see it?

He is responding to their assertion that He is not greater than Abraham who died.

And so He says to them, although he died physically, Abraham is still alive in paradise, and he rejoiced to see His day.

ii. *Rejoicing*

Let's illustrate the idea of rejoicing in a different setting: We might rejoice if the queen of England were to visit our city, but it is unlikely she would even know if we were to visit London. Much less would she be rejoicing about our visit.

Thus it is the lesser who rejoices to see the greater.

And Abraham's rejoicing is proof that Jesus is the greater.

*I AM*

How do they respond to this?

They complain that He is not old enough to have seen Abraham!

So He responds with another statement highlighted by His double amen: *I who am the Amen [Truth itself] tell you as a most certain and infallible truth: before Abraham was born, I am.*

What does this mean?

By using the phrase *I AM* He is claiming to be the God who revealed Himself to Moses, *I AM THAT I AM*.

He claims to be God, and therefore to exist before Abraham.

*They pick up stones*

Did they understand Him?

Yes, the people understood that He was claiming to be God, which they considered to be blasphemy, so in verse 59 they pick up stones to kill Him.

But again He is able to escape. He cannot die before His appointed time.

## E. The Conflict Over the Healing of the Man Born Blind, § 100, John 9:1-41

Here we have the sixth of John's seven signs.

### *Messianic miracle*

There are three miracles which Jesus performs that are described as messianic miracles because the Pharisees taught that only the Messiah would be able to perform them.

We have already seen the first two of them. Do you remember what they were?

The first was the healing of the Jewish leper. And the second was the casting out of a mute demon.

The third messianic miracle was the healing of anyone born blind. It was one thing to heal someone who simply had gone blind, but to heal someone born blind would be a messianic miracle. A lot of details on this third messianic miracle are given in John 9:1-41. This lengthy chapter can be divided into five segments.

### 1. Physical Healing, John 9:1-12

The first segment, verses 1-12, records the physical healing itself. And the first five verses tell us how it came about.

#### *A strange question*

Read verses 1-5.

Notice the setting. Jesus and His disciples are passing by when they see a man who was blind from birth. And this prompts them to ask Jesus a theological question:

*Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he would be born blind?*

Now, does it strike you that this is a strange question to ask? What is strange about it?

The strange part of the question is not: did his parents sin and he was born blind? That could be explained by a point of the Mosaic Law in Exodus 34:6-7 that God visits the sins of the fathers *upon the children, and the children's children, unto the third and fourth generation*. So, conceivably his parents sinned and as a discipline, punishment or judgement God caused the son to be born blind.

#### *The strange part*

But there is more to the question than that. Can you see it?

The question also asks: did this man sin, and because he sinned he was then born blind?

How could he sin first and then be born blind?

Some people in the New Age Movement have used this passage to claim that Judaism in the first century held to a form of reincarnation, but there never was any such belief in ancient Judaism. The question does not reflect New Age philosophy, but it does reflect a point of Pharisaic theology.

### *Pharisaic teaching*

The Pharisees teach that when a child is conceived, he is conceived with two separate inclinations, and they refer to it as the good inclination and the evil inclination. And the two inclinations continually struggle for control of the person. In most people the good inclination wins. But there are exceptions, and it could be that during the nine month development within the womb of the mother the evil inclination got the upper hand and out of an attitude of animosity the child kicks his mother in the womb, therefore dishonouring the mother. And therefore the child is born blind.

So being born blind is a sign of divine discipline and divine judgement and therefore anyone who is born blind will never see – until the Messiah comes.

For this reason healing a man born blind is a messianic miracle.

To heal someone who went blind was not unusual because that happened before. But to heal someone who was born blind was unique. It had not happened before, and it would not happen until the Messiah came and did it.

### *Understanding*

And, as you will see, understanding this very issue will enable us to see why things happen the way they do in this chapter.

### *Theology corrected*

Now, in verse 3 He corrects their theology.

The man was not born blind because of any specific sin committed either by the man himself or by his parents. So neither option proposed in the question is correct.

God so ordained the situation for His own glory at this particular point in time.

### *Healing*

Now let's read about the healing of this man in verses 6-12.

He now proceeds to heal the man, but He does it in a rather strange way. What does He do?

He spits on the ground and from the spit and the dirt He makes mud. He then smears the mud on the eyes of the man born blind. Even then the man is not healed. He then tells the man, in verse 6, to *"Go, wash in the pool of Siloam"*. Only then will he finally be healed.

Now why go through all this trouble? Why not simply heal him instantaneously?



### *Mishnaic law*

We mentioned before that Jesus not only violates Mishnaic law, He sometimes goes out of His way to do so. Here is one example of this.

First of all we already know that it is the Sabbath day and that it was forbidden by rabbinic law to heal any person on the Sabbath day.

But not only do the rabbinic writings spell out not to heal a blind man on the Sabbath day, they also spell out how not to do it!

Let me quote the law the way it actually reads.

“It is prohibited to heal a blind man on the Sabbath day either by injecting wine into his eye or making mud from spittle and smearing it on his eyes.”

Not only can you not heal a blind man on the Sabbath day, you cannot do it this way on the Sabbath day!

Yet that is the way He does it.

### *The pool of Siloam*

There are many pools in Jerusalem, and many are easier to get to than the pool of Siloam. Why was he sent to the pool of Siloam?

You have to go down a very steep hill to the bottom part of the City of David. This is difficult enough for people with sight, and more so for those without sight. Why this pool and no other?

As we saw in section 96, it happens to be the feast of Tabernacles. And there is a special ceremony conducted by this pool every day for seven days. This was the most crowded pool in the city during this period of time.

And therefore word would spread quickly that a third Messianic miracle had been performed.

### *Policy on miracles*

But in keeping with His policy since He was rejected, He doesn't heal the man publicly because when the miracle occurs He and the man are separated by some significant geography.

### *Result*

And indeed, when he washes the mud off his eyes in the pool of Siloam, it does cause a stir. And it causes a dilemma for the Jewish audience.

On one hand, and on the positive side, this was a miracle never performed before.

But on the negative side, it was done on the Sabbath day. And furthermore, it was done in a way that is specifically forbidden on the Sabbath day.

And they cannot reconcile this in their minds, so, as we are about to see, they go to their leaders to get this one sorted out.

## **2. The First Interrogation, John 9:13-17**

Read verses 13-17.

Notice that John emphasises the issues that concern them here: both the fact that the man was healed on the Sabbath, and the method by which he was healed.

And as the man is questioned they are hoping to find some kind of loophole in his story. But none of his answers help them out at all.

#### *Division among the Pharisees*

Notice verse 16. What is happening among the Pharisees now?

There is a division developing among them. Some are saying Jesus couldn't be from God because He doesn't keep the Sabbath, while others were saying that He must be from God to be able to perform such signs.

### **3. The Interrogation of Parents, John 9:18-22**

How will they solve this problem?

Read verses 18-22.

Here the man's parents are brought before the Pharisees and interrogated.

#### *The man*

Among the Pharisees, in attempting to find a way out of their dilemma, the question was raised,

“Suppose the whole thing is not true to begin with. Just suppose the man never was born blind in the first place and the whole thing is a trick. Let's ask the parents.”

But the parents confirm two things.

- i. First of all there was no doubt about this man being their son.
- ii. And secondly they affirmed that he was indeed born blind.

So there was no longer any possibility that there was any type of fakery going on, or that someone was trying to play a trick on the Pharisees.

### *The parents*

But, as for how their son was healed the parents decided to say nothing more and to let their son speak for himself.

What was the reason for their reluctance?

The answer is given in verse 22:

*His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone confessed Him to be Christ, he was to be put out of the synagogue.*

The *Jews* here refers to the Jewish leaders, the Sanhedrin.

And they have already decreed that if anyone owned Jesus as Messiah, he would be excommunicated from the synagogue.

It is obvious that the parents wanted to believe in Him, and perhaps at this point they had become secret believers in His Messiahship, because they saw that He not only performed a messianic miracle but also performed that miracle on their own son.

### *Excommunication in Pharisaism*

In Pharisaic Judaism, there were three specific levels of excommunication.

- i. The first level is called the *nezipah*,

which is simply a “rebuke” that lasted anywhere from seven to thirty days and was merely disciplinary.

And the decision could only be pronounced by three rabbis.

That was the lowest level of excommunication.

An example of the *nezipah* is found in 1 Timothy 5:1.

*Do not sharply rebuke an older man, but rather appeal to him as a father.*

- ii. The second level is called the *niddui*,

which means, “to cast out.” It would last a minimum of thirty days and was disciplinary.

A *niddui* had to be pronounced by ten rabbis.

Examples of the second type are found in 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15 and Titus 3:10.

<sup>14</sup> *If anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of that person and do not associate with him, so that he will be put to shame.* <sup>15</sup> *Yet do not regard him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.*

<sup>10</sup> *Reject a factious man after a first and second warning.*

iii. The third and worst type of excommunication is called the *cherem*,

which means to be totally devoted to destruction, and the person is to be “un-synagogued,” to “be put out of the synagogue and to be separated from the Jewish community.”

The rest of the Jews considered someone under the *cherem* curse to be dead, and no communication or any kind of relationship whatsoever could be carried on with the person.

This third type is found in 1 Corinthians 5:1-7 and Matthew 18:15-20.

<sup>1</sup> *It is actually reported that there is immorality among you, and immorality of such a kind as does not exist even among the Gentiles, that someone has his father's wife.* <sup>2</sup> *You have become arrogant and have not mourned instead, so that the one who had done this deed would be removed from your midst.* <sup>3</sup> *For I, on my part, though absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged him who has so committed this, as though I were present.* <sup>4</sup> *In the name of our Lord Jesus, when you are assembled, and I with you in spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus,* <sup>5</sup> *I have decided to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.* <sup>6</sup> *Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough?* <sup>7</sup> *Clean out the old leaven so that you may be a new lump, just as you are in fact unleavened. For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed.*

<sup>15</sup> *“If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother.* <sup>16</sup> *“But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every fact may be confirmed.* <sup>17</sup> *“If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.* <sup>18</sup> *“Truly I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven.* <sup>19</sup> *“Again I say to you, that if two of you agree on earth about anything that they may ask, it shall be done for them by My Father who is in heaven.* <sup>20</sup> *“For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst.”*

#### *Excommunication decreed*

The fact that the expression, *be put out of the synagogue*, is used tells us which level of excommunication the Pharisees had chosen for one who would own Jesus as Messiah. It was the third and most severe level, the *cherem* - to be un-synagogued, to be put out, to be considered as dead.

Therefore, the Pharisees were now threatening a Jewish believer, not merely with a rebuke or with being cast out temporarily, but with being put out permanently.

And because the parents knew what the Pharisees had decreed, they chose not to make any further comments, except to affirm those two things: that he was their son, and that he was born blind.

#### *Conclusion*

Therefore, just as the first interrogation of the man had done, the interrogation of the parents ends inconclusively.

#### 4. The Second Interrogation, John 9:23-34

So they call the man in again for a second interrogation.

Read verses 23-34.

During this interrogation, the Pharisees begin to lose their sense of logic and they become somewhat emotional.

And there is a bit of humour here that I will try to bring out as we go through the passage.

*Praise God for a sinner!?*

Look at verse 24:

*So a second time they called the man who had been blind, and said to him, "Give glory to God; we know that this man is a sinner."*

Does this make sense?

This is not a very logical response!

When is the last time any of you said, "praise the Lord, this guy robbed the bank, or praise God this person killed somebody"? We praise God for many things, but we don't praise God for other people's sins.

Yet this is what they are asking him to do – *give glory to God because we know Jesus is a sinner.*

*Tactful challenge*

At this point the man is able to stay tactful.

He responds by saying in verse 25,

*Whether He is a sinner, I do not know; one thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.*

Now there is much more here than meets the eye. This is not merely a statement of simple fact: I was blind and now I see. It is more than that.

What he is actually doing with this statement is issuing a challenge.

What he is saying is I was born blind. And you are my spiritual teachers. You are the ones who taught me that because I was born blind I will never see unless the Messiah comes in my lifetime. That is what you taught me.

Now this man named Jesus of Nazareth has come and has healed me of my blindness, and, based upon what you taught me, He should be proclaimed to be the Messiah.

Instead you tell me to give God the glory because you know He is a sinner!

Can you please explain this to me? I am having trouble following your logic here.

### *Pharisees look for a loophole*

And how do they respond to this challenge?

In verse 26 they say,

*What did He do to you? How did He open your eyes?*

What kind of a response is that?

The man's challenge is perfectly logical, but if they can find a loophole in his story it can be defeated.

So their response was in effect, "alright, tell us once again from the beginning. Go through every little detail."

There must be a loophole in the account somewhere.

### *Tactless response*

And now the man loses his ability to stay tactful.

Look at verse 27. He says,

*"I told you already and you did not listen; why do you want to hear it again? You do not want to become His disciples too, do you?"*

That's not a smart thing to say to Pharisees.

### *Pharisees*

And they respond accordingly in verse 28,

<sup>28</sup>*They reviled him and said, "You are His disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. <sup>29</sup>"We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where He is from."*

The implication was that being a disciple of Moses was superior to being a disciple of Jesus because God spoke to Moses, but He did not speak to Jesus.

### *Further bold challenge*

If the man was tactless earlier, he really blows it next. He is very bold in the face of severe consequences.

Look what he says in verse 30.

<sup>30</sup> *The man answered and said to them, "Well, here is an amazing thing, that you do not know where He is from, and yet He opened my eyes.*

The point is that as the spiritual leaders of Israel they should be able to explain this.

Then he continues by emphasising the very points the Pharisees are trying to escape.

- i. First in verse 31.

<sup>31</sup> *"We know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is God-fearing and does His will, He hears him.*

The first point is that Jesus cannot be a sinner because God hears Him, and God only hears those who fear Him and do His will.

- ii. His second point is in verse 32.

<sup>32</sup> *"Since the beginning of time it has never been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind.*

There are records of the healing of people who went blind, but never was there any report of someone healed who was born blind.

That is what makes this miracle uniquely messianic.

So he is reminding them of their own theology here.

And the implication for the Pharisees is that they had no basis or grounds for rejecting the Messiahship of Jesus.

### *Pharisees*

The Pharisees now terminate the interrogation. Look at verse 34.

<sup>34</sup> *They answered him, "You were born entirely in sins, and are you teaching us?" So they put him out.*

As far as the Pharisees are concerned that will terminate that discussion.

On the basis of their theology, anyone who was born blind was born that way because of some specific sin, either committed by the individual while in the womb of the mother, or by his parents.

So they are not about to be taught by such a person, even if he is only repeating their own theology.

The casting out of verse 34 is the same as that of verse 22. He is now expelled from the synagogue.

## 5. Spiritual Healing, John 9:35-41

And so we come to the last part of this story.

Now keep in mind that this man never saw Jesus. When he walked away from Jesus he was still blind. And when he finally received his sight Jesus was nowhere to be seen.

### *Spiritual healing*

Read verses 35-38.

Who is taking the initiative in verse 35?

When Jesus hears about his expulsion from the synagogue, He finds the man and asks him:

*“Do you believe in the Son of Man?”*

The man does not know who he is talking to, so he says in verse 36,

*“Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?”*

Then Jesus identifies Himself in verse 37,

*“You have both seen Him, and He is the one who is talking with you.”*

At that point he says in verse 38,

*“Lord, I believe.” And he worshiped Him.*

And for a Jew to worship another man, meant that he was accepting Him to be the Messianic Person, the Messianic God-Man.

And that leads to the spiritual healing of the man born blind.

### *Blindness and sight*

Now read Jesus' conclusion in verses 39-41.

He concludes with a comparison between the man and the Pharisees.

What is the point of His comparison?

He points out that this man moved from physical blindness and physical darkness to physical light and physical sight.

But he has also moved from spiritual blindness and spiritual darkness to spiritual light and spiritual sight.

As for the Pharisees, they have physical sight and physical light. But because of their unbelief they remain in spiritual blindness and spiritual darkness.



### *Light and darkness*

We are pointing out, without further comment, the places where John mentions his sub-theme of light and darkness. It can be seen in this chapter in verses 4-5 and in verses 39-41. This subtheme is worthy of its own study, but we don't have time to discuss it in this context.

### *Messianic miracles*

Now let's review the three messianic miracles, noticing the development in the attitude of the leader's towards Jesus:

1. Do you remember the first one? It was the healing of the Jewish leper.

And what happened as a result of that miracle?

The intensive investigation of Jesus' Messiahship began.

2. And what was the second messianic miracle? It was the healing of the mute demoniac.

And what was the result?

The result was the decree that Jesus was not the Messiah on the basis of demon possession.

3. And the third messianic miracle was the healing of the man born blind.

The leadership's response to this miracle was that anyone who owned Jesus as their Messiah would be put out of the synagogue.

## F. The Conflict Over the Shepherd, § 101, John 10:1-21

Here we have the sixth of John's seven discourses, the discourse on the Good Shepherd.

In this discourse we will find the third and fourth I AM statements: *I am the door of the sheep* (verse 7), and *I am the Good Shepherd* (verses 10 & 14).

### 1. Messiah the True Shepherd, John 10:1-6

Read the first part of the discourse in verses 1-6.

As verse 6 says, Jesus was speaking to them in a figure of speech. And this has been His practice since He was rejected in section 61.

John says *they did not understand what those things were which He had been saying to them*.

Now the question is: do we understand the things He was saying to them?

Does what He said raise questions for you?

#### *A Parable*

Recall that a parable is a figure of speech in which a spiritual truth is illustrated by analogies drawn from every day life and experience.

A parable uses something that is known and understood to illustrate something that is otherwise unknown. And the illustration is taken from an everyday life experience.

In this case, the life experience concerns the shepherd and his sheep.

#### *One major point*

And each parable makes one major point, and it might have some sub-points as this one does.

The major point and the sub-points will become clear as we understand the everyday life experience being used.

#### *Understanding a parable*

Once we understand the illustration and its key elements, we will be able to find the truth that is being illustrated.

#### *Sheep in Israel*

So let's begin by looking at the way sheep are cared for in Israel. It is very different from the way they are treated here in our country.

Here sheep are rounded up and driven along by specially trained sheep-dogs.

But there the shepherd has a personal attachment to the sheep, and the sheep recognize his voice and respond accordingly.

One man who had taught in Israel told of two illustrations that were vivid in his memory concerning eastern shepherds and their sheep. He says ...<sup>vi</sup>

*Of the two pictures, one is that of a shepherd leading his sheep through the city of Jerusalem just outside the Jaffa Gate. Cars were whizzing by while the shepherd*

*sang and gently whistled to his sheep, and they dutifully followed him despite all of the bustling traffic nearby.*

*The other picture is that of an early morning with the Bedouins when the shepherds began to lead their sheep out of the sheepfold, which contained the combined flocks of four shepherds. As each shepherd took his turn and began to sing and call his sheep, they dutifully separated from the larger flock and began to follow him to the hills for their daylight feeding.*

### *Sheepfold*

The sheepfold was a place of security, intended to keep intruders out.

It would probably have been either a circular or a square enclosure, constructed with a high stone fence or wall, and at the top of the wall may have been vines or briers.

### *Door*

The entrance would be the only break in the wall, and once the sheep were safely inside at night, the watchman or guard (who was either a servant or a shepherd) would lie down across the opening and serve both as the protector for the sheep and as a gate or a door to the sheepfold.

So there was no door as we know it, but the watchman himself was the door.

### *Access*

Unless an intruder was willing to confront the watchman, the only way into the sheepfold was to climb the wall (10:1).

Access for the shepherd was quite another matter. He could enter the sheepfold through the opening to check his sheep anytime he desired because he was known both to the watchman and to the sheep (10:2–3).

### *Intimacy*

The use of *his own* in verses 3–4 clearly indicates the intimate relationship between the shepherd and his sheep.

In the mornings the shepherd would enter the fold and lead the sheep out to their pastures and water holes by the sound of his voice. The sheep follow him because they know his voice.

But, as we read in verse 5, they simply will not follow a stranger. Instead, they will flee from him because they do not know his voice.

And the intimacy between the shepherd and his sheep is emphasized by the fact that the shepherd called his sheep by name.

### *Key elements*

What are the key elements in this illustration?

The sheep, the shepherd, the thief or stranger, and the doorkeeper.

### *The main point*

Now, before we try to interpret these elements and the parable, what is the main point made by this illustration?

The main point is that there is only one true shepherd of the sheep.

There are also five sub-points:

- i. The true shepherd is the one who enters by the door.
- ii. The false shepherd climbs over the wall. He is a thief and a robber.
- iii. The true shepherd calls his sheep by name and leads them out to pasture.
- iv. The sheep follow the true shepherd because they know his voice.
- v. But they will flee from a stranger because they do not know his voice.

#### *The meaning of the parable's elements*

Now we understand the illustration, let's look to see what it is illustrating.

And we'll begin with the key elements: the sheep, the shepherd, the thief, and the doorkeeper.

What do these elements represent?

- i. The sheep are the people of Israel, and more particularly, they are the believing remnant of Israel.
- ii. The true shepherd is the Messiah, Jesus. He will make this more explicit later in this section.
- iii. *The doorkeeper*

Who is the doorkeeper?

The true shepherd is the one *who enters by the door*. He is the one who enters in the appointed way, the one who is recognised by the doorkeeper.

How were the people of Israel to recognize the Messiah when He came?

The prophets of the Old Testament described the Messiah who would come.

And just as the doorkeeper of the sheepfold verifies the identity of the shepherd and allows him to enter the sheepfold, so the Old Testament prophets verify the identity of the Messiah.

And the doorkeeper is the Old Testament prophets.

And the true shepherd will be recognised because He comes in fulfilment of the Old Testament prophecies, and what He does will be in accordance with those prophecies.

- iv. *Thief and stranger*

Now, and by way of contrast, who is the thief who climbs over the wall?

Who is disregarding the door, which is the Old Testament prophets?

The Pharisees are false shepherds who have climbed in the wrong way. They have taken authority and, as we have seen before, by their own rules and regulations they have actually nullified the Law and the Prophets.

Notice that Jesus is directly addressing the Pharisees here. Who are the *you* of verse 1? The same *you* as in verse 9:41, which are the Pharisees of verse 9:40.

And the prophets had much to say about the shepherds of Israel, for example in Jeremiah 23:1–40; and Ezekiel 34:1–31.

And Micah predicts, in 5:2, that the Messiah will come from Bethlehem. And in verse 4 he says,

<sup>4</sup> *And He will arise and shepherd His flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord His God.*

Isaiah says in 40:11,

<sup>11</sup> *Like a shepherd He will tend His flock, In His arm He will gather the lambs And carry them in His bosom; He will gently lead the nursing ewes.*

And the prophet who said the most about the Messiah and His role as a good shepherd was Zechariah in 11:4-14, where Zechariah was told to play the role of a good shepherd, representing the Messiah. Now Jesus is the fulfilment of that prophetic role prophecy.

#### *The meaning of the parable*

So now to step back and catch an overview of what this parable means. What is He saying?

By means of this parable Jesus is pointing out that He is the one true shepherd of Israel who comes in accordance with the prophets of the Old Testament, and that by way of contrast the Pharisees are thieves and robbers who disregard those same prophets.

He also points out that His own sheep will follow Him because they know His voice. His own sheep are the ones described in Zechariah 11:7 as the poor or afflicted of the flock. And they are the people who are willing to believe and who receive Him in John 1:10-12 (which you can find on page 1 of the Harmony).

<sup>10</sup> *He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him.* <sup>11</sup> *He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him.* <sup>12</sup> *But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name,* <sup>13</sup> *who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.*

## **2. Messiah the Door, John 10:7-10**

Now Jesus uses the same life example to illustrate a new point, and He shifts the focus from the shepherd to the door of the sheepfold.

Read verses 7-10.

Again He introduces what He has to say with His *Amen, amen, I tell you as a most certain and infallible truth.*

#### *The door to eternal life*

And what is this truth and the main point He is making here?

His main point here is that He is the true door. And in verse 9 He explains what He means by that. What does He say here?

He is saying that the only way to enter into salvation and eternal life is to come through Him. And those who do come in will not only have eternal life, they will have it abundantly, far beyond the minimum required of necessity.

#### *Thieves and robbers*

He also points out that all who came before Him are thieves and robbers who come only to steal and kill and destroy.

And notice in verse 8 He uses the present tense to refer to them. They are, in the present, thieves and robbers.

Once again He is referring to the leaders of Israel who have rejected His Messiahship and endeavor to prevent others from accepting Him.

### **3. Messiah the Good Shepherd, John 10:11-18**

Now not only is He the true door, He is also the good shepherd, and in the next paragraph He gives three characteristics of the good shepherd.

Read verses 11-18.

#### *i. The good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep. (verses 11, 17-18)*

The first characteristic of the good shepherd distinguishes him from the hired hand. What is it?

*The good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.*

Who killed Jesus?

According to what He says in verse 18, it is irrelevant who killed Him. Different groups of people have different roles in His death, but, as we will see later, He will chose the moment of His own death.

The Father gave Him authority both to lay down His life, and to take it up again. And when He died, it was not because anyone took His life away, but because He took the initiative to lay it down.

#### *ii. He knows His own and His own know Him. (verses 14-15)*

Then in verses 14-15 He adds the second characteristic of the good shepherd that, just as the Father knows Him and He knows the Father, so He knows His own and they know Him.

#### *iii. He has other sheep which are not of this fold. (verse 16)*

And the third characteristic of the good shepherd is found in verse 16. What is it?

<sup>16</sup> *"I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will hear My voice; and they will become one flock with one shepherd.*

This statement that only becomes clear in the light of later New Testament revelation, especially in the writings of the apostle Paul.

Now who are the *other sheep*? And what is *this fold*?

This fold is the land of Israel, and He points out that He does have a flock of sheep right there in the land of Israel. They are the Jews who are responding to Him with belief, and they are the members of the faithful remnant of that day.

But He has *other sheep* who are of a different fold, and eventually the two folds will be united together *and they will become one flock with one shepherd*.

And the sheep of the other fold are the Gentiles who come to faith.

And as Paul revealed in his letters, the two will be united into one body, the body of the Messiah.

Although that specific revelation is not yet being given. We see here the first hint of it.

So Jewish and Gentile believers become one flock, and they have one shepherd.

#### 4. The Division, John 10:19-21

So to summarize this discourse He has told them three main things:

- i. He is the one true shepherd of Israel who comes in accordance with the prophets of the Old Testament.
- ii. He is the door and the only way to enter into salvation and eternal life is to come through Him.
- iii. And He is the good shepherd, who lays down his life for the sheep. He knows His own sheep and they know Him, and they will be both Jews and Gentiles.

Now read what happened among the Jews as a result. Read verses 19-21.

*A division occurred again among the Jews because of these words.*

Some are saying that He is the Messiah in light of the recent special miracle of the healing of the man born blind.

Others are saying no, He has a demon; a charge which is now coming from the people as well as their leaders.

### G. The Witness of the Seventy, § 102, Luke 10:1-24

Now while the 12 disciples whom He appointed as apostles were with Him all the time, there were other disciples who were there on call, not necessarily with Him all the time, and here they are called upon for a very specific mission.

#### 1. The Seventy Sent, Luke 10:1-16

Read verse 1.

Now this verse has some links back to its immediate context in Luke's gospel. Can you see them?

- i. He begins by saying, *after this*. So the question is: after what?

- ii. Then he says *the Lord appointed seventy others*. And the question is: other than who?

To answer these questions we need to turn back to the end of Luke chapter 9, which we will find in section 95 in the Harmony.

#### Context

Read Luke 9:51-52.

The time of the Feast of Tabernacles was near and He was determined to go to Jerusalem. And He decided to go through Samaria. So He sent messengers ahead of Him to enter a village to make arrangements for Him.

Chapter 9 goes on to recount what happened on His journey to Jerusalem.

#### Purpose

Then comes verse 1 of chapter 10 which says:

<sup>1</sup> *Now after this the Lord appointed seventy others, and sent them in pairs ahead of Him to every city and place where He Himself was going to come.*

After what?

After sending messengers ahead of Him into Samaria to make arrangements for His journey to Jerusalem, He now appoints seventy others for the same purpose: to go out in pairs to the very places He Himself was going to visit, and their purpose is to prepare a place for Him to stay in those cities.

So this is not a general ministry to go throughout the land proclaiming a message, but a very specific ministry to go only to those places He Himself was going to visit. And their purpose is to prepare places for them to stay.



### *Instructions*

Then He gives them some instructions.

### *The harvest*

Read verses 2-16.

Although the leaders of Israel have rejected His Messiahship, and many of the people are following their leaders in rejecting Him, nevertheless He says the harvest is plentiful.

In other words there are many individual Jews who are going to accept the message of His Messiahship and believe in Him.

So He tells them to pray for labourers to reap the harvest, and obviously they also need to be willing and ready to reap this harvest.

### *Rejection*

In verse 3 are warned to anticipate rejection by those who remain in unbelief. And like the 12, so also the 70 are sent as lambs in the midst of wolves.

### *Provision*

In the first part of verse 4, they are also told not to take anything with them. What they need will be provided as they proceed. And verses 7 and 8 also say that what they need will be provided for them.

### *Urgency*

Then, at the end of verse 4, they are not to greet anyone on the way. Why would that be?

There is a sense of urgency and nothing must hinder them in their mission to prepare places for Him to stay as He begins His final journey towards Jerusalem for His approaching death.

They are to carry nothing with them and they are not to stop along the way for conversation.

### *House of peace*

And once they find an acceptable place for Him to stay they need to look no further. They are to stay in that house

And they are simply to do good to those that accept them, but declare judgement on the cities that will reject Him.

When they find a city that receives them, they are to *heal those in it who are sick, and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.'* (verse 9) Healing the sick is evidence that they are experiencing the Kingdom life, because when the King is present there is healing for those who come to Him.

### *Judgment for rejection*

As for the cities that will reject Him, they will be under judgement. He repeats the curse we saw in the earlier paragraph. Among the cities that saw the majority of His miracles they will be suffering the greater judgement at the Great White Throne.

### *Accepting the messenger*

In verse 16 is the principle that those who accept the messenger are accepting the one who sent him. To accept the message of one of the seventy is to accept Jesus, which in turn is to accept the Father who sent Him.

And the converse is also true. To reject their message is to reject Jesus and the Father who sent Him.

### *At least 35 places*

And so the 70 are sent out two by two, which means that there will be at least 35 places prepared.

## **2. The Seventy Return, Luke 10:17-20**

Now read what happens when they return, in verses 17-20.

### *Their joy*

When they come back, they come back with great joy, and, although it is not stated here, no doubt some of their joy is because in every place they went they found the fellowship of believers. And so places have been prepared for Him to visit.

But we are told that they are also rejoicing over the fact that they found demons to be in subjection to them, and in Jesus name they were able to cast them out.

### *True cause for joy*

How does He respond to this?

But He tells them in verse 20 not to rejoice over the fact that demons are subject to them.

What they should be happy about is that their names are written in heaven. The thing to be excited about is their salvation, and not the issue of demons being in subjection.

### *Satan*

The demons are only subject to them because of the divine authority which He gave them.

He also says that He saw *Satan fall from heaven like lightning*. It is a prequel to, or a foretaste of, the final collapse of Satan.

## **3. Messiah's Prayer, Luke 10:21-24**

Then Jesus prays.

Read verses 21-24.

### *Truth hidden*

Why is He rejoicing?

He is rejoicing that the truth has been hidden from those who count themselves wise in their own eyes. And who is this?

It is the Pharisees who fit this description - they have tempered (or modified) what the Scripture says with the so called wisdom of Pharisaic Judaism, and they can no longer see what the plain text of Scripture says.

This why they failed to recognize the Messiahship of Yeshua.

#### *Truth revealed*

He also rejoices that the truth has been revealed to those who accept Him with childlike faith.

These are the ones who were not educated in Pharisaism, but only had the Scripture to go on. And they were taught the Scripture from the age of five in that day. They believed the Scriptures, and saw that Jesus fulfilled them.

#### *Blessed eyes*

And in verse 23 , what was their unique advantage?

Their advantage, and the advantage of other disciples and Jews who recognized Him, is that they are seeing the fulfillment of prophecies that the prophets and kings wished to see.

And the ones, who in that day were considered to be the wisest and most knowledgeable in the Biblical literature, were the very ones who failed to recognise Him.

And again, they failed to recognise Him only because they failed to take the text as it is.

## H. The Conflict Over the Question of Eternal Life, § 103, Luke 10:25-37

Read verses 25-28.

What is a lawyer?

Lawyer here means someone who is an expert in the Scriptures, and especially the Mosaic Law.

### *A question*

And this lawyer comes to Jesus with a question. What is it?

His question is: *what shall I do to inherit eternal life?*

Now this question is intended to trap Jesus theologically, to show that He is not well versed in the Scripture and in the Law in particular.

### *One work*

Here again the Greek is more emphatic than the English translation. (The form of the word, *do, poiéō*, is a participle in the aorist tense and singular number.)

Its emphasis could be expressed as follows: What is the one thing that I can do, once and for all, to have eternal life?

So the lawyer asked: What is the one work that will guarantee I have eternal life?

### *The Law*

Because he focussed on the issue of what one work can he do, Jesus refers him to the Law (verse 26).

<sup>26</sup> *And He said to him, "What is written in the Law? How does it read to you?"*

And the man answers correctly (quoting the first and second most important commandments from Deuteronomy 6:5 and Lev. 19:18):

*"YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND; AND YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF."*

So in verse 28 Jesus says to him: *"You have answered correctly; DO THIS AND YOU WILL LIVE."*

But here Jesus uses the present tense, meaning keep on doing this, keep on doing this consistently and you will have eternal life.

### *Jesus' answer*

In other words Jesus is saying: you asked me the question what one work most I do to have eternal life. If you want to base your salvation on work, then let's see what the Law says: love God, love your neighbor.

So if you can keep on doing this perfectly then you shall have eternal life.

And the lawyer, of course, knew he could not consistently maintain that standard. No one can.

### *Neighbour*

So read what happens next in verses 29-37.

How did the lawyer respond?

Knowing that he has lost the argument and could not entrap Jesus as he intended, he now attempts to argue a point of theology: well, if I have to love my neighbor - how do you define “neighbor”? *Who is my neighbor?*

And in Pharisaic Judaism your neighbor could only be a fellow Jew. A non-Jew could never be your neighbor.

### *The good Samaritan*

Now Jesus gives him the famous story of the Good Samaritan where a man was robbed and left for dead on the Jericho road. And a priest and a Levite go by without offering any help. Perhaps they assumed the man was dead and a priest and a Levite could not touch a dead body.

They could excuse themselves that way. But they even failed to check if the man was alive or dead. They could have tried to check without touching him. Now of course another Jew who was not a priest or a Levite could have touched the man to see how he was.

Then it was not a Jew who came by next, but a Samaritan.

And this Samaritan knew that the person beaten up and dying on the side of the road was a Jew, and yet he went against the whole Samaritan culture. He brought the man some oil and some wine. He put the man on the donkey and began to walk it. He brought him to an inn. He left some money with the innkeeper to make sure he can stay there until he is fully recovered. And if it needs any more money, he will pay it next time he comes around.

So, in light of these actions, how do you define the man’s neighbor? Was it the priest? Obviously not. Was it the Levite? Obviously not. It was the Samaritan.

### *The conclusion*

But notice that the Jewish lawyer does not even want to say “Samaritan”, so he answers the question in a round about way in verse 37:

*“The one who showed mercy toward him.” Then Jesus said to him, “Go and do the same.”*

So the lawyer failed in his attempt to trap Jesus into contradicting the Law, and he failed to find a loophole that would enable him to avoid loving his *neighbour*.

### *An application*

And the way to define your neighbor is simply this: whoever has a need that you can meet is your neighbor.

## I. The Example of Fellowship, § 104, Luke 10:38–42

Read verses 38–42.

### *Women*

One of Luke's concerns is the role of women in the life of the Messiah. Notice that he is the only gospel writer who records this event.

These two special women appear for the first time at this stage. We will meet them again as the gospel story unfolds.

### *A home prepared*

Now Jesus comes to a village where He is welcomed into a home by two sisters, Martha and Mary.

Later we will learn that their home is in Bethany, not too far from Jerusalem, located on the lower eastern slopes of the Mount of Olives. And they have a brother named Lazarus.

This will be one of the homes found by the seventy who were sent out to prepare places for Him to stay. And, as we shall find later in the course, this household plays an important role in His life and ministry.

### *Martha's frustration*

Now when they welcome Him into their home, what do these two women do?

While both women welcome Him in, Martha is more concerned about getting everything ready. She wanted to become a very nice Jewish hostess.

On the other hand, Mary sits at the feet of Jesus listening to what He is teaching.

And Martha gets a bit frustrated and asks Jesus to scold her sister and tell her to help her out in the affairs of the household in getting things ready.

### *Jesus' response*

How does Jesus respond to Martha?

*<sup>41</sup>But the Lord answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things; <sup>42</sup>but only one thing is necessary, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her."*

And what is *the good part* that Mary has chosen?

While Martha was occupied for the Messiah, Mary was occupied with the Messiah, sitting at His feet, listening to His word, being taught by Him.

So He is telling Martha that to be taught by the Messiah is far more important than to be busy for Him, simply preparing a meal.

### *Later, we will discover ...*

And would you like to know what Mary learned while she was sitting at Jesus feet?

Mary learns something here that even the apostles fail to understand, and she is commended for it when it finds expression in her actions. But Luke doesn't tell us here, and we will have to wait until we discover it later in our course (in sections 141 and 171).

## J. Instruction in Prayer, § 105, Luke 11:1-13

### *Sermon on the Mount*

In dealing with the Sermon on the Mount I mentioned that it was the Messiah's interpretation of the true righteousness of the Law in contradistinction with the Pharisaic interpretation.

It was not intended to be church ethics for this age, but there are things He says in it that do become church ethics for this age.

And we know what does and does not apply in this age by what is repeated later in the gospels, especially after section 61 where He was rejected, and also by what is repeated in the letters of the apostles.

Here is one such example.

### *Prayer*

Read verses 1-4.

Now why would the disciples need to be taught to pray?

Remember that in Judaism in those days nobody prayed their own prayers. Every prayer was from a prayer book. There were no extemporaneous (impromptu, unrehearsed, spontaneous) prayers per say.

Judaism no longer taught people to pray on their own. Everything was from prayer books, as it is to this day.

And of course, by now the disciples recognise that Jesus does not use the common prayers of Judaism.

So they asked Him: *Lord, teach us to pray.*

### *A six point outline*

And once again He gives the same six point outline that He gave in the Sermon on the Mount. So we won't go over it again in detail here.

The fact that He repeated it in this context shows that what He taught about prayer in the Sermon on the Mount also applies to us today.

And He taught that prayer should not be prescribed, or come out of a book, but it should come out of the heart.

But at the same time He also taught that it should not be hap-hazard. And He gave us a model or outline to use for our prayer life.

And this is especially useful for our times of devotions, whether we have them in the morning, afternoon, or evening.

But throughout the day, of course, and as issues arise, we can do much shorter praying, and use specific, simpler prayers.

### *A Parable*

He then goes on to present a parable. Read verses 5-8.

These verses are the illustration taken from their common life experience.

### *Key elements*

What are the key elements of this illustration?

There are three elements, all people:

1. The main character, who has two friends, but nothing he can give his visitor to eat.
2. His first friend, who comes to visit from some distance and is in need of something to eat.
3. The second friend, who lives nearby and has bread available.

And what is the main point of the illustration?

### *Main point*

The point made in the illustration is that the persistence of the man in requesting bread for his visitor was rewarded with all that he needed.

### *Meaning of key elements*

What do the key elements represent?

The main character represents the disciple.

The visitor represents someone with a need for which the disciple doesn't have whatever is needed.

The neighbour with the bread represents God who does have what is needed.

### *Interpretation*

What, then, does the main point of the illustration teach?

It teaches the need for two things:

1. Intercessory prayer, to intercede for someone in need, and
2. Persistent prayer, to continue asking until the need is met.

And Jesus points out that if an unwilling person will finally give in because of persistence, how much more can we expect from God who is actually willing to hear and to answer our prayers!

### *Conclusion*

Then He draws His conclusion and makes an application in verses 9-13. Read verses 9-13.

In verse 9 the Greek tense emphasises persistence. He says that we should *keep on asking, keep on knocking, keep on seeking*.



### *Application*

Then in verses 11-13 He make His application. What is it?

*“If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?”*

Now, ever since the day of Pentecost in Acts chapter 2, we receive the indwelling Holy Spirit the moment we believe. So now we don’t have to ask God to give us the Holy Spirit.

But that was not the case before the Holy Spirit was given at Pentecost.

In the economy of the Mosaic Law, while some believers were indwelt, not all were indwelt. While all believers had the Spirit with them, the Spirit was only in certain people, not all.

And one way to receive the Spirit in a unique way under the Mosaic Law would be to ask Him.

And that is the way it will be until Acts 2 when things change.

## K. Conflict Over Healing of the Dumb Man, § 106, Luke 11:14-36

Now He repeats the second messianic miracle by casting out another mute demon.

The first time we saw this miracle was in section 61, and we know it is not simply a second record of the same event because there are some significant differences in the details of each event.

First of all section 61 happened in Galilee, and this one happened in Judea a year or so later.

### 1. The Charge, Luke 11:14-16

Read verses 14-16.

The response to this miracle sounds familiar from what we read in section 61. Can you spot the difference?

In section 61 it was the leaders who said He is demon possessed and is able to perform the miracles He does because He is possessed by Beelzebul, the prince of demons.

It is now the crowds who are making the charge of demon possession. It is no longer coming exclusively from the leaders. Now the people are beginning to repeat what their leaders have been proclaiming all over the country.

Therefore, here in Judea before the crowds He will repeat some of the things He said earlier in Galilee before the Scribes and Pharisees.

### 2. The Defence, Luke 11:17-23

Read verses 17-23.

In making His defense to the crowds in Judea He points out five things which are similar to what He said in section 61.

The similarity should not be surprising since the charges are the same, although the two events occur in different places and with different audiences.

The similarities don't mean that this is the same event that we read about before.

What are the five points He makes here?

- 1) In verses 17-18 Jesus explains that the accusation is untrue because it would mean a division in Satan's kingdom.
- 2) In verse 19 they themselves believe that exorcism is a gift of the Spirit, and for them to accuse Him of doing so by the power of Satan is inconsistent with their own theology.
- 3) In verse 20 the miracle actually authenticates His message.
- 4) In verses 21-22 show that Jesus is stronger than Satan and not subservient to Satan.
- 5) In verse 23 there is again a call to individual decision: *He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me, scatters.*

The first part of this statement is fairly plain. They cannot be both for Him and against Him at the same time. If they are not for Him they are against Him. And these are the only two possibilities.

The questions arise from the second half of this verse. What is the gathering? And, what is the scattering that He talks about?

The implication of His statement is that those who are with Him will gather with Him, but those who are against Him will scatter.

Now what is the gathering, and what is the scattering?

Turn in your Bibles to Deuteronomy 28:63–64.

In chapter 28 of Deuteronomy, Moses first sets before Israel the blessings they will receive if they diligently obey the Lord their God. Then he sets out the curses they will have if they disobey the Lord their God.

And in the midst of the consequences of disobedience he says this:

<sup>63</sup> *“It shall come about that as the Lord delighted over you to prosper you, and multiply you, so the Lord will delight over you to make you perish and destroy you; and you will be torn from the land where you are entering to possess it.”* <sup>64</sup>  
*“Moreover, the Lord will scatter you among all peoples, from one end of the earth to the other end of the earth; and there you shall serve other gods, wood and stone, which you or your fathers have not known.”*

Here, right in the very covenant He gave them, God warns them that one of the consequences of their disobedience will be a scattering. They would be scattered among all nations over all the earth.

Now when in the history of Israel has this happened?

And in all their history, up to the time when Jesus was speaking, this had not yet happened. In the Babylonian captivity they were taken captive into one nation.

But in AD 70, about 40 years after Jesus spoke these words, the Romans destroyed the city of Jerusalem and the temple. At that time:

- i. Those who accepted His Messiahship and heeded His warnings were gathered together in safety outside of the war zone and not one of them perished.
- ii. But those who rejected His Messiahship were either killed or scattered all over the world by the Romans!

These words of the covenant would be familiar to His audience. And so we can see that Jesus is making reference to this statement from the covenant. And the implication is that the time for that scattering is at hand.

### *The meaning*

And those who are with Him, that is, those who believe in Him, accepting His Messiahship will be gathered together in safety when that judgment comes.

But those who are against Him, who reject His Messiahship, will be scattered.

### *Warning and invitation*

So His words are both a warning and an invitation.

And each individual of this generation must make a once and for all decision whether or not they will follow Him.

## **3. The Condition of the Nation, Luke 11:24-28**

### *The parable of the unclean spirit*

Now read verses 24-26.

Jesus gives essentially the same parable here that He gave in section 62, the parable of the unclean spirit that left and came back.

And He gives the main point of the parable at the end of verse 26:

*The last state of that man becomes worse than the first.*

The man in the parable represents the generation of Israel that has rejected His Messiahship on the basis of demon possession.

And His parable means that the last state of that generation will be worse than the first state of that generation.

### *Blessing – to hear and obey the word of God*

Read verses 27-28.

Jesus gave the same reply in section 63, but on that occasion it was His mother and brothers who came and attempted to take Him home.

On this occasion it is a woman in the crowd who calls out, but Jesus response is the same.

Spiritual relationships are more important than physical ones, and what is of greatest importance is to hear and obey the word of God.

## **4. The Sign to that Generation, Luke 11:29-32**

### *A sign*

Read verses 29-30.

Who is He referring to with the phrase “*this wicked generation*”?

He is speaking of the generation of Israel who has rejected His Messiahship while He was with them. It does not refer to any generation after that.

Notice that He is addressing the crowds here. In section 62 He addressed the same remarks to the Scribes and Pharisees, the leaders of Israel.

So again we see that the crowds are accepting the leadership's explanation that He performs His miracles by the power of Beelzebub.

#### *The sign of Jonah*

And once more Jesus calls them an evil generation, and declares that the only sign that will be given to them is the sign of Jonah - which is the sign of the resurrection.

#### *Condemnation*

Read verses 31-32.

What is He saying here?

There is condemnation waiting for that generation, and on judgment day, Gentiles, who responded with repentance to lesser light, will condemn this particular Jewish generation.

### **5. The Call to the Nation, Luke 11:33-36**

They were asking Him for a sign when they already have the Light Himself shining in their midst!!

Read verses 33-36 to see what He says to them about the Light.

There are actually two different parables here. Two separate illustrations taken from every day life, and both of them involving a lamp. But in each case it is a different lamp.

#### *i. The first parable*

Before we look for its meaning, let's examine the illustration in verse 33.

Why would someone light a lamp?

The purpose of lighting a lamp is to give light for people who see. So when you light a lamp you put it on a lampstand in a prominent position in the room for all to see when they come into the room.

The word *cellar* here is *krypte*, meaning crypt, secret cell, or vault. In other words it is a hiding place.

#### *The point made by the parable*

There is no point hiding the lighted lamp in a secret place or under a basket.

If it is to fulfil its purpose it must be put on a lampstand for all to see.

#### *The meaning of the parable*

The lamp is the source of light and would represent Jesus, the Messiah.

What does the light represent?

The word that He is proclaiming is light. He provides light for them through His teaching.

And He has already told them that the light He is proclaiming is not His own, but He received from the Father. And that the light He was giving to them was the light of the knowledge of the Father.

And, just as the lamp is put on a lampstand for all to see, so also His revelation was made openly in His public teachings, and He taught these truths before the whole nation.

ii. *The second parable*

Verse 34 makes a different use of the word *lamp*, and therefore introduces a new parable.

The first parable described His teaching as a light set on a lampstand for all to see.

This second parable describes the reception of the light by His audience, the way that His light is perceived.

And in this second parable the Greek word order emphasises the lamp. He says

*The lamp of the body is the eye.*

The lamp is obviously the source of light. So He is saying that the source of light for the body is the eye.

Now in what sense is the eye the lamp of the body?

Physically, light is received into the body through the eye. And then we comprehend what it is that we are looking at.

*body*

And the word for *body* here is not the word *sárx*, which means flesh, and refers to the material body, but the word *sóma*, which means body in the sense of an organized whole made up of parts and members. And here it refers to the person himself or to his inner being.

So by saying that *the lamp of the body is the eye* He is saying that we understand what we are looking at because the eye brings light into the body.

### *the eye*

Jesus expands on this idea in the rest of the verse:

*when your eye is clear, your whole body also is full of light; but when it is bad, your body also is full of darkness?*

### *clear*

And to understand what He means it will help to look at another translation which better brings out the meaning of the words used here<sup>vii</sup>:

*When your eye is in single focus, sound, and fulfilling its function, also your whole body is well lighted. But when it is pernicious, also your body is full of darkness.*  
(Wuest)

When the eye is clear it accomplishes its purpose and we see things as they are, resulting in a correct understanding of what we are looking at.

Conversely, when the eye is bad, it fails to accomplish its purpose and we don't see things the way they are, resulting in an incorrect understanding of what we are looking at.

### *meaning*

Now that is the illustration. What is He getting at, what is He pointing out to them?

Recently, after the healing of the man born blind, Jesus referred to the Pharisees as blind although they could see physically. He was saying that they are spiritually blind because of their unbelief.

And because they were spiritually blind they rejected the light that they received.

But now He adds that their rejection of Him was not due to the light being unclear. The problem was not with His presentation of the light.

The problem was with the eye of the beholder of the light. It was not clear. It was not faithfully representing what it was looking at.

So He is telling them that if their eyes were clear they would be filled with light.

In other words, if they were single-mindedly receptive to the truth He is revealing then they would be filled with understanding.

But this they refused to do, so instead of light they will have darkness.

And the reason Israel will remain in darkness will not be the fault of the light they were given, but the fault of the nation which rejected the light offered to them.

### *Meaning of verses 33-34*

Now to review verses 33-34.

In verse 33 He told them that just as the lamp is put on a lampstand for all to see, so He taught before the whole nation for all to see.

Then in verse 34 He told them that their failure to understand His teaching was not due to any failure in His teaching, but was due to their refusal to receive His teaching as it was taught.

And this in turn, as He told them earlier, was due to their unbelief.

iii. *Be constantly scrutinizing yourself*

Then in verse 35 He makes an application. It is an exhortation which might better be translated:

*Be constantly scrutinizing yourself therefore lest the light which is in you is darkness.  
(Wuest)*

In other words they are exhorted to be continually examining themselves as to the condition of their hearts, because, if they are unbelieving, they will not be able to understand His teaching.

The way they choose to look at His teaching will determine whether or not their understanding of His teaching is correct.

Therefore they are to *constantly scrutinize themselves*.

iv. *Some will believe*

And verse 36 might better be translated:

*Therefore, assuming that your whole body is well lighted, not having any part full of darkness, the whole shall be full of light as when the lamp by its bright shining illuminates you. (Wuest)*

In other words, if they will correctly look at His word they will have complete understanding, just as when a brightly shining lamp completely illuminates them.

And, although the leaders and the majority of the nation have rejected Him and remain in darkness because of their unbelief, there will nevertheless be some individuals in the nation who will receive the light, and believing in Him they will have eternal life. (John 1:10-12)



### Summary

In the preceding paragraph we saw that *this wicked generation* was seeking a sign which they would not be given.

But here Jesus points out to them that God has given them a light that was set upon a lampstand for all to see. And the light was His teaching and the signs that confirmed it.

He goes on to tell them that their failure to understand His teaching was not due to any failure in His teaching, but was due to their refusal to receive His teaching as it was taught.

Therefore He ends with an admonition to be constantly scrutinizing themselves to see if they are believing and correctly understanding His teaching.

If they will believe, they will have complete understanding.

## L. The Conflict Over Pharisaic Ritualism, § 107, Luke 11:37-54

Now Jesus is invited to lunch by a Pharisee and He accepts the invitation.

Read verses 37-41.

Here a Pharisee invites Him over to dinner. But, as the context shows us, it is only to have an opportunity to try to entrap Him in some way.

And what is the issue that he raises?

It was the same issue that came up in section 77. He did not ceremonially wash His hands before eating dinner. This was a requirement of the oral law, the traditions of the Pharisees, but not of the Mosaic Law.

Now the Pharisee hadn't said anything, he simply noticed that Jesus had not washed and he was surprised.

But his surprise shows and Jesus can tell that He is being looked upon with condemnation, and so He points out their problem in verses 39-41.

What does He say?

Jesus tells the Pharisees that their outside is clean but their inside is filthy.

They only concern themselves with external things in keeping the Law, but they should be concerned about the condition of their hearts. That was the main point of the Sermon on the Mount.

And if they give their hearts to God, then all things are ceremonially clean for them.

### *Woe to the Pharisees*

Then Jesus pronounces a series of woes, and when we get to section 137 we will find a more elaborate series of woes.

#### 1. *Woes on the Pharisees*

He begins with three woes on the Pharisees. And we'll read them one at a time.

##### a. *Neglect*

Read verse 42.

What is the cause of their woe here?

They are far more concerned with lesser issues of the Law, without showing concern for the greater demands of the Law.

The background for verse 42 was the Pharisaic teaching that nothing was to be partaken of unless a tithe was taken from it first.

But at the same time they were neglecting the greater issues of justice and the love of God.

b. *Self-glory*

Read the second woe in verse 43.

What is the issue here?

The second woe concerns their self-glory. Always seeking the best seats in the synagogue and looking for salutations in the market place.

c. *hypocrisy*

Read verse 44.

This time the issue needs a bit more reflection to discover. Can you see it?

In Paragraph 137 He will compare them to whitewashed tombs, but here they are like concealed tombs that are not so easily seen.

What would be the problem with a concealed tomb?

Others may walk over a concealed tomb without knowing and so become defiled without knowing.

So they are causing corruption and impurity without warning.

And they are hypocrites because they put on the outward appearance of righteousness when they are inwardly full of impurity.

2. *Interruption*

Then He is interrupted. Read verse 45.

Who were the lawyers?

The lawyers were experts in both Mosaic and Mishnaic law.

They were the real thinkers of the Pharisees, and were the ones actually involved with making new rules and regulations in the law.

Therefore, by condemning the Pharisees in general, Jesus automatically condemns the lawyers because the precepts that the Pharisees are following have been laid down by these very lawyers.

So now, one of the lawyers interrupts Him, saying in effect: "you also reproach us who are experts in the law."

3. *Woes on the lawyers*

And Jesus replies in effect: *OK, Woe to you lawyers as well!*

a. *Burdensome traditions*

Read verse 46.

What is the issue here?

They make their traditions mandatory, and institute heavy burdens of compliance.

And they have no concern for the burden or how they can help people to bear it.

b. *They rejected the prophets*

Read verses 47-51.

What is he pointing out here?

They have rejected the prophets.

And their rejection of the prophets has led to the rejection of the Messiah, which in turn will lead to the coming destruction of AD 70.

Notice again the emphasis on that particular generation at the end of verses 51 and 52. He says that: *the blood of all the prophets ... will be charged against this generation.*

Jesus will repeat this in section 137, and more detail will be given then, but notice for now that this same generation which is guilty of the unpardonable sin will be held accountable for all the blood of the prophets that has been shed since the foundation of the world.

It will be required of this one specific generation.

Why?

Because everything that the prophets were to speak about the coming Messiah has now been said and the prophetic descriptions of His coming are complete. The prophets testify to His Messiahship, and to reject his messianic claims automatically means the rejection of the prophets.

And so this generation, by rejecting His claims to be the Messiah, has rejected all the testimony of the prophets about Him, and is therefore guilty of the blood of all the prophets.

You cannot affirm the prophets without also affirming His messianic claims.

c. *They took away the key of knowledge*

Read the third woe in verse 52.

What is the *key of knowledge* which these lawyers have taken away from the people?

Essentially it is the understanding of the plain sense of what was written by Moses and the Prophets.

And how did they take it away?

They had built so many additional laws and traditions that the actual word of God could no longer be recognized and they and consequently the people were unable to recognize the Messiahship of Yeshua when He came to them.

They did not enter in to understanding themselves, and, by their teaching, they also hindered the people from entering in to understand what was written.

The third woe is for hiding the truth from the people by means of their traditions. They took away the key of knowledge.

So here around the dinner table of a Pharisee are three woes on the Pharisees in general and three more woes specifically on the lawyers (who are also Pharisees).

#### *The reaction of the Pharisees*

Then the section concludes in verses 53-54 with the reaction of the Pharisees. Read verses 53-54.

As Wuest's translation puts it:

*And after He had gone out from there, the men learned in the sacred scriptures and the Pharisees began to set themselves against Him with a vengeance, and to be plying Him with questions so as to entice Him to give answers to questions to which He would have no opportunity to give consideration beforehand, concerning many things, preparing a trap for Him in order to catch something out of His mouth.*

In other words the Pharisees totally lose themselves emotionally, trying to get Him to say something that will bring legal condemnation against him. However they are unable to do so.

## M. Instruction of the Disciples, § 108-110

Now the next three sections 108 - 110 together form a unit in which Jesus instructed His disciples in nine specific lessons.

### *Speaking to His disciples*

Read Luke 12:1.

Notice the contrast here. Many thousands of people have gathered together in one place, to such an extent that they trampled one another under foot.

In spite of this, He is focused on teaching His apostles and Luke says He began speaking to them first of all.

And that has been His policy ever since His rejection in section 61.

### 1. Hypocrisy, § 108, Luke 12:1-12

Now read verses 1-12.

#### *Context*

Now what do we have here? Have you ever wondered what these verses mean and why they are all lumped together here?

While these verses appear to be a collection of miscellaneous teachings, there is actually a thread of thought running through them. And this will come into view if we keep in mind the context in which He made these statements, especially the immediately preceding section.

And Luke actually encourages us to do this in his text, because he begins with the words: *under these circumstances*.

Under what circumstances?

He was invited to lunch by a Pharisee who was surprised that Jesus did not practice the ceremonial washing of His hands that is a requirement of their traditions.

Jesus responds that they should be more concerned about the state of their hearts than the cleanness of their hands.

Then He proceeds to pronounce woes on them for their neglect of the more important commands of the Law of Moses, for their hypocrisy, and for their burdensome traditions. (and their rejection of the teaching of the prophets and taking away the key of knowledge from the people.)

In response, the Pharisees set themselves against Him with a vengeance.

### *Hypocrisy*

It is in this context, then, and *after so many thousands of people had gathered together that they were stepping on one another* that He began to teach His disciples, saying, *Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.*

Now what is *the leaven of the Pharisees*?

When Jesus talks about *the leaven of the Pharisees* He is talking about the teaching of the Pharisees.

The Pharisees teaching of God's Word is based upon their oral tradition or Mishnaic law.

What is hypocrisy – what does the word mean?

Hypocrisy describes the acting of a player on the stage assuming a role of something which he is not. So his outward appearance is not representing his true self. His true self is hidden.

In what sense is the teaching of the Pharisees hypocritical?

It is important to understand the Law and the Prophets as they were given.

The problem with the teaching of the Pharisees was that it obscured the true meaning of the Word. And it hid the revelation of the Messiah found in the prophets. And thus it kept the truth from the people.

This is what Jesus means by calling it hypocritical.

And it is also important to obey the commands of the Law of Moses as they are given.

But the Pharisees make up man-made commands (such as the requirement to ceremonially wash before eating, which He has just been responding to in the previous section) and then make them equal with Scripture. Thus the true commands of Moses are hidden behind the mask of the Mishnah.

And this too is hypocrisy.

### *Secrets revealed*

By its very nature, hypocrisy conceals things and whispers secrets to the ear in hidden places.

So, in verses 2-3, Jesus points out that all these hidden things will be revealed.

Then in view of the Pharisees' hypocrisy and their vehement opposition, Jesus gives some instructions to His disciples, whom He calls *My friends*.

### *Fear only God*

In verses 4-5 He says that God alone is the One to fear. Although the Pharisees will oppose them with violence and will even kill them, the disciples should not be afraid of them.

The only One they should fear is God, who can not only kill them but also cast them into hell.

### *Trust God*

But, He says in verses 6-7, instead of fearing God, they can trust Him, because they are more valuable to Him than many sparrows, not one of which is forgotten by God.

### *Identify with Jesus*

So, in verses 8-9, not fearing the Pharisees and trusting God, they should openly and freely declare their identity with Him, knowing that if they do then Jesus will also declare their identity with Him before the angels of God.

### *Unforgivable sin*

In verse 10 He repeats what He told the Pharisees when they rejected Him in section 61.

Why does He say: *everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him?*

In the process of investigation of His messianic claims there were two stages, First, the observation stage, and then the interrogation stage.

The purpose of the investigation was to determine if His claims are true, whether or not He is the Messiah.

And during the course of this interrogation stage they would be questioning Him and challenging Him, and even speaking against Him.

This was acceptable and would be forgiven them.

But now they have reached their conclusion. The investigation is complete. Their decision has been made, and they have decided that He is not the Messiah, and the power enabling Him to perform His miracles is that of the prince of demons.

So He makes the contrast. While they were speaking against Him, whatever they said would be forgiven them.

But now they have reached their decision they will be judged on the basis of that decision, and the consequent destruction of the city and the temple and the scattering of the Jews is now inevitable.

Thus their decision is unforgivable.

### *Divine utterance*

In verses 11-12 He says that they will be brought before rabbinic courts of law (because they have violated the rabbinic laws), but they don't need to be concerned about how they will respond. They will be given divine utterance at that point of time.

As Wuest translates this, He says:

*And whenever they bring you to the synagogues and to magistrates and authorities, do not begin to be troubled how or what your verbal defense shall be, or what you shall say, for the Holy Spirit shall teach you in that very hour the things that are necessary in the nature of the case to speak.*

### *Summary*

So, in verses 4-11, He is telling His disciples that they will be able to fulfill the commission and the commands He gives them without fearing those who oppose them. They can trust God to protect them and to provide for them even the very words to speak to their accusers.



## 2. Covetousness, Luke 12:13-34

Now see how this lesson develops.

### a. *Occasion, Luke 12:13-15*

Read verses 13-15.

#### *Occasion*

Now what would bring about the need for this question?

The occasion is that someone in the crowd has a family dispute going on over their inheritance, and he comes to Jesus and asks Him to tell his brother to settle that dispute by telling his brother to divide the inheritance with him.

#### *Why?*

And why would this man feel free to ask Jesus to do this?

Have a look at Psalm 72:1-2.

*<sup>1</sup> Give the king Your judgments, O God, And Your righteousness to the king's son. <sup>2</sup> May he judge Your people with righteousness And Your afflicted with justice.*

This is a Messianic Psalm, and according to verse 2, the Messiah will be the one to arbitrate disputes, and He will do it with righteousness and justice.

And since Jesus had claimed to be the Messiah, He should therefore arbitrate between this man and his brother over the inheritance.

#### *Response*

How did Jesus respond?

He responds by quoting from Exodus 2:14.

*Who made you a prince or a judge over us?*

Now where have we heard those words before? Where, in the history of Israel, do we find these words?

Jesus is quoting the very words of the Israelites to Moses.

Moses had killed the Egyptian overseer, and the next day, when he saw two Jews fighting and tried to intervene, he was rejected with this statement: *Who made you a prince or a judge over us?*

And the Hebrews would not see Moses again for another 40 years.

Now, just as Moses was initially rejected, Jesus was rejected. And because He was rejected, He cannot act in His Messianic role as an arbitrator at this time.

He can only do that after His second coming and the establishment of the Messianic kingdom, even as Moses was only able to lead Israel out of Egypt when he came to them the second time.

### *Warning against greed*

Having rejected this man's request, Jesus then warns His disciples to be on guard against every form of greed.

And the Greek here emphasizes the need for continuous vigilance:

*Take heed and be guarding yourself from every kind of greedy desire for more, because not in the abundance of possessions is life to be found.*

### **b. Instruction, Luke 12:16-21**

Then He again speaks a parable. Read verses 16-21.

Let's think about this parable for a minute. What is the illustration it uses?

A man who was quite wealthy and very productive ran out of room to store all his crops. So he replaced his barns with bigger ones and lived a life of ease.

But God called him foolish, because that very night his life was required of him and others would take all that he had accumulated.

Now in what sense was that behaviour foolish?

Yes, it is folly to store up wealth that he would not be able to use.

But that is only half of his folly. What is the other half?

While he was busy storing up wealth in his barns he was not storing treasure for himself in heaven! He was *not rich toward God*.

How could this man have become rich toward God?

He could have obeyed the second most important command of the Mosaic Law, to love his neighbour as himself. He could have shared his abundant produce with others instead of keeping it all to himself.

He doesn't even need all this extra produce, and yet, although there are many poor people, he doesn't share the surplus with them, and therefore fails to fulfil the second most important commandment of the Mosaic Law.

And failure to keep the second most important commandment is in turn due to failure to keep the first most important commandment, to love the Lord God with our whole being.

And a failure to love the Lord will lead to a failure to love the neighbour.

### c. *Application, Luke 12:22-34*

And having said this parable in the hearing of the crowds, he gives the application to His disciples.

Read verses 22-34.

There are two very basic and essential things that they need never worry about. What are they?

Food and clothing.

And why need they never be anxious about food and clothing?

Because God will feed them. And God will clothe them. And therefore they need not show anxiety over these particular issues.

Instead of anxiety over these things where should their attention be directed?

He tells them to seek His kingdom, and God will provide their basic needs.

And how can we test to find out where our hearts are?

By observing where our treasure is. The location of our treasure will point out the inclination of our hearts.

### 3. *Watchfulness, Luke 12:35-40*

Then He exhorts them to be ready for His return and gives them two illustrations to emphasise what He means.

Read verses 35-40.

#### *Exhortation*

He begins with the exhortation in verse 35. And the Greek literally says:

*You yourselves see to it that your loins are girded ready for action, and that your lamps are burning constantly.*

#### *Illustrations*

The first illustration is in verses 36-38. What is the point He is making with this illustration?

He emphasises the need to be ready, to be alert and watching for His return. While these servants carry out the work they have been given to do they are also to be watchful and alert to the master's return so that they can welcome him when he comes.

And the second illustration is in verses 39-40, and it points out that He will return at an hour they do not expect.

#### *Meaning*

This is speaking of the rapture which can happen at any time now. It is imminent. And we are to be alert and ready to welcome Him when He comes.

And what does it mean to be alert and ready to welcome Him when He returns?

First of all it means to believe in Him.

Then it means to be about His business, doing what He has given us to do.

And therefore it means to be free from the encumbrances of sin and the world.

As we will see later in our course, He will have more to say on this subject in a different context. (Matthew 24 & 25)

#### 4. Faithfulness, Luke 12:41-48

##### *Peter's question*

Now Peter has another question. Read it in verse 41.

*"Lord, are You addressing this parable to us, or to everyone else as well?"*

His question is a good one: To whom shall we apply this parable?

And he postulates two possibilities: either it applies *to us*, which would be the disciples, or it applies *to everyone else as well*, which in its context would be the crowds of many thousands who were gathered there at that time.

So Peter asks a good question, are you addressing this parable to us or to the crowds?

Now before we read Jesus' answer, how would you have answered Peter's question?

The answer Jesus gives to Peter had three parts.

##### *Faithful Stewardship*

- a. Read the first part in verses 42-43.

What is He saying here?

He has appointed stewards (and Peter is one of them) to be responsible to feed His servants at the proper time.

Those who are faithfully doing so when He returns will be rewarded with more responsibility.

##### *Unbelievers*

- b. The second part of Jesus' answer is introduced with the word, *but*. So it stands in contrast to the first part.

Read verses 45-46.

What is the contrast Jesus is making?

Having just described the faithful steward, now, by way of contrast, Jesus describes an unfaithful servant who will consequently be assigned *a place with the unbelievers*.

##### *Parable*

So Jesus' answer to Peter is in the form of a parable in which the master represents God, and the servants of the master represent all of mankind.

And they are divided into two categories.

The first category, represented by the faithful steward, is those who are believers.

And the second category, represented by the unfaithful slave, is those who are unbelievers.

The believers will be rewarded with responsibility for all God's possessions.

And the unbelievers will be punished and assigned to a place reserved for them.

#### *Anyone who knows the truth*

- c. Then, in the third part to His answer, Jesus has more to say about the fate of the unbelievers.

Read what He says in verses 47-48.

What is the key issue here?

In verse 47 we find *that slave who knew his master's will and did not get ready or act in accord with his will...*

All men have offended God, and unless they accept the pardon He offers them they will be punished for their offence.

And the key issue being pointed out here is that everyone is accountable for what he knows. Did he believe, and did he act in accordance with what has been given to him?

#### *Degrees of punishment*

And even the degree of punishment for unbelievers will be determined by their knowledge of the truth. Those who know the truth and reject it will receive greater punishment than those who did not know it.

#### *Summary*

So Jesus exhorts them to be ready and alert when He comes. They are to be watching for His return while at the same time engaged in the work He has given them. And He tells them that He will come at a time they do not expect.

Then Peter asks Him whether He is saying this to them or to the crowds in general.

And He answers that the world is divided into two groups:

- a. Believers, who He describes as faithful stewards who will be rewarded with responsibility for all God's possessions, and
- b. Unbelievers, whose degree of punishment will be determined by how they respond to what they know.

## **5. The Effects of His Coming, Luke 12:49-53**

Now Jesus describes the effect of His coming in the light of His rejection by Israel.

Before His rejection in section 61 He was offering them the Messianic Kingdom. And with the Messianic Kingdom would come blessing and unity. He was offering them a time of peace with the Lord and therefore peace in all issues.

But now, in light of His rejection, that has changed.

#### *Judgment instead of blessing*

Read what He says in verses 49-50.

What does *fire* symbolise at the beginning of verse 49?

Judgment. In place of peace with God and consequent blessings there will be judgment.

And then He points out that before the judgment can begin He must first undergo a baptism, referring to His coming death on the cross.

#### *Division in place of unity*

Read verses 51-53.

What is His point here?

Even the Jewish family unit, known for its unity, will be torn apart when one or two of their number accept His Messiahship.

And this fulfils the prophecy of Isaiah 8:14 - 15 that when Emanuel comes, He will be the new point of division in the Jewish world, a division between the remnant and the non-remnant. Isaiah says He will be a sanctuary to those who believe, and to those who do not believe He will be *a rock to stumble over*.

#### *Summary*

These then are the results of rejecting Him as their Messiah. In place of blessing is judgment. In place of unity is division. In place of peace, it is war. And in place of unity within the Jewish family there will be division over His Messiahship.

## **6. The Signs of the Times, Luke 12:54-59**

Now He speaks to them about the signs of the times.

#### *Messianic Times*

Read verses 54-56.

What is His point here?

It comes in verse 56. They *know how to analyse the appearance of the earth and the sky* to determine whether it will rain or be hot.

Even so they should *analyse this present time* and correctly judge what is happening.

In other words they should know that these were Messianic times.

And how were they to know that?

From Old Testament prophecy.

Most notably, if they had simply calculated from the prophecy of Daniel 9, they would have known that the Messianic times had arrived. Daniel even gave a specific time table for the first coming.

In fact, as we learned early in this course, the magi or astrologers from Babylon, who had and believed the writings of Daniel, were able to analyse the times and they came to Israel to worship the new-born Messiah.

And why did the leaders of Israel fail to recognise it? Again, not because they didn't know Scripture, but because they only knew it as it was re-interpreted in Pharisaism. Their understanding of what was written was obscured by the teachings of their leaders.

#### *Make peace with the judge*

And because they failed to judge the times correctly they rejected their Messiah. And because they rejected their Messiah a judgment against them was determined.

Read what He says next in verses 57-59.

Why did He give them this illustration?

Common sense, He says, teaches you that you should make peace with your enemy before you arrive in court where the judge will have you thrown into prison.

What is His purpose in giving this illustration?

In the context of that generation, the generation that rejected Him, individual Jews need to make their peace with the Lord by accepting Jesus as the Messiah before the AD 70 judgement comes. Otherwise those living at that time will suffer great death and destruction and poverty.

The judgment is certain. But the individual can escape it by accepting His Messiahship before it comes.

### **7. Concerning Repentance, § 109, Luke 13:1-9**

#### *Recent tragedies*

Read Luke 13:1-5.

Two recent tragedies had happened in Jerusalem.

One is that Pilate took some Galileans to be rebels, and he sent his soldiers who killed them in the temple compound. And as a result animal blood was mixed with human blood.

The second tragedy was that there was a tower at the pool of Siloam that collapsed killing 18 people.

And the teaching of the Pharisees was that if people die in such a violent manner they must be especially sinful.

#### *Question*

And so after each example Jesus asks them a question to challenge their thinking. What is it?

*Do you suppose that those who died so violently were worse sinners than those who did not?*

#### *Answer*

In both cases He gives the same answer. And the answer is in two parts. The first part relates to those who died, and the second part relates to His audience.

First He says to them, *I tell you, no.*

Here Jesus points out that neither the Galileans, nor those who died in the tower of Siloam were guilty of any special sins. They were not more sinful than others.

Then He warns them: *unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.*

The word “*repent*” means to change their mind. Unless they change their minds about Jesus, recognizing that He is not demon possessed but that in fact He is the Messiah, they will perish in like manner.

#### *Fulfilment*

And indeed that is precisely what came to pass.

When the Roman war against Jerusalem occurred in 68-70 AD, there were defensive towers on the walls of Jerusalem. And as the Romans began to undermine the foundations of the towers, the towers began collapsing, and many Jewish soldiers died in like manner.

And one of the last battles took place inside of the temple compound, where the Jewish defenders were killed by the Romans. And once again animal blood and human blood were mixed together. And so they perished in like manner.



### *The parable*

Jesus then gives a parable in verses 6-9.

What point is this parable making?

The owner of the fig tree pronounces a judgment against it. It is to be cut down. But there will be a delay in carrying out the judgment to give the tree opportunity to bear fruit.

### *The purpose of the parable*

And why did Jesus tell this parable, what was His purpose in giving it?

In its context, the purpose of the parable is to show why the judgment against Israel is being delayed by 40 years, until AD 70.

It is to show that even after 40 years they do not produce any fruitfulness. Even after 40 years there is no repentance on the part of the nation.

And finally the destruction of AD 70 hit.

## **8. Concerning Israel's Need, § 110a, Luke 13:10-17**

Section 110 is the last synagogue incident recorded in Jesus life.

Read verses 10-17.

### *Sabbath rest*

Mosaic Law did not prohibit healing on the Sabbath, but rabbinic law did. They argued that if someone had been sick for any period of time, why not wait just one more day rather than heal on the Sabbath day. But the purpose of the Sabbath was rest, and the point Jesus makes is that true rest consists in healing and being delivered from bondage.

### *Focus is individuals*

Notice the focus of Jesus' ministry here. He is no longer dealing with Jews as a nation, but He is dealing with Jews as individuals.

We see this in verse 16. He refers to the woman as *this woman*, a daughter of Abraham.

Notice the indefinite object, indicated in English by the indefinite article. She is a daughter of Abraham, one of many.

And the point is that as a nation they are under judgment and He is no longer dealing with them as a nation at this time.

But He will deal with Jewish individuals, and individual Jews can come to faith. And she is one example, a daughter of Abraham.

And since His rejection His emphasis has been on individual Jews as opposed to Jews as a nation.

## **9. Concerning the Kingdom Program, § 110b, Luke 13:18-21**

Read verses 18-21.

Here Jesus repeats two of the parables of the mystery kingdom.

### *Context*

Luke connects this section with the previous one with the word “so” or “therefore”.

In the previous section Jesus was responding to the hypocrisy of the Pharisees, and confronting them with their rejection of His Messiahship and its consequences. And He has just released a woman *whom Satan has bound for eighteen long years*.

Therefore He now repeats these two parables which describe the mystery kingdom, the kingdom that will come about due to their rejection of Him as their Messiah.

### *Parable of the mustard seed*

First the parable of the mustard seed in which a seed that normally grows into a bush is growing into a tree with the birds of the air nesting in its branches. And as we saw in section 64, the birds represent the agents of Satan. The point of the parable is that there will be an abnormal growth of the mystery kingdom until it becomes a monstrosity housing the agents of Satan.

### *Parable of the leaven*

In the second parable the leaven is false teaching and false doctrine. And so Jesus is teaching that the mystery kingdom, in all its divisions, will contain false teaching. And what happened to Judaism, the corrupting of God’s word with the traditions of men, traditions that actually make it difficult for people to see God’s word as He intended it to be seen, will also happen in the church age!

## N. The Conflict at the Feast of Dedication, § 111, John 10:22-39

Read John 10:22-23.

### *Hanukkah*

Here we learn that it is the time of the Feast of Dedication.

The Hebrew word for this feast is Hanukkah, which means dedication. And it is not a feast inaugurated by Moses. There were two feasts inaugurated after the time of Moses.

One is the Feast of Purim as a result of events recorded in the book of Esther. It celebrates deliverance from persecution and execution at the hands of the Persians.

And the other is the Feast of Hanukkah or Dedication resulting from the events occurring in the inter-testament period. And while these events and the feast itself is not found in the Old Testament, the events that lead to it are prophesied in Daniel's prophecies (Daniel 8 & 11).

It was a time when the Greek Syrians had taken over the temple and had desecrated it by offering a pig on the altar. After three years of fighting the Jews got the temple back, and it was the month of Kislev, which corresponds to our December. Notice in verse 23 it says it was winter. The feast is observed in the month of December, winter time.

Having recovered the temple from the Syrians, they were three months late for the Feast of Tabernacles, which is a festival that lasts for 7 days plus one day, a total of eight days.

So when they dedicated the temple they observed the Feast of Tabernacles three months late. They then decided to make this an annual affair. They would observe the Feast of Tabernacles at its normal time in the month of October, and then observe the Feast of Dedication for eight days in the month of December.

And Jewish people do that to this day.

And the only place that the Feast of Dedication is mentioned in the Bible is here in the New Testament.

This is the occasion. It was winter and the time of the Feast of Dedication. And, John writes, *Jesus was walking in the temple in the portico of Solomon.*

### *Accusation*

Read how the Jews confront Him in verses 24-26.

What are the Jews saying here?

They accuse Him of being obscure about His messianic claims. They claim that He had not come out openly and said that He was the Messiah, though obviously He did that rather frequently.

## Response

Jesus begins His response in very clear terms by directly contradicting their accusation and pointing out the reason why they think He has been obscure.

His response actually comes in four parts, resulting in a clear picture of the issue.

1. He says simply, *I told you*. And in its context where they have just asked, *if you are the Christ, tell us plainly*, it means that rather than being obscure as they claim, He has in fact told them very plainly. And by His words He has claimed to be the Messiah.
2. Then He points out why they think He has been obscure. Their problem, He says, is not that He didn't tell them clearly. Their problem is that they did not believe.
3. Then He adds that, not only has He told them by His words, but also by His works. The miracles He performed substantiate His claims.
4. And then He gives the reason for their unbelief. He says, *But you do not believe because you are not of My sheep*. And because they are not of His sheep they fail to recognize Him.

## His sheep

Then, having mentioned His sheep, He goes on to give three characteristics of His sheep.

Read verses 27-29.

What are the three characteristics of His sheep?

### 1. They recognise Him

How would you summarize verse 27?

They recognize Him.

How do they recognize Him?

They hear His voice, and they follow Him. So when He calls, they respond. And they respond because they recognize Him.

For example, when Matthew was called, He left everything and followed Him because he recognized Him to be the Messiah. And when He called the fishermen on the Sea of Galilee, they dropped everything and they followed Him.

### 2. Eternal life

Not only do they recognize Him, at the beginning of verse 28 He gives them eternal life.

### 3. Eternal security

Eternal life, by its very nature, is permanent. It is not temporary. And Jesus goes on to say that His sheep cannot be snatched out of His hand, and they cannot be snatched out of the Father's hand.

This is an important statement teaching eternal security. They have eternal life which cannot be taken away from them.

### *He and the Father are one*

Then His argument reaches its climax as He makes a very clear statement about His divinity in verse 30.

Read verses 30-33.

He says quite plainly: *I and the Father are one.*

Now, do they understand what He means?

Obviously! John records in verse 31 that *The Jews picked up stones again to stone Him*. So much for their accusation that He was obscure! Their actions reveal their understanding.

And long ago, in John chapter 5, when He claimed that God was His Father, the Jewish audience understood Him to claim that He is equal with God. And again their actions revealed their understanding. *They were seeking all the more to kill Him because He ... was making Himself equal with God.* (John 5:18)

But now He makes an even stronger claim. He says, *I and the Father are one.*

Before they begin throwing the stones He asks them a question to highlight just what they understood Him to say:

*I showed you many good works from the Father; before you stone me can you please tell me for which of them are you stoning Me?*

Notice their answer in verse 33:

*The Jews answered Him, "For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy; and because You, being a man, make Yourself out to be God."*

So they understood correctly that He claimed to be God Himself.

### *Blasphemy?*

Then He responds to their claim that He is blaspheming by claiming to be one with God.

Read verses 34-39.

He begins by quoting from Psalm 82:6, where God, speaking of Israel's judges, says "*you are Elohim*", "*you are gods*".

Jesus is using a form of argument commonly used by the rabbis, a form of argument which progresses from the lesser to the greater.

He argues that if the Law calls gods men who are given that title by divine declaration (a fact established by the Scripture which cannot be invalidated), then surely it cannot be blasphemy if He, who the Father sanctified and sent into the world declares that He is indeed the Son of God.

That is to say ...

The judges were men appointed by God in this age and God declared that they are gods. And the word of God came to them. And they had delegated authority to perform the works of God on earth.

This is stated in the Scripture which is true and cannot be broken. The Greek word, *broken*, is the same verb, *to loose*, which we have met before. It means the Scripture has been declared by God and cannot be changed.

But, in contrast with the judges, Jesus, who is the Son of God, and who is the Word of God, was set apart by God and sent into the world by Him. By saying that He and the Father are one, He is saying that What God is, He is. And if the Father is God, and He is, then He also is God.

If the lesser is true, and it is because the Scripture is true, then surely the greater is also true.

And He is therefore not blaspheming because His statement is true.

### *Moses and Aaron*

Verse 35, where Jesus refers to those *to whom the word of God came*, is quite likely speaking of Moses and Aaron.

We are told in Exodus 4:16 that Moses was a god to Aaron. And in Exodus 7:1 we read that Moses was a god to Pharaoh.

And how was Moses as God to Aaron and Pharaoh?

Because God sent him and he was God's messenger. God gave him His words to speak to Pharaoh through Aaron.

And if Moses, who was merely a man who received the words of God, could be as god to Aaron and Pharaoh, why could not Jesus, who is the Word of God, be the very Messiah, the Son of God.

Like Moses, He was God's messenger with God's message.

The children of Israel listened to Moses. Why should they not listen to Him? He not only claimed this unique privilege, He had the power to prove His claims, and He performed it.

### *Believe His works!*

The judges and Moses only had delegated authority. He claimed not merely delegated authority. He claimed to be what the Father is. *I and the Father are one*. He claimed that He is God.

And again He asks them to believe this, even if they are unable to believe it on account of what He said, He asks them to believe it on account of His works.

### *Rejection*

And how do they respond?

In verse 39, *Therefore they were seeking again to seize Him, and He eluded their grasp*.

Once again they reject Him. And they try to take hold of Him to stone Him.

But of course He eludes them.

## VI THE PREPARATION OF THE DISCIPLES BY THE KING, § 112-127

Now He begins to focus His ministry on preparing His disciples for His coming death. Until now He was instructing His disciples in how they were to conduct their lives and carry on their teaching ministry in Jesus' absence. Now beginning in section 112 He is preparing them for His death when He will leave them.

The main element in the previous segment of His life was the statement, *and there was a division*. Jesus' coming caused a division among the Jewish people, even among family members

The main element or motif of this segment is *the first shall be last, the last shall be first*. And *the exalted shall be humbled, the humble shall be exalted*.

And He is going to make a contrast between the Jewish leadership and the individual Jew, particularly the disciples, who will follow the Messiah.

Those who saw themselves as exalted will be humbled, and the humble, who will come to Messiah for mercy will be exalted.

Those who were first, namely the Jewish leadership, will be last. And those who were considered last will be raised to a status of first place.

### A. The Withdrawal from Judea, § 112, John 10:40–42

#### *Perea*

Now read John 10:40–42.

He now goes into what is called Perea. Perea is the east bank of the Jordan River. That puts Him outside the jurisdiction of the Sanhedrin. The Sanhedrin's jurisdiction went only as far as the Jordan and the Sanhedrin could do nothing once He is across the Jordan.

#### *John the Baptist*

This is also the area where John the Baptist did most of his ministry.

John heralded the first coming of the Messiah.

John's ministry was not the restoration of all things. That will be the function of Elijah in preparation for the Messiah's second coming. John's ministry was to have a people ready to accept the Messiah once the Messiah was identified at His first coming.

This ministry of John was foretold by Malachi in Malachi 3:1.

<sup>1</sup> *"Behold, I am going to send My messenger, and he will clear the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple; and the messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight, behold, He is coming," says the Lord of hosts.*

Malachi also prophesied that Elijah would be sent before the second coming of the Lord. We find this in Malachi 4:5–6.

<sup>5</sup> *"Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord."* <sup>6</sup> *"He will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, so that I will not come and smite the land with a curse."*

As we saw in Luke 12: 51-53, as a result of His rejection there will be division, even between family members.

But when Elijah comes, immediately before the Lord's return, *he will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers.*

#### *The result of John's ministry*

Now we read here in verses 41 – 42 that John's ministry was quite successful:

<sup>41</sup>*Many came to Him and were saying, "While John performed no sign, yet everything John said about this man was true."* <sup>42</sup>*Many believed in Him there.*

So those who had been baptized by John, and made the commitment to believe in the Messiah when John identifies who He is, have no trouble recognizing Him as the Messiah.

It is those who have rejected John's baptism who also reject Jesus.

## **B. Instruction Concerning Entrance into the Kingdom, § 113, Luke 13:22-35**

In section 113 we find Jesus teaching concerning entrance into the Kingdom. And verse 22 sets the scene.

Read verse 22.

*And He was passing through from one city and village to another, teaching, and proceeding on His way to Jerusalem.*

He is on His way back to Jerusalem, and He is passing through cities and villages along the way. And, while they are not specifically mentioned here, no doubt He was visiting the places which had been prepared for Him by the seventy who were sent out for that purpose in section 102.

#### *Question*

And as He was going, someone raised a question.

Read verse 23

*Lord, are there just a few who are being saved?*

This question arises because, during the previous three months of His ministry, which we have just looked at in sections 96 – 111, while there are many who believe, the great majority obviously do not believe.

And while the question concerns salvation, we see from Jesus' answer that its focus involves entry into the Messianic Kingdom.

#### *Answer*

Now read how Jesus begins His response in verse 24.

There are two points here:

1. first of all the door is narrow; and
2. secondly entry through the door is difficult and requires them to *strive*.



### *The narrow door*

Why does He describe the door as narrow?

Pharisaism is a wide road because they taught that all Israel has a share in the age to come. That is, anyone born a Jew would have the right to enter into the Messiah's Kingdom.

However, Jesus taught that the way into the Kingdom was narrow, because only those who believed Him to be the Messiah would enter into the Kingdom of God.

So He says they must *strive to enter through the narrow door*.

Jesus responds that entry into the Kingdom has been blocked by Pharisaism, so it takes a struggle for a Jew to break through what he has been programmed to believe before he can see the way to enter in.

### *Strive*

And He says they must *strive to enter*.

Why must they *strive to enter*?

Because Pharisaism has so re-interpreted what the Scriptures actually taught, the Jew has to undergo a struggle before he can understand and accept that Jesus is the Messiah. And the struggle involves a radical change of world view.

He undergoes a reprogramming of his mind before he can break away from the Pharisaic programming and recognize the Messiahship of Jesus. Any Jewish person, even today, who is confronted with His Messiahship ends up going through this struggle before they can see the possibility. It's a spiritual struggle. It is also an ethnic struggle, a theological struggle, and a national struggle.

### *The door will be shut*

Then He warns them that the time is coming when it will be too late to enter.

Read verses 25-27.

When the door is shut the opportunity to enter is finished. When He comes to establish His kingdom it will be too late to enter in.

And although they will even acknowledge that He is the one who taught in their streets, and they will plead to be allowed to enter the Kingdom, they will not be doing it on the basis that they accept His Messiahship.

And He will call them evildoers and tell them to depart.

### *The result*

Then He describes the result.

Read verses 28-29.

Those who break through in their struggle and accept His Messiahship are the ones who are going to enter the kingdom, while the majority is going to be left outside the Kingdom.

When the kingdom is finally established, people will come from north, south, east, and west, and they will sit down and enjoy the Kingdom, while those who were initially invited into the Kingdom will be outside the Kingdom.

### *Motif*

Then in verse 30 we come to the motif repeated in this period of His ministry. Read verse 30.

*And behold, some are last who will be first and some are first who will be last.*

Those who saw themselves as exalted will be humbled, and the humble, who will come to Messiah for mercy, will be exalted.

### *To the Jew first!*

Notice that, as Paul reminds us, the gospel is *to the Jew first, and also to the Gentiles*.

The Jews, who were chosen by God and given the promises and the covenants, should have been the first to believe and therefore the first to enter the kingdom.

But they will be the last to enter the kingdom.

And right at the very end of the Tribulation all Israel will believe, and so they will be the very last to enter into the kingdom!

They should have been the first, but they will be the last.

And the Gentiles, who would have been the last, will be first because all the Gentiles who enter the kingdom will enter the kingdom before that day when all the Jews will enter.

### *Pharisees*

Now read verse 31.

*Just at that time some Pharisees approached, saying to Him, "Go away, leave here, for Herod wants to kill You."*

Now why do you think the Pharisees warn Him about what Herod might do to Him?

Remember that we read that He crossed over to the eastern side of the Jordan and into Perea.

Perea, along with Galilee, was under the jurisdiction of Herod Antipas. However it was outside the jurisdiction of the Sanhedrin.

And while their statement appears to express concern for His safety, actually, the Pharisees' concern was to get Him to go back to the west side of the Jordan where the Sanhedrin could have Him arrested.

### *Response*

Read His answer in verses 32-33.

He answers them with a parable so they don't understand what He is saying, and He is telling them they do not need to be concerned.

He won't go to Jerusalem at this stage. But He will eventually and at exactly the right time.

So they need not be concerned. He will die in Jerusalem.

And their attempt to get Him to cross back over the Jordan into the jurisdiction of the Sanhedrin fails.

### Lament

Then He concludes with a lament, and, as we will see when we reach section 137, He will close His public ministry with this same lament.

Read verses 34-35.

In it He summarises three messages to Israel.

1. He often liked to spread out His hands and offer Israel the Messianic protection offered by the prophets. But He says *and you would not have it* - when they rejected Him.
2. Consequently, in the first clause of verse 35, their house is destined to lie desolate. It is destined to be destroyed forty years hence.
3. Now look at the rest of verse 35.

*And I say to you, you will not see Me until the time comes when you say,*

*'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!'*

### Messianic greeting

Now what is the significance of this statement?

In Hebrew, those words, *Blessed is he who comes* are a greeting. It is how you greet someone who arrives in the country or simply comes to your home. When a friend returns to Israel after a journey the first words he hears will be: "Baruch Haba (Blessed is he who comes)."

Jesus was saying, I will not return until you welcome me.

This saying is a quote from Psalm 118:26. Psalm 118 is a messianic Psalm. It speaks about the Messiah at the time of the second coming.

Read Psalm 118:22-26 to get a glimpse of its context.

*<sup>22</sup> The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief corner stone. <sup>23</sup> This is the Lord's doing; It is marvelous in our eyes. <sup>24</sup> This is the day which the Lord has made; Let us rejoice and be glad in it. <sup>25</sup> O Lord, do save, we beseech You; O Lord, we beseech You, do send prosperity! <sup>26</sup> Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord; We have blessed you from the house of the Lord.*

The stone rejected by the builders is the Messiah. But now, in the time that the psalmist is writing about, a time that is still future, He becomes the chief cornerstone, and it is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in their eyes. It is a day of rejoicing and gladness. And they address Him with this greeting: *Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.*

So in the first century Jewish context that expression was the official Jewish greeting for the Messiah.

And rabbis would teach that whenever the Messiah comes He must be welcomed with these words.

And when they finally say these words it will be because they are accepting Him to be their Messianic King.

So, here in verse 35 He lays down the pre-condition to His second coming.

He won't return until the Jewish people acknowledge Him to be the Messiah and ask Him to come back.

## **C. Instruction in a Pharisee's House, § 114, Luke 14:1-24**

In section 114, we again find Jesus invited over to a Pharisees house, and, as verses 1 and 2 point out, it is merely for entrapment. They have also invited a man with dropsy and given him a place in front of Jesus. And they invited Him so that they might watch Him closely to see what He would do.

### **1. True Sabbath Rest, Luke 14:1-6**

Read verses 1-6.

What point does Jesus make here by healing this man?

His point here is that true Sabbath rest includes being healed.

He points out that even the Pharisees taught that if a domesticated animal falls into a pit on the Sabbath day and its life is endangered, then it is permissible to raise the animal out of the pit – even on the Sabbath day.

But a human being is more valuable than an animal that was made for the service of man.

And for Jesus true Sabbath rest means not just the cessation of activity, but a restoration of health and wellbeing.

So He proceeds to heal which, of course, violates the Pharisaic law, but not the Mosaic Law.

### **2. Humility, Luke 14:7-11**

He goes on to teach them a parable about humility.

Read verses 7-11.

What point does He make with this parable?

The point He makes is: don't praise yourself, wait for others to praise you. And don't raise yourself up, but let others raise you up.

And then He repeats the motif of this period of His ministry in verse 11.

*For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.*

Again He reminds them that those who see themselves as exalted will be humbled, and the humble, who will come to Messiah for mercy, will be exalted.

And in the context in which He is speaking it is the Pharisees and leaders of Israel who see themselves as exalted.

### **3. Respect of Persons, Luke 14:12-14**

Read verses 12-14 where He speaks about respect of persons, but not just respect of persons. So as we read, look to see the deeper significance of what He says.

Notice that Jesus is addressing His host. What is He saying to him?

He is pointing out to His host that the kind of hospitality they were showing Him was simply self-seeking and self-righteous.

True hospitality flowing out of the righteousness of God should be extended to those who have no way of repaying.

And why should he extend hospitality to those who are unable to repay him?

Because, He says, such hospitality *will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous*.

And why will it be rewarded at that time?

Such hospitality will be rewarded *at the resurrection of the righteous* because it is the outward expression of the kind of righteousness that one is given when He accepts the Jesus to be the Messiah.

So, while Jesus is speaking to His host about respect of persons in the context of hospitality, He is actually speaking to him about the contrast between hospitality which is based upon self-righteousness, and hospitality which is based upon true righteousness.

#### 4. The Rejection of the Invitation, Luke 14:15-24

Then He finishes His teaching here with a parable.

Read verses 15-24.

Now Luke introduces this parable by telling us the response of one of the guests to what Jesus had just been saying about the reward for hospitality that is based on true righteousness.

*When one of those who were reclining at the table with Him heard this, he said to Him, "Blessed is everyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God!"*

So Jesus responds with a parable about a great feast that had been prepared.

##### *The illustration*

Before we look for the meaning of the parable, let us take notice of the details of the illustration itself. What are the important details? There are quite a few of them.

A man had planned to give a feast. And certain people had already received an invitation.

And when the feast had been prepared the man sent out his servants to those who had been invited telling them to come and partake because everything is now ready.

And one by one they all gave excuses why they could not come.

Some were simply too occupied with business. Some were too occupied with their possessions. Others were simply too occupied with personal pleasures.

How does the man respond to this?

He sends out his slave twice more to bring in two groups of people to his banquet.

Where is he sent first? And who is he to bring in?

He is sent into the streets and lanes of the city to bring in the *poor and crippled and blind and lame*.

And where is he sent the second time?

He is sent *out into the highways and along the hedges*.

So, having first brought in the poor of the city from its streets and lanes, he is then sent out further afield along the highways to compel others to come to the feast.

Then the man declares: *none of those men who were invited shall taste of my dinner*.

### *Meaning*

Now that we have a clear view of the illustration used in the parable, what are its key elements, and what do they mean?

The man who prepared this feast is God Himself, and the feast is the banquet that will take place in the Messianic Kingdom.

And the meal is prepared by means of the prophets.

And the invitations were given out by John the Baptist.

Then Jesus came to bid the invited guests to come for the banquet was now ready.

And the invited guests were the Jewish leaders.

But the Jewish leaders of that generation rejected the offer.

So now the feast will be given, not to those who were initially invited, the Jewish leaders, but to two other groups.

The ones for whom the servant was sent out into the streets and lanes of the city would be Jewish Believers in *Yeshua*. And they were brought in.

As there was still room, the servant was sent out beyond the streets of the city into the countryside to bring Gentiles in to the feast.

So that generation which received the invitation to enter the Kingdom will fail to enter the Kingdom. They will not be in it either in this age or in the age to come.

And others who were not initially invited, the Jews first, and also the Gentiles, will get to partake of the wedding feast.

## D. Instruction Concerning Discipleship, § 115, Luke 14:25–35

Now in section 115 Jesus teaches about discipleship. And as we look at this section bear in mind that discipleship is not the same as salvation. Salvation has only one requirement, and that is to believe certain truths.

### *Three lessons in discipleship*

Here Jesus teaches three lessons about what is required of a disciple.

#### 1. *Leave all.*

Read how He begins in verses 25-26.

*If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple.*

Has this statement ever troubled you, and have you ever wondered what it means?

Especially in Jewish circles where they like to pick on the New Testament, many like to point out a discrepancy here between the Old Testament and the New Testament. They point out that the Old Testament teaches that we should honour our parents, but here Jesus tells us to hate our father and mother.

### *Meaning of words*

Now in English we tend to use the words love and hate primarily in the emotional sense, and sometimes the Scriptures use it that way as well.

But there is also another way the words love and hate are used in the Scriptures. – They means to choose and not to choose. To love means to choose, and to hate means to reject or not to choose.

In Jewish literature it is used of a common situation where a man went into a shoe store and found that of all the sandals in the store only two of them would fit his feet, and so his choice was limited to those two pairs. And then it says he loved one and hated the other. But it doesn't mean that he had this emotional love affair with one pair of sandals, and that he also had an emotional animosity towards the other pair. It simply meant that he chose one pair and did not choose the other pair.

### *Jewish context*

Remember that Jesus is speaking at a time when the Jewish people as a nation were rejecting Him as the Messiah. And many parents, spouses, and brothers or sisters would not acknowledge Him to be the Messiah.

And if the believing Jew is going to be His disciple, he needs to follow Him anyway, in spite of the rejection of his family members.

So the disciple must choose not to follow his family members who have rejected the Messiah, and instead choose to follow Jesus.

### *Meaning*

The principle is that, if we are going to be His disciples, then anything that would stand in the way of our following Jesus must be removed.

And Abraham is an example of this in that God called him to leave his family and to follow Him.

The disciple must be willing to leave all relationships behind, and notice He says, *even his own life*, to follow Him.

In other words, the disciple needs to be ready to relinquish everything, even his very own life, in order to follow our Lord and Messiah, Jesus.

### 2. *Identify with His rejection*

Now read verse 27 to see the second lesson.

What does He mean by the expression *carry his own cross*?

We looked at this back in section 70 where Jesus was beginning to teach them about the ministry they would have in view of His rejection.

It was the Roman custom to make convicted criminals carry their own crosses to the place of crucifixion. So bearing a cross meant carrying their own execution device while facing ridicule and humiliation along the way to death.

Therefore to carry a cross and follow Him means to chose to identify with Him, knowing that the consequence may very well be rejection and humiliation, and even death.

It means to identify ourselves with Him, even in being rejected as He was rejected.

### 3. *Count the cost.*

The third lesson points out the need to count the cost of discipleship before committing to it.

Read verses 28-33.

How much of our possessions are we willing to give up in order to become a disciple. Jesus demands all of it.

Again Jesus makes a clear distinction between salvation and discipleship.

And for salvation only one thing is necessary, and that is belief in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus.

But for discipleship it is necessary to give up all things, even our own lives; to identify with His rejection; and to think through what it means to follow Him, and then accept whatever provision God provides along the way as we follow Him wherever He calls us to go.



## Salt

Jesus now brings His lessons about discipleship to a conclusion by repeating the parable of salt.

By way of review, how is it that salt can lose its flavour?

Salt as we know it is pure sodium chloride and cannot lose its saltiness. But in the Middle East of Jesus' day salt was obtained from mineral deposits that were a mixture of several minerals and if it was exposed to rain or moisture from the earth the sodium chloride would be leached out of it and it would become tasteless.

### *Previous uses of the parable of salt*

This is the third section where He has used this parable.

1. The first time He used it was in section 54, where He was describing in detail the characteristics of the true righteousness required by the Law of Moses.

There He used it to explain that, just as their salt contained within it a salty flavoured component, so Israel contained within it a believing Remnant who were intended by God to be the flavour of righteousness in the world. They were to possess the characteristics of true righteousness for all the earth to savour. So the Jews were the salt of the earth.

But they had lost their flavour of righteousness because so many of them were following the Pharisaic tradition of righteousness instead of the true righteousness required by the Law.

2. The second time He used the parable of salt was in section 91, where Jesus was teaching His disciples about their exclusiveness and pride.

His disciples had been arguing amongst themselves about which of them was the greatest. And Jesus taught them that they should be living in peace with each other, and not be jealous if one is elevated above another. And this will come about if they have the salt of the righteousness of God within them because one of the outward effects of God's righteousness within them will be that they are *at peace with one another*.

And just as salt enhances the flavour of food, so true righteousness within enhances their fellowship.

3. Now here, the third time He uses this parable, He is teaching the crowds about discipleship. And with it He is pointing out to them that a prerequisite of true discipleship is to have the righteousness of God within them.

So now He has used this illustration three times in three different contexts:

1. Speaking to the Jews under the Law of Moses,
2. Speaking to the disciples about their pride, and
3. Speaking to the crowds about discipleship.

And in each context the salt represents the righteousness of God that those He was addressing need to have within them.

## E. Instruction Concerning God's Attitude toward Sinners, § 116, Luke 15:1-32

In section 116 we see Jesus giving instruction concerning God's attitude towards sinners.

### 1. The Occasion – Luke 15:1-2

Read verses 1-2 to see the occasion or what it was that provoked this instruction.

Why were the Pharisees and scribes grumbling?

*He receives sinners and eats with them.*

And why was this a cause for them to criticize Him?

In Pharisaic theology it was said that God rejoiced over the death of sinners. Therefore, in their view, if Jesus really was the Messiah, he would not have welcomed sinners.

The Mishnah, the Oral Law of the Pharisees, contained a great number of rules covering a Pharisee's relationship towards sinners. And by the word *sinners* they mean prostitutes and tax collectors.

Here are five of the many such rules which show their underlying attitude:

- 1) The Pharisee was neither allowed to sell anything to, nor to buy anything from, a publican or sinner, in either a dry or fluid state. And that covers everything!
- 2) The Pharisee was not to eat at the sinner's table and thus partake of something which may not have been tithed.

The Pharisees tithed every little seed. And they would not even accept food at a non-Pharisee's home because of the fear of partaking of un-tithed food.

- 3) The Pharisee was not to admit the sinner to his own table until he put on the clothes of a Pharisee.

And this was a figure of speech, meaning conversion to Pharisaism.

So only if a sinner became a Pharisee would he be allowed to eat at a Pharisee's table.

- 4) A Pharisee was not to do anything in the sinner's presence which might demonstrate any points connected with the laws of purification.

He was not to do anything which might arouse interest in ritual purification on the part of the sinner.

The sinner should be dissuaded from even asking questions about the laws of purification.

God forbid that he might want to be converted!

- 5) There is joy before God when the one who provokes Him perishes from the earth.

And so God rejoices over the death of a sinner.

And the application of these attitudes to Jesus was:

If He was really the Messiah, then He would not associate with this class of society.

And so it was this attitude of the Pharisees towards sinners that gives rise to their grumbling here.

#### *Jesus' response*

This is the occasion. And Jesus responds with three parables to show the contrast between the Pharisaic attitude towards sinners and God's attitude towards sinners.

Verse 3 begins with the word, *so*, meaning therefore. And it is important to remember that the three parables that follow are a direct response to the grumbling of the Pharisees and scribes.

### **2. The Parable of the Lost Sheep – Luke 15:3-7**

Read verses 3-7.

#### *Lost and found*

The focus here is on the lostness of the sheep, because of the tendency of sheep to stray.

And human beings, like sheep, have a tendency to stray from God and become lost.

This parable may also be describing the work of God the **Son**, who goes to find the one who is lost and brings him back into the fold.

#### *Joy*

And notice how the parable ends: when the sheep is found there is joy.

And in the same way *there will be joy in heaven over one sinner who repents.*

### **3. The Parable of the Lost Coin – Luke 15:8-10**

Read the second parable in verses 8-10.

#### *Searching*

Whereas the first parable is about the status of the sheep which is lost, the second parable is about the woman's earnestness in seeking.

So the focus is on the searching.

And this emphasises the work of the Holy Spirit, who searches the hearts of all individuals and is the agent by which a person's heart is opened and drawn to the Lord.

#### *Joy*

And when the coin is found there is joy, and so it is also in life, when a sinner repents there is joy, as Jesus says in verse 10.

*In the same way, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.*

And this contradicts the Pharisaic mind set.

#### 4. The Parable of the Prodigal Son – Luke 15:11-32

The third parable is the well-known parable of the prodigal son.

And here the focus is on restoration, which is the work of God the Father.

##### *The prodigal*

Read verses 11-19.

There are two sons. One who is staying home and working with the father, and one who wants to receive the inheritance early. So the father divided the inheritance and, because he was wealthy, the younger son's portion (one third) would still have been quite substantial. But he wasted all his funds in riotous living. Finally, to survive he had to get a job feeding pigs, which for a Jew is quite a downward trend!

Finally he came to his senses and recognised that his own sustenance was even poorer than what the servants in his father's house had to eat. So he chooses to go back home, not with the intent of being restored back into sonship, but simply to be a servant and do better than working for the one who raises pigs.

##### *The father's longing*

Now read verse 20.

What does this say about the father?

It shows that the father was sitting in a position where he could see in the distance. And this was his habit. It was no coincidence that the father saw his son returning *while he was still a long way off*. He was longing for his son to return, and, on a daily basis, he kept looking for his son to return.

And when he sees his son, what does he do?

When he sees his son approaching in the distance, he doesn't wait for his son to arrive; he runs to his son and greets him warmly.

##### *Restored by the Father*

Then Jesus tells us about how the father restores the son.

Read verses 21-24.

In verse 22, the father gives him three things. What are they, and what is their significance?

1. He gives him the best robe, which is the sign of his birth right. (1 Samuel 18:4 Johnathan)
2. He gives him a ring, which is the sign of his authority in the household. (Genesis 41:42 Joseph; Haggai 2:23 Zerubbabel; Esther 8:2 Mordecai)
3. He gives him shoes or better sandals as a sign of his sonship. (Deuteronomy 25:9)

Then they begin to celebrate *for*, as the father says, *this son of mine was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found*.

### *The older brother*

But then the older brother comes in from working in the field.

Read verses 25 - 30.

How does the older brother respond to what he sees?

He doesn't like what he sees because he has always been obedient. And never has there been a feast held for him, and never has he had these gifts given to him. And he is the eldest son.

But he has never been rewarded.

So, in his mind he has earned many celebrations, but has never received any.

### *The reason for the rejoicing*

And how does the father respond to this?

Read verses 31-32.

<sup>31</sup>*"And he said to him, 'Son, you have always been with me, and all that is mine is yours.*  
<sup>32</sup>*'But we had to celebrate and rejoice, for this brother of yours was dead and has begun to live, and was lost and has been found.' "*

So what reason does the father give for the celebration and rejoicing?

They are in response to the fact that the one who was lost has been found. And the one who as considered dead has begun to live again.

### *The lesson*

There is a lesson here.

The older brother believed that he should be rewarded with celebrations because he had earned them. And this is the teaching of the Pharisees. They believe they will be rewarded for all their works in keeping their rules.

But Jesus is pointing out here that rewards will not be given on the basis merit, but rewards will be given on the basis of mercy.

The one who has never gone away does not need to be restored. And the restored son is the one they must rejoice over.

### *Conclusion*

All three parables teach about the rejoicing that takes place when the lost one returns. And this stands in stark contrast to the Pharisaic attitude expressed in the grumbling that provided the occasion for this teaching.

And the purpose of the three parables is to explain the difference between the Pharisaic attitude towards sinners and God's attitude towards sinners.

And God does not rejoice over the death of a sinner, but rather, He rejoices over those who come to Him.

## F. Instruction Concerning Wealth, § 117a, Luke 16:1-31

### 1. The Parable of the Unjust Steward, Luke 16:1-13

Now Jesus turns from addressing the Pharisees and scribes about the attitude of God towards sinners and returns to His instruction of the disciples.

#### *The parable*

Read Luke 16:1-8.

First of all notice that this manager is not dismissed immediately. Notice in verse 3 that he says, *my master is taking the management away from me*. And in verse 4 he says, *so that when I am removed from the management...*

So this manager is given notice that his employment will be terminated because he was squandering his master's possessions.

How does he use the time he has left?

He uses it to make new friends in the hope that when he loses his present job he will be welcomed and possibly even given a new job by one of them.

#### *Key point of the parable*

Now how does his master respond to this?

He responds with praise!

And why does he praise him?

Verse 8 gives us the reason.

*His master praised the unrighteous manager because he had acted shrewdly.*

Notice that he was not commended for his unrighteousness, but for his shrewdness. He was commended for his wisdom demonstrated by his actions. The time he had left in his job, he used wisely to make friends for the future.

#### *Application*

Then at the end of verse 8 Jesus begins to make His application of the illustration given in the parable. He says:

*for the sons of this age are more shrewd in relation to their own kind than the sons of light.*

Here He notes that unbelievers show more shrewdness than believers.

### Application

Now read His application in verse 9.

*And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by means of the wealth of unrighteousness, so that when it fails, they will receive you into the eternal dwellings.*

Now the word translated “wealth” here is “mammon”, which is a common rabbinic term referring to all that the world offers materially. It includes all kinds of possessions, earnings, gain, and anything of material value.

And what is the point Jesus is making here?

The point is this: He says we are to use the material things of this world to win friends for ourselves.

And why are we to do that? He also give us the reason.

*So that when it fails, they will receive you into the eternal dwellings.*

When what fails?

When the mammon fails.

And when does mammon fail?

Our material world fails for us when we die and go to heaven.

And what will happen then?

Then some of those who we helped to bring to the Lord will be in heaven welcoming us *into the eternal dwellings*.

In other words, some of the people that we win to the Lord by using our material means will go into heaven before we do, and they will be there to welcome us when we arrive.

### Three contrasts

He goes on to make three contrasts in regard to faithfulness.

Read them in verses 10-12.

1. Verse 10. The one who is faithful in a very little thing will also be faithful with much.
2. Verse 11. The contrast is between unrighteous mammon and true riches.

What are the true riches?

The true wealth that belongs to believers is the message of the gospel that they have from Jesus.

3. Verse 12. The contrast is between that which is another’s and that which is your own.

And what is the point He is making with these three contrasts?

The point here is that

if believers are trustworthy in little things and with material things, and if they are trustworthy with the possessions of others,

then unbelievers will trust them with greater things, with the true wealth of the gospel which they possess.

Some of these will believe and go on to heaven ahead of us and will be there to welcome us when we arrive.

So believers can use the material things of this world to win friends for the Lord.

*Who are we serving?*

But His lesson is still incomplete, and He adds the most important part right at the end.

Read it in verse 13.

*No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.*

Here He points out that it is impossible to serve two masters. We will always end up choosing one over the other, serving the one we choose devotedly and neglecting the other. As Paul points out in a different context, we will be the slaves of the one we choose to obey.

So what is the issue He is bringing to their attention?

The issue is this, and it is a key question in each of our lives:

Who are we serving? Which one is in control? Is it God, or is it mammon?

We need the material things of this world to provide for our families, to pay our bills and things of that nature. But are we subservient to the material things of this world? Or are we serving the Lord?

And once we are serving the Lord then we will know how to deal with our material things.

We will know what part of our income has to go to meet our needs, what part we want to save, and what part will go to support the Lord's work. All these have to be brought into consideration.

If we make ourselves the servants of God, then we will see our mammon, our material things, from His perspective and He will teach us how to deal properly with them.

## **2. The Conflict with the Pharisees, Luke 16:14-18**

*Scoffing*

Read verse 14.

In section 116 we saw Jesus responding to the grumbling of the Pharisees and the scribes about the fact that He was receiving sinners and eating with them. So He was teaching them about God's attitude towards sinners, which stands in contrast to their own attitude towards sinners.

Now, while He has been speaking to His disciples, the Pharisees have also been listening. But they cannot contain themselves, and they begin scoffing at Him.



### *Pharisaic attitude*

Why is this?

Luke point out that they *were lovers of money*.

The teaching of Pharisaism was: whomsoever the Lord loves He makes rich. And so they gave themselves to becoming wealthy, because wealth was, in their view, a sign of divine favour.

And unfortunately, some in the church have fallen into the same trap with the health and wealth message.

### *Response*

Read how Jesus responds to their scoffing in verses 15-18.

In verse 15 He points out the contrast between God's view of their hearts and their own view.

In verses 16-17 He repeats something He taught earlier:

Because of Pharisaism the way into the Kingdom has been blocked. And so a Jewish person has to struggle and almost fight violently to be able to break through the teachings of the Pharisees to see what the truth is.

And so, as He puts it here, those who believe are forcing their way into the kingdom.

He also reminds them again that not the smallest stroke of a letter of the Law will fail.

### *Example of divorce*

And the issue of divorce, which He mentions in verse 18, is a key example of the difference between what Pharisaism taught about adultery and what the biblical standard is.

And He will give us more details on the subject of divorce in section 122, so we won't discuss now, but we'll leave it until get to that section.

## **3. The Story of the Rich Man and Lazarus, Luke 16:19-31**

Then, still responding to the Pharisees who were scoffing at Him, He goes on to tell the story about the rich man and Lazarus to counteract their concept: whomever the Lord loves He also makes rich.

In the same story He also counteracts the Pharisaic teaching that all Israel has a share in the age to come so that everyone who is born a Jew automatically goes into God's Kingdom.

### *The story*

Read verses 19-31.

He talks about an unnamed rich man, who is a Jew; and a poor beggar, who He does name, by the name of Lazarus.

### *At his gate*

Notice in verse 20 that Lazarus was laid at his gate. This means that the rich man had a nice big home in a compound with a wall. And Lazarus would beg at the compound wall.

So every time the rich man went in and out of his house, in and out of his compound, he would see Lazarus.

He had ample opportunity to fulfil the second most important Mosaic Law to love your neighbour as yourself. And this he failed to do.

And again, he failed to fulfil the second most important commandment because he failed to fulfil the first one: to love God with his whole being. Had he loved God, he would know what to do with his mammon.

But instead of sharing his wealth with those who were in need, he hoarded it.

*Rich man in hell!*

Now when both men die what occurs is the exact opposite of what the Pharisees expected!

It is the rich man who ends up in hell. And it is Lazarus who ends up in Abraham's bosom.

### *The place of the dead*

Now in order to understand what is going on here, let me describe with the situation as it was at the time of Jesus, and up until the time He ascended.

Look at the chart to showing the place of the dead. (PowerPoint file “Sheol, Hades.ppt” or printed chart from “The Unseen World diagram.xlsx” or The Place of the Dead Appendix 8 in the Harmony)

### *Sheol / Hades*

There is a place in the centre of the earth that goes by the Hebrew name of Sheol. In Greek it is called Hades. Hades and Sheol are the same thing. One is simply a Greek name and the other is a Hebrew name.

In the Old Testament, you read that everyone who dies goes into Sheol or Hades, without exception. Believers went to Sheol or Hades, and so did unbelievers.

But there are two different compartments.

### *Abraham's bosom / Paradise*

The side where the righteous would go is a place referred to as Abraham's bosom.

This is a very common name from rabbinic writings from this period.

It occurs only once in the New Testament, here in this passage in verse 22. But it is a very common Jewish name for this place – Abraham's bosom.

It is also referred to as paradise.

Paradise is a term used for the place where believers go, and so at that point of time paradise was in Abraham's bosom.

Today paradise is up in the third heaven.

In the future, in the eternal order, paradise will be in the new Jerusalem on the new earth, but at this stage paradise was in Abraham's bosom in the righteous side of Sheol.

While animal blood in the Old Testament was able to cover sins, it could not take the sins away. And the Hebrew word for atonement does not carry all of the theological implications that the term implies in English. It simply means to cover. The sins of the saints were covered but not removed. Therefore they could not enter into the presence of God upon death. The place they went to was Abraham's bosom, paradise.

### *The side of the Unrighteous*

Now the other side, the side of the unrighteous, had three subdivisions.

#### *1. Abyss.*

The first subdivision is the Abyss, which is a temporary place of confinement for fallen angels or demons.

When a demon is cast out, he would normally spend some time in the Abyss and then be released.

There are demons confined there right now, like those of Revelation chapter 9 that will be released as part of the Tribulation judgements.

This is also where Satan will be confined for 1,000 years during the Messianic Kingdom in Revelation 20:1-3. This is also a temporary confinement because after 1,000 years he is released.

#### *2. Tartarus*

The second division is a place called *Tartarus*, which is a permanent place of confinement for demons or fallen angels, specifically those fallen angels who intermarried with human women in Genesis chapter 6. (2 Peter 2:4)

In Genesis chapter 6 we have an unnatural intermarriage between human women and fallen angels which lead to the race of the Nephilim that brought about the flood.

And now those angels that participated in that sin are in Tartarus. They will never be free again. They are in permanent confinement. They will be there until the Great White Throne Judgement, and then they will go into the Lake of Fire.

So putting it into more contemporary terminology, the Abyss is like a place for a temporary jail sentence, and Tartarus is like a place for a lifetime jail sentence.

#### *3. Hell*

The third subdivision is hell, which is where unbelievers go. This is also referred to as Abbadon or the Pit.

### *Great Chasm*

So when a believer died, his body was buried in the earth somewhere and his soul went into Abraham's bosom. If an unbeliever died his soul went to hell.

And there was an impassable chasm between the two.

This passage shows they could see each other. And they could talk to each other. But they could not cross from one side to the other.

### *Back to the story*

We'll come back to this chart in a few moments, but let's go back to the story Jesus told.

### *Two contradictions*

Not only does He contradict the concept that wealth is a sign of divine favour, he also contradicts the concept that being a Jew gave them automatic rights into God's Kingdom.

### *Descendant of Abraham*

Notice that the rich man is a descendant of Abraham.

Twice he calls him *father Abraham*.

In verse 24: *Father Abraham, have mercy on me.*

In verse 30, *No, father Abraham.*

And it is a relationship that Abraham acknowledges, because in verse 25 he says, *Son, remember.* (The NASB translates son as child. *Téknōn* can be either. *Téknōn* is a general designation for offspring and contemplates the individual as one who is parented, one who has been born to another.)

So there is a physical tie between Abraham and the rich man. But being a descendant of Abraham did not guarantee the rich man any spiritual benefits as the Pharisees had expected.

### *Two requests*

Now the rich man makes two requests of Abraham. And each of them teaches a lesson.

### *Agony*

What is his first request?

The first request he makes is to allow Lazarus to come over and place one wet finger upon his tongue. That would give him tremendous relief. Notice his agony.

How does Abraham respond?

Abraham points out there is this great chasm fixed between them. They can see each other and talk to each other, but what Lazarus cannot do is cross from his side to the other.

So there will be no relief coming whatsoever.

### *Request for a miracle*

And what is his second request?

Now the rich man still has his memory, and he remembers that he has five brothers which are still living. And knowing their spiritual state is the same as his, he recognises that if something doesn't happen they will end up in the same place as he is.

So his second request is to allow Lazarus to be raised from the dead to warn the five brothers.

How does Abraham respond?

In verse 29

*Abraham \*said, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.'*

They have Moses, they have the prophets. All they have to do is simply read the Scriptures they have. Simply believe the Scripture as it is written and they could avoid this place.

And what is the rich man's argument in response to Abraham?

The rich man says in effect, 'no, what my brothers need is signs and wonders.' They need to see miracles and signs. If they see Lazarus is raised from the dead – that is what will finally get them to believe.

And this, of course, reflects the requests of the Pharisees for a miracle.

But notice the response of Abraham in verse 31.

*But he said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead.'*

In other words, if the Bible is not accepted and believed as it is written, no amount of signs and wonders and miracles will be persuasive.

And the best evidence for this is all the miracles that Jesus performed. He even performed unique miracles never done before, and yet they found a reason to reject Him anyway!

### *A true story*

Now this is sometimes called the parable of the rich man, but notice it is not called a parable at all.

And furthermore, in Jewish parables there are no names given. There is no Lazarus, and there is no Abraham in a Jewish parable.

This is not a parable. It is a true story. It is a real, true story that had taken place.

### *His purpose*

Also notice that He tells this story just before He will raise a man called Lazarus, in section 118.

It is not the same Lazarus, although the name is the same.

We have already seen some of the purposes which Jesus fulfils with this story. But there is another purpose we haven't mentioned yet.

What do you think His purpose was in telling this story at this time, just before He raises Lazarus from the dead?

His purpose in telling the story here is to point out that when the first sign of Jonah is given, when a man named Lazarus is resurrected, they will find a reason not to believe.

### *Advantage of thematic view*

This is an observation we are able to make because we are looking at the gospels thematically rather than geographically.

Because we are looking at the gospel events in their chronological sequence, and because we are focussing on the significance of those events in the unfolding story of the Messiah's life rather than simply focussing on their geographic location and considering each event in isolation as other studies have done, we are able to see the correlation of one event with another.

### *Summary of purposes*

To summarize Jesus purposes in giving this parable:

1. He is refuting the Pharisees' idea that wealth is a sign of God's favour.
2. He is refuting the Pharisees' idea that all Jews will automatically gain entrance into paradise.
3. He is teaching them that signs will not persuade them to believe. But belief comes from accepting the words of Moses and the prophets.
4. He is pointing out in advance that the first sign of Jonah, which He will soon give them, will be rejected.

### *Paradise moved when Christ ascended*

Now getting back to the chart, when Jesus died on the cross His body was placed in the tomb, but His soul went into paradise or Abraham's Bosom. As we will see soon, He will say to the rebel who was crucified with Him, "You will be with me today in Paradise."

Things have changed for the believer as a result of the ascension of Jesus. This is found in Ephesians 4:8-10.

Today when a believer dies, his body stays here, but his soul goes straight into God's presence: To be absent from the body means to be present with the Lord. This is seen for example in Philippians 1:21-24; 2 Corinthians 5:1-11.

### *Hades emptied after the Millennium*

Things have not changed for the unbeliever. He dies, his body stays here, and his soul goes into hell.

But when the Millennium is over, the second side of Hades shall also be emptied, and all the demons and unbelieving souls will stand before the Great White Throne Judgement.

And they will be cast, alive, into the Lake of Fire, also referred to as Gehenna.

It is not Hell that is the eternal abode of the unbeliever; it is the Lake of Fire that is the eternal abode of the unbeliever, which is worse than Hell because Hell is torment for the soul only. But the Lake of Fire will be torment for both soul and body.

### *The state of the lost*

Now, from the story He told us let's draw some lessons concerning the state of the lost.

1. They are eternally separated from God. There is no second chance after death.
2. The state is unalterable, eternal, it cannot change. Again, there is no second chance after death.
3. They are in torment, so much torment that just one wet finger placed upon the tongue would bring tremendous relief. But no such relief is forthcoming.
4. They are very conscious of their lostness. There is no soul sleeping there. They are very conscious of their lost condition.
5. They do remember opportunities they had to respond correctly, but rejected.

If we clearly understand the condition of the lost, that should energize us all the more to share the gospel.

There is only one way to avoid this state. And that is to believe the simple gospel. And therefore we must take the opportunities that God provides to share the gospel clearly.



## **G. Instruction Concerning Forgiveness, § 117b, Luke 17:1-4**

Now Jesus turns from addressing the Pharisees to speak to His disciples.

And He gives them instructions concerning forgiveness.

Read Luke 17:1 – 4.

He teaches here three basic things.

1. They are to be careful not to give offence.

In verses 1-2, while stumbling blocks are inevitable, they are warned that it would be better to have died before causing someone else to stumble.

There will be an accounting that takes place after death, and it would be better to die early than to live longer to cause stumbling and then have to give account for it.

2. They are to be careful not to take offence.

In verse 3, they are to be on guard so that rather than taking offence they would confront the offender, with a view to both repentance and forgiveness.

3. Forgiveness is to be uncouneted.

He has spoken to Peter about this on an earlier occasion. They are to be willing to extend forgiveness as frequently as it is requested. Forgiveness should be unlimited in number.

## **H. Instruction Concerning Service, § 117c, Luke 17:5-10**

Have you ever thought it would be good to have more faith?

If so, you are in good company. Here the apostles ask Him to increase their faith.

How will He answer them?

Read verses 5 – 10.

Notice that His answer has three parts.

1. He begins with a statement in verse 6.
2. Then He gives an illustration in verses 7-9.
3. Followed by His conclusion in verse 10.

### *Even a little faith is effective*

What is His point in verse 6?

He begins by pointing out to them that even a very little faith is effective.

### *Servanthood*

Then He gives an illustration about servanthood. What is this illustration showing us?

He is showing us the relationship between a master and his servant. The master assigns the servant his work and gives him commands, while the servant simply carries out his master's commands.

### *Application*

Then Jesus makes the application in verse 10.

*So you too, when you do all the things which are commanded you, say, 'We are unworthy slaves; we have done only that which we ought to have done.'*

### *Meaning*

So putting all three parts of Jesus answer together, what is His answer to their request for Him to increase their faith?

First He reminds them first of all that even the smallest amount of faith is effective. So they already have enough faith to be effective.

Then He says not to focus is on increasing your faith, or even on faith itself, but on exercising the faith that they already have to obey all that they are commanded.

And when we are doing all that the Lord has given us to do, we will be exercising the faith that we already have, and we will begin to see how God is working. We will see Him answering prayers. And we will see His work in those around us. We will see our part in His work and how, when we simply obey Him, His work is accomplished. And His work extends beyond what we are able to do ourselves.

And so the way that faith is increased is by doing the work of the Lord.

Our faith will increase by exercise.

And then, when we have done what He commanded, exercising our faith in the process, we should also recognize that all we have done is only what is expected of us as His servants.

## I. The Resurrection of Lazarus: The First Sign of Jonah, § 118, - 120

Now we come to the account of the resurrection of Lazarus, which is the first sign of Jonah that He promised to the leaders of Israel. Sections 118 – 120 of the Harmony together are a description of this event.

This is the seventh of John's seven signs.

Here also have the fifth of his seven "I am" s in verse 25, where Jesus says: *I am the resurrection and the life.*

And in verses 9 & 10 is John's subtheme of the conflict between light and darkness, which we are pointing out as we go, but not elaborating.

### 1. The Sign of Resurrection, § 118, John 11:1-44

#### a. The Death of Lazarus, John 11:1-16

*Request for help*

Read verses 1 – 5.

A message comes to the two sisters that we met earlier that Lazarus is ill, fatally ill. And the intent of the message was to get Him to come quickly to Bethany and heal Lazarus before he dies.

Now where He was geographically at this point in time would have been only a one day walk to Bethany. He had plenty of time to get there in time. And we would expect to read that when He heard about the illness He departed for Bethany. Yet that is not what we read.

*Delay*

Read verse 6.

Notice how 6 begins: *so when, or when therefore.*

These words point to the explanation for what follows.

And what follows is that Jesus deliberately stayed two more days where He was after receiving the request of the sister Mary and Martha. This is unusual, and we would not have expected it.

Why did Jesus delay for two more days?

He had already made clear in verse 4 that this sickness is not for the purpose of death, though death will occur, but for a greater purpose, a special purpose, *for the glory of God.*

And so, therefore, in order to fulfil that purpose He doesn't go anywhere. But He deliberately stays put waiting for Lazarus to die.

Only when Lazarus finally does die does He begin moving towards Bethany.

### *Danger*

Read verses 7 – 16.

Now He says, *“Let us go to Judea again.”*

This, of course, would take Him from Perea back across the Jordan into Judea. And the disciples recognise the danger of doing that and question His intention.

### *The time is right*

So Jesus makes two points in response to them.

1. In verses 9 – 10 He makes the point that the time to be working is during the daylight hours, and the inference is that now is the right time to be returning to Judea.
2. Then in verses 11 – 15 He reminds them about Lazarus. Perhaps they have forgotten about him, or perhaps they thought Jesus didn’t intend to go to him.

Here Jesus tells them that Lazarus has died and that He will now go and raise him up again.

But they are having trouble understanding Him.

And in verse 16, Thomas is still focused on the danger and he says: *“Let us also go, so that we may die with Him.”*

### ***b. Jesus and Martha, John 11:17-27***

Read verses 17 – 27.

When Martha hears of His approach she goes out to greet Him, and she also scolds Him for not coming when He was first called. Had He come when He was first called, Lazarus was still living and He could have healed him.

Now she does affirm her faith in His Messiahship. And she does understand His power to heal before death. But she does not yet understand His power over death.

And He teaches her that the one who believes in Him may die physically, but he cannot die spiritually.

### ***c. Jesus and Mary, John 11:28-32***

Read verses 28 – 32.

Mary also goes out to greet Him, and like Martha she also scolds Him for not coming when He was first called. Like Martha, she does recognise His power before death, but not after death. And she does recognise Him to be the Messiah.

#### d. *Jesus and Lazarus, John 11:33-44*

Read verses 33 – 38.

How would you describe Jesus' response to the situation He finds here?

##### *Common interpretation*

Some would say that in verse 33 we see the tears of Mary and her friends acting sympathetically upon Jesus, and drawing forth His emotions. And that it is a vivid and beautiful expression of His "real" humanity!

And that His being *deeply moved in spirit and* troubled refers to His visible difficulty in repressing His emotions.

Then when He could repress them no longer, in verse 35, He wept, showing His perfect oneness with us in our sorrow for human suffering and death.

This is a common interpretation.

##### *Three Greek words*

But if we look at some of the Greek words John uses here, we will arrive at a better understanding of the text. There are three.

##### *1. Wailing*

When He arrives at the tomb, in verse 33, and He sees a group of people there *weeping*, the Greek word is, *klaíō*, which means "to weep as a loud expression of grief, wail, lament, implying not only the shedding of tears, but also every external expression of grief."<sup>viii</sup>

They were not merely weeping at their loss. This was the loud wailing and lamentation you can still hear in certain kinds of Jewish funerals.

##### *2. Tears*

And in verse 35 it says *Jesus wept*. But it is a different word from the one used in verse 33.

It is *dakrúō*, which simply means to silently shed tears. Jesus shed tears quietly.

The others are wailing loudly. But, by way of contrast, Jesus simply shed tears.

### 3. Indignation

The third word we need to understand here is found twice.

As He listened to all this wailing, it says in verse 38, He was *deeply moved within*. And earlier in verse 33 we read, *He was deeply moved in the spirit*.

And again it is far more emphatic in the Greek than it is in English. He was moved with indignation. He was very, very angry.

The Greek word, *embrimáomai*, means to be enraged, or indignant, to express indignation against someone.

So literally the Greek says He was moved with indignation in the spirit. He was angry.

#### *Jesus' responses*

So Mary and the Jews who were with her were loudly wailing and lamenting.

And against this backdrop John gives us two responses of Jesus, each of which stands in contrast to that wailing and lamenting.

1. Once He simply shed a tear.
2. And twice He became indignant and very angry.

#### *His tears*

Now what was it that prompted His tears?

It was the death of Lazarus and being invited to come and see where he lay.

#### *His indignation*

And what brought about His indignation?

Read verse 37 again.

*But some of them said, "Could not this man, who opened the eyes of the blind man, have kept this man also from dying?"*

Had the Jews accepted His Messiahship instead of rejecting Him, the death and resurrection of Lazarus would have been unnecessary!

And therefore, had they accepted Him as their Messiah, He would indeed have kept Lazarus from dying!

It was their rejection of Him that occasioned the death of Lazarus, and so their question provokes His indignation and anger!

And in verse 33 also, it was their rejection of Him that occasioned the death of Lazarus, and so their loud wailing and lamentation again provokes His indignation and anger!

### *Lazarus raised*

Read verses 39-44.

He then, in verse 39, orders the stone to be rolled away. And Martha, who would be the one to be careful about such things, says to Him: don't do that because by now Lazarus has been dead for four days, so by now he stinks!

Not normally a nice thing to say about your brother, but in this case it would be accurate.

### *Four days*

But the mention that he has been dead for four days is significant and helps to explain why He acted the way He did.

The common teaching of the rabbis in first century Israel was that when a person dies the spirit of the person hovers over the body. And there is always a small possibility of resuscitation.

But at the end of the third day the spirit descended down to Sheol of Hades.

From then on resuscitation wasn't possible. Only by a miracle of resurrection could the man live again.

And because it was a sign intended for the nation, Jesus set the stage in such a way that they could not explain it away by mere resuscitation.

Lazarus has been dead for one day too many.

### *Primary reason for the miracle*

In many commentaries when they deal with the resurrection of Lazarus and the reason behind it, they focus only on the love He had for Mary and Martha. And not doubt that is involved.

But it is always wise to look at the textual reasons why He does what He does. In other words it is wise to look for the reasons that are actually given in the text.

And now what was the primary reason for raising Lazarus?

Look at verse 42.

*"I knew that You always hear Me; but because of the people standing around I said it, so that they may believe that You sent Me."*

Notice that the primary reason for the resurrection was for the benefit of the multitudes who were standing there, *so that they may believe that You sent Me*.

This was the one miracle He promised to do publicly for them after His rejection in sections 61 - 64. He said that there will be no sign given except the sign of Jonah.

And so Lazarus is resurrected and the first occurrence of the sign of Jonah is given.

We'll see how the Jews respond in the next section.

And because, in the first century, the bodies were wrapped around with strips of cloth, He orders Lazarus, who is now alive again, to be unwrapped so that he can move around freely.

## 2. The Rejection of the First Sign of Jonah, § 119, John 11:45-54

Now in section 119 we see the response of the Jews. And there are two different responses.

### *Belief and unbelief*

Read verses 45 – 46.

Notice in verse 45 that many of the Jews who were there *believed in Him*. And this is the correct response.

Then verse 46 introduces a contrast with the word, *but*.

And the rest of the section, nine verses, is given to those who do not believe.

### *Leadership complex*

Some of the Jews were still labouring under what Arnold calls a leadership complex.

Do you remember what we mean by a leadership complex?

Back in section 61, after Jesus cast out the mute demon, we read that: *All the crowds were amazed, and were saying, "This man cannot be the Son of David, can he?"* They were not asking by what authority He cast out demons, as they did in section 42. What they were asking was: Could this be the Jewish Messiah? He is doing what Messiah alone was supposed to be able to do.

And, while they were willing to raise the question, could this be the Messiah? They were not willing to answer the question for themselves.

And they are looking to the leaders to make that decision for them.

We see this throughout Jewish history. And whichever way the leaders go, the people are sure to follow.

We see it frequently in the pages of the Old Testament. When the king did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, the people followed. But when he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, they also followed.

Even in our day, when we witness to our Jewish contacts, eventually they always raise the same objection: if Jesus was the Messiah, how come our rabbis don't believe on him. That is the leadership complex. In New Testament times because of the stranglehold Pharisaism has upon the masses, because of the application of Mishnaic Law, as we detailed previously, this leadership complex was very strong. So again, while they are willing to raise the question, could this be the son of David, they are not willing to answer it for themselves. They are still looking to the leaders to make that decision for them.

So some of the Jews are still labouring under the leadership complex, and they report what has occurred to the Pharisees.



### Sanhedrin

And because the Pharisees know that this is the sign He promised to give them, they would have to respond.

Read their response in verses 47 – 48.

How did they respond?

*Therefore the chief priests and the Pharisees convened a council.*

This is a meeting of the Sanhedrin, the rulers of Israel.

Again, the Sanhedrin was comprised of 71 members carefully divided along party lines.

- 24 seats went to the chief priests, who were all Sadducees.
- 24 seats went to the elders, who were all Pharisees.
- 22 more seats went to the scribes, who were all Pharisees.
- The last seat went to the high priest, himself a Sadducee.

So the Sanhedrin was composed of both Sadducees and Pharisees.

### Their concern

And they do not deny the fact of His signs. They acknowledge that: *This man is performing many signs.*

What is it they are concerned about?

They were not seeking after truth. Instead, they were seeking ways to protect their own selfish interests.

If Jesus gathered too many followers, He might get the attention of the Roman authorities; and this could hurt the Jewish cause, both the recognition of the Jewish nation and the place of these men as the leaders of that nation.

### Caiaphas

And now we meet the high priest of that time, Caiaphas, a Sadducee who conducted the proceedings.

Read verses 49 – 52.

Did you notice the irony here?

Caiaphas says: *it is expedient for you that one man die for the people, and that the whole nation not perish.*

This was true, but not true in the sense that he meant it.

How did Caiaphas meant it?

Caiaphas means that it is better for Jesus to be killed on behalf of Israel so that Israel itself is not destroyed by Rome.

But, as John points out, in essence what he said is true, although not in the way that Caiaphas intended it.

Jesus really did die for the nation so that the nation would not perish. He died to make their salvation possible, and not only their salvation, but also the salvation of both Jew and Gentile of all nations.

But this is not what Caiaphas had in mind.

And, not only are his words true in a sense that he did not intend, but also the destruction of Israel that he hoped to avoid by killing Jesus, would come about precisely because they rejected Him.

In 70 AD the Romans did destroy Jerusalem. And this was the judgment that came as a direct consequence of their rejection of Jesus as their Messiah.

And remember, John wrote his gospel about 85 to 90 AD, 15 – 20 years after Jerusalem was destroyed.

This is the first of several ironies that John points out in His gospel.

#### *The Sanhedrin's decision*

Now read the decision of the Sanhedrin, and Jesus' response, in verses 53 – 54.

*So from that day on they planned together to kill Him.*

And so by this action the Sanhedrin, led by Caiaphas the high priest, rejects the first occurrence of the sign of Jonah.

#### *Jesus departs*

At this point Jesus departs to a city called Ephraim, north of Jerusalem. This is His final departure from Judea until the time comes for Him to make His final journey for His death.

#### *Three messianic miracles*

There were three messianic miracles:

##### *1. The healing of the Jewish leper*

The result of the first messianic miracle was that the intensive investigation of Jesus' Messiahship began.

##### *2. The healing of the mute demoniac*

The result of the second messianic miracle was the decree that Jesus was not the Messiah on the basis of demon possession.

##### *3. The healing of the man born blind*

The leadership's response to the third messianic miracle was that anyone who owned Jesus as their Messiah would be put out of the synagogue.

### *Three signs of Jonah*

There will be three occurrences of the sign of Jonah:

#### *1. The resurrection of Lazarus*

The first occurrence of the sign of Jonah is the resurrection of Lazarus after being dead for four days.

And the resurrection of Lazarus resulted in the issue of a death warrant by the Sanhedrin.

#### *2. The resurrection of Jesus*

The second sign of Jonah is the fulfilment of Matthew 12:39-40

<sup>39</sup> *But He answered and said to them, "An evil and adulterous generation craves for a sign; and yet no sign will be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet; <sup>40</sup> for just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.*

This too was rejected and resulted in the persecution of the church.

#### *3. The resurrection of the two witnesses*

The third sign of Jonah will be the resurrection of the two witnesses in the middle of the Tribulation (Revelation 11:3-13).

And the result will be that all the Jews living in Jerusalem at that time will believe.

We'll look at this again at the end of our study of the Life of the Messiah.

### **3. Instruction in Light of Rejection, § 120, Luke 17:11-37**

#### *a. The Personal Witness to Caiaphas, Luke 17:11-19*

Here in section 120 we see that Jesus did have a sense of humour.

Read verses 11 – 19.

#### *Last journey to Jerusalem*

At the end of the last section, in response to the Sanhedrin's decision to kill Him, Jesus left Jerusalem and went north to the city of Ephraim.

Here we see that he continued going north. And now we find Him passing between Samaria and Galilee, where He begins His final journey to Jerusalem. And again He will travel on the eastern side of the Jordan in Perea.

#### *Ten lepers healed*

Now remember the first messianic miracle, which we reviewed at the end of the last section. When Jesus healed just one Jewish leper at the beginning of His ministry the leaders began their intense investigation of His Messianic claims.

But this time He heals not just one leper, but 10 lepers, 9 of whom are Jewish. And one of them is a Samaritan.

And when they ask for healing, coming to Him on the basis of their personal need, notice what He tells them to do.

<sup>14</sup> *When He saw them, He said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests."*  
And the head of the priesthood is Caiaphas.

#### *Witness to Caiaphas*

So now Caiaphas, who had just rejected the Messiahship of Jesus, and led the Sanhedrin to reject the Messiahship of Jesus, receives a tenfold witness to the Messianic claims of Jesus. Because ...

- 10 times over he has to sacrifice two birds.
- 10 times over, for seven days he has to answer three questions.
  - Yes, they were all declared lepers.
  - Yes, they were healed of leprosy.
  - And 10 times over, it was a man named Jesus of Nazareth who did the healing.

#### *Faith*

One comes back, before he goes to Jerusalem, to thank Him and that one happened to be a Samaritan.

Jesus points out that, for him and for the others, it was their faith that healed them.

And although they all had the faith to be healed, only one came back to say thank you.

#### ***b. The New Form of the Kingdom Program, Luke 17:20-21***

Now some Pharisees come to Him with a question. But because they are unbelievers, His answer is incomplete.

Read verses 20-21.

Their question concerns when the Kingdom of God was going to be set up, a question they would debate among themselves.

Notice what He said to them.

*"The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed; nor will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or, 'There it is!' For behold, the kingdom of God is in your midst."*

Now they are asking Him about the messianic kingdom that will come at the end of the age.

But He answers them in terms of the mystery kingdom that is coming as a result of their rejection of Him.

It is called a mystery because it is something that was not revealed anywhere in the Old Testament. But now, since His rejection, He has been teaching His disciples about it.

And He tells them three things about it.

1. It is not coming in a way that can be watched, *with signs to be observed*.

They are still looking for signs, but they have rejected the signs they were given. And the new form of the kingdom is coming without signs for them to observe.

2. It is not confined to a particular location that someone should say, “it is here,” or “it is there.”

3. And as to when it is coming: it is already right here in your midst.

Even though they can't see it because of their unbelief, it is already present among them.

*c. Instruction Concerning the Second Coming, Luke 17:22-37*

Then He goes on to instruct His disciples about His second coming.

And He will have more to say to them about this when we come to the Olivet Discourse in section 139.

*His coming will be very obvious*

Read verses 22-24.

He begins by telling them that His coming will be delayed, and they will be longing for His return, but not seeing it.

Then while they are longing for His return, there will be those who report that He has already returned and can be found here or there.

But they are not to believe them and go running after them.

When He comes back everybody will see Him. It won't be like the first coming.

His second coming will be very visible. It will be obvious to everybody everywhere.

*But first, rejection by this generation*

But notice what must come first.

Read verse 25.

So, before the second coming can occur, whenever it is, what must first happen is the rejection of the first coming!

And notice once more He refers specifically to this generation. This generation alone is guilty of the unique and unpardonable sin.

### *Judgment comes unexpectedly*

Now read verses 26-30.

Here He gives them two examples of past judgements. One from the days of Noah, and one from the days of Lot.

As Noah prepared the ark for the flood, the people continued in their normal daily routine. They ate, drank, and married. One day Noah boarded the ark. The rains came. Everyone except Noah and his family perished without warning.

The same thing went on in Lot's day. People carried out the normal routines of life. Then one day Lot quietly left the cities, and God rained down fire on Sodom and Gomorrah. And the cities vanished from history.

What are the common elements in these examples?

There are three common elements.

1. Life was going on as normal – eating, drinking, marrying, buying, selling, planting.
2. Noah and Lot and their families were taken out of the situation.
3. Then judgment came when those who were left were not expecting it.

And Jesus says it will be the same when the Son of Man is revealed. His second coming will be preceded by a judgment that we call the Great Tribulation. It is also called the Time of Jacob's Trouble, and the Day of the Lord.

And the points observed in these past examples will also apply to this future judgment.

1. The righteous will be taken to safety before it comes,
2. And when it comes, no one will suspect anything until it is too late. Life will be going on as usual and things will be quite normal on the earth. Weddings will be interrupted. Commerce will be interrupted. Farm routines and building works will all be interrupted.

### *Flee*

Read verses 31 – 33.

*On that day*, He says, in other words, during the tribulation, there will be an urgent need to flee from persecution.

Do you remember what happened to Lot's wife?

The angel who rescued them from the city told them not to look back. But she looked back and was turned into a pillar of salt.

Her problem was that, while she was escaping the judgment of Sodom, her heart belonged to Sodom, and so she too died in the judgment.

And so, when the judgment of the Great Tribulation comes, those who are on the earth at the time will have to make a clear decision as to where they stand with Jesus.

Those who seek to keep their lives are those who reject Jesus and try to preserve their way of life, clinging to the way of life that is being condemned. But they will lose their lives, many in the present judgment and all of them when they stand before the Judge.

And those who choose to stand with Jesus will be killed as martyrs, but even so they will preserve their lives for ever.

### *Rapture*

Then Jesus describes the rapture.

Read verses 34 – 36.

Just as Noah and his family were taken into safety in the ark before the flood came down to destroy all the unbelievers who were left,

and just as Lot and his family were taken into safety in another place while judgment came down on those who were left in Sodom and Gomorrah,

even so, one will be taken into safety with Him, and one will be left to face judgment.



### *Review*

So lets review what He taught here.

The Pharisees came to Him with a question about when the Kingdom of God was going to be set up.

And they were asking Him about the messianic kingdom which was still to come. But He answers them about the mystery kingdom that was already present as a result of His rejection.

He tells them that it is already here, but they don't see it because of their unbelief.

Then He goes on to instruct His disciples about His second coming at the end of this age.

He tells them that His coming will be very obvious to everyone everywhere.

But first, as He points out to them, He must be rejected by this generation.

Then He shows them, with two examples of past judgements, that the judgment at the end of the age will come unexpectedly on the unrighteous, while life is proceeding as usual.

And the same examples show that the righteous will be taken to safety before the judgment begins.

Then He says that those who cling to the way of life that is condemned will perish, but those who are martyred for following Him will preserve their lives.

Then He finishes with a description of the rapture by which the righteous will be taken to safety with Him, while the unrighteous will be left to face judgment.

And only at the end of the judgment of the great tribulation will the second coming occur.

### *Where will the Son of Man be revealed*

This raises another question for the disciples.

Read verse 37.

They are curious to know where His second coming will occur.

The body refers to Israel, who is in hiding at the time.

And the vultures refer to the Gentile armies that are gathering against Israel to destroy them.

In other words, when He comes, He will come to the place where Israel is hiding and the Gentile armies are approaching to destroy them.

These things will come up again in the Olivet discourse in section 139.

## J. Instruction in Prayer, § 121, Luke 18:1-14

Now Jesus gives His disciples two lessons on prayer, and each lesson is in the form of a parable.

And as we read these lessons, notice their structure.

They both have three parts.

- i. Luke begins by telling us the purpose of the parable.
- ii. Then Jesus gives the parable.
- iii. And finally, Jesus makes the application of the parable.

### 1. Perpetual Prayer, Luke 18:1-8

Read the first lesson in verses 1-8.

#### *The parable*

Lets start with the parable. What are the key elements of this parable?

- a. A judge who is unrighteous. He *did not fear God, and he did not respect man*.
- b. A widow with a need for justice.
- c. The widow persistently came to the judge to seek justice.
- d. The unrighteous judge eventually gives in to her persistence and grants her justice.

#### *Purpose*

Now what purpose did Luke give for this parable?

*He was telling them a parable to show that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart.*

Why was this encouragement necessary?

Remember, He has just been instructing them about His second coming, telling them that the kingdom will not be set up in this generation after all, but that His coming will be delayed so that they will be longing for it, and not seeing it.

And because of that delay and their longing for His return, there will be a tendency to *lose heart*.

And therefore, He tells them, they are to continue praying, as He taught them earlier: *Thy Kingdom come*.

#### *His application*

Then He makes His application, and His argument is a typical Jewish one.

He points out that if the unrighteous judge will finally respond because of persistence, how much more can they expect God, who is the righteous judge, to respond to their petitions.

### *Content of persistent petition*

And what is the content of their petition to be?

Look at verses 7 and 8.

*Will not God bring about justice for His elect ... I tell you He will bring about justice for them quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?*

When, according to prophecy, will God bring about justice for His elect?

Justice will come with the establishment of the Messianic Kingdom. (Isaiah 9:7)

And Jesus, at the end of verse 8, links the arrival of justice with His second coming. When He comes to bring justice, *will He find faith on the earth?* He asks.

And so the subject of this persistent praying here is the justice that will come with the Messiah's second coming to establish His Kingdom on earth.

He is teaching them that, while the coming of the Kingdom is delayed, we are not to lose heart, but to pray persistently at all times that His Kingdom will come.

And He will indeed bring it. And with it will come justice for His elect.

## **2. Humble Prayer, Luke 18:9-14**

The second lesson follows the same structure: a purpose, a parable, and an application.

Read it in verses 9-14.

### *Parable*

In the parable He draws a contrast between two men who went to the temple compound during the hour of prayer.

### *Pharisee*

Describe the Pharisee.

The Pharisee used the time to let God know how lucky God was to have him on His team.

In his prayer he brags that he fasts twice a week, meaning Mondays and Thursdays. Those were the two Pharisaic fast days.

He gives tithes of all that he gets.

And the Pharisee simply focuses on his righteous actions, trying to convince God to do good for him.

### *Tax Collector*

But stands in contrast to the Pharisee. And he presents a more humble prayer.

What is his prayer?

He says *have mercy on me*. The word mercy is literally "be propitiated".

And the word “propitiate” means to satisfy the wrath of God against sin. God’s wrath against sin is satisfied by Messiah’s death.

So he recognises his sin. He recognises his unworthiness in God’s sight.

And the action he performs is a sign of mourning. He stands afar off, and he won’t so much as lift his eyes up to heaven.

These are the actions of mourning, and he demonstrates how to pray in a humble way.

#### *Application*

And the application comes in verse 14.

As Jesus points out, it is not the Pharisee who went home justified. It is the publican who went home justified.

Then He repeats the motif found in this part of His ministry:

*everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted.*

And so, being humble means correctly recognising our sin and our unworthiness in God’s sight, and that we are justified by God’s mercy in satisfying His wrath by the Messiah’s death.

## K. Instruction on Divorce, § 122, Mark 10:1-12; Matthew 19:1-12

Now in this section we find Jesus teaching the Pharisees and His disciples about divorce.

Read Mathew 19:1 – 3, and as we read, notice the setting and the occasion for His teaching.

### *Perea*

First of all, notice where Jesus is when this question arises.

Both Mark and Matthew record that He has left Galilee and He is going to the region of Judea, and He is *beyond the Jordan*.

And we will look at the significance of this very shortly.

### *Pharisaism*

But first let me give you some background on the Pharisees.

The Pharisees themselves were divided over this question.

And the disagreement was over the meaning of two Hebrew words found in Deuteronomy 24:1-4, the words *‘ervah dabar*, translated in the NASB as *some indecency*. Literally the words mean *a matter or manner of uncleanness*.

Now their question was: what did that actually mean?

There were two rabbinic schools in the first century: the school of Hillel, and the school of Shammai.

Both of these rabbis began their schools in the first century BC. And by the time of Jesus they were no longer living, but the schools they began continued.

The view of Hillel was more open, and the view of Shammai was more strict.

### *Hillel*

The Hillel view is that the phrase *‘ervah dabar* refers to any cause. So a man could divorce his wife for any cause.

Notice the way the Pharisees raise their question in verse 3.

*Some Pharisees came to Jesus, testing Him and asking, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any reason at all?”*

That is the Hillel view.

For example, Hillel said that a man could divorce his wife if she mis-cooked his food. And even if she put too much salt in his food, that is grounds for divorce!

A later rabbi, rabbi Akiva, who followed the school of Hillel in the second century AD, says that if a husband finds another woman more beautiful than his wife, he can divorce his wife.

So, in the school of Hillel, a husband could divorce his wife for any cause.

## Shammai

On the other hand, the school of Shammai was more limited; you could only divorce your wife for sexual immorality.

| Rabbinic School | View        | Reason for Divorce |
|-----------------|-------------|--------------------|
| Hillel          | More open   | Any cause          |
| Shammai         | More strict | Sexual immorality  |

## Testing Him

Now, according to verse 3, what was the motive for the Pharisees' question?

*Some Pharisees came to Jesus, testing Him.*

### Testing Him?

The word, *testing*, is a word that means *to put to the test*, or it can mean *to tempt*.

So how would this question put Him to the test in a way that would advance their objective of having him killed?

This is where His location, mentioned by both Mark and Matthew, becomes important.

He was still in the region of Perea which is under the jurisdiction of Herod Antipas.

And what did Herod Antipas do to John the Baptist?

When John the Baptist spoke out against the royal marriage of Herod and Herodias, he ended up being arrested and then beheaded.

So their hope here is that He will say something about the marriage of Antipas and Herodias and as a result they hope that He will also end up suffering their wrath.

That is why the question the Pharisees raise is a testing of Him.

## Jesus' response

In response Jesus points out 5 things.

### 1. God's intent

In both Mark's account and Matthew's account, He begins by pointing them to the writings of Moses.

Read Matthew verses 4 – 6.

This is a clear statement of God's original intent for marriage.

The original intent of God was: marriage is permanent, and without a divorce.

## 2. *Divorce permitted*

Now the Pharisees have a follow-up question which leads to the second point.

Read verses 7 – 8.

So when the Pharisees asked Him why Moses commanded a man to write a bill of divorcement, Jesus points out that Moses did not command divorce, he only permitted it.

And what was the reason he permitted it?

He permitted it because of the hardness of their hearts.

Divorce was never commanded. It was only permitted.

The Biblical ideal is always forgiveness and restoration: reconciliation, not divorce.

## 3. *Both ways*

His third point is found in verses 11 – 12 of Mark's account, where He speak out against the one-sidedness of the Jewish law.

Read verses 11 – 12 of Mark's account.

Even in Israel today, a woman cannot divorce her husband. Divorce only works one way. A man can divorce his wife, but she cannot divorce him.

And in rabbinic thinking the man does not commit adultery against his wife, only the wife commits adultery against her husband.

But Jesus points out adultery goes both ways. Adultery can be committed both by the husband against the wife and by the wife against the husband.

## 4. *Only one ground*

Now read Matthew's account in verse 9.

Here Jesus makes only one exception.

And He only allows one ground for divorce and that is immorality.

And some translations say fornication here. The Greek word is *porneia* which is the source for our word pornography.

It refers to any sexual immorality, whether it is pre-marital sex, extra-marital sex, homosexuality, lesbianism, or bestiality.

There is only one ground for divorce, and that is sexual immorality of any kind.

And again, this only allows for divorce, it does not require it.

So He sides with the school of Shammai here: only fornication or immorality is a valid basis for divorce.

## 5. Singleness is a gift

Now read the reaction of the disciples to this teaching in verses 10 – 12.

And how do the disciples respond?

*“If the relationship of the man with his wife is like this, it is better not to marry.”*

If we cannot divorce our wives for any reason we want to, then it doesn’t pay to get married.

And that provides Jesus with the opportunity to make His fifth point.

<sup>11</sup> *But He said to them, “Not all men can accept this statement, but only those to whom it has been given.*

The word *given* means to be given as a gift.

Their question is: Should a person remain single?

And His answer is: As a general principle, no, but those who have the gift of singleness can make that choice.

Paul refers to the gift of singleness in 1 Corinthians 7:1-7.

<sup>1</sup> *Now concerning the things about which you wrote, it is good for a man not to touch a woman. <sup>2</sup> But because of immoralities, each man is to have his own wife, and each woman is to have her own husband. <sup>3</sup> The husband must fulfill his duty to his wife, and likewise also the wife to her husband. <sup>4</sup> The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does; and likewise also the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. <sup>5</sup> Stop depriving one another, except by agreement for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer, and come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. <sup>6</sup> But this I say by way of concession, not of command. <sup>7</sup> Yet I wish that all men were even as I myself am. However, each man has his own gift from God, one in this manner, and another in that.*

For those with the gift of singleness, that would be a good choice to make because they can devote all of their time to the work of the Lord. A married person has less time for the work of the Lord. And those married with children have even less time. But a single person can give their whole time to the work of the Lord. And therefore that is viewed as being a good spiritual choice, but it should be limited to those who have the gift of singleness.

So Jesus points out, in verse 12, that some are born eunuchs, and some are made eunuchs by others when they are castrated.

But some become eunuchs for the sake of the Kingdom of God.

So He concludes with the principle: *He who is able to accept this, let him accept it.*

And those who are *able to accept this* are those who are given the gift of singleness.

In Arnold’s travels visiting churches he often comes across people who say they are hungering for the gift of tongues, hungering and thirsting for the gift of prophecy, but there is not much of a run on the gift of singleness! He doesn’t hear people saying they are hungering and thirsting for the gift of singleness. And yet that’s a very good gift to have according to what Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 7.



### *Divorce in OT & NT, a summary*

This is not the whole teaching on divorce and remarriage. Let me summarise the teaching on divorce and remarriage in the Old Testament and the New.

#### *Old Testament*

In the Old Testament there were two grounds for divorce:

##### *1. Sexual incompatibility*

The first ground for divorce is in Deuteronomy 24, and that is sexual incompatibility.

Now what about sexual immorality, you ask?

Keep in mind that in the Mosaic Law sexual immorality was not grounds for divorce.

And why not?

Because someone guilty of immorality would be stoned to death. It was grounds for execution.

And that renders the innocent party a widow or widower, and there is no problem with a widow or widower remarrying.

So the grounds for divorce in Deuteronomy 24:1-4 is sexual incompatibility.

##### *2. Religious incompatibility*

The second ground for divorce in the Old Testament, comes out of the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah, and it was religious incompatibility.

When Jews married Gentile women who continued to practice idolatry they were commanded to divorce those wives.

The problem was not their being Gentiles, but their being non-converts to the Biblical faith.

And if you had Biblical grounds for divorce in the Old Testament it automatically allowed for remarriage, so, in both cases they were allowed to remarry.

#### *Rescinded in the New Testament*

Now sexual incompatibility as a reason for divorce is rescinded in the New Testament here in section 122. It is not allowed as a reason for divorce in this section.

And religious incompatibility is rescinded in 1 Corinthians 7:12-13.

<sup>12</sup> *But to the rest I say, not the Lord, that if any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, he must not divorce her.* <sup>13</sup> *And a woman who has an unbelieving husband, and he consents to live with her, she must not send her husband away.*

So Paul writes that if two unbelievers marry, and one person chooses to become a believer and the unbeliever doesn't like that and asks for a divorce, then the believer is told not to fight the divorce, but to grant it. Incompatibility as a ground for divorce is now limited to this condition.

There are two grounds for divorce in the New Testament:

1. *Sexual immorality*

One is the one we talked about in this section, sexual immorality.

2. *An unbelieving spouse wants to leave a marriage*

The second ground for divorce is found in 1 Corinthians 7:15.

<sup>15</sup> *Yet if the unbelieving one leaves, let him leave; the brother or the sister is not under bondage in such cases, but God has called us to peace.*

In the event that one of them becomes a believer after marriage, the unbelieving one is to be allowed to leave the marriage.

And the believer is told not to fight to prevent the divorce in this case.

In both these cases where there are grounds for divorce, it would allow for remarriage to occur.

But it is limited to these two situations.

## **L. Instruction on Entrance into the Kingdom, § 123, Mark 10:13–16; Matthew 19:13–15; Luke 18:15–17**

Now read Mark's account in section 123, Mark 10: 13 – 16.

What is He teaching here?

His teaching here is that the way we enter the Kingdom is by means of childlike faith.

And this is the only way to enter the kingdom.

He says:

*“Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it at all.”*

## M. Instruction on Eternal Life, § 124, Mark 10:17-31; Matthew 19:16-20:16; Luke 18:18-30

### *A Ruler's question*

Now what happens in section 124?

Read verses 17 – 18 in Mark's account.

### *Urgency*

First of all, notice some details that Mark gives in verse 17.

Jesus is *setting out on a journey*. He is leaving the place where He has been staying, and we know from section 120 that He is on His way to Jerusalem.

And as He sets out this *man ran up to Him and knelt before Him, and asked Him* a question.

What does this convey to us?

For this man, the question is urgent. He has an urgent desire to know the answer.

### *The man*

What do we know about this man?

Read Luke 18:18, 23.

Luke tells us in verse 18 of his account that he was a ruler, which means he was either a president of a synagogue, or he was a member of the Sanhedrin.

And then he tells us in verse 23 that he was extremely rich.

And Mark tells us that he knelt before Jesus, which is a posture of respect.

### *The question of eternal life*

And what was his urgent question?

*Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?*

He is very much concerned about his spiritual eternal benefits.

Now because he was a wealthy ruler, from a rabbinic standpoint he was already a recipient of divine favour.

But in his case he obviously recognized that something was missing.

And Jesus has been claiming to be the Messiah, the Son of God, which means He was intrinsically good.

There are two different words in Greek that mean good. One is *agathos*, which means intrinsically good, goodness is part of his nature. This is the word used in this context. The second word is *kalos*, which means externally pleasing, or externally good.

So, although this man, as the Pharisees taught, was the recipient of divine favour, he recognized that there was still something missing. And he recognizes that Jesus is intrinsically good.

And so the question he raises is: what is the thing I need to do to have eternal life?

### *Good?*

Jesus responded in His typical Jewish way with a question of His own.

Read it in verse 18 of Mark.

*Why do you call Me good? No one is good except God alone.*

Jesus has been claiming to be the Messiah, the Son of God, and He claimed to be one with God.

And therefore He claimed to be *agathos*, intrinsically good. And His question to the ruler is essentially: Does he agree with this?

Now what answer should this man have given Jesus?

What the ruler should have answered is: I called you good because you are God.

And by that answer he would have answered his own question, because by accepting Jesus as the God-man Messiah he would have eternal life.

But the man never answers Jesus. He does not respond to the question Jesus raises.

### *Mosaic Law*

So Jesus now takes him to the Mosaic Law.

Read Mark, verse 19.

And Jesus quotes several of the commandments, but not all of them.

What is the common theme in the commandments that Jesus quotes?

They are all commandments concerning human relationships. There is a reversal in the order of the sixth and seventh commandments, but that is not uncommon during this period. He quotes only the commandments concerning human relationships.

### *The ruler's reply*

Now read the man's answer in verse 20.

*Teacher, I have kept all these things from my youth up.*

As long as he could remember, from his youth up, he has kept these commandments. So he did pretty well there.

Yet he knows he hasn't quite made it.

So, as Matthew records in verse 20, he raises another question: *what am I still lacking?*

### *His one lack*

Jesus will answer his question, not only by showing him what he lacked, but by explaining what to do about it.

Read Mark verse 21.

<sup>21</sup> *Looking at him, Jesus felt a love for him and said to him, "One thing you lack: go and sell all you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me."*

And what was the one thing this man lacked?

While he has been very good in keeping the commandments concerning human relationships, he has not been very good at keeping the commands regarding his relationship to God. Those he has not kept so well.

And what was hindering him from keeping the commandments regarding his relationship with God?

What had been keeping him from trusting God was his wealth.

Therefore it was his wealth that was keeping him from having eternal life.

The problem was not with the wealth itself, but with the person's tendency to trust the wealth rather than God.

And the one thing he lacked was a trust in God that enabled him to keep the commandments relating to his relationship to God.

### *Do three things*

So, to help this man see what he still lacked, Jesus tells him to do three things. What are they?

#### *1. Love God*

First of all, sell all of your possessions. Get rid of your wealth.

And what will that show?

It will show that he loves God more than he loves his things, his wealth.

And that way he will fulfil the first most important commandment of the Mosaic Law.

#### *2. Love your neighbour*

Secondly, give to the poor.

And what will that show?

It will show his love for his neighbour, a real love for his neighbour resulting from his love for God.

Again, if he keeps the greatest commandment, to love God, then he will also keep the second greatest commandment, to love his neighbour.

#### *3. Follow Me*

And thirdly, *follow Me*.

In other words, accept Jesus to be the Messiah.

### *The ruler's response*

Now how does the man respond to this?

Read verse 22.

<sup>22</sup> *But at these words he was saddened, and he went away grieving, for he was one who owned much property.*

### *Hard for the wealthy to enter the kingdom*

Now, in view of what they gave just witnessed, Jesus turns to His disciples to teach them how hard it is for the wealthy to enter the kingdom.

Read verses 23 – 24a.

Notice that once again Jesus contradicts the common Pharisaic view about wealth being a sign of divine favour.

How does this view of wealth hinder them from coming to God?

The problem is the tendency of the wealthy class to trust in their wealth.

If wealth was truly a sign of divine favour, and if you have wealth then you are already a recipient of divine favour, and so you already have eternal life.

And therefore they didn't put their trust in God. They put their trust in their wealth.

### *Disciples amazed*

Notice the amazement of the disciples. They too grew up with this teaching. So what Jesus is teaching is amazing to them.

### *Camel*

So Jesus continues the lesson.

Read verses 24b – 25.

He says it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.

### *Common myth*

There are tourist guides in Israel that came up with a story that a lot of tourists come home with: that there used to be a gate in Jerusalem called the eye of a needle. It was a small gate, so to get the camel through it you had to get the camel to go down to its knees and squeeze him through the gate.

But there are so many other gates around Jerusalem, so why even bother?

The fact is there was no such gate. There never was any such gate anywhere in the walls of Jerusalem.

### Needle

He really is talking about a needle.

This is easier to see in the Greek text because Mark and Matthew use a Greek word that means a sewing needle.

But Luke, again showing his medical profession, used a different Greek word. He used a word that means a surgeon's needle.

So Jesus really is talking about a needle.

And how hard is it for a camel to go through the eye of a needle?

It is impossible. And that is the point.

### Astonishment

Read the response of the disciples in verse 26.

*They were even more astonished and said to Him, "Then who can be saved?"*

Now *they were even more astonished* because, if even the rich can't be saved, what chance does anyone else have.

So their question is *then who can be saved?*

### *It is possible with God*

Jesus then makes the point that He has been working towards throughout this lesson.

Read verse 27.

And what is His point?

What is impossible for man is possible with God, and even rich people can be saved.

And salvation is the work of God, not the work of man.

This rich ruler came to Jesus with a question, asking, "*what shall I do to inherit eternal life.*"

He knew that he didn't have eternal life. And he wanted to know what he needed to do.

The answer is: There is nothing he can do to earn eternal life. With man it is impossible. But all things are possible with God. And he will have eternal life if he simply trusts God to give it to him.

And this takes him back to Jesus' first question: "*Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone.*"

### *Peter's response*

The wealthy ruler was told to sell all his possessions and to follow Jesus. In the light of this Peter has a question for Jesus.

Read verse 27 in Matthew's account.

*Behold, we have left everything and followed You; what then will there be for us?*

So he asks what reward will they have from following Him.

#### *Jesus' response*

And Jesus responds by saying three things. The first only applies to the apostles and the second and third apply to all believers.

##### *i. Twelve thrones*

Read Matthew's verse 28.

The disciples will someday sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And they will have authority over the twelve restored tribes in the Messianic Kingdom.

In the Kingdom there will be a government with two separate branches.

There will be a Jewish branch of government and a Gentile branch of government.

And co-ruling over the Gentile branch of government will be the church saints.

Co-ruling over the Jewish branch of government will be the resurrected king David, and with David the twelve apostles will be ruling over the twelve tribes of Israel.

So this promise is limited to them.

##### *ii. Restoration in this age*

Read verse 29 of Mark's account.

And the second promise is that there will be a restoration in this life.

The restoration is not necessarily in the physical realm.

For example, He says you will have new brothers and sisters and mothers. But you don't have a literal new mother, brothers, and sisters.

So it's not true in a literal physical sense.

And in the same way, it doesn't necessarily mean physical wealth. It could be physical wealth for some, but not necessarily.

Nevertheless there will be measures of restoration in this life.

Arnold relates the following:

I was expelled from home when I finished high school.

So the day after my graduation I left California on my way back towards New York City. I began College that Fall.

By the time I finished the four years of College I had three different keys on my key ring for three different homes. One was in Levittown Long Island. One was in Baltimore, Maryland. And one was in Cape Mane, New Jersey.

And the people who had these houses never adopted me, but they treated me as a son, and to this day I call them Mom & Pop, though some have passed away. And their children call me brother, and I call them brother and sister.



When I graduated College, the family in Cape Mane New Jersey took out an ad in the paper. I suspect somebody reading it thought there was a bad mistake, because it says “Mr. & Mrs. Charles Catell announce the graduation of their son, Arnold G Fruchtenbaum.”

And so I experienced this restoration in this life.

And notice it is *along with persecutions*. We are not exempt from that.

iii. *Eternal life in the age to come*

And the third promise is, *in the age to come, eternal life*.

So these are the rewards for discipleship. For the apostles there will be twelve thrones in the kingdom.

And for the rest of us, who have given up everything to follow Him, there will be both a restoration in this present life, and eternal life in the kingdom to come.

*The last shall be first, and the first last*

But He hasn't finished His answer to Peter's question yet. He has one more point to make.

Read verse 31 of Mark and also Matthew 20:1 – 16.

And notice how he both begins and concludes: *the last shall be first, and the first last*.

*A parable of rewards*

So the parable illustrates this principle, and it completes His teaching in answer to Peter's question about the rewards of discipleship.

What is the main point made in the parable?

The point of the parable is that rewards will not be based on seniority.

And it teaches three things.

1. Labourers are to work in the vineyard and leave the rewards to Him.
2. God will be just and fair, and He will be gracious.
3. God has a right to do as He chooses in dispensing His rewards.

## N. Instruction Concerning His Death, § 125, Mark 10:32–45; Matthew 20:17–28; Luke 18:31–34

### *Going up to Jerusalem*

Read Mark 10:32.

Jesus is now on His final journey towards Jerusalem.

And when Mark and Matthew report that He was going up to Jerusalem, note that their road takes them across the Jordan river, which is approximately 1300 feet below sea level at that point, and Jerusalem is 2,450 feet above sea level.

So they are beginning to climb about 3,700 feet (1.1 Km). and the distance will be about 30 Km.

And as they travel, Jesus is walking on ahead of the disciples, and others are following after them.

How do these two groups react to the fact that He is leaving Perea and going up to Jerusalem?

The disciples *were amazed, and those who followed were fearful*.

Why?

Because they know that the Jewish leaders are looking for an opportunity to kill Him.

### *His coming death and resurrection*

And now He teaches His disciples for the third time concerning His coming death and resurrection.

Read Luke 18:31 and Mark verse 33.

Here He gives them more specific detail than He has given them before, and He makes 11 points. And the first three are found in Luke verse 31, and the others are in Mark verse 33.

1. First, He must go to Jerusalem.
2. Then, secondly, He tells them that what is about to take place is the fulfilment of what the prophets wrote about the Son of Man.
3. And thirdly, now is the time for their fulfilment.

He is going up to Jerusalem for the very purpose of fulfilling what was written about Him.

4. He will fall into the hands of the chief priest (Sadducees) and the scribes (Pharisees).
5. The Jews will condemn Him to death.
6. The Jews will turn Him over to the Gentiles.
7. The Gentiles will mock Him. - Isaiah 50:6
8. The Gentiles will spit on Him. - Isaiah 50:6
9. The Gentiles will scourge Him. - Isaiah 50:6
10. The Gentiles will kill Him. - Daniel 9:26
11. He will then be resurrected on the third day. - Isaiah 53:10-11

### *They didn't understand*

Now read verse 34 of Matthew's account.

*But the disciples understood none of these things, and the meaning of this statement was hidden from them, and they did not comprehend the things that were said.*

Once again we are told they did not understand what He was saying.

And their lack of understanding is seen in the very next incident.

### *James' & John's request*

Read Matthew 20:20 – 28.

The mother of two of the disciples, James and John, the sons of Zebedee, is Salome, which is the Greek word for the Hebrew Shulamit.

And she approaches Jesus saying: When your Kingdom is established, please command that these two sons will be next to you, one on your right hand and one on your left hand.

So they are still under the impression that He is about to set up the messianic kingdom, in spite of what He has just told them, and what He has been teaching them since His rejection by the leaders of Israel.

### *Jesus' response*

Jesus points out that what is approaching is not the establishment of the Kingdom, but His own death.

And He points out three things to them.

1. Read Matthew 20:22 – 23a.

Those closest to the King must reach that position the same way He did, which was by means of suffering.

By way of observation, there are two sons. James ends up being the first martyr. He will be the first of the apostolic group to die. In Acts 12 he will be beheaded. And John, her other son will be the last apostle to die, and he will be the only one that will die of old age. Her two sons become the first and the last of the apostles to die.

2. Read Matthew 20:23b.

His second point is that only the Father can appoint those who will be sitting next to Him. The Father will appoint who will sit next to the King.

3. Read Matthew 20:24 – 28.

Thirdly, rulership and authority can be obtained strictly by means of being a servant.

Position in the Kingdom will not be based upon personal ambitions or based upon private requests, but will be assigned by God the Father to those who have actively served as servants.

## O. The Healing of the Blind Men, § 126, Mark 10:46–52; Matthew 20:29–34; Luke 18:35–43

Section 126 records the healing of the blind men.

### *Jericho*

Read Mark 10:46a and Luke 18:35a.

Now was He leaving Jericho, or was He approaching Jericho?

This is one of those points where people argue against the inspiration of the New Testament.

Mark says: *they came to Jericho. And as He was leaving Jericho* the event occurs.

Matthew says it was: *as they were leaving Jericho*.

And Luke says, *As Jesus was approaching Jericho*.

So which is it, is this happening on His way to Jericho, or on His way out of Jericho?

Actually, the correct answer is very simple.

### *Two Jerichos*

In first century Israel, as you were travelling from Galilee to Jerusalem, you would normally go by way of Perea. And when you cross the Jordan River and go up to Jerusalem, you end up going through two different Jerichos.

There was the Old Testament Jericho, the Jericho that has been there since Old Testament times.

But Herod the Great built New Testament Jericho about three or four miles south of Old Testament Jericho.

And so, as He is coming out of Old Testament Jericho and moving into New Testament Jericho, and there is countryside in between, where this event occurs.

So there is no contradiction here. He was leaving Old Testament Jericho and arriving at New Testament Jericho.

### *Two blind men*

Read Mark 10:46b – 48.

Now Matthew records that there were two blind men here, but Luke and Mark focus on the prominent one, named Bartimaeus.

### *Son of David*

And when they realize who was walking there they cry out for a miracle.

Notice the basis of their request.

How did they address Jesus?

*Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!*

So they cry out for mercy on the basis that He is the Son of David.

That is His messianic title, and He has been rejected as the Messiah. So on that basis He will not respond.

He will not perform the miracle on the basis of the fact that He is the Messiah.

### *Privacy*

But notice how He does respond. He will ensure three things before He does the miracle.

Read Mark 10:49 – 50.

So he is taken away from the crowd and brought to Jesus.

This ensures the privacy of what follows. It will not be a public miracle for the crowds, but it will be a private act.

### *Faith*

And how did Bartimaeus respond when he was called?

*Throwing aside his cloak, he jumped up and came to Jesus.*

Have you ever thought what it means for a blind man to throw his cloak aside?

Because he cannot see, throwing the garment away haphazardly means he would never be able to find it again later!

So obviously it is an act of faith on his part that, since Jesus called him, he would finally be given his sight.

He can leave his garment behind, and go back and find it later, because his sight will be restored!

That expresses his faith.

### *Personal need*

Now read Mark 10:51.

And here we find the expression of personal need.

So, before healing him, Jesus has established privacy, faith, and personal need.

Then He heals the man by telling him,

*Go; your faith has made you well.*

Again emphasizing that this miracle is done on the basis of faith.

And this has been His practice since His rejection in section 61.

## P. Instruction Concerning the Kingdom Program, § 127, Luke 19:1-28

### 1. Personal Faith, Luke 19:1-10

Now read Luke 19:1 – 10 where we read the well known story of Zaccheus.

The Jericho Jesus entered and was passing through here was the New Testament Jericho built by Herod.

*Zaccheus*

And there He meets a man named Zaccheus.

*What do we know about this man, Zaccheus?*

He was a chief tax collector, which refers to the fact that there were other tax collectors working under his authority.

Therefore not only would he receive an income from his own collections, he would also receive a percentage from what the other publicans collected.

So in this manner he became somewhat wealthy.

And is says he was short, (which means he was under 5' 4", Arnold's height). So climbed a tree to get a better look at Jesus.

When Jesus saw him He says, come down, I must stay with you tonight.

This event leads to the salvation of Zaccheus so that he will make a commitment that whatever he has defrauded he will restore. His commitment was the fruit of his salvation.

*Individual Jews come to faith*

Notice what Jesus said to him in verse 9.

*And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he, too, is a son of Abraham."*

Earlier, in section 110 dealing with the healing of the woman who had been bent double for 18 years, she was referred to as a daughter of Abraham.

Here Zaccheus is described as a son of Abraham.

What is the significance of this description?

Notice the indefinite object, indicated in English by the indefinite article. He is a son of Abraham, one of many.

And the point is that as a nation they are under judgment and Jesus is no longer dealing with them as a nation.

But He will deal with Jewish individuals, and individual Jews can come to faith. And here is one example, a son of Abraham.

And to repeat, since His rejection His focus has been on individual Jews coming to faith and receiving salvation as distinct from the Jews as a nation. The nation as such has rejected Him and is under judgment, but individual Jews are coming to faith.

## 2. Postponed Kingdom, Luke 19:11-28

### *Purpose*

Then He tells a parable, and Luke begins by telling us the reason why Jesus told them the parable.

Read it in verse 11.

*While they were listening to these things, Jesus went on to tell a parable, because He was near Jerusalem, and they supposed that the kingdom of God was going to appear immediately.*

They still do not understand the program of death and resurrection. And they are still convinced that when He arrives in Jerusalem He will finally set up the Messianic Kingdom.

And the purpose of the parable is to dissuade them from that belief.

The Kingdom will not be set up at this time because of Israel's rejection of His Messianic claims.

And so this is a parable of the postponed kingdom.

### *Parable*

And in it Jesus will make six points concerning the postponement kingdom.

Read verses 12 – 14.

Here He describes the fact that the kingdom will be postponed and what will happen during the period of its postponement.

What are the three points He makes in these verses?

#### 1. *The King's journey*

In verse 12: The King must leave in order to receive his kingdom, and he will return.

And the application is that the Messiah will be leaving the earth until He receives His kingdom from His Father, and then He will return.

#### 2. *Servants*

In verse 13: The Servants of the King are left behind to carry on his business until he returns.

And the application is that the servants of the Messiah are left behind to carry on the ministry He has given them until He returns.

#### 3. *Citizens*

In verse 14: The citizens will reject the kingdom offer.

And so too, the nation of Israel will reject their Messiah and His offer of the Kingdom.

#### 4. *Return*

Now read verse 15.

What does this verse describe?

While verses 12 – 14 describe the need for the postponement and what is to happen while the king is absent, verse 15 describes what will happen upon the return of the king.

And first of all note that: The King will return, and so eventually the Messiah will return.

#### 5. *Judgment of servants*

Then also notice that: When he returns He calls His servants to give an account of what they had done for Him in His absence.

And verses 16 – 26 elaborate on this judgment.

##### *Those who labour*

Read verses 16 – 18.

What is He telling them here?

Those who were faithful in doing what the king had given them to do while He was absent were rewarded with authority over a number of cities in the kingdom.

And the application is that those who are faithful in labouring for the Messiah will be rewarded when He comes to establish His kingdom.

And what is the basis of the judgment?

The judgment is based on, or determined by, the work that was done for the king.

And what is the nature of the rewards?

The rewards are positions of authority in the Kingdom.

And the extent of that authority will be appropriate for each individual, and will be determined by the King.

##### *Those who do nothing*

But not all of the king's servants were faithfully serving Him while he was gone.

Read verses 20 – 26.

How would you describe this servant?

This servant had nothing to show his king except what he was originally given. And so he had made no use of what he was given.

And what was the result of the judgment for him?

There was no reward for him.



In fact, not only was he not rewarded, what he was given was taken away from him and given to one of the faithful servants.

And the application is simple. Those who choose not to labour for the Lord at all, although they are given certain things to start with, will find that what they were given is taken away and will be given to someone else.

And thus there will be believers in the Kingdom who have absolutely nothing to show for their work for the Lord. And they will not be given positions of authority in the kingdom.

### *Summary*

The servants of the Messiah will be judged upon His return.

And while the basis for the judgement is the work that was done for Him, work that is the evidence of their faithfulness, the rewards that are given are positions of authority in the Kingdom.

And each position of authority will be appropriate for the one who receives it.

But there will also be those believers who will be saved and enter the kingdom, yet they will have no authority whatsoever because they were not faithfully serving the Messiah before He returned.

### 6. *Judgment of citizens*

Now read verse 27, where the king deals with his citizens.

So there will be the judgment of the citizens who have rejected the kingdom.

And for that generation of Jews which rejected their Messiah, that judgement will happen in AD 70 with the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple by Rome.

### *Going up to Jerusalem*

Read verse 28:

*After He had said these things, He was going on ahead, going up to Jerusalem.*

Notice again the words “*up to Jerusalem*”.

This is typical of Luke. And it is a very Jewish way of writing. You always go up to Jerusalem, and down from Jerusalem. You don’t merely go to and from, but up to, or down from Jerusalem.

### *Now the stage is set ...*

And that concludes this section, and this section concludes the sixth main division of the Messiah’s life, where the focus of His ministry has been on His preparation of the disciples for what lies ahead.

Now the stage is set for the next major division of His life, beginning in section 128, where we will look at the last week of His life as it unfolds.

## VII THE OFFICIAL PRESENTATION OF THE KING, § 128-138

We now come to the seventh main division of Jesus' life, The Official Presentation of the King, which will lead to His official rejection. And why we call this division of His life "The Official Presentation of the King" will become clear as we discuss the significance of the events that take place during this period of His life.

### A. The Arrival in Bethany, § 128a, John 11:55–12:1, 12:9–11

Section 128a gives us the setting for the events to follow, which we know as "the Triumphal Entry". And it is rich with details about the occasion – when it happened, who was there, why they were there, what they were doing, and what motivated them.

Read it now in John 11:55–12:1, 12:9–11.

*Date – 8<sup>th</sup> of Nisan – 31 March, AD 30 – Friday*

First of all, when do these things happen?

Notice what John tells us about the timing of these events. He tells us two things. What are they?

First he tells us that *the Passover of the Jews was near*.

Then he gives us the exact date when Jesus came to Bethany. He says it was *six days before the Passover*.

When is Passover?

Read Exodus 12:1-6 to find out about two important dates.

<sup>1</sup> Now the Lord said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, <sup>2</sup> "This month shall be the beginning of months for you; it is to be the first month of the year to you. <sup>3</sup> "Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying, 'On the tenth of this month they are each one to take a lamb for themselves, according to their fathers' households, a lamb for each household. <sup>4</sup> 'Now if the household is too small for a lamb, then he and his neighbor nearest to his house are to take one according to the number of persons in them; according to what each man should eat, you are to divide the lamb. <sup>5</sup> 'Your lamb shall be an unblemished male a year old; you may take it from the sheep or from the goats. <sup>6</sup> 'You shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month, then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel is to kill it at twilight.

On the tenth day of the first month they are to take an unblemished lamb from their flock. We will look at the significance of this in the next section.

And according to Exodus 12:6, Passover is observed on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the first month, the Jewish month of Nisan.

John writes that Jesus came to Bethany *six days before the Passover*. And that makes it Friday the 8<sup>th</sup> of Nisan, one week before He dies.

On our Gentile calendar it is March 31 AD 30.

### *Passover*

This is the fourth Passover mentioned in His public ministry. The first one was right at the beginning of His public ministry.

And so, the four Passovers make 3 years of active ministry.

And He was baptized roughly six months before the first Passover. That's why people say that His ministry was about three and a half years long.

But the active ministry was almost exactly three years.

Again, this is the Passover when He will die.

### *Where are they?*

That answers our questions about when these things happen. The next question is: where do they happen?

In 11:55 we read that many Jews are going up to Jerusalem for the Passover.

And in 12:1 we read that Jesus came to Bethany.

### *Bethany and Bethpage*

Bethany is located on the lower eastern slopes of the Mount of Olives, an easy walk over the Mount of Olives to Jerusalem, a distance of about 2.4 km.

And as you walk from Bethany over the Mount of Olives to Jerusalem you go by another town, Bethpage.

Both of these towns play a role in the next section.

### *Who was there?*

Now John gives us quite a bit of information about who was there, why they were there, and what they were doing.

Who are these individuals and groups?

### *Many Jews*

First he mentions that many Jews went up to Jerusalem out of the country to purify themselves because the Passover was near. This would be their annual habit, and the population of Jerusalem swells at this time of year.

And what were they doing?

They were seeking Jesus and wondering among themselves if He would come to the feast.

And why would they be wondering this? He was a Jew who habitually kept the Passover along with every other requirement of the Mosaic Law. So why would they be wondering?

### *Death warrant*

Because, as John says in verse 57,

*... the chief priests and the Pharisees had given orders that if anyone knew where He was, he was to report it, so that they might seize Him.*

We have already noted that in response to the resurrection of Lazarus, and lead by Caiaphas, the Sanhedrin decided to put Jesus to death. But Jesus had withdrawn from areas they controlled.

Now He would come to Jerusalem for the Passover and the Jewish leaders saw this as an opportune time to arrest Jesus. So they instructed the crowds to report any sighting of Jesus to them.

Thus their decision to put Him to death is now reaching the crowds. And so they begin to wonder amongst themselves if He will even come to the feast.

### *Lazarus*

Now, in verse 9 we see a large crowd of the Jews gathering at Bethany.

Why were they gathering in Bethany?

*... not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might also see Lazarus, whom He raised from the dead.*

Why does this catch their attention? What was unique about the resurrection of Lazarus?

While there had been resurrections by others in the Old Testament, what is unique about this resurrection is that it happened on the fourth day, which in rabbinic theology would not be allowed to happen unless the Messiah came.

The raising of Lazarus becomes the first sign of Jonah, which requires the three day period in the grave.

### *Irrational leaders*

Notice the emotional and illogical way the leaders are behaving now.

The chief priests, by the way, were Sadducees.

And in verse 10 we see that it is the chief priests in particular who take action.

*But the chief priests planned to put Lazarus to death also.*

And why did they want to put Lazarus to death?

Verse 11 gives the reason:

*because on account of him many of the Jews were going away and were believing in Jesus.*

Can you imagine the confusion in their minds.

Sadducees do not believe in resurrection of the dead. So, how rude and presumptuous of Lazarus to be raised from the dead!

The leaders were so illogical that, not only were they conspiring to do away with Jesus, but they also wanted to see Lazarus dead again, because by coming back to life he was testifying to the Messiahship of Jesus, and *many of the Jews were ... believing in Him.*

They did not keep him in the grave the first time! What hope would they have now?

#### *A personal application*

And, while we are laughing at the Sadducees here, let us be careful that we are not laughing at ourselves.

Do we hold to some theory or idea so strongly that we are unable to recognise that the evidence before our eyes stands in contradiction to that idea?

It might be a question of theology, or a question of science, or something else.

And we can easily find examples of what others are doing. Can we also see what we ourselves are doing?

#### *Results of the first sign of Jonah*

Now there is one more thing to notice before we move on. We see here two results of the first occurrence of the sign of Jonah.

What are they?

The leaders have rejected the sign. They have rejected Jesus and are planning to kill Him. They have issued His death warrant and given orders that anyone who knows His whereabouts is to report it to them *so that they might seize Him*.

But on account of Lazarus, because of his resurrection, *many of the Jews were going away and were believing in Him*.

#### *The stage is set*

Thus John has set the stage and given us the background for the events we call the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem.

## B. The Triumphal Entry, § 128b, Mark 11:1-11, 14-17; Matthew 21:1-11; Luke 19:29-44; John 12:12-19

*Date – 10<sup>th</sup> of Nisan – 2 April, AD 30 – Sunday*

As we have already noted, according to John, Jesus arrived at Bethany *six days before the Passover*, which was Friday the 8<sup>th</sup> of Nisan.

And most likely, although it is not recorded in the gospel accounts, Jesus spent the Sabbath day at Bethany and had supper at Martha's house.

Then the events of the Triumphal Entry occur on the day after the Sabbath, on Sunday the tenth of Nisan, which is April 02, AD 30.

And we will see the significance of this date soon, but first let's see what happened.

### *Miracle*

Read Mark 11:1-6.

Bethany is a village on the eastern slopes of the Mount of Olives which is to the east of Jerusalem across the Kidron Valley. Bethpage is nearby and on the way to Jerusalem.

Notice the miracle that occurs here. One which is often missed. What is it?

Jesus says, *you will find a colt tied there, on which no one yet has ever sat.*

It has never had anyone sit on it before, so what would it normally do? It would buck. But the animal does not buck.

This is a miracle and it demonstrates His authority over all of His creation.

### *The Lord has need of it*

And if anybody objects to them taking the animal away what are they to say?

They are simply to say "*the Lord has need of it.*" And that will be sufficient to let the animal go.

The title *Lord* is given to the Messiah by King David in Psalm 110:1

*The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at My right hand until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet."*

This demonstrates His authority as the Messiah.

### *Prophecy fulfilled*

Now both Matthew and Luke record that this event is a fulfillment of prophecy and they quote from Zechariah 9:9.

Read Matthew 21:4-5.

God knew beforehand what He intended to do.

## Questions

Now read Matthew's account from verse 6 to verse 9, Matthew 21:6-9.

Something happens here that should catch our attention! But we have heard this passage read so often and we probably haven't noticed it.

This passage is making obvious to Matthew's Jewish audience something which we don't see until we understand some Jewish context. And there are several things to observe.

Are you curious? As you look over the passage again, are there things there that raise questions in your mind?

## Palm branches

One of these things is the crowd's use of palm branches.

In verse 8 Matthew says some of the crowd *were cutting branches from the trees and spreading them in the road.*

John tells us in verse 13 what kind of branches they were ... : *the branches of the palm trees.*

Why would they be spreading out palm branches? What is the significance of doing this? And why is Matthew reporting it?

This behaviour of the crowd actually stands out like a beacon on a hill because the Jews don't usually spread out palm branches at the time of Passover which occurs in the Spring. That's what they do at the feast of Tabernacles, which is in the Autumn. (Leviticus 23:40)

*Now on the first day you shall take for yourselves the foliage of beautiful trees, palm branches and boughs of leafy trees and willows of the brook, and you shall rejoice before the Lord your God for seven days.*

## Tabernacles and the Kingdom

Now what would they be thinking? What is the significance of the Feast of Tabernacles? Remember we looked at this when we were considering Peter's response at the transfiguration.

It was common knowledge among the Jews, based upon the prophecy of Zechariah in Zechariah 14:16-19, that the Feast of Tabernacles will be fulfilled in the Messianic Kingdom when it will be celebrated each year by all nations.

What we are seeing here is that the multitudes are making the same mistake that Peter made at the transfiguration.

They are making the faulty assumption that Jesus is about to set up the Messianic Kingdom.

And therefore they are doing things that would normally not be done at the Passover, but would be done at the Feast of Tabernacles.

### *Hosanna!*

They are also saying things that are normally said at the Feast of Tabernacles.

Furthermore they cry out: *hosanna!* Now Hosanna is simply the Hellenized form for the Hebrew Hoshanah, "save us now!" The "s" sound is hardened since there is no "sh" in Greek.

And there is a series of prayers in Judaism known as the Hoshanah Prayers or Hoshanot Prayers, which are prayed at the time of the Feast of Tabernacles, not at the time of the Feast of the Passover.

### *Hosanna in the highest*

At the end of Matthew 21:9, the people are saying *Hosanna in the highest!*

What does that mean?

In Hebrew it would be *Hoshanah Rabbah*.

What does Hoshanah Rabbah mean?

"Hoshanah" or "Hoshana" literally means "please save (us)" or "save us now!" in Hebrew, and

"Rabbah" or "Rabba" means "great" in Hebrew.

Taken together, these Hebrew words mean: the "great salvation".

The day of Hoshanah Rabbah is the seventh day and final day in the seven-day festival of Sukkot (Tabernacles).

The name for the special synagogue service for the seventh day of Sukkot is the same name as that for the day: Hoshanah Rabbah.

So Matthew's use of the expression *Hosanna in the highest* would immediately bring to mind the final day of the Feast of Tabernacles.

### *Prayers from Tabernacles*

And there is a series of prayers in Judaism known as the Hoshanah Prayers or Hoshanot Prayers, which are prayed at the time of the Feast of Tabernacles, not at the time of the Feast of the Passover.

The expressions *Hosanna*, *Hosanna to the Son of David*, and *Hosanna in the highest* are all titles of prayers that are used at the Feast of Tabernacles, and yet here they are using them at the Passover season.

### *Feast of Tabernacles*

All these things, the palm branches, *Hosanna in the highest*, and the Hosanna Prayers, emphasize that the people have the feast of tabernacles in mind.



*Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord*

Notice the phrase they are using to greet Him: *blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord*.

This expression of greeting is reported by all four gospel writers.

Luke says in 19:38,

*BLESSED IS THE KING WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD; Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!*

And John says in verse 13,

*Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel.*

We came across this phrase in section 113, where Jesus told them that He won't return until they say, *blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord*.

In the first century Jewish context that was the official Jewish greeting for the Messiah.

And rabbis would teach that whenever the Messiah comes He must be welcomed with these words, for they come out of the Messianic Psalm in the Old Testament, Psalm 118:26.

*References to the Messianic Kingdom*

So the things they are doing and the things they are saying clearly indicate that they believe He is about to establish the Messianic Kingdom when He finishes the ride.

But Jesus is not offering them the Messianic Kingdom! Israel has already rejected Him as their Messiah. Once the unpardonable sin is committed, it remains unpardonable. And the consequent judgment will come.

*Maccabees*

In recorded history the Jewish people only did this on two other occasions, both in reference to the Maccabee brothers.

First of all on behalf of Judah Maccabee, in 2 Maccabees 10:7. And later on to his brother Simon, the last of the Maccabee brothers still living, in 1 Maccabees 13:51.

In both cases it followed a victory against the Greek Syrians. And they were anticipating the Messianic Kingdom being set up.

Here there has been no military conquest at all. But they are anticipating the Messianic Kingdom to be set up.

*Theological significance of the ride*

Now we have explained the behaviour of the crowd.

But why is Jesus riding into Jerusalem on a donkey? And why is He allowing the crowds to shout out these things?

Certainly He is doing it to fulfil prophecy. But there is more to it than that.

What is He actually accomplishing with this ride into Jerusalem?

### *Significance of the 10<sup>th</sup> of Nisan*

The key that will help us see the answer to these questions is found in the significance of the date on which these events occurred – the 10<sup>th</sup> of Nisan.

Earlier we read Exodus 12:1-6 to find out about two important dates. In verse 3 Moses records the Lord saying:

<sup>3</sup> *“Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying, ‘On the tenth of this month they are each one to take a lamb for themselves, according to their fathers’ households, a lamb for each household.*

On the tenth day of the first month they are to take an unblemished lamb from their flock. And verse 5 adds: *Your lamb shall be an unblemished male a year old.*

So from the 10<sup>th</sup> to the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the month the Passover lamb would be inspected to make sure it was without blemish.

The significance of this ride is not, as sometimes has been taught, that He is re-offering of the Messianic Kingdom. Nowhere in all four gospels does He ever re-offer the Messianic Kingdom to that generation of Israel.

On the appointed day, the very same day the literal lambs were being set aside, on the 10<sup>th</sup> of Nisan, He was set aside from the flock of Israel to be the Passover Lamb.

And, just as the literal lambs were examined, from the 10<sup>th</sup> to the 14<sup>th</sup> He was tested to demonstrate that He was without blemish and therefore qualified to be the Passover Lamb who would die for our sins, once and for all.

### *Verbal testimony to His Messianic claims*

Now while the people are proclaiming His Messiahship, what are the leaders doing?

Read Luke 19:39–40.

<sup>39</sup> *Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Him, “Teacher, rebuke Your disciples.”*

They are still rejecting Him.

<sup>40</sup> *But Jesus answered, “I tell you, if these become silent, the stones will cry out!”*

Why would the stones cry out if the disciples were silent?

On this day, the day the Passover lamb was set aside, there must be a verbal testimony to His Messianic claims!

### *Prophecy of judgement*

Read verses 41-44 of Luke 19 and notice the prophecy He makes concerning the city of Jerusalem and the reason for it.

<sup>41</sup> *When He approached Jerusalem, He saw the city and wept over it, <sup>42</sup>saying, “If you had known in this day, even you, the things which make for peace! But now they have been hidden from your eyes. <sup>43</sup>“For the days will come upon you when your enemies will throw up a barricade against you, and surround you and hem you in on every side, <sup>44</sup>and they will level you to the ground and your children within you, and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not recognize the time of your visitation.”*

What is it that they could have known which is now hidden from their eyes?

The things which make for peace.

What are these things?

The things which make for peace are the things pertaining to the Messianic Kingdom, because only when the Messianic Kingdom is established will they have peace.

Why are these things hidden from them?

They are hidden from them because they *did not recognize the time of your visitation*. In other words they did not recognize their Messiah when He came to them.

And what is the consequence for the city?

The judgment that has been in place ever since section 61 and which was fulfilled in AD 70.

### Responses

#### City

Now read Matthew 21:10-14 to see the response of the city.

Matthew verse 10 says,

*When He had entered Jerusalem, all the city was stirred.*

The Greek word is much stronger. It means to be shaken, as if by an earthquake. The word means

*“To agitate, to shake with the idea of shock, cause to tremble with fear, concussion.”<sup>ix</sup>*

And that indicates that there was general understanding of the significance of this day.

#### Leaders

Read the response of the leaders in verses 15-16.

Matthew points out that again the leaders were moved with indignation.

And Jesus will not accept their challenge to quieten the multitudes down because, as we already noted, on this day, the day the Passover lamb was set aside, there must be a verbal testimony to His Messianic claims.

#### Jesus

And His acceptance of the praises of the multitude shows that He is accepting their claims about Him being the Messiah.

<sup>11b</sup> *and after looking around at everything, He left for Bethany with the twelve, since it was already late.*

## C. The Authority of the King, § 129, Mark 11:12–18; Matthew 21:18–19a, 12–13; Luke 19:45–48

*Date – 11<sup>th</sup> of Nisan – 3 April, AD 30 – Monday*

Now we come to section 129 which records two events that demonstrate the authority of the King.

And the first thing to note is that both Matthew and Mark begin by pointing out that it is the next day. That makes it the 11<sup>th</sup> of Nisan, which would be Monday April 3 AD 30.

### 1. The Cursing of the Fig Tree, § 129a, Mark 11:12–14; Matthew 21:18–19a

Read Mark 11:12–14.

#### *The Fig Tree*

What is the burning question here?

The question most of us have difficulty with is:

If it was not the season for figs, then why did He curse the fig tree for not having figs!!? It wasn't supposed to have figs at this point of time!

Actually, it wasn't the lack of figs that brought about the curse. And it wasn't figs Jesus was expecting to find.

In verse 13, Mark emphasises the fact that the tree had leaves on it. He says that it was *in leaf*, and he says that Jesus *found nothing but leaves*. Then he says *it was not the season for figs*.

So if it's too early to find figs on the tree, why would Jesus who was hungry go to see *if perhaps He would find anything on it*? Surely He knows it's too early for figs?

To understand this we need to know more about the fig trees in Israel.

On the fig trees in Israel, when the leaves come out, there are little buds form at the same time. And those buds are edible. The figs come out about six weeks later, in about mid-June.

The fact that this fig tree had leaves meant that it also should have had those nodules that could be eaten. But when He went over to it there was nothing there for Him to eat.

And so the fig tree was making a profession of something that it did not have.

#### *Israel*

In this context it becomes a picture for Israel. Israel claims to know the one true God and should have been able to provide spiritual nourishment for those who came to her. But Israel also has become fruitless and therefore falls under a curse.

In Mark 11:14 He says: *May no one ever eat fruit from you again!* And the word *ever* here translates three Greek words, *eis ton aiona*, which literally means *in this age*.

So, for this present age Israel will prove to be a fruitless son.

### *Humanity and Deity*

Also notice the mixture of His humanity and His divinity.

The fact that *He became hungry* shows His humanity.

And the cursing of the fig tree that withers within 24 hours, as we will see in section 131, is a display of His deity.

## **2. Possession of the Temple, § 129b Mark 11:15–18; Matthew 21:12–13; Luke 19:45–48**

Now in section 129b we have a second event, the possession of the temple occurring on the same day, the 11<sup>th</sup> of Nisan, Monday April 3 AD 30.

Read Mark's account, verses 11:15-18.

This is a repetition of the first act of His public ministry three years earlier when He went up to Jerusalem at the time of the Passover. (Recorded in section 31, John 2:13-22).

### *His authority*

Once again, at the last Passover of His public ministry, He is found exercising His Messianic authority over the temple.

While He repeats what He did the first time, there are a couple of elements which are new.

For example, as Mark points out in verse 16, this time *He would not permit anyone to carry merchandise through the temple*.

And so He not only cleanses the temple compound, He also takes control of it, and nobody is able to pass through it without His permission.

Thus He shows His authority to cleanse it, His authority to possess it, and His authority to safeguard it.

And once again by overthrowing the tables of the money changers and the sacrifice sellers, He also overthrows the private business venture of Annas the high priest.

### *Responses*

What was the response of the chief priests and the scribes?

They were seeking *how to destroy Him*.

And why didn't they just do it? Why didn't they seize Him then and there?

Mark says *whole crowd was astonished at His teaching*.

And Luke says in verse 48, *they could not find anything that they might do, for all the people were hanging on to every word He said*.

Fear of the reaction that would occur among the people keeps them from taking action too quickly.

So they needed an opportunity to arrest Jesus when He was away from the multitudes. Judas will shortly provide that opportunity.

## D. The Invitations by the King, § 130, John 12:20-50

It is still Monday.

### 1. The Invitation, John 12:20-36

#### *Request of Gentiles*

Turn to section 130 and read John 12:20-22.

Who were these people who came to see Jesus?

Greeks coming to worship at the feast meant that these were Gentile converts to Judaism.

Why did they come to Philip when they were seeking Jesus?

Being Gentiles they would not be able to go beyond the court of the Gentiles to reach Jesus.  
But Philip would be able to go in to tell Jesus they wanted to see Him.

Then why did Philip go to Andrew instead of Jesus?

Philip doesn't quite know what to do.

As we learned from the encounter with the Gerasene demoniac, and again with the Syro-Phoenician woman, Jesus is not accepting Gentile disciples at this stage of His ministry, and His ministry at this time is to the Jews. And perhaps Philip has the same prejudice that Peter had and which God addressed in a vision at Joppa.

So he goes to Andrew, but Andrew doesn't know what to do either, so they both go to Jesus.

#### *Jesus' Answer*

Now let's see how Jesus answers. Read verses 23-33.

In His answer Jesus once again spells out the program of His death and resurrection which is now imminent, and which His disciples still don't understand.

And in His answer He gives four results that will be brought about by His death. Can you see what they are?

1. First of all, by His death He will provide life, verses 23-24: <sup>23</sup>*And Jesus \* answered them, saying, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. <sup>24</sup>"Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.*
2. By His death He will judge the world, verse 31. *Now judgment is upon this world.*
3. By His death He will defeat Satan, verse 31. *Now the ruler of this world will be cast out.*
4. Only after His death can Gentiles freely come to Him, verse 32. <sup>32</sup>*"And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself."*

So, only after He has been lifted up, which He pointed out to signify by what kind of death He will die, only after the events of His death can Gentiles freely come to Him.

So the basic answer to the Greeks for now is that they cannot come to Jesus at this point in time.

### *Invitation to eternal life*

He also gives an invitation to salvation, but notice that the focus is now on the individual in verses 25-26:

<sup>25</sup>“He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it to life eternal. <sup>26</sup>“If anyone serves Me, he must follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also; if anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him.

Verse 25 is an invitation to salvation, and verse 26 is an invitation to discipleship.

### *Bat Kol*

In verse 28, for the third time we have a Bat Kol, where God the Father speaks audibly from heaven. The first one was at His baptism, the second at His transfiguration, and now at this is the third time.

It makes a simple statement, which is typical of a Bat Kol, promising that He has glorified His name and He will glorify it again.

God has glorified His name through the life and work of His Son, and now He will glorify it through the death and resurrection of His Son.

### *The crowd's response*

How did the crowd around Him respond to all this?

Read verses 34 – 36.

The people were still questioning Him.

How could He be the Messiah? The Messiah is eternal and therefore cannot die. So who is this Son of Man who is going to die?

### *Light and darkness*

Jesus answers them in terms of light and darkness.

And the conflict between light and darkness is a sub-theme of John's gospel which is beyond the scope of this course to detail.

His answer is an invitation to walk in the Light and accept the Light while it is still present among them. It is an invitation to believe in Him.

### *Jesus withdraws*

And after answering them in this way, He withdraws from the crowds.

## **2. John's Summary of Messiah's Ministry, John 12:37-50**

And the reason He withdraws is found in the second part of this section where John gives a summary of the Messiah's ministry. And it comes in two parts.

### **a. Summary of Israel, John 12:37-43**

Read verses 37 – 43 to see how he summarises Israel's response to the ministry of their Messiah.

### *Wilful disobedience*

How would you characterise their response from verse 37?

Notice that *He had performed many signs before them*. They had been given many opportunities to believe.

Notice also the tense at the end of verse 37: *yet they were not believing in Him*. This suggests that they kept on not believing in spite of many opportunities they were given to believe.

As far as Israel is concerned, he says they can be characterised by wilful disobedience.

### *Signs and wonders*

What does this say about the popular idea that in order to convince people we need to perform miracles, signs and wonders?

It contradicts that idea. Signs didn't work in Biblical history. They didn't work in the gospels. Miracles are beneficial for people who believe, but for those who don't believe, even in the midst of many signs and wonders which have never been done before or since, they still find reasons not to believe.

### *Blindness*

Did their wilful disobedience take God by surprise or catch Him unprepared?

John quotes from Isaiah 53:1 and 6:10 to show that this unbelief and their consequent blindness were anticipated by God.

As we saw in Matthew 12, in section 61, once Israel rejected the Messiahship of Jesus, this blindness was imposed on the people by God, and so, as Paul writes in Romans 11:25-26, *a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in*. It is a partial hardening, a partial blindness. There are always Jewish people coming to faith.

### *Many believed*

Nevertheless, in spite of all this, John also points out in verses 42-43 that even among the Pharisees there were people who came to faith.

They did believe, but they would not openly confess Him because of fear, and they preferred *the approval of men rather than the approval of God*.

### *Summary*

So on one hand there were those who chose not to believe and on the other hand there were those who did believe, who were convinced He was the Messiah, but they chose not to make their belief public because of their fear or pride.



### ***b. Summary of Jesus, John 12:44-50***

Now read Jesus' summary of His own ministry in verses 44 – 50.

In these verses He makes 6 points about His ministry. Can you see them?

1. He was sent by the Father. Verse 44.
2. He came to testify of the Father, to reveal the Father. Verse 45.
3. He is the Light. Verse 46.
4. Rejection will result in judgement by the Father. Verses 47 – 48.
5. Acceptance will result in salvation. Verse 50a.
6. He speaks what the Father gave Him to speak. Verses 49 – 50.

And verse 46 is another example of John's sub-theme of light and darkness.

## **E. The Proof of Authority, § 131, Mark 11:19-25; Matthew 21:19b-22; Luke 21:37-38**

### *Daily movements*

Read Luke 21:37-38.

These verses actually belong at the end of section 139 or the beginning of section 140. A.T. Robertson violates Luke's order by putting them here. He doesn't do it very often, but when he does we go back to what Luke tells us the order was.

The gospel writers point out that He went out teaching regularly on a daily basis at the temple.

*Date – 12<sup>th</sup> of Nisan – 4 April, AD 30 – Tuesday*

Mark verse 20 begins: *As they were passing by in the morning.* So another night has passed.

And it is now the 12<sup>th</sup> of Nisan, Tuesday, April 4<sup>th</sup> AD 30.

### *The withered fig tree*

Now what do they discover on the way to Jerusalem that morning?

Read Mark 11:20-21.

The very next morning after the fig tree was cursed, they notice that the fig tree has withered. It has all withered, from the roots up, and all in one day. Peter and the other disciples were amazed!

And they asked *"How did the fig tree wither all at once?"*

### *Believe God*

In response to their astonishment Jesus teaches them two lessons about prayer.

And the first is found in verses 22 – 24 of Mark's account.

Read Mark 11:22 – 24.

Does this passage create any questions in your mind?

Is He talking about a literal mountain?

Is this a formula for receiving anything we want?

Now we'll talk about the mountain in a moment, but Jesus does not begin with the mountain.

#### *Prayer condition - faith*

He begins with a statement that is the key to this passage: *Have faith in God*.

This is the focus of His statements here, and He mentions it four times. Can you see it?

*Have faith in God ... does not doubt ... but believes ... believe.*

Even the statement to the mountain, *be taken up and cast into the sea*, uses the passive voice which means that it is not the speaker performing the action. And in this context it implies that God is doing it.

He begins by instructing them to *have faith in God*. And then He goes on to say that believing God is actually a necessary condition for answered prayer. If we are going to receive what we ask for in prayer then we must believe that God will grant it to us.

#### *Prayer subject – this mountain*

Now we come to the mountain. Which mountain is He talking about here?

Both gospel writers record that Jesus referred to *this mountain*. And once again the Greek is very emphatic. He literally says: *whoever says to the mountain – this one*. He is referring to a specific mountain.

Which mountain do you think He is referring to?

If he means a literal mountain, He would be referring to the mountain on which Jerusalem stands, the mountain that He is approaching. That is the mountain in the immediate context here.

Would God actually throw that particular mountain into the sea?

But if He were not referring to that literal mountain what would He be referring to?

When the word mountain is used symbolically, it is always used as a symbol of a king, kingdom or throne.

In the immediate context, is there a king of kingdom in view?

In the previous section, speaking of His imminent death, in John 12:31, Jesus says: *Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out*.

So the kingdom in view here is the Satanic kingdom, a kingdom that is under judgment and whose ruler will be cast out.

You may remember that in section 87, Matthew 17:20, immediately after dealing with a dumb demon that the disciples had been unable to cast out, Jesus made a similar statement. In that context we concluded that *this mountain* most likely refers to the Satanic Kingdom and not a physical mountain like Mt. Hermon.

Once again the expression, *this mountain*, most likely refers to the Satanic Kingdom and not a physical mountain.

### *Prayer subject – all things*

And why did He say, in verse 24, *all things for which you pray*?

Is this, as some say, encouraging us that we can have anything we want provided we believe?

Notice the word, *therefore*, at the beginning of this sentence. Thus the two sentences are joined together and the expression *all things* is limited by the context.

### *Not only ... but even*

Now notice how Matthew records what Jesus said. Read Matthew 21:21.

<sup>21</sup>And Jesus answered and said to them, “Truly I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and cast into the sea,’ it will happen.

*Not only ... but even.*

The withered fig tree is the lesser work. If they have faith, God will accomplish the greater work for them.

### *Summary*

Thus, rather than teaching that we can rearrange the landscape if we don’t doubt, or that we can have anything we want if we will believe it, Jesus is instructing the disciples to have faith in God, and to exercise that faith by expecting God to overcome the kingdom of darkness in response to their requests.

And what was the answer to the disciples’ question? “*How did the fig tree wither all at once?*”

God did it. And furthermore, if they have faith in God, He will not only do the same for them, He will even overcome the kingdom of darkness when they ask and trust Him to.

### *Prayer condition - forgiveness*

Then He gives them a second condition for answered prayer.

Read Mark 11:25.

He tells them that it is necessary to forgive others anything we have against them in order to be forgiven by God. And this is also a prerequisite to our prayers.

## F. The Authority of the King Challenged: The Testing of the Lamb, § 132, -135

Now it is still Tuesday the 12<sup>th</sup> of Nisan, April 4<sup>th</sup> AD 30.

And in sections 132 – 135 we find the authority of the King being challenged. This is the period during which the Passover lamb is tested.

During this same period Jesus will be tested by four different groups of Jewish leaders, each trying to trap Him in some way.

There are two things they would like to accomplish. First of all they want to find a way to discredit Him before the people. And secondly, they want to find a specific charge against Him so that He could be punished, either by Jewish or Roman law, or both.

### 1. By Priests and Elders, § 132, Mark 11:27–12:12; Matthew 21:23–22:14; Luke 20:1–19

#### a. *The Attack. Mark 11:27-28; Matthew 21:23; Luke 20:1-2*

The first attack comes from the priests and elders. The priests were Sadducees and the elders were Pharisees. So this is a combined Sadducean and Pharisaic attack.

Read about it in Matthew verse 23.

What is the issue raised by their question?

The issue concerns His authority. The question is *by what authority are You doing these things*, because in the view of the rabbis authoritative teaching required previous rabbinic authorization.

We have already noted that others kept quoting this rabbi or that rabbi to prove their point and give authority to what they were saying. You can see that in Jewish writing to this day.

But Jesus quotes no scribe, no rabbi, no Pharisee. When He interprets the text of the Scripture in general and the Law in particular, He is the one who gave those Scriptures and therefore He has the right to interpret it.

#### b. *The Answer*

So in typical Jewish manner He responds to their question with a question.

Read Matthew 21:24-27.

Why did Jesus ask them this question about the source of John's baptism?

Their answer to that question would reveal either their sincerity, or their duplicity.

If they were sincerely enquiring about the source of His authority then Jesus' question would lead them to the answer they sought.

Now what would it mean if John received his ministry from heaven?

Then Jesus can say that He received His authority from John, because John is the one who called Him *the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world*.

And, on the other hand, what would it mean if they say John's ministry is from men?

That would mean that he did not have any divine calling, and then they would be the ones discredited before the people because the people saw John as a prophet and a saint.

Not only would they be discredited. Luke records in verse 6 that they were afraid of being stoned to death because the people were convinced that John was a prophet.

And therefore they are now in the very trap they tried to put Jesus in. So they simply refuse to answer the question.

And Jesus responds: because you won't answer My question, *neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.*

And why not?

By their answer to His question they have declared that they have already decided not to believe Him!

Now Jesus proceeds to give three parables to these leaders of Israel.

#### (1) The Parable of the Two Sons, Matthew 21:28-32

And the first parable is the parable of the two sons.

##### *Parable*

Read Matthew 21:28 – 31a.

What is the point made in the parable?

It is indicated by Jesus' question, *which of the two did the will of his father?* And the point is that sonship is proven by obedience.

The father asked his first son to go out and work in the field and the son said, "no, I'm not going to do that", but he went ahead and did it anyway. The second son said he will do it but ends up not doing it. So which son proved to be obedient: the one who said no but went ahead and did it; or the one who said yes but went ahead and did it anyway. And the answer is obvious.

##### *Application*

And what application does He make?

read verses 31b & 32.

Who do the two sons represent?

These leaders of the Jewish people, who saw themselves as being the righteous ones, who felt they would have easy entry into the Kingdom, and have authority in the Kingdom, are the ones who will fail to get in. They are the ones who said "yes", but didn't do what the Lord said.

But those who said "no", and then regretted it and obeyed, are the tax collectors and prostitutes. They will be in the kingdom and these leaders will be excluded.

## (2) The Parable of the Householder, Mark 12:1-12; Matthew 21:33-46; Luke 20:9-19

The second parable is the parable of the landowner or householder. In it Jesus quotes from the parable of the vineyard found in Isaiah 5:1-7 in which Isaiah says: *the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel and the men of Judah His delightful plant.*

### *The parable*

Read Matthew 21:33 – 39.

What are the main elements of the parable and who or what do they represent?

The elements are the landowner, the vineyard, and the vine-growers, the slaves of the landowner, and the son of the landowner.

The landowner in the parable is God the Father. The son is the Messiah. The vineyard is Israel.

And the vine-growers are the Jewish leaders who were to work the land and produce the fruit, and then keep a portion for themselves. But a portion was to go back to the landowner.

And the landowner's slaves are the prophets which God the Father has sent to Israel.

In verses 34 – 36 Matthew points out that he sends out three sets of servants. Some were totally rejected, some were beaten, and some were killed. The three categories would be: the pre-exilic prophets, before the Babylonian exile; then came the post-exilic prophets; and then came John and his disciples.

### *The climax*

The climax of the parable is reached when the landowner sends his son expecting the vine-growers to respect him.

How do the vine-growers respond to this?

They kill the son assuming that they will end up being not merely the vine-growers, but the actual owners of the property.

### *The main point*

And what is the main point Jesus is making with the parable?

He is telling them that the Jewish leaders, whom God set over the house of Israel, have killed the prophets who were sent to them; and now they will kill the Son also.

### *The question*

Then He follows through with a question?

Read His question and their answer in verses 40 and 41 of Matthew's account.

Thus the priests and elders pronounce their own judgment, which He will repeat to them!

### *The chief cornerstone*

But first He takes them to the messianic Psalm 118 and quotes verses 21 – 23.

Read it in verse 42.

*‘THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED, THIS BECAME THE CHIEF CORNER stone’.*

And what is the point He is making?

The point is this: They have rejected the messianic stone, but that same stone will someday become the head of the corner. Not only will many individuals believe in the Messiah whom they have rejected, but the day will come when all Israel will believe!

### *Judgement*

Then He makes application of the judgment which the leaders themselves have already pronounced upon the vine-growers in the parable.

Read verse 43 of Matthew’s account.

Notice that Matthew is the only gospel writer to include this statement. Matthew, of course , is writing to a Jewish audience. And for them it is particularly relevant. But it is not so relevant for the Gentile audiences of Mark and Luke.

*Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people, producing the fruit of it.*

*given to a people, producing the fruit of it*

Now two important questions here are:

- i. From whom has the kingdom been taken?
- ii. And to whom will it be given?

Some interpret this to mean that the kingdom of God was taken away from Israel and given to the church. That is the unanimous view among replacement theologians. And it is a view among some dispensationalists.

But a second view, and the one more likely intended by Jesus, is that the kingdom of God has been taken away from the Pharisees and that generation of Israel which rejected it to be re-offered to a future Jewish generation that will accept it.

The Greek word translated people here is *ethnos*, meaning a nation or people or race, a description that is not applied to the church.

And He is talking to the Pharisees and elders, saying, *the kingdom of God will be taken away from you.*

To repeat: the kingdom of God has been taken away from the Jewish leaders of that day and from that generation to be reoffered to a future Jewish generation that will accept it.

### *This stone*

That's the application for the nation. But there is also an application for individual Jews.

Read verse 44.

<sup>44</sup>*“And he who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; but on whomever it falls, it will scatter him like dust.”*

Who is *this stone*?

The stone is the Messiah. (compare with Isaiah 8:13-14.)

On the one hand, because they refused to accept Him as the Messiah, they stumbled over the stone. And as a result of their stumbling they will be broken to pieces.

But on the other hand, because of their continuous unbelief, eventually the stone will arise and fall upon them. And the result is they will be scattered like dust.

### *Response*

How did they respond to this?

Read verses 45 – 46.

First, notice that *they understood that He was speaking about them*.

So the parable is addressed in not so much to Israel as a whole but to these Pharisees and elders in particular. They understood this.

The kingdom is not taken away from Israel. It is taken away from the Jewish leaders of that generation. And it is destined to be re-offered to a future Jewish generation which we will see again when we deal with section 139.

## **(3) The Parable of the Wedding, Matthew 22:1-14**

Then comes the third parable, the parable of the wedding, where the main idea is that those who were invited will not partake of the marriage feast, but others will.

Read Matthew 22:1 – 14.

### *Invited guests*

In those days the wedding ceremony was followed by a seven day wedding feast. And the invitation was already sent out to those that would be part of the wedding feast. Once the wedding feast was ready servants would go out to let the invited people know that they can now come.

When this king has prepared his wedding feast and he sends out his servants to call those who were invited to come, they simply made excuses. And some mistreated and killed his servants.

Who do the invited guests represent? This generation of Israel who have rejected Him.

And how did the king respond to this rejection?

There were basically two responses of the king.



### *Judgement*

The first response is in verse 7: *the king was enraged, and he sent his armies and destroyed those murderers and set their city on fire.*

And this is exactly what would now happen to this generation and the city of Jerusalem in AD 70.

In verse 8 He says, *those who were invited were not worthy.* That was this generation. They are not worthy to come.

### *Other invitees*

Therefore the king makes his second response: he now sends out his slaves to invite others to the wedding feast which is already prepared.

Who are these ones who are now invited?

Anyone who will come, both Jew and Gentile.

Here verse 9 they are described as coming from *the main highways*, which may emphasise the Gentiles. In section 114 (Luke 14:15-24), when Jesus was dining in a Pharisees house and told this same parable, the king sent out his servants twice: first into the streets and lanes of the city, and then into the highways.

First of all they go around the streets of the city. The people found there are the Jewish people outside the leadership who came to repentance and came to faith. Secondly they also went out to the byways and the highways and these would be the Gentiles who also participate in the wedding feast.

But His main point is that those who were invited, that generation of Israel, will not be found at the wedding feast because they rejected the invitation. And the wedding feast will be celebrated by all those who accept the king's invitation to come.

### *Wedding garments*

Now verses 11-13 raise another question. The king saw a man without wedding clothes and he threw him out.

And the question is: why would he throw him out? Perhaps he couldn't afford a wedding garment.

But in the context of that day the host provided the wedding garments for the guests to wear at the feast.

So, if this man was not dressed in wedding clothes, it was because he chose not to accept what was offered to him.

And consequently he goes out to the place of outer darkness. I'll say more about the outer darkness when we get to the Olivet Discourse later on.

## **2. By Pharisees and Herodians, § 133, Mark 12:13-17; Matthew 22:15-22; Luke 20:20-26**

The priests and elders confronted Him with a question concerning the source of His authority.

Now the Pharisees and Herodians try to trap Him with a question of politics.

Pharisees and Herodians were on opposite ends of the political spectrum. The Pharisees were opposed to Roman rule of any form. But the Herodians were willing to accept Roman rule if it came through the house of Herod. And so Herodians supported Roman rule through the house of Herod; the Pharisees were opposed to it.

Because these two groups were on opposite ends of the political spectrum, they were able to formulate a question such that whichever way Jesus answers He could be accused either by one or the other.

**a. *The Attack, Mark 12:13-15a; Matthew 22:15-17; Luke 20:20-22***

Read Matthew 22:15 – 17.

The question they raise is whether it is lawful to give taxes to Caesar or not.

How would this trap Him?

The Pharisees taught that those who pay tribute to Caesar own Caesar as king, and to accept Caesar as king is to reject Jehovah as king.

Now obviously they had to pay tribute. They had no choice. But they would pay it indirectly to show that they were being forced to do something they considered illegal.

So if He says it is legal to pay taxes then He could arouse the anger of the people, and more significantly at this point in Jewish history, the anger of the Zealots who would kill people who supported Rome in any form.

On the other hand, if He said no, then they could accuse Him before the Roman governors since telling people not to pay tribute happens to be an act of rebellion against Rome.

Thus they sought to trap Him.

**b. *The Answer, Mark 12:15b-17; Matthew 22:18-22; Luke 20:23-26***

Now Jesus knows they are trying to entrap Him.

Read His response in Matthew 22:18 – 21.

*The coin*

He says, “*Show Me the coin used for the poll-tax.*” Not just any kind of coin, but the coin used for the tribute money.

Why that particular coin, what was significant about it?

Notice that *they brought Him a denarius*. They didn’t have one with them to give Him. So they had to go and find one and bring it to Him.

Nobody would carry that kind of coin because it would have the image of Caesar on it.

Furthermore they could not put that kind of coin in the temple treasury, because they could not have images of people or animals on coins for the temple treasury. And that is why they had the money changers to exchange Roman coinage for temple currency that could be used to pay the half shekel tax and make the offerings.

*The principle*

Then He asked them, *“Whose likeness and inscription is this?” And they said to Him, “Caesar’s.”*

Then He laid down the principle in verse 17: *Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.*

And what is the general principle here?

The principle is that there is a delegated authority as well as an absolute authority.

Absolute authority lies with God and He determines who rules over whom, when, and where. As Daniel says, He raises up kings, He puts down kings, He even has the basest of men to sit upon thrones. And all human governments, including Caesar’s, only have delegated authority.

So because God delegates authority to governments, paying taxes, even to Caesar, does not mean rejection of God’s authority. Actually it means submission to God’s authority!

*Silenced!*

So they were unable to trap Him as Luke points out.

Read Luke 20:26 as well as Matthew 22:22.

And what is their response?

*They were amazed at His answer, they became silent, and leaving Him and went away.*

### 3. By Sadducees, § 134, Mark 12:18–27; Matthew 22:23–33; Luke 20:27–40

#### a. *The Attack, Mark 12:18-23; Matthew 22:23-28; Luke 20:27-33*

We have seen Jesus tested with a question of authority and a question of politics.

The next question is a theological one and it comes from the Sadducees.

Read Matthew 22:23 – 28.

One of the differences between the Pharisees and the Sadducees concerned their view of the resurrection. The Pharisees did believe in a future resurrection when the Messiah came. But the Sadducees did not believe in any resurrection. (And that’s why they were sad, you see!)

And the Sadducees always liked to ask the Pharisees trick questions to make them look stupid, and often succeeded. Now they try one of these trick questions on Jesus.

#### b. *The Answer, Mark 12:24-27, Matthew 22:29-33; Luke 20:34-40*

*The reason for their problem*

He begins His answer by pointing out to them the reason for their problem.

Read Mark 12:24.

*Jesus said to them, “Is this not the reason you are mistaken, that you do not understand the Scriptures or the power of God?”*

He then proceeds to answer their question by reference to both the power of God and the Scriptures.

### Scriptures not quoted

But when He refers to the Scriptures notice what He does not do. There are three passages from the Old Testament that clearly teach resurrection, but which He does not quote. He does not quote Daniel 12:2. He does not quote Isaiah 26:19. He doesn't quote Job 19:25-26.

Daniel 12:2 (NASB95)

<sup>2</sup> *"Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt.*

Isaiah 26:19 (NASB95)

<sup>19</sup> *Your dead will live; Their corpses will rise. You who lie in the dust, awake and shout for joy, For your dew is as the dew of the dawn, And the earth will give birth to the departed spirits.*

Job 19:25–26 (NASB95)

<sup>25</sup> *"As for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, And at the last He will take His stand on the earth. <sup>26</sup> "Even after my skin is destroyed, Yet from my flesh I shall see God;*

And there is a good reason why He does not quote from these passages.

Another difference between Pharisees and Sadducees was this. The Pharisees believed you can derive doctrine from any part of Scripture, be it the Law, the Prophets, or the Writings. The Sadducees said, no, you cannot do that. Every doctrine must have its origin in the five books of Moses. You can use the Prophets and the Writings to illustrate doctrine, but the origin of every doctrine must come from the five books of Moses.

They saw no indication of anything being taught about resurrection in the five books of Moses, and chose not to believe in it.

Therefore to quote from Isaiah or Daniel or Job, while that was authoritative for the Pharisees, simply would not be authoritative for the Sadducees.

And so He had to find some other way to prove it.

### Proofs of resurrection

He points out three things to them.

- 1) He begins by referring to the power of God.

Read Luke 29:34 – 36.

The resurrection is not merely a reawakening. The final resurrection is a transformation where the body changes from one type to another. And *they cannot even die any more.*

As Paul will later tell us it changes from mortality to immortality, from corruption to incorruption. And the new body does not reproduce itself.

And the answer to their question is: she won't be married to anybody; there won't be any marriage relationships in heaven in the glorified state. He says they will be like the angels in heaven, *being sons of the resurrection.*

This says nothing about angels on earth who are fallen. But angels in heaven don't marry and are not given in marriage. And humans in heaven won't marry or be given in marriage, though here on earth we obviously do.

- 2) Secondly he quotes Exodus 3:6, the second book of Moses.

Read Mark 12:26.

#### *Abrahamic covenant*

Why does He quote this to them?

*'I AM THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, AND THE GOD OF ISAAC, AND THE GOD OF JACOB'.*

This was the Old Testament terminology for the Abrahamic covenant. Today we have simplified our terminology and we say, "the Abrahamic covenant", but in the Bible it is a sentence as it is here: the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.

So, by quoting this passage, He is referring them to the Abrahamic covenant.

But where in the Abrahamic covenant is there a promise of resurrection?

#### *The principle*

The promise is found in a very simple principle. If God makes a promise to an individual, and that individual dies before the promise is fulfilled, then God is obligated to raise that person back to life because every promise of God must be fulfilled, and furthermore it must be fulfilled to the one to whom the promise was made.

#### *An illustration*

That's a point that replacement theology misses so much!

If you have two sons and you promise your first son a bicycle, and you go and buy the bicycle and give it to your second son, you haven't fulfilled your promise because you made the promise to your first son.

Whatever else you want to do for your second son, the promise to your first son must still be fulfilled.

And whatever extra blessings He may have for the church, and there are quite a few, they cannot nullify the promises made to Israel.

#### *Abraham*

Now read Hebrews 11:17-19.

*<sup>17</sup> By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was offering up his only begotten son; <sup>18</sup> it was he to whom it was said, "In Isaac your descendants shall be called." <sup>19</sup> He considered that God is able to raise people even from the dead, from which he also received him back as a type.*

Here we see that this principle was in Abraham's mind when he was so willing to plunge the knife into Isaac's throat.

But God didn't say anything about a resurrection to him, so how did Abraham know that?

By the time he was asked to offer up Isaac he had learned that the God he worshiped was a promise keeping God, a covenant keeping God. And by that time God had made certain promises about Isaac that were not yet fulfilled. Therefore Abraham knew that if he killed Isaac God would raise him back to life.

#### *Promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*

So what did God promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob?

There are many, but one promise is particularly relevant to Jesus' argument.

And to all three men He said the same thing: "to you and to your seed I will give this land." Not only to your descendants will I give this land. To all three men He said, "To you and to your seed I will give this land."

When those three men died how much of the land did they own?

One burial cave they had to pay good money for, one plot of land in Shechem they had to pay good money for, and several wells. That was the extent of their real estate holdings.

And so how would God ever keep His promises to the patriarchs?

They died without ever having much of anything. Therefore He must raise them back to life!

And we saw earlier in the gospels (Matthew 8:11 in section 55) that Jesus said people will come from all directions into the land in the kingdom and they will fellowship with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. In that day they will be in the land promised to them, finally enjoying it.

#### *Summary*

So contained in the unfulfilled promises made to the patriarchs is the promise of resurrection, because every promise of God must be fulfilled to the one to whom it was made.

And this promise was made to the patriarchs. So it will be fulfilled to the patriarchs.

And that is where the resurrection can be seen in the Abrahamic covenant.

3) And His third point brings them back to the power of God.

Read Luke 20:38.

God has a living relationship with the patriarchs, and therefore He cannot leave them dead. The present living relationship is with the souls and spirits of these men. The body is currently dead, but it is necessary for the body to be brought back to life.

#### *Results*

There are three results of this encounter.

Read Matthew 22:33 and Luke 20:39 – 40.

- 1) The people are astonished at what He is saying. It is a new interpretation of Exodus 3:6 which they had not understood before. (Matthew 22:33)
- 2) Secondly, even the Pharisees (scribes) were a bit impressed because it gave them new ammunition against the Sadducees. (Luke 20:39)
- 3) And thirdly the Sadducees were now silenced. There will be no more questions coming from them. (Luke 20:40)

#### 4. By Pharisees, § 135, Mark 12:28–34; Matthew 22:34–40

##### a. *The Attack, Mark 12:28; Matthew 22:34-36*

Read Matthew 22:3 – 36.

This is the fourth attack, and again it is a question of theology.

Mark identifies the questioner as a scribe. The scribes were the ones who had all of these laws memorised.

And Matthew records that it was a lawyer, and the lawyers were experts in these laws.

And the question that he raises is: what is the most important commandment?

##### b. *The Answer, Mark 12:29-34; Matthew 22:37-40*

*The answer*

Read Jesus' answer in Matthew 22:37 – 40.

Jesus answers the question beyond what was asked. He gives them the first most important commandment, found in Deuteronomy 6:4-5: You must love God with your whole being.

And then He gives them the second most important commandment, found in Leviticus 19:18, which is to love your neighbour as yourself.

Of the 613 commandments in the Mosaic Law these were the two most important ones. And notice these two are not among the Ten Commandments. Two of the most important commandments are not found among the ten! That is why we shouldn't separate the ten from the others. They are all part of the Mosaic Law.

Why are these two commandments the two greatest commandments?

All the commandments deal with either human relationship to God, or human relationships among humanity.

If we love God with our whole being we will naturally keep all the commandments concerning our relationship to Him.

If we love our neighbour as ourselves we will naturally keep the commandments applicable to human relationships.

And therefore *on these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets.* (Matthew 22:40)

*The outcome*

Now read the lawyer's reply, and the outcome of this challenge in Mark 12:32 – 34.

What was the outcome?

On this issue the Pharisaic lawyer did agree. And Jesus *said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God"*.

And now the Pharisees have also been silenced.

*After that, no one would venture to ask Him any more questions.*



## G. The Challenge by the King, § 136, Mark 12:35–37; Matthew 22:41–46; Luke 20:41–44

It is still Tuesday the 12<sup>th</sup> of Nisan, April 4<sup>th</sup> AD 30.

They have attacked Him four times and four times He has answered them. They didn't provide any evidence to discredit Him before the people or to take Him before the Romans.

### *Jesus' question*

Now He has a question for them.

Read Matthew 22:41 – 46.

In verse 41 we see that He addressed this question to the Pharisees.

He begins by asking them, "whose son is the Messiah supposed to be?" And they answered correctly, "*the son of David.*"

Then comes the tricky part of the question.

*He \*said to them, "Then how does David in the Spirit call Him 'Lord,' saying,  
'THE LORD SAID TO MY LORD, "SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND, UNTIL I PUT YOUR ENEMIES BENEATH YOUR FEET" ' ?  
If David then calls Him 'Lord,' how is He his son?"*

If the Messiah is the son of David, then how come David calls Him Lord in Psalm 110:1? A father does not call his son Lord.

### *Answer*

How would you answer this?

The answer lies in the one thing about the Messiah that the Pharisees did not understand: They didn't understand that Messiah would be the God-man.

As to His humanity, He is the son of David.

As to His deity, He is the Lord of David.

But that was foreign to their thinking, and they were therefore unable to answer His question.

### *The Lamb without spot or blemish*

And now the Pharisees are further silenced.

So this period of testing of the lamb has shown Him to be the Lamb without spot and without blemish.

Their attempt to find a basis for execution so far has failed.

## H. The Judgment by the King, § 137, Mark 12:38–40; Matthew 23:1–39; Luke 20:45–47

Now we come to section 137: The Judgement by the King in which He denounces the leaders of Israel.

Chapter 23 of Matthew is the most detailed of the three accounts, mainly because he traces the consequences of the unpardonable sin more than Mark, Luke, and John do.

This whole chapter has one theme and that is the formal rejection and public condemnation of the Scribes and Pharisees, the leadership of Israel of that day.

And this lengthy denunciation marks the close of His public ministry exactly three years after it began. It began and finished at the time of the Passover.

It is still Tuesday of the last week, the 12<sup>th</sup> of Nisan, April 4<sup>th</sup> AD 30.

We can divide this chapter into three parts.

### 1. To the Disciples and Multitudes, Matthew. 23:1-12

In the first part He speaks to the disciples and the multitudes about the Pharisees, and He will say five things about them.

#### 1) *Seat of Moses*

Read His first point in Matthew 23:1-3.

Is there a problem here: has Jesus just contradicted Himself?

He says, *all that [the Pharisees] tell you, do and observe.*

During His ministry we have seen Jesus consistently disobeying the religious laws of the Pharisees. Is He now admonishing His disciples and the crowd to obey them?

This statement has been misinterpreted by many, including some in the Messianic movement.

And the issue is that Jesus appears to say that we have to do what the rabbis tell us to do. Well the rabbis would tell you to quit believing in Jesus. Then what do you do? Unfortunately some Messianic Jews have renounced their faith using this same logic.

How can we solve this problem? Is He really teaching them to obey the laws of the Pharisees?

*Answer*

Once again the answer lies in better understanding the context.

Notice the word, *therefore*, at the beginning of verse 3:

*therefore all that they tell you, do and observe.*

Why are they to do all that the Pharisees tell them?

Because the Pharisees *have seated themselves in the chair of Moses.*



Here is a picture of a stone seat that was discovered in a synagogue of Chorazin, and there are Hebrew inscriptions on this seat and the Hebrew says “The seat of Moses”.

And what is the significance of Moses’ Seat?

Understanding its importance is the key to understanding what Jesus means here.

And it has to do with the application of case law in a civil court, not a religious one.

The seat of Moses is the place where two litigants would come together before a judge who would decide their case. And whatever the judge said was the final verdict. There was no further appeal, and they must go ahead and fulfill whatever the judge said.

So what Jesus is saying to them is this:

In matters of civil law, because of their position, they are to be respected and obeyed.

But in matters of righteousness, do not follow their example because they say one thing and do another. They are hypocrites.

## 2) *Heavy burdens*

Now read His second point in verse 4.

What are the heavy burdens that they put on men’s shoulders?

They are guilty of making the Mishnah a burden upon others while they find ways to get around it.

## 3) *Self-seeking and self-righteous*

Read verses 5-7.

How would you describe these people?

They are self-seeking and self-righteous.

When they do obey the Mosaic Law, they are not being motivated to obey these laws based upon the love of God which is the only true motivation for being obedient. They are being obedient only for the sake of being seen by other men, so that others will see how spiritual they are.

### *they broaden their phylacteries*

What does He mean when He says *they broaden their phylacteries*?

Phylacteries are small black boxes, and to this day orthodox Jews, in their morning prayers, tie one around the forehead, and they tie one around their left hand if they are right-handed and around their right hand if they are left-handed. This is in obedience to Deuteronomy 6:8.

Inside the box are three passages of Scripture: Exodus 12:2-16 (Abrahamic covenant); Deuteronomy 6:4-9, (the famous “Hear, O Israel!” passage); and Deuteronomy 11:13-21 (blessings for obedience).

Now this was the right thing to do, but they made these boxes unusually large just to be seen of others.

### *They lengthen the tassels*

In verse five He also mentioned that *they lengthen the tassels of their garments*.

This refers to the tassels that all orthodox Jews wear on the corners of their garments. And this too is in keeping with a divine commandment found in Deuteronomy 22:12.

It was the right thing to do, but they made them unusually long just to be seen of others.

### *Motivation*

What is motivating these Pharisees?

Jesus points out in verse 5 that they do these things *to be noticed by men*.

And, as He explained in the Sermon on the Mount, because they are motivated only to be seen by others, that is the only reward they will get. There will be no reward coming from heaven.

#### 4) *Man-exulting titles*

Read verses 8-12.

What is the issue here?

They are guilty of desiring man-exulting titles.

He points out they love to be called rabbi, teacher, father, master.

These were not merely titles used for positions of authority. If that's all they were they would not be a problem.

But in Pharisaism, having these titles gave the person with the title a lot of authority over a disciple, far more authority than the Bible would allow one person to have over another.

In fact the rabbi was supposed to be the most important person in your life. The rabbinic writings say that if both your parent and your rabbi are taken into captivity and offered up for ransom, you must first work to ransom the rabbi. Then you can ransom your parent.

But those who believe in the Messiah must be characterised by the opposite tendencies, humbling themselves.

#### 5) *They prostitute their religion*

And His fifth point is found only in Luke's & Mark's accounts.

Read Mark 12:40.

How did they *devour widows' houses*?

First of all, in the Mosaic Law the widows were to receive special protection.

Therefore no Pharisee would foreclose on the home of a widow (seize the home of a widow who was unable to repay her loan) until he first prayed about it. Then having prayed about it he would go ahead and do it anyway.

They used these prayers to hide their covetousness. Their prayers were only a means to increase their wealth, and so they were guilty of prostituting their religion.

These are five things He says about the Pharisees to the disciples and to the crowds who were listening.

## 2. **To the Pharisees, Matthew. 23:13-36**

Then, in the second part of the passage, He goes on to address the Pharisees directly.

And He pronounces seven woes upon the them. And six of them begin with the same words:

*Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!*

So He will point out to them various aspects of their hypocrisy.

#### 1) *They keep Jews from the Kingdom*

Read the first woe in Mathew 23:13.

Why does He call them hypocrites?

*Because [they] shut off the kingdom of heaven from people.*

And how do they *shut off the kingdom of heaven from people*?

He gives two reasons:

- i. First of all they do not enter in themselves, because they are rejecting His Messianic claims.
- ii. And secondly, they prevent others from entering in by leading the nation to reject Him as well.

And why is this hypocritical?

Because, while they profess to be entering into the Kingdom themselves and to be bringing others into the kingdom with them, they are, in fact doing the opposite. They are keeping people, especially Jewish people, out of the Kingdom.

This is the reason for the first woe.

## 2) *They keep Gentiles from the Kingdom*

Read the second woe in verse 15.

What reason does He give here for their hypocrisy?

They are zealous to make proselytes of the Gentiles. But, professing to bring them into the Kingdom, they are actually bringing them into even greater bondage in the kingdom of darkness.

And that bondage was expressed in their legalism. The converts to Pharisaism were often more zealous in their legalism than the Pharisees themselves.

This is the reason for the second woe.

## *Comparison of first two woes*

Now compare the first and second woes. What do you notice?

In the first woe they are condemned for hindering those who are entering the kingdom.

In the second woe they are condemned for going out to bring yet others into bondage.

## 3) *Inverted priorities*

Read the third woe in verses 16-22.

What is the primary issue here?

Jesus points it out with the question He asks and repeats.

With each example He asks the same question: *which is more important*, the sanctified or the sanctifier.

And so, while we might simply condemn their deception, Jesus condemns them because they gave priority to the sanctified over the sanctifier.

The first example, in rabbinic theology: If you swear by the temple you don't have to keep your oath, but if you swear by the gold in the temple you do have to keep your oath. But what makes this gold so special? As to its makeup it is not different from gold found elsewhere in the world. What makes this gold special was where it was placed – in the holy temple. The temple sanctifies the gold, not vice versa. But here they switch the priorities.

The second example is: If you swear by the altar then you don't have to keep your oath, but if you swear by the sacrifice on the altar you then have to keep your oath. But what makes the dead body of that animal special? As to its makeup it is not different from any other dead body of the same kind of animal elsewhere in the world. What made it special was where it was placed – upon the holy altar. The altar sanctifies the gift, not vice versa.

And by means of swearing these kinds of oaths, they give priority to the sanctified, instead of giving it to the sanctifier.

This is the basis for the third woe.

#### 4) *Majoring on minor points*

Now read the fourth woe in verses 23 & 24.

Why are they condemned here?

For dwelling on the minor points of the Law while ignoring the major points of the Law.

He says they *tithe mint and dill and cummin*. These were three of the smallest seed known in Israel of the first century. They were careful to tithe even of the smallest seed.

This was not the wrong thing to do, because He says *these things you ought to have done*.

The problem is that they ignored the more important aspects of the Law, such as justice, and mercy, and faith.

And so they dwelt on the minor points of the Law while ignoring the major points of the Law.

This is the reason for the fourth woe.

#### 5) *External behaviour without internal righteousness*

Read the fifth woe in verses 25-26.

What is the issue this time?

They concern themselves with the demands of the Law on their external behaviour while ignoring the demands of the Law on their internal being.

They concerned themselves with washing their hands, but not with cleansing their hearts.

He compares them to those who, after eating, wash the outside of the cup and bowl leaving the inside dirty. But on the inside they will eat again and the old food will corrupt the new food.

What is the only way they can be clean on the outside?

By first cleaning the inside!

### *Blind*

Now notice how many times He calls the *blind*.

Within the third, fourth, and fifth woes, five times He calls them blind – five times!

- a. First of all in verse 16, *you blind guides*.

They are blind guides because multitudes followed their practices. And their followers thought they were being led into life without realising that they were being led by spiritually blind guides.

- b. Verse 17, *You fools and blind men!*

- c. Verse 19, *you blind men*.

- d. Verse 24, *you blind guides*.

- e. Verse 26, *you blind Pharisee*.

### 6) *Whitewashed tombs*

Read the sixth woe in verses 27-28.

What is this about?

This woe is because outwardly they appeared to be very spiritual and religious, but inwardly they are corrupt.

He compares them with whitewashed tombs.

And to this day in Israel all tombs receive a fresh white coat of paint. The purpose of that has to do with anyone from the tribe of Levi. A Levite could not walk over a grave or come into contact with a tomb. So as the Levites are walking down the road, to be sure these tombs are very visible to them, every year they get a fresh coat of white paint.

So, on the outside they look white and fresh and clean, but nothing inside has changed. They are still full of unclean, corrupting, dead men's bones.

All of their religious practices and thousands of new rules gave the appearance of how religious they are. But that changes nothing in the internal man. It is still corrupt!

### 7) *The blood of all the prophets*

Now we come to the seventh woe.

Read verses 29-33.

What were the Pharisees claiming about themselves?



The Pharisees claimed to honour the prophets by building their tombs and decorating their monuments.

And they deny any responsibility or support for the actions of their forefathers.

How does this highlight their hypocrisy?

The prophets told of the Messiah and His coming.

And everything that the prophets were going to say about the coming of the Messiah had by that time been said. The Old Testament cannon had already been closed for about four and a half centuries.

Furthermore, John the Baptist came as the forerunner announcing the soon coming of the King.

Jesus Himself proclaimed His Messiahship and authenticated it with miracles, signs and wonders.

Yet in spite of this they rejected His claims.

And to reject His Messiahship automatically means to reject the Old Testament prophets.

No one can claim, not even the orthodox Jew can claim, to believe the prophets and reject the Messiahship of Jesus. It's a package deal. To believe one is to believe the other. To reject one is to reject the other.

Consequently, by rejecting Jesus as the Messiah they have also rejected the prophets.

Therefore they are hypocrites.

While claiming to honour the prophets they have rejected them.

And thus they are *filling up the measure of the guilt of their fathers*.

*Therefore ...*

Jesus continues, *therefore ...*

What will be the consequence for them?

Read verses 34 – 36.

*Therefore*, because they have rejected the prophets and have rejected Him, He points out that they will be held responsible not only for rejecting His Messiahship, but also for the blood of all the Old Testament prophets.

Now one thing to keep in mind is that the order of the Bible that Jesus uses is the Jewish order and not the order we have today in the Christian Bible. The number of books in the Jewish Old Testament and in the Christian Old Testament is the same. But the order is not the same. The first book is, of course, the same – Genesis. The last book in the Jewish order is not Malachi, but Second Chronicles.

Now notice in verse 35 He names two men: Able, found in the first book, Genesis; and Zechariah, found in the book of Second Chronicles, the last book in the Jewish order.

And by naming these two men He says they will be accountable for everything from Genesis to Second Chronicles.

This was a Jewish figure of speech meaning the whole body of revealed written truth – much as we would say today: from Genesis to Revelation, our figure of speech today for the whole body of revealed written truth.

*This generation*

Now look at verse 36. *Truly I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation*. Note those two words yet again: *this generation*.

This generation, guilty of the unpardonable sin, would now be held accountable for the whole body of revealed written truth.

### 3. The Lament, Matthew. 23:37-39

In the third part of this chapter He closes His public ministry with a lament.

*Three messages*

Read verses 37 – 38.

Here He summarises three messages to Israel. What are they?

#### 1. *His Rejection*

In verse 37, He often liked to spread His hands out and offer Israel the Messianic protection offered by the prophets. But He says *and you were unwilling* - when they rejected Him.

#### 2. *Their Desolation*

So in verse 38, their house is destined to lie desolate. It is destined to be destroyed forty years hence.

### 3. *His Return*

Now look at verse 39. Still addressing the Jewish leaders notice what He says.

*“For I say to you, from now on you will not see Me until you say, ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!’ ”*

We have mentioned before that this is the official Messianic greeting. When the Messiah comes they will greet Him with these words.

And they would never say these words of Jesus unless they first accepted Him to be the Messianic King.

#### *The pre-condition*

And notice the words, *until you say*.

So, here Jesus is laying down the pre-condition to the second coming.

He won't return until the Jewish people accept Him to be the Messiah and ask Him to come back.

#### *Rapture and second coming*

One of the key differences between the timing of the rapture and the second coming lies right here.

Can you see it?

The rapture has no pre-conditions at all. It could happen at any moment in time. It could happen right now.

The second coming does have one key pre-condition, which is Israel's national salvation. Until the whole nation comes to faith there will be no second coming!

We will say more about this in our closing comments when we finish our course.

### *Three implications*

If we clearly understand the pre-condition to the second coming, then there are three other important things that we will also understand clearly.

Three things follow on from this pre-condition. Can you anticipate them?

#### 1) *Anti-Semitism*

First of all we will understand the Biblical foundations of anti-Semitism, and why Satan has always had this long war against the Jews, trying to destroy the Jews at every opportunity.

Satan knows that once Jesus comes back his career is over.

He also knows that Jesus will not come back until the Jews ask Him to come back. So, if he can succeed in wiping out the Jews before they have a chance to plead for Messiah's return, there will be no second coming, and Satan's career will be saved forever.

That is why there has always been this continuous war against the Jews since the days of Abraham. And that is why things like the crusades occurred. That is why the Russian pogroms occurred. That's why the Nazi holocaust occurred.

And that is why Revelation 12 says that once Satan is confined in the tribulation and knows his time is short, he expends all his energies to try to wipe out the Jews once and for all.

Anti-Semitism in any form, whether it is active or passive, whether it is ethnic, whether it is nationalistic, whether it is religious, whether it is economic, political, sociological, or theological, it is part of Satan's bandwagon to avoid the second coming.

#### 2) *The odious Name*

Secondly, we will understand why Satan has used one name more than any other name to persecute Jews.

And since the fourth century, 95% of all persecutions of the Jews were in Jesus' name, in the name of the church and the cross – ninety five percent!

Satan knows the name they have to call upon to bring Him back, so he has a strategy to make that name odious in the Jewish community. And it has become odious.

So in the Jewish community, when a Jew accepts Jesus, he is not merely changing what he believes, or his religion, or his faith. He is joining the people who are responsible for killing your parents, your brothers, your sisters, your cousins.

And this is part of the Satanic strategy to avoid the second coming.

### 3) *Jewish evangelism*

And that brings us to the third point – why it is important to be faithful in carrying out Jewish evangelism and Jewish missions.

Part of the ministry to the Jewish community is to distinguish the Jesus of Scripture from the Jesus of Jewish and church history, so that, in spite of all that faulty programming, they can finally come to see who the real Jesus is.

Sadly, in our day there are several evangelical groups that have all kinds of programs for Israel. All 'do good' programs. But they have a policy not to share the gospel with the Jews to avoid offending them.

And they say God told them to do this. God did not tell them to do that! The one thing Satan doesn't want the Jews to get is the gospel, and so they fall into Satan's trap. It is good to do nice things for Israel, but not at the cost of the gospel.

The proclamation of the gospel cannot be compromised under any circumstances. But that is what has taken place.

And so you should pick a Jewish ministry to support, and make sure that whatever else they may do on behalf of Israel and the Jewish people, they don't compromise on finding opportunities to share the gospel with Jewish people.

## I. Instruction at the Treasury, § 138, Mark 12:41-44; Luke 21:1-4

### *Location*

The area where He was teaching was near the treasury.

The treasury section had thirteen large offering boxes. Each box was for a specific need of either the temple or the people. And they could donate into any of those boxes.

### *Observation*

Read Mark 12:41 – 44.

What was Jesus observing?

And as He sat there He pointed out to His disciples how those who are wealthy were bringing a lot of money but it didn't really hurt their ability to spend. But there was a widow who put in two mites which was the absolute minimum allowed to be put in.

### *Implication*

What implications follow from this?

The wealthy could give a lot of money and didn't have to trust God to provide for them. But when she gave everything that she had, she had to trust the Lord that she would get to eat again, and to sleep under a roof again.

### *Illustration*

This observation illustrates the contrast between external righteousness and internal righteousness that He has just been teaching about in section 137.

Because of her internal righteousness before the Lord she was able externally to be willing to pay all that she has. The others were merely external with no internal changes.

### *Still Tuesday*

It is still Tuesday the 12<sup>th</sup> of Nisan, April 4<sup>th</sup> AD 30.

## VIII THE PREPARATION FOR THE DEATH OF THE KING, § 139-152

The previous division of the Messiah's life saw Him set apart as the Passover Lamb and tested by various groups until, as Matthew records,

*No one was able to answer Him a word,  
nor did anyone dare from that day on to ask Him another question.*

Now the eighth main division of Jesus' life is the preparation for the death of the King.

Here we will see things such as:

His prophecies concerning both near and distant events,  
His last Passover meal,  
His promises and admonitions to His disciples, and  
His high priestly prayer.

It is still Tuesday the 12<sup>th</sup> of Nisan, April 4<sup>th</sup> AD 30.

### A. The Prophecies of the King, § 139, Mark 13:1-37; Matthew 24-25; Luke 21:5-36

Just as section 137 marked the end of Jesus' public ministry, so section 139 marks the end of His prophetic ministry.

It contains a very extensive prophecy with both near prophecies and distant prophecies.

And the subjects Jesus discusses here are covered far more extensively in Arnold's book "The Footsteps of the Messiah". But in this course we will stay close to the text in front of us.

#### 1. The Historical Setting, Mark 13:1-2; Matthew. 24:1-2; Luke 21:5-6

##### *Occasion*

What was the occasion for these prophecies?

Read Matthew 24:1 and Mark 13:1.

They are now leaving the temple compound for the last time.

And what are the disciples thinking about?

They point out to Jesus the buildings that made up the temple compound. And they especially focus on the stones that were used.

Why might they be focused on the buildings and the stones of the temple?

A little earlier that day, Jesus had said to Jerusalem: *Behold, your house is being left to you desolate!*

Perhaps they were contemplating the contrast between such destruction and the magnificence of these buildings.

And indeed, at this point of time in the land of Israel, the stones that were used were the largest stones for buildings ever known. A lot of them measured 10 to 12 feet and weighed several tons.

### *Temple construction project*

Actually, they were looking at buildings that were still under construction. Herod the Great began rebuilding the temple compound in the year 20 BC. And while the temple building itself was completed rather quickly because of its importance, the rest of the compound was still being built even as these words were spoken.

In fact, they would not be finished until the year 64 AD, about 84 years after the reconstruction began, and 6 years before it was all destroyed by the Romans.

### *Prophecy*

Jesus responds to them with a prophecy in keeping with what He has been saying since His rejection in section 61.

Read what He says in Matthew 24:2.

*Truly I say to you, not one stone here will be left upon another, which will not be torn down.*

He prophesies a complete destruction of the entire temple compound area.

### *Fulfilment*

And how was this prophecy eventually fulfilled?

In the closing segments of the war in the year AD 70, against the order of Titus, a Roman soldier threw a torch into the first room of the building.

While the temple walls were overlaid with gold, the gold was overlaid with curtains and wall coverings. And as they caught fire they began to melt the gold and the liquid gold began to seep between the stones.

Later on, to reach the gold the Romans had to remove all the stones from on top of each other.

So there are no remains of any of the buildings of the temple compound.

### *Stones*

By the way, in case you are wondering, the western wall or the Wailing Wall is not the wall of a building. It was the wall that surrounded the temple compound.

The prophecy applied only to the buildings and not to the outer wall.

## **2. The Three Questions, Mark 13:3-4; Matthew. 24:3; Luke 21:7**

### *Bewilderment*

By now the disciples are quite puzzled about the establishment of the kingdom.

They believe Jesus is the Messiah, but the leaders of Israel have rejected Him.

So the kingdom cannot be established at this time.

Jesus has denounced those leaders, pronouncing woes upon them.

He says He will not return until Israel requests His return.



But how can that happen since Israel's leaders have rejected Him and He has denounced them.

He told them that Jerusalem will be left desolate.

And now He adds that not one stone of the temple will be left upon another.

And yet, when the kingdom is established, the Messiah will reign in Jerusalem.

### *Questions*

And as they walked from the temple compound through the Kidron Valley and onto the Mount of Olives, this bewilderment leads them to formulate some questions.

Read all three gospel accounts, Mark 13:3 – 4; Matthew 24:3; Luke 21:7.

Notice in passing that Jesus is sitting down. This is the position of a rabbi, and He always taught in a sitting position.

And while Matthew simply says the disciples came to Him, Mark specifies that the questions came from four disciples, Peter, James, John, and Andrew.

### Three questions

Now what are their questions?

Notice especially how Matthew records them. He has three clauses, each referring to a different event.

- 1) *Tell us, when will these things happen?*

Which things?

The antecedent to these things is the prophecy of the preceding section, the destruction of Jerusalem.

*Tell us, when will Jerusalem be destroyed?*

- 2) *Secondly, what will be the sign of Your coming?*

What is the sign that the second coming is about to occur.

- 3) *And thirdly, of the end of the age?*

What is the sign that *the end of the age* has begun?

And what do they mean by *the end of the age*?

Remember that in the Jewish thinking of that day there were only two ages: the age in which we are now living; and the age to come. And the age to come is always the Messianic Kingdom.

So the point of the last question is: what is the sign that this age is about to end and the new age, the Messianic age is about to begin.

Now notice how Luke records the first question.

*Teacher, when therefore will these things happen? And what will be the sign when these things are about to take place?*

So each of their three questions is also a request for a sign.

### The overall question

What is the common thread that runs through all of these questions?

They are all aspects of one overarching question: When and how will the Messianic Kingdom come into being?

There will be a destruction of Jerusalem at the end of this age. Zechariah prophesied that Jerusalem will be captured and plundered before the Kingdom is established (Zechariah 14:2).

Obviously the Messiah must return before the Kingdom begins.

And the end of this age will precede the beginning of the next age, which is the Kingdom.

These are three events that will take place before the Kingdom is established.

So the basic purpose of their questions, and therefore the basic purpose of Jesus response is to answer the question:

When and how will the Messianic Kingdom come into being?

#### *Observations about the Olivet Discourse*

And He will answer all three of their questions, but not in the same order in which they were asked. He will answer them in the order 3, 1, 2: the end of the age, the destruction of Jerusalem, and His return.

Not all the gospel writers provide answers to all three questions.

It is Luke who focuses on the first question about the sign of Jerusalem's destruction. Remember that Jerusalem happens to be one of Luke's four main concerns, and therefore he would naturally focus on what Jesus said about Jerusalem.

Mark and Matthew both ignore Jesus' answer to the first question and focus on the second and third questions.

This section is called "the Olivet Discourse" because it takes place on the Mount of Olives.

In His answer, Jesus mostly follows a chronological order, and when He departs from that order, He indicates it in some way, as we will see.

### **3. The General Characteristics of the Church Age, Mark 13:5-7; Matthew. 24:4-6; Luke 21:8-9**

Now, to see how Jesus begins to answer their questions, read Matthew 24:4 – 6.

How do these statements address their questions?

A more literal translation of the end of verse 6 would be: *It is inevitable in the nature of things for this to happen, but that is not yet the end.*

In other words, He is telling them two things that are not signs of the end of the age. Rather, they are things that will be characteristic of the present age, which is the church age.

#### **1) False Messiahs**

What is the first characteristic of the church age?

The rise of false messiahs.

Jesus Himself was the first person in Jewish history who claimed to be the Messiah.

After Him came a long line of false messiahs beginning in the year 132 AD with a man named Simon Bar Coseba who became known as Simon Bar Cochba, and continuing into the late 1800's with a man named Jacob Frank from Poland.

Between these two there were many false messiah's in Jewish history. The most famous one who had the largest following around the world was a man named Sabbetal Tzvi in the 1600s.

There were also false messiahs among the Gentiles from time to time, including Rev. Sun Yung Moon, who claimed to be the second coming of Jesus. He had a large following both in the east and the west and founded the Unification Church.

But no matter how many such movements there are, no matter how large they are, no matter how much attention they get, this will characterise the whole age.

It is not a sign of the last days.

## 2) *Rumours of wars*

And what is the second thing that will characterise the whole age?

*You will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars.*

This refers to local wars, and a local war here or a local war there is not a sign of the last days.

People often assume that anything that happens in the Middle East must be significant in some way, and sometimes it is, but often it is not.

Some books came out trying to prove that the first gulf war fulfilled certain prophecies. But the Bible nowhere spoke of a war between the USA and Iraq. It was certainly significant politically, but not Biblically or prophetically.

So keep in mind that just because a war happens somewhere in the world or in the Middle East in particular, it is not a sign of the last days.

These are two characteristics of the present age.

There will be false messiahs, and there will be both wars and rumors of wars, but these are the inevitable result of the nature of the age, and they do not indicate that the end of the age is near.

Rather, these common characteristics of the age form the background against which He will contrast the sign that the end of the age is near.

## 4. **The Sign of the End of the Age, Mark 13:8; Matthew. 24:7-8; Luke 21:10-11**

Read Matthew verses 7 – 8.

And what is the sign that the end of the age is near?

*Hebrew idiom*

The key to understanding what Jesus is talking about is to find out the meaning of the Hebrew idiom, *nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom*.

Taken in the Jewish context of the time when it was spoken, this is an idiom referring to total conflict in the area under consideration.

### Old Testament Usage

We can find examples of its use in two Old Testament passages.

Turn to Isaiah 19:1 – 4.

<sup>1</sup> *The oracle concerning Egypt. Behold, the Lord is riding on a swift cloud and is about to come to Egypt; The idols of Egypt will tremble at His presence, And the heart of the Egyptians will melt within them.* <sup>2</sup> *“So I will incite Egyptians against Egyptians; And they will each fight against his brother and each against his neighbor, City against city and kingdom against kingdom.* <sup>3</sup> *“Then the spirit of the Egyptians will be demoralized within them; And I will confound their strategy, So that they will resort to idols and ghosts of the dead And to mediums and spiritists.* <sup>4</sup> *“Moreover, I will deliver the Egyptians into the hand of a cruel master, And a mighty king will rule over them,” declares the Lord God of hosts.*

What is the area in view in this context?

In this passage the land of Egypt is in view and the idiom refers to a conflict all over the land of Egypt.

Now look at 2 Chronicles 15:1-7.

<sup>1</sup> *Now the Spirit of God came on Azariah the son of Oded,* <sup>2</sup> *and he went out to meet Asa and said to him, “Listen to me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin: the Lord is with you when you are with Him. And if you seek Him, He will let you find Him; but if you forsake Him, He will forsake you.* <sup>3</sup> *“For many days Israel was without the true God and without a teaching priest and without law.* <sup>4</sup> *“But in their distress they turned to the Lord God of Israel, and they sought Him, and He let them find Him.* <sup>5</sup> *“In those times there was no peace to him who went out or to him who came in, for many disturbances afflicted all the inhabitants of the lands.* <sup>6</sup> *“Nation was crushed by nation, and city by city, for God troubled them with every kind of distress.* <sup>7</sup> *“But you, be strong and do not lose courage, for there is reward for your work.”*

What area is in view here?

This time it is the Middle East that is in view, and the idiom refers to conflict all over the Middle East.

So the phrase is used of a total conflict in the area that is in focus in the context: for Isaiah that is Egypt; and for 2 Chronicles it is the Middle East.

### Jesus' usage

What area does Jesus have in view as He is speaking?

In the Olivet Discourse the whole world is in view.

This is clear both from the nature of the question He is answering, and from other references to the world later in the context. In Matthew's gospel the world is mentioned in verses 14, 21, 30, 31, & 35. In Mark's gospel: verses 27, & 31. In Luke's gospel: verses 26, 33, & 35.

### Usage in Jesus' day

In the literature of Jesus' day the expression, *nation against nation, and kingdom against kingdom*, was a Jewish idiom for a world war preceding the coming of the Messiah.

One Jewish source known as the Bereshit Rabbah states:

*If you shall see the kingdoms rising against each other in turn, [kingdom against kingdom and nation against nation], then give heed and note the footsteps of the Messiah (XLII:4).*

The word “*footsteps*” here refers to a series of all the events that will bring about the coming of the Messiah. In Judaism this would be the only coming of the Messiah.

Another Jewish source known as the Zohar Chadash states:

*At that time wars shall be stirred up in the world. Nation shall be against nation and city against city; much distress shall be renewed against the enemies of the Israelites.*

### Jesus' answer to the third question

As we have already noted, it is clear that Jesus has the whole world in view, and so He is talking about a world-wide conflict.

And that stands in contrast to the wars and rumors of wars He has just mentioned as being normal for this present age. When you see a world war in contrast to local wars, that is the sign that the last days have begun.

### Beginning of birth pangs

Now what is He saying about birth pangs?

He says, in verse 8, that *all these things*, the world war and the famines and earthquakes, *are merely the beginning of birth pangs*.

And how are birth pangs related to the end of this age and the coming of the kingdom?

The word translated *birth pangs* refers to the series of pains a woman experiences before giving birth to a baby.

In the last days of this age, there will be a series of birth pangs, or a series of events that will occur before the birth of the new Messianic Age.

And here Jesus focuses on *the beginning of birth pangs* or the very first birth pang.

So that answers the third question: what is the sign that the last days have begun?

When you see a world war in contrast to local wars.

### Fulfilment

I do agree with those who hold that we live in the last days, and I would begin the last days with the First World War in 1914-1918.

The Second World War was a continuation of the First World War. And both world wars had a very decisive impact on Jewish history. World War I gave impetus to the growth of the Zionist movement, and World War II led to the reestablishment of the Jewish State three years after the war ended.

The sign that the end of the age has begun is the worldwide conflict fulfilled by World War I and World War II.

And the beginning of birth pangs, the first in a series of events leading to the arrival of the Kingdom has already occurred.

## 5. The Personal Experiences of the Apostles, Mark 13:9-13; Luke 21:12-19

Now He has answered their third question, but before He moves on to the next question He has an important personal message for them.

Read it in Luke 21:12 – 19.

*When?*

Notice the timing He gives for what He describes here. When these persecutions will take place?

He says: *But before all these things ...*

So He is departing from His normal chronological flow of events to tell them what will happen before the last days of this age begin.

*What He tells them*

And altogether He tells them nine things.

Nine things that flow in a continuous thread of thought with a single astonishing theme.

See if you can pick it up as we look at the details He gives them.

What are the nine things He tells them here?

1. Verse 12 talks about their rejection and persecution.

Notice who is doing the persecution. There are actually two groups of persecutors here.

Those who bring them *to the synagogues* would be Jews.

So they will be rejected and persecuted by the Jewish community.

2. But the *kings and governors* would be Gentiles. And they will also be persecuted by the Gentiles.

3. Although they are being persecuted by both Jews and Gentiles, periods of persecution will provide them opportunities to testify. (verse 13)

4. The gospel will be proclaimed in spite of opposition. (Mark 13:10)

It will be proclaimed everywhere – to all nations.

This is a point that Paul confirms in Romans 10:8f and Colossians 1:6, 23. The gospel is proclaimed to all nations.

5. When they are brought before a court of law, whether it is a Jewish court of law or a Gentile court of law, they do not need to worry about how they will give their defense.

When the time comes they will be given divine utterance.

They will be able to speak and defend the faith and the others won't be able to withstand it. (14-15)



6. Not only will they be rejected by both Jewish and Gentile society, it gets more personal in Mark 13:12 & Luke 21:16.

They will be rejected by their families and friends. And some will be killed.

Of these eleven apostles who stay with Him, ten will die the death of a martyr. (16)

7. They will be hated by all. (17)
8. Now read Luke 21:18 again.

*Yet not a hair of your head will perish.*

What does He mean by this?

The Greek is quite emphatic: *Yet a hair of your head will by no means perish, or will certainly not perish.*

Now what does He mean by the word *perish*?

After His rejection, when He was telling them about the persecutions that would follow as a result, He used the same word when He said to them in Matthew 10:28 (in section 70).

Read it again.

<sup>28</sup> *“Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.*

Here the word is translated *destroy*.

It does not indicate extinction or annihilation, but only change from one state of being to another. God does not cause either soul or body to cease to exist in hell, but the state of being has certainly changed.

And what does He say that God is able to destroy in hell?

He *is able to destroy both soul and body in hell*. Both soul and body will be in hell, and with the body will be the hair on the head.

So when He now says to them, *Yet not a hair of your head will perish*, He is telling them that not even a hair of their heads will end up in hell.

In other words, their eternal salvation is secure.

And He is telling them exactly what He told them earlier, that they should not be afraid of those who are able to persecute them and kill them.

Their spiritual salvation is guaranteed and their eternal life is secure!

And consequently, although they will not see the end of this age, they will see the Kingdom when it comes.

9. And verse 19 is another verse that, at first sight, is difficult to understand.

Read Luke 21:19.

What does He mean by this?

The ASV translates it : *In your patience you shall win your souls.*

And the word, *gain* (NASB) or *win* (ASV) usually means to acquire or purchase with a price.

And if salvation is by grace and not by works, then obviously He is not telling them that they can gain their own souls by means of their patience.

And in fact, He has just reminded them that their own souls are eternally secure.

So it is more likely that He is telling them that, in spite of opposition coming from both Jews and Gentiles and from both family members and friends, they will win many souls to the Lord by their patient endurance.

#### *The thread of thought*

Now, step back to see the overall thread of thought so far.

This age will, because of its very essence, be characterised by the appearance of false messiahs and by both wars and rumours of wars.

But the end of the age will be preceded by a series of events, like birth pangs, and the first of these will be a world-wide conflict.

But they were not to expect the end of the age to come too soon.

#### *The apostles' personal future*

In fact, Jesus predicted that many of them would be martyred before the end of the age ever begins.

What they will see is persecution and imprisonment, and accusations before kings and governors.

They are to take courage for these things will provide opportunities for their testimony and the preaching of the gospel to all nations.

And they will be given what to say when they need it. No one will be able to refute them.

They will be betrayed by those closest to them, both family and friends. They will be hated because of His name, and some of them will be put to death.

Nevertheless their eternal life is secure, they will see the Kingdom, and they will win many souls for the Kingdom.

### **6. The Sign of the Fall of Jerusalem, Luke 21:20-24**

Then, as Luke records, He gives them the answer to their first question.

#### *The sign*

Read Luke 21:20

*When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then recognize that her desolation is near.*

This is the sign that the destruction of Jerusalem is near: *When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies.*

#### *Warning*

Read verses 21 – 22.

Then He gives a warning to Jewish believers living in a day which came between 66 and 70 AD.

What does He tell them to do?

They are not to take up swords to help defend the city. Rather, they are to find a way to abandon it. If they are outside the city, they are not to go in to help defend it. Those in the city must get out, and those outside of it must not go in.

And why is this?

*because these are days of vengeance, so that all things which are written will be fulfilled.*

Because to do otherwise would be to fight against the determined purposes of God as recorded in the written prophecies.

#### *Woe*

Read verses 23 – 24.

He points out at that *there will be great distress upon the land and wrath to this people.*

Who does He mean by *this people*?

*This people* here would be the Jewish people.

They will be killed with the sword, and dispersed as captives into all the nations.

### *The Times of the Gentiles*

And how long will Jerusalem be trampled under foot by the Gentiles?

*Until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.*

What is *the times of the Gentiles* referring to?

The Times of the Gentiles is the period of time where the Gentiles hold domination over the Jewish people.

It began with the Babylonian captivity in 586 BC when the last Davidic king sitting upon the throne was removed. There has not been a Davidic king sitting upon the throne since then.

The Times of the Gentiles will only end when once again a Davidic king is sitting upon the throne of David. And that will happen when the Messiah establishes His Kingdom.

### *Fulfilment*

How was the prophecy of Jerusalem's destruction fulfilled?

The way the fulfillment came initially is this: In the year 66 AD the Roman army came and besieged the city of Jerusalem assuming they were only facing a local revolt.

And the Messianic community of Jerusalem took that to be the sign that Jesus was speaking about and they had to leave the city. But with the Romans sitting out there they could not do so.

But the general of the Romans, Cestus Gallus began to realize that the revolt was much more extensive and Jewish forces were cutting his supply lines. He was forced to lift the siege and returned to Caesarea.

And so temporarily the city was no longer under siege, and then the Messianic community took the opportunity to abandon the city. They were joined by Jewish believers from Judaea, from the Galilee, from the Golan. They went to a city called Pella just south of the sea of Galilee but on the other side of the river, and therefore outside of the war zone.

A total of 1,100,000 Jews were killed in the Roman war between 66 and 70 AD.

But not a single Jewish believer lost his life because of his obedience to these admonitions here.

### *Conclusion*

So with these words Jesus answered their first question, the sign of the coming destruction of Jerusalem.

Now He has answered their third question asking for the sign that the end of the age is near, and He has given them some personal instruction to the effect that they will not personally see this sign, and He has answered the first question asking for a sign that Jerusalem's destruction is about to take place.

## **7. The Great Tribulation, Mark 13:14-23; Matthew. 24:9-28**

Jesus has answered two of the disciples' questions – the sign that the end of the age is approaching, and the sign that Jerusalem is about to be destroyed. Now He begins to pave the way for the answer to their second question: what will be the sign of His coming?

#### a. *The First Half, Matthew 24:9-14*

Read Matthew 24:9 – 14.

This passage raises a number of questions for us.

First of all the events described here are similar to those we have just seen when He was explaining to the disciples what their own personal future would be, in Mark 13:9-13 and Luke 21:12-19.

And some commentators consider this passage to be dealing with the same things.

But similarity is not sameness. And the differences are significant.

##### *When?*

For instance, the gospel writers are actually quite specific about the different time periods they are describing.

What did Luke say about the time period he was describing?

In 21:12 he begins: *but before all these things*, clearly indicating that what he describes occurs before the first birth pang.

What does Matthew say about when these events occur?

He begins in verse 9 with the word, *Then*, pointing out that the Messiah is now describing what will come after the first birth pang found in verses 7 – 8.

And he emphasises this at the beginning of verse 10 by saying: *At that time*. At that time which comes after the first birth pang.

So Luke and Matthew clearly have different time periods in mind.

Here Matthew describes events in the first half of the Tribulation that will come some time after the sign of the First World War.

##### *Who?*

Now who is doing the killing and hating here?

At the end of verse 9 He says: *you will be hated by all nations because of My name*.

And the word for *nations*, to their Jewish ears, refers to the Gentile nations.

So the Gentile nations are delivering them to tribulation, killing them and hating them.

And who are they killing and hating?

The disciples? Jesus has already told them they won't live to see the first birth pang, and these events occur after the first birth pang.

While Gentile believers will also suffer at this time, I believe Jesus has the Jewish people in mind here, and specifically the Jewish people of the first half of the tribulation.

The reason for this is that His focus in verses 9 to 12 appears to be on the Jewish people. We will see this as we proceed.

### *Because of My name*

Why will they be killed and hated by all nations?

Because of His name!

Why will Israel be hated and killed because of His name?

Because Satan knows his time is short. He knows that if the Jews survive until the end they will call on Jesus' name and He will come to them. So to achieve his purpose he must kill every Jew before they call on that name.

Will Gentile believers also suffer because of His name?

Yes, and for a related reason. Gentiles who believe in Jesus are able to influence Jewish people to call on His name. So they will also be subject to tribulation.

### *What the Jews do to each other (verses 10 – 12)*

In verse 9 He describes what the Gentiles are doing to the Jews.

Then in verses 10 – 12 He describes what the Jews are doing to each other!

### *Stumble (verse 10)*

Now look at verse 10.

What does He mean by saying: *many will fall away*?

The Greek word is **skandalízō** meaning figuratively to be a stumbling block to someone, to cause to stumble at or in something, to give a cause of offense to someone<sup>x</sup>.

The ASV translates it better as: then shall many stumble.

Does that bring to mind other passages of Scripture?

Read Isaiah 8:14 – 15.

<sup>14</sup> *"Then He shall become a sanctuary; But to both the houses of Israel, a stone to strike and a rock to stumble over, And a snare and a trap for the inhabitants of Jerusalem. <sup>15</sup> "Many will stumble over them, Then they will fall and be broken; They will even be snared and caught."*

For those Jews who believe, the Messiah will become a sanctuary. But for those who do not believe, He will be a rock to stumble over.

The apostle Peter quotes from Isaiah.

Read 1 Peter 2:6 – 8.

<sup>6</sup> *For this is contained in Scripture: "Behold, I lay in Zion a choice stone, a precious corner stone, And he who believes in Him will not be disappointed."* <sup>7</sup> *This precious value, then, is for you who believe; but for those who disbelieve, "The stone which the builders rejected, This became the very corner stone,"* <sup>8</sup> *and, "A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense"; for they stumble because they are disobedient to the word, and to this doom they were also appointed.*

This same idea of the stone of stumbling is also found in Matthew 21:44; Luke 2:34; Romans 9:31; 1 Corinthians 1:23.

So the Jews will stumble because of their unbelief and disobedience. And as a result they will betray one another and hate one another.

#### *False prophets (verse 11)*

And also in verse 11, *many false prophets will arise and will mislead many*. This is also foreseen by Zechariah in Zechariah 13:2-6.

#### *Lawlessness*

What is lawlessness?

John writes in 1 John 3:4.

<sup>4</sup> *Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness.*

And by implication, lawlessness is sin, iniquity, and unrighteousness. (Also see Romans 4:7)

#### *Multiplied (verse 12)*

In verse 12, Jesus says *lawlessness is increased*. And the verb means: To make full and hence to multiply or increase.

And the apostle Paul tells the Thessalonians that a time will come when evil will no longer be restrained (II Thessalonians 2:6-7).

<sup>6</sup> *And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he will be revealed.* <sup>7</sup> *For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way.*

#### *Love grows cold*

So there will be a great increase in lawlessness, which implies an increase of sin, iniquity, and unrighteousness.

And the result will be that *most people's love will grow cold*.

*All Israel will be saved! (verse 13)*

Now read verse 13 again.

*But the one who endures to the end, he will be saved.*

This is a puzzling verse. Is He proclaiming a salvation by works? How can we understand it?

*Saved*

First of all, what kind of salvation is He talking about?

The word translated, *will be saved*, is a word that is used both for physical salvation and for spiritual salvation.

But this sentence would be superfluous if it was speaking about physical salvation. If it is to say anything significant, it must be referring to spiritual salvation.

So it says that those who endure to the end will be saved and have eternal life, and they will be in the coming Kingdom.

*By works of endurance?*

Does this mean that they are saved by their work of endurance?

Not at all! Salvation is by grace alone, and not by works.

So why does He say, *the one who endures to the end, he will be saved*?

*Who?*

Of whom can it be said that if they endure to the end they will be saved?

There is only one group in all the world for whom this is true!

Read Zechariah 13:8 – 9.

<sup>8</sup> *“It will come about in all the land,” Declares the Lord, “That two parts in it will be cut off and perish; But the third will be left in it.*

<sup>9</sup> *“And I will bring the third part through the fire, Refine them as silver is refined, And test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, And I will answer them; I will say, ‘They are My people,’ And they will say, ‘The Lord is my God.’ ”*

Those Jews who are still alive at the end of the Tribulation will be saved.

And they are saved, not because of their endurance, but because, at that time, right at the end of the tribulation, they will believe and call on His name!



### Contrast

Now notice Jesus begins this statement with the word, *but* ...

What is the contrast? How is this statement in contrast with what He has just said?

The contrast is actually astonishing!

He has just told them that Jews will be persecuted and hated and killed, many will stumble through unbelief and hate one another, and love will grow cold because lawlessness has increased.

Then He makes His contrast: *BUT*.

In spite of all the killing, at the very time when it might seem no longer possible, there will still be Jews alive at the end of the tribulation!

And in spite of the increase of lawlessness and the stumbling in unbelief, those who survive until the end will believe!

So, contrary to what appears to be happening, there will indeed be those who survive! And they will all believe and call on His name!

This is what Paul refers to in Romans 11:26, where he says: *all Israel will be saved!*

### Gentiles (verse 14)

Now we come to verse 14, and His focus shifts. Read it again.

*This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.*

Who comes into focus now?

The Gentiles.

Before the end will come, all the Gentiles will hear the gospel of the kingdom. They will all know that this age is about to end and the kingdom is about to begin.

How will this be accomplished?

That is detailed in Revelation 7:1-8. The gospel will be proclaimed by the 144,000 Jews. And by means of the 144,000 Jews the gospel will be proclaimed throughout the world.

The results of the ministry of the 144,000 are recorded in Revelation 7:9-17, where it clearly states that *a great multitude* of Gentiles will come to the saving knowledge of our Lord Jesus the Messiah.

### *Summary of the first half of the tribulation*

So to summarize.

Jesus is preparing to tell them about the sign of His second coming.

And He tells them what will happen to Israel, and to the Gentile nations during the first half of the tribulation.

Israel will be hated and killed by all the nations because of His name.

Many of them will stumble over Him because of their unbelief and disobedience.

Consequently they will betray each other and hate each other.

And false prophets will mislead them.

And their love will grow cold.

Nevertheless, there will be those who survive until the end. And they will all be saved!

And the good news of the kingdom will be preached to all the gentile nations.

And then the end will come.

**b. The Second Half, Mark 13:14-23; Matthew. 24:15-28**

Then notice how Matthew continues in the next section: *therefore* ...

Why-fore? Because of the certainty that, no matter how bad it gets, there will be those who endure to the end and are saved. No matter how dark it becomes, there is hope. *Therefore* ...

*Abomination of Desolation*

Read verse 15 of Matthew 24.

Having described the first half of the Tribulation, Jesus now describes the event that will mark the beginning of the second half.

*The Abomination of Desolation ... standing in the holy place.*

What is the *Abomination of Desolation*?

It will involve two stages.

Read II Thessalonians 2:3-4.

*<sup>3</sup> Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, <sup>4</sup> who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God.*

The *first* stage will be when the Antichrist will take over the Jewish Temple, sit down in the Holy of Holies, and declare himself to be god, call upon the whole world to worship him as god and receive the mark of 666 to signify their acceptance of him as deity.

Read Revelation 13:11-15.

*<sup>11</sup> Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb and he spoke as a dragon. <sup>12</sup> He exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence. And he makes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose fatal wound was healed. <sup>13</sup> He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down out of heaven to the earth in the presence of men. <sup>14</sup> And he deceives those who dwell on the earth because of the signs which it was given him to perform in the presence of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who had the wound of the sword and has come to life. <sup>15</sup> And it was given to him to give breath to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast would even speak and cause as many as do not worship the image of the beast to be killed.*

The *second* stage of the Abomination of Desolation (at the end of verse 14) will be when the False Prophet will make an image of the Antichrist and stand it up in the Holy of Holies (Revelation 13:11-15; Daniel 12:11).

And as Jesus says, Daniel the prophet speaks of this event. We see this in three passages.

Daniel 9:27

<sup>27</sup> *“And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate.”*

Daniel 11:31

<sup>31</sup> *“Forces from him will arise, desecrate the sanctuary fortress, and do away with the regular sacrifice. And they will set up the abomination of desolation.*

Daniel 12:11

<sup>11</sup> *“From the time that the regular sacrifice is abolished and the abomination of desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days.*

This act of the Abomination of Desolation will signal that the second and worse half of the Tribulation has begun.

*When you see ... then ..., for then ..., then ...*

Now, before we move on to read the rest of this section, notice the structure in what He says.

We have already looked at His *therefore*, which links what He is now saying with what He has just said. Therefore, because no matter how dark it becomes there is hope in the certain knowledge that those who endure to the end will be saved.

Now notice the next word: *when*. Therefore when you see the Abomination of Desolation ...

So the appearance of the Abomination of Desolation marks a point in time.

Now also notice how He begins in verses 16, 21, and 23:

*then ..., for then ..., then ...*

Now Jesus describes three things that follow that point in time.

#### 1) *Flee to the mountains*

Read the first in verses 16 – 20.

What must they do when they see of the Abomination of Desolation?

He says: *then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains.*

So the Abomination of Desolation will be the signal for the Jews to flee out of the Land of Israel.

This flight is also recorded in Revelation 12:13-17, which you can read in your own time.

The present state of Israel will continue to exist in constant turmoil until the midpoint of the Tribulation. But mid-tribulation it will collapse and there will be one more forced exile from the land.

### *Speedily*

And what is the emphasis in verses 18 and 19?

The emphasis of this passage is a sense of urgency in Israel's flight. In fact, the whole emphasis is on speed and quickness. If you happen to be on the house-top, don't go down into the house to get any possessions. As soon as your foot touches the ground make your way out of the country. Or if you happen to be out in the field when you see this event occurring, don't go back to the living quarters to take so much as a coat. From the place you are ploughing, make your way out of the country.

At this point world-wide anti-Semitism will break out in full force and the satanic goal, described in Revelation 12, to annihilate all the Jews before they can call for the Messiah's return, begins in earnest.

### *Difficulties*

Then He points out three difficulties they will have in making a quick escape.

What are they?

- i. The first difficulty is for women who are pregnant or have infants.

In both cases, this makes quick flight difficult as any woman in that condition can certainly verify.

- ii. The second difficulty is in relation to the winter.

How would winter make it more difficult to flee?

### *Rain season*

In America or Australia we have rain in all four seasons, but not so in Israel.

The rain season begins at the end of October. Rains will fall in November, December, January, & February, and begin to peter out in March and die out by mid-April.

So from mid-April to mid-October no rain falls.

### *Wadis*

Another difference is in the way highways are built.

In America if a highway comes to a gully, even if it is a dry waterway, the American way is to build a bridge across it.

Not so in Israel, where the road is paved into the water gullies and up and out again. These water gullies are called wadis.

A wadi is dry all of summer.

But in the rainy season tons of water come down carrying lots of rock and debris often destroying these highways.

When the Jews have to flee the land they will have to flee to Petra by means of these wadis. And if it happens in the winter it will be much more dangerous.

### *Modern example*

Just how dangerous it can be was emphasised some years ago when forty French tourists were walking down a wadi heading for an archaeological site.

It was not raining where they were walking, but it had been raining elsewhere. The waters came down and 38 of them drowned. Only two survived.

### *So ...*

*So, ... pray that your flight will not be in the winter.*

- iii. The third difficulty is in relation to the Sabbath

How would the Sabbath cause them difficulty?

The Sabbath is a day when all public transportation closes down.

Unless you have an automobile that will make escape so much more difficult.

For these two reasons, they are advised to pray that this Abomination of Desolation, which will indeed come to pass, will not come on the Sabbath day or during the winter months, during the rainy season.

## 2) *There will be Great Tribulation*

Read verses 21 – 22.

Notice how He begins these two verses: *for then*.

And what follows is the reason why those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains when the Abomination of Desolation is set up in the temple.

And what is that reason?

The tribulation at that time will be greater than any other since the beginning of the world.

Satan's attempt to annihilate the Jews once and for all will have begun in earnest (as detailed in Revelation 12).

### *How great?*

How great will that tribulation be?

Look at the emphatic statement in verse 22:

*Unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved;  
but for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short.*

So great will that tribulation be that the very existence of the elect nation, Israel, is threatened.

And for that reason those days will be cut short, so that the Jewish people as a people, Israel, will survive this terrible period, though greatly reduced in number.

### *1,260 days – cut short?*

What does He mean when He says:

*Unless those days had been cut short.*

People have taken this to mean that the Tribulation won't last exactly seven years, or the second half won't last exactly three and a half years.

But that would violate other passages that give us an exact time period of 1,260 days.

The wording here simply means "to be suddenly cut short".

The period of persecution will not be allowed to continue one second beyond its allotted time. The allotted time is 1,260 days. Once that is reached it will be suddenly cut short and will not be allowed to continue even one second longer.

And that is why the Jews will survive.

### 3) *Concerning the Messiah's return*

Now read verses 23 – 25.

In verse 23 Jesus' word, *then*, introduces the third thing He wants to tell them about this time *when you see the Abomination of Desolation ... standing in the holy place*.

#### *False Messiah's and false prophets*

What will happen at that time?

*false Messiahs and false prophets will arise  
and will show great signs and wonders,  
so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect.*

There are also false prophets in the first half of the tribulation, but this time they will be given satanic power to perform signs and wonders to deceive many.

#### *False reports that the Messiah has come*

Read verses 26 – 28.

What does He describe in verse 26?

Jesus warned that there will be people saying that the Messiah has returned here or that the Messiah has returned there, and that the Second Coming has secretly occurred.

How are they to respond to these reports?

He warned the Jews of that day not to believe any such rumour and come out of hiding.

*There will be a visible sign*

How will they know that these reports are false?

Because, unlike His First Coming, the Second Coming will not be in secret.

When the Messiah returns the second time, all men will see it, for it will be like a flash of lightning surrounding the world!

And there will be no need for anyone to report that it has happened!

*Where?*

Now what does He mean in verse 28?

*where the body is, there will the vultures be gathered together.*

It is a cryptic answer to the question: where will He return?

The body is the body of Israel. And the vultures refer to the Gentile armies.

So, wherever the body of Israel is, that is where the Gentile armies will gather.

And wherever the Gentile armies gather, that is where the second coming will occur.

*Bozrah*

Where will that be?

From other passages we know it to be a city with the Hebrew name Bozrah. It is better known today by its Greek name, Petra.

That is where the “body” will be (Mic. 2:12-13).

That is where the “vultures” will be gathered to come against them (Isaiah 34:1-7; 63:1-6).

And that will be the place of the Second Coming (Isaiah 34:1-7; 63:1-6; Hab. 3:3).



### *Summary of the second half of the tribulation*

Now the Messiah has told them about the events of the second half of the Tribulation.

It will begin when the Abomination of Desolation is set up in the temple.

Then those who are in Judea are to flee to the mountains.

Because then there will be a great tribulation, the greatest ever seen.

And then there will be false messiahs and false prophets.

And false reports that the Messiah has come.

But do not believe them, because the coming of the Son of Man will be as visible as lightning that flashes from the east to the west.

And He gives them a cryptic indication of where the second coming will take place.

All of this has been necessary preparation to set the scene for His answer to their second question: What will be the sign of His coming?

### **8. The Second Coming, Mark 13:24-26; Matthew. 24:29-30; Luke 21:25-27**

Now He will give them the sign of His coming.

Read Matthew 24:29 – 30.

When does His coming happen?

*Immediately after the tribulation of those days.*

### *Signs in the sun, moon, and stars*

What happens in verse 29?

There will be a total blackout with no light coming to the earth. The sun, the moon, and the stars will not be giving any light to the earth!

There will be five blackouts in the last days. One will come before the Tribulation starts. The second, third and fourth will be during the tribulation. And this one is immediately after the tribulation.

### *And on the earth ...*

Now notice what Luke adds. Read Luke 21:25 – 26.

What happens to the oceans?

*The roaring of the sea and the waves.*

And how do men respond to all these signs?

*With dismay among the nations, perplexity, and fainting from fear and the expectation of the things that are coming on the world.*

Notice this is especially *among the nations*.

#### *The sign of the Son of Man*

And according to Matthew verse 30, *then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky*.

And what will that sign be?

When He comes, at the end of verse 30, it is *with power and great glory*.

This glory is obviously the *Shekinah* Glory.

At that time there will be no light from any heavenly body, and the darkness of that total blackout will be dispersed by the light of His Shekinah glory as He comes on the clouds.

And that is the answer to their second question.

The sign of the second coming is this: the light of His Shekinah glory will dispersing the darkness of the total blackout around the world.

#### *The second coming*

That is how He will come, and that is also the way the whole world will see the second coming.

The light of His Shekinah glory will disperse the darkness, enveloping the whole world.

#### *Summary*

The Messiah had now answered all three questions.

- i. The sign of the destruction of the Jewish Temple was to be the surrounding of Jerusalem by armies.
- ii. The sign that the end of the age had begun was to be a world- wide war.
- iii. The sign of the Second Coming would be the light of His *Shekinah* Glory breaking through the worldwide blackout.

The *first* sign was given in A.D. 66; the *second* sign was given in 1914-1918; and at the end of the Tribulation, the *third* sign will be given as well.

### **9. The Regathering of Israel, Mark 13:27; Matthew. 24:31**

Now, although Jesus has answered all three of the disciples' questions, He still has more to say about the last days.

Read Matthew 24:31 and Mark 13:27.

What is Jesus describing here?

And who are the angels sent out to gather together?

The regathering of Israel that will follow the second coming of the Messiah.

Post-tribulationists use these passages from Mark and Matthew to teach a post-tribulation rapture of the church. But notice the church is not the focus here.

#### *The elect*

First of all, the word *elect* is a word not only used for the church saints. It is used of three different groups.

- 1) It is used of the elect angels, angels that did not fall.
- 2) It is used of all of us who are believers.
- 3) It is used of Israel as the elect nation.

In this context Israel is in focus, and *the elect* refers to Israel, the elect nation.

We can see this both from what Jesus has been saying about the great tribulation that precedes His coming, and from the Old Testament passages Jesus is referring to.

#### *Matthew's focus - Israel*

Matthew summarises the final regathering of Israel revealed by the prophets, and his background is taken from Isaiah 27:12-13, where the final regathering will be with the sound of a great trumpet.

Read Isaiah 27:12–13

<sup>12</sup> *In that day the Lord will start His threshing from the flowing stream of the Euphrates to the brook of Egypt, and you will be gathered up one by one, O sons of Israel.* <sup>13</sup> *It will come about also in that day that a great trumpet will be blown, and those who were perishing in the land of Assyria and who were scattered in the land of Egypt will come and worship the Lord in the holy mountain at Jerusalem.*

Isaiah says it is going to happen. Jesus adds that it is going to happen, only following the second coming.

And this is the purpose of what Jesus says here: to make clear that the world-wide regathering of Israel predicted by the prophets will only be fulfilled after the second coming.

#### *Mark's focus - Israel*

Now Mark says something similar, but not quite the same because he has a different passage in mind.

Read Deuteronomy 30:3–5

<sup>3</sup> *that then Jehovah thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the peoples, whither Jehovah thy God hath scattered thee.* <sup>4</sup> *If any of thine outcasts be in the uttermost parts of heaven, from thence will Jehovah thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee:* <sup>5</sup> *and Jehovah thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers.* (1901 ASV)

This talks about the regathering of Israel both from the uttermost parts of heaven (in verse 4) and from the furthest part of the earth (in verse 3). And this is also the emphasis in Mark's passage.

#### *Both living and resurrected Israel*

So with Israel's final restoration following the second coming, we are going to see:

- i. the regathering of living Israel from the four corners of the earth, the Jews who survive the tribulation; and
- ii. the regathering of resurrected Israel from heaven, including the Old Testament saints like Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

So both living Israel and resurrected Israel will be able to enjoy living in the land together.

#### *For further study*

(Further information about the restoration of Israel can be found in *The Footsteps of the Messiah*, pages 411-420, esp. 419-420.)

This part of the Olivet Discourse summarizes many Old Testament prophecies (*e.g.*, Isaiah 11:11-12:6; 43:5-7; Jer. 23:5-8; 31:7-14; Ezek. 11:16-21; 20:40-42; 36:22-31, *et. al.*), specifying that the final worldwide restoration will come only after the Second Coming, and not before.

### **10. The Exhortation, Luke 21:28**

Read Luke 21:28.

<sup>28</sup> *"But when these things begin to take place, straighten up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."*

Here He is giving them an exhortation. But what does He mean?

#### *These things*

First of all, what does He mean by *these things*?

He has just been answering their questions about the destruction of Jerusalem, the end of the age, and the sign of His second coming.

Then what would He mean by the time *when these things begin to take place*?

The beginning of these things would be the destruction of Jerusalem.

#### *Redemption*

What does He mean by *redemption*?

He would not be referring to spiritual redemption, because that would already be accomplished on the cross.

*Redemption* also means deliverance from calamities and death.

He has certainly been describing the calamities and death that will occur during the tribulation.

#### *Drawing near*

Now what does *drawing near* mean?

The word is *eggízō*, meaning to come near, or approach.

And in the perfect tense it means to have drawn near, to be near, to be at hand. And that is how He used it at the beginning of His ministry in section 37 of the Harmony, in Mark 1:14 – 15.

*Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand ... "*

Now, in the present context, He uses the same word in the present tense, meaning that their redemption is approaching or drawing near.

In what sense was the kingdom of God at hand?

He is the Messiah, He is with them, and if they would accept Him to be their Messiah, then the kingdom would begin.

When they rejected Him, the offer of the kingdom was withdrawn and replaced by a proclamation of judgment – the destruction of Jerusalem that would occur in AD 70.

Therefore the kingdom could not be established until after that judgment had occurred.

#### *Another generation*

But once that judgment was fulfilled, then once again the one thing that is required before the kingdom can be established is for Israel to accept His Messiahship.

And so, once again the kingdom of God is drawing near.

So far no generation of Jews has accepted Jesus to be their Messiah, but the generation of the Revelation will do so.

And one of the purposes of the tribulation is to bring that about, to cause that generation of Jews to recognize that He is their Messiah and to call on His name.

It will succeed in that purpose, and so the Kingdom is drawing near.

#### *Exhortation*

He tells them to *straighten up and lift up their heads*.

This means to straighten up as those who have hope, and lift up your heads as those who have courage.

#### *Rapture?*

Another view of his verse is that He is talking to believers about the imminence of the Rapture.

The exhortation, then, would be that believers should live with hope and courage because the rapture that will deliver them from the coming tribulation is at hand or imminent. And it has been imminent ever since the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70.

However, in Luke's context Jesus does not even describe the Rapture, and in the flow of His thought throughout His discourse Jesus has not yet come to the Rapture.

So, while the words themselves could be used of the Rapture, the context is clearly focused on the Second Coming at the end of the tribulation.

### **11. The Parable of the Fig Tree, Mark 13:28-31; Matthew. 24:32-35; Luke 21:29-33**

Now He gives them a parable to further encourage those Jews who will face the tribulation.

At the same time what He says here will form a contrasting background for the next topic He is about to introduce.

Read Matthew 24:32, and Luke 21:29-30.

This is the whole parable. And what follows is His application of the parable.

*Behold the fig tree and all the trees*

First of all, what is the importance of the fig tree here?

Some say that the fig tree is a symbol for Israel, but that is not the case.

Notice what Luke says: *Behold the fig tree and all the trees*.

While this is called “The Parable of the Fig Tree”, the fig tree is only representative of all the trees. It is not being used symbolically as some claim.

*Purpose of the illustration*

Now what is the point made by this illustration?

The point is this: When *the fig tree and all the trees* begin to blossom, it is a sure sign that summer is on its way, because the blossoming occurs in the spring, and summer follows spring.

*Application*

Now read His application in Matthew’s verses 33 – 35.

And what is the application?

Just as a blossoming fig tree means that summer is on its way, so when the events that Jesus has been speaking about occur, then they can know that His return is near.

*The kingdom of God*

Read Luke verse 31.

While Matthew is emphasising His coming, Luke is emphasising the result of His coming, the establishment of the kingdom.

*All these things*

And what are *all these things* that signal the soon return of the Lord?

By *all these things*, Jesus is referring to His description of the tribulation, and especially to the Abomination of Desolation.

When the Abomination of Desolation occurs, it will signal that the return of the Messiah is only 3½ years away.

And from the Prophet Daniel, whom Jesus specifically named, they would know that it will be exactly 1,260 days from the Abomination of Desolation until the Second Coming.

And notice the progression.

*When these things begin to take place ... your redemption is drawing near.*

*When you see all these things, recognise that He is near, right at the door.*

Ever since Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 AD, their redemption has been drawing near.

Once the Abomination of Desolation occurs in the middle of the tribulation, He will be standing at the door ready to end this age and begin His Kingdom!

#### *This generation*

And why did He say, in verse 34,

*Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place?*

The point is that the Jewish *generation* that sees the Abomination of Desolation will still be here at the Second Coming! It will not pass away!

Remember that the Abomination of Desolation signals Satan's and the Antichrist's final attempt to exterminate the Jews.

The fact that the Jewish generation which sees the Abomination of Desolation will still be here when the Messiah returns shows that Satan's attempt to destroy the Jews will fail.

And the Jewish saints of the second half of the Tribulation can receive comfort from these words.

#### *Summary*

So to summarise:

Just as the blossoming of the fig tree and all the trees tells you that it is spring and therefore summer is near, so when you see the Abomination of Desolation you will know that the return of the Messiah to set up His kingdom is near. In fact, He is right at the door!

And the Jewish generation that sees the Abomination of Desolation will survive Satan's best attempts to destroy it. They will still be there when He comes.

#### *Guarantee*

And what purpose does verse 35 serve?

It is His guarantee that what He has described will indeed take place just as He described it.

Heaven and earth are destined to pass away, but His words will not pass away.

And neither will that generation pass away.

It will happen just as He has described!

## **12. The Rapture, Mark 13:3 2; Matthew 24:36-42; Luke 21:34-36**

Now Jesus continues to expand their understanding of the bigger picture.

So far He has:

Given them the sign of Jerusalem's destruction.

Told them that the end of the age will be preceded by a series of birth pangs,

And given them the first birth pang.

He has:

Described the great tribulation that will come at the end of the age,

Given them the sign of His coming at the end of the tribulation,

Reassured them that Israel will survive to the end and that they will all be saved,

And He has described the regathering of all Israel, both the living and the dead.

Now He has one more event to add to the picture.

Read Matthew 24:36.

*That day and hour*

The first question here is: what does He mean by *that day and hour*? Which *day and hour* is He talking about?

He answers this question at the beginning of verse 37:

*For the coming of the Son of Man ...*

In other words He is talking about His coming.

And, since He has already been talking about the Second Coming, we might be tempted to think that He is still talking about His second coming (and many do).

But is He?

*Peri de*

In both Matthew's and Mark's accounts Jesus begins with the word, *but*.

And in both accounts, in the Greek it is the two words: *peri de*.

The word *de* is sufficient by itself to say 'but'.

The *peri de* construct is a contrastive introduction of a new subject. It means He has been talking about one subject up until now, but now He is introducing a new subject.

The most frequent use of this construct is in 1 Corinthians where it is translated *now concerning*.

Every time Paul introduces a new topic he says *peri de, now concerning*. Now concerning the things about which you wrote ... Now concerning things sacrificed to idols ... Now concerning spiritual gifts ... Now concerning the collection for the saints ... Now concerning Apollos our brother ... (I Cor. 7:1, 25; 8:1; 12:1; 16:1, 12; I Thes. 5:1; etc.)

So, by using the *peri de* construct, Jesus indicates that He is introducing a new subject which is distinct from the Second Coming He has just been describing.

And what is that new subject?

In verse 37, as we have seen, He calls that new subject *the coming of the Son of Man*.



So there is a *coming of the Son of Man* that is distinct from His second coming which He has already described.

And in His flow of thought through the Olivet Discourse, as He answers their request for the sign of His coming, He wants them to know about this other *coming of the Son of Man*.

We know it as the Rapture, and, as we proceed to look at what He says about it, we shall see how it is different from the second coming.

### *Timing*

Now the first point He makes is concerning the timing of this coming of the Son of Man.

When will it occur?

No one will ever know. The angels in heaven do not know, the Son in His humanity does not know. Only the Father knows.

This stands in contrast to the Second Coming, which will be a dateable event.

The Second Coming happens exactly seven years from the date that the covenant is signed. It happens exactly 42 months or 1260 days after the abomination of desolation. So anyone in that period can compute the exact date that the Messiah will return.

But the Rapture will never be a dateable event.

The only clue given concerning the timing of the Rapture is that it will occur sometime before the Tribulation, and it may not necessarily occur just before the Tribulation.

### *No sign*

Now read His second point in verses 37 – 39.

What will the coming of the Son of Man be like?

The Rapture comes when things are quite normal here on earth. There are no special signs.

We saw previously in the context of the Second Coming that things are very abnormal on the earth. There is a total blackout. There are convulsions throughout nature and in the heavens. There is dismay among the nations. There is fear.

In the Second Coming things are very abnormal. But at the Rapture things are going on very normally. People are marrying and giving in marriage, eating and drinking. These are normal every day conditions.

So, unlike the Second Coming, there will be no unusual events and there will be no sign given for the Rapture.

## Separation

Read His third point in verses 40 – 41.

### Optional discussion

The word translated *taken* is *paralambánō*, meaning: To take near, with, or to oneself, to receive to oneself.

And the word translated *left* is *aphíēmi*, meaning: To send forth or away, to let go from oneself.

By the way, the word *taken* in verse 39 is a different word. It is *airō*, meaning to take up and carry away, or to remove by carrying. The Flood carried away and removed all humanity except those in the ark.

*Paralambánō*, translated *will be taken* in verses 40 – 41, is better translated in John 14:3 *receive you to Myself*.

What is He describing here?

*One will be taken and one will be left.*

Who is taken?

Read John 14:1–3.

<sup>1</sup> “Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. <sup>2</sup> “In My Father’s house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. <sup>3</sup> “If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also.

Who is Jesus addressing?

Believers.

And what happens to them when He comes?

He will receive believers to Himself and they will be with Him where He is in heaven.

## Rapture

So when the Son of Man comes and the Rapture occurs, it will result in a separation of the believer from the unbeliever.

The believer will go with Jesus into the place in heaven that He has prepared for him. And the unbeliever will be excluded and remain on the earth.

### Exhortation

Read Matthew 24:42.

### Be on the alert

The exhortation is to *be on the alert* and to *be on guard*.

What does it mean to be on the alert?

A modern day example might be a driver driving near a school would need to be alert for young children who might suddenly rush onto the road. Seeing this the driver would need to take some action to avoid hitting the child. He would slow down or turn away.

### Reason

What reason does Matthew give for why it is necessary to be on the alert?

*For you do not know which day your Lord is coming.*

Which coming of the Lord is Jesus referring to here?

The coming of the Son of Man known as the Rapture.

### Be on guard

Luke gives us more details of this exhortation.

And while Matthew gives the reason for being alert, Luke gives us two things that can be avoided by being alert and two things that can be gained by being alert.

Read what can be avoided by being on guard in Luke 21:34.

Here are two things that can be avoided. In other words they are two results of not being on guard. What are they?

The first is hearts that are

*weighted down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of life.*

The Greek word translated *dissipation* means: A headache, a hangover, a shooting pain or a confusion in the head arising from intemperance in wine or strong liquors.<sup>xi</sup>

This is the first result of not being on guard.

And the second is

*Be on guard, so that ... that day will not come on you suddenly like a trap.*

Now that raises at least two questions.

What is *that day*?

And how is it *like a trap*?

### That day

First, what is *that day*?

Notice that Luke has not described the Rapture as Mark and Matthew have.

So he is not referring to the Rapture.

In Luke's context, Jesus is referring to the great tribulation which He has just been describing.

### *Like a trap*

Secondly, what are the characteristics of a trap?

A trap might be a cage or a hole in the ground that is disguised so that the creature to be caught cannot escape once inside. When the creature crosses a certain point, something about the trap will change. And the result will be that the creature cannot escape.

Now, how would the great tribulation be like a trap?

Read the answer in verses 35.

It is not a physical trap, but it is a period of time from which there is no escape for *all those who dwell on the face of all the earth* once it begins.

In other words, no one living on the earth at that time, no matter where they are on the earth, can escape the effects of the tribulation. It will fall upon all earth-dwellers.

And, as Jesus points out, its appearance will be sudden, like a trap going off.

### *Inevitable?*

But is ending up in the trap inevitable?

No. He tells us to be on guard so that we can avoid the trap!

The nature of the tribulation, like a trap, is that once in it there is no escape.

The only way to escape it is to avoid it. And the only way to avoid it is to *be alert!* And hence the exhortation.

### *The way of escape*

Read the way of escape from the trap in verse 36.

Here He repeats the exhortation to *keep on the alert* and gives them two things that will result.

The first result is that they will *escape all these things* – things that *will come upon all those who dwell upon the face of all the earth*.

And the second result shows how to avoid the trap and *escape all these things*.

What is the way of escape?

*To stand before the Son of Man.*

He has just said that it is not possible to escape if one is on the earth, therefore, to escape all these things, one must be off the earth, and in heaven, standing before the Son of Man.

This will be the result of the Rapture for believers: we will *stand before the Son of Man* in heaven, and by standing before Him we will *escape all these things*.

And this is the only way to escape the events of the tribulation.

### *Believe*

And what is the only way to participate in the Rapture, and be taken up into heaven to stand before the Son of Man?

It is to believe in Him.

Therefore the exhortation to *be on guard* and to *be alert at all times* is an exhortation to unbelievers to believe!

And throughout the Olivet Discourse, to be on the alert, to be on guard, and to be ready all mean to be saved by believing in Him.

### *Summary*

So, having described the events that will take place at the end of the age and the sign of His second coming, He now tells them about the coming of the Son of Man that will have no sign.

At this coming believers will be taken from the earth into heaven to stand before Him, and unbelievers will be left to experience the events of the tribulation.

So He exhorts them to believe while there is still time before He comes.

Once He comes there will be no escaping the earth and the tribulation will come upon all those who dwell on the face of all the earth.

It will be like a trap without escape.

Therefore believe now, while there is still time!

And, as we shall see, the rest of this discourse will be spent emphasising just this point.

### *For further reading*

For further reading

Re the Rapture: Footsteps pages 142-155; MBS039.

Re Olivet Discourse: Footsteps Appendix V, pages 621-649; MBS028

## **13. Parables Urging Watchfulness, Readiness and Labour, Mark 13:33-37; Matthew. 24:43 - 25:30**

His Olivet Discourse is not merely a collection of isolated statements about the end times.

It has a continuous thread of thought which He weaves into a fabric depicting a vivid picture of the end of this present age.

And what follows is not five unrelated parables, but five parables that both illustrate His exhortation to *keep on the alert* and at the same time give more details about what will take place at the end of this age.

**a. *The Parable of the Porter, Mark 13:33-37***

Read the first parable, the parable of the porter, in Mark 13:33 – 37.

This parable answers the first question we had when we read the exhortation to be alert: what does it mean to be alert?

We used an illustration from our own times to answer that question. And that is exactly what Jesus does here. He illustrates what it means to be alert with a contemporary example.

And four times He says to be alert: in verses 33, 34, 35, & 37.

As we have already seen, to be alert in this context means to be saved. Only those who are saved are going to escape *these things*.

The message of this parable is : He is coming! Be on the alert!

**b. *The Parable of the Master of the House, Matthew 24:43-44***

When we need to be alert to something we need to know at least two things. We need to know what we are looking out for. And we need to know what to do about it when we see it.

The second parable illustrates just these points.

Read Matthew 24:43 – 44.

What are they to look out for?

His coming *at an hour when you do not think He will*.

And what are they to do about it?

They *also must be ready*.

Here the focus is on being ready.

The message of this parable is : He is coming! Be ready!

c. *The Parable of the Faithful Servant and the Evil Servant, Matthew 24:45-51*

The next question, of course, is how can they be ready?

Read the third parable in Matthew 24:45 – 51.

What is new in this parable that wasn't in the previous two?

*Contrast between believer and unbeliever*

There is a contrast between *the faithful and sensible slave* and the *evil slave*.

And how are they different?

The faithful one is expecting his master to return and is consequently labouring about his master's business.

The evil one is not expecting his master to return any time soon, and is consequently fulfilling his own evil desires.

So their different behaviour stems from their different attitude towards their master.

And this difference illustrates the answer to the question of how to be ready. To be ready means to believe the master.

Thus the first new thing introduced in this parable is the contrast between the believer and the unbeliever.

*Contrast between outcomes*

The second new thing introduced in this parable is the different outcomes for the believer and the unbeliever when their master returns.

What are the two outcomes?

For the *faithful and sensible slave* there is blessing and the reward of even greater responsibility.

But the *evil slave* will be taken by surprise when his master returns and will be punished most severely.

Weeping is for their lack of faith (their unbelief), and gnashing of teeth is for their pain.

*Kingdom*

Notice here that these are outcomes that will occur when the Kingdom is set up. Believers will be given responsibility in the Kingdom, but unbelievers will be confined to hell.

*Message*

The message of this parable is: He is coming! Be ready, believing in the Lord and labouring at His business! And the response to the Lord will determine one's experience during the Kingdom.

#### d. *The Parable of the Ten Virgins, Matthew 25:1-13*

Now read the fourth parable in Matthew 25:1 – 13.

This parable compares the establishment of the kingdom of heaven with what takes place in a Jewish wedding.

##### *Jewish background*

What is the Jewish background for this parable?

In the Jewish wedding system, when the marriage was to be consummated, the bridegroom would go to the home of the bride to fetch her and bring her to his home.

As he approached his own home, he would be met by a procession of virgins who would conduct the bride and groom to the marriage ceremony which would be followed by the marriage feast.

The virgins would have oil lamps to light the way in case the bridegroom arrived at night.

##### *Elements of the parable*

Now what are the elements of the parable and what do they represent?

The bridegroom represents the Messiah, and although not explicitly mentioned, his bride is the church, who will be with Him when He comes.

The wedding feast is symbolic of the Messianic Kingdom.

The virgins are those who are on the earth at the time of His return. And they are distinct from His bride who is already with Him. They represent the people on earth at the end of the tribulation when He returns to establish His Kingdom.

##### *Wise and foolish*

Now the virgins are described as either foolish or wise.

What does that mean?

Read Psalm 14:1 – 3.

<sup>1</sup> *The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, they have committed abominable deeds; There is no one who does good.* <sup>2</sup> *The Lord has looked down from heaven upon the sons of men To see if there are any who understand [are prudent], Who seek after God.* <sup>3</sup> *They have all turned aside, together they have become corrupt; There is no one who does good, not even one.*

The word translated *understand* in verse 2 means to be prudent or to wisely understand.

So David is contrasting the fool who says *in his heart, "There is no God"* with the prudent *who seek after God*.

In the Old Testament the contrast between the wise or prudent and the foolish is a contrast between believers and unbelievers.

Notice, in our parable in verse 10, that the *prudent* virgins are described as *those who were ready*. And to be ready, as we have already seen, is to believe.



### *Contrasting outcomes*

As well as contrasting the nature of the foolish and the prudent virgins, Jesus also contrasts what the bridegroom's return will mean for them.

*Those who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast; and the door was shut.*

But when the foolish virgins came asking to enter, they were told '*Truly I say to you, I do not know you.*' And they were excluded from the wedding feast.

### *Meaning*

So this parable describes what will happen when the Kingdom is established.

Jesus, the Messiah, will return with His bride, the church.

Those who have become believers during the tribulation will enter into the Kingdom with Him, and the door will be shut.

There will be no further opportunity for people to enter the kingdom and the unbelievers will be excluded.

Therefore, with Him in the Kingdom will be the church saints who accompany Him as His bride when He returns and the tribulation saints who will enter with Him and His bride.

### *Exhortation*

Now, in view of what He has just been telling them about the establishment of the Kingdom, He repeats the exhortation to *be on the alert*.

Again this is a call to believe.

Why does He add, *for you do not know the day or the hour*?

There are two occasions when the Son of Man will come: the Rapture when He will come to fetch His bride, and the Second Coming when He will come with His bride to establish the Kingdom.

And the exhortation to *be on the alert*, which is to believe, applies both to those living before the Rapture and to those living after the Rapture.

Those living before the Rapture have the opportunity to participate in the Kingdom as His bride and therefore to escape the tribulation.

Those living during the tribulation have the opportunity to accompany the bride and Groom into the Kingdom.

And this opportunity will be the subject of His next and final parable.

### e. *The Parable of the Talents, Matthew 25:14-30*

Notice that this parable begins with the word, *for*, making it the second explanation for the exhortation of verse 13.

Read verses 14 – 30.

Jesus begins this parable saying, *for it is like ...*

What is it that is like the situation described in this parable?

It is the same kingdom described in the previous parable, and more specifically *it* refers to the events that will occur just before the coming of the Kingdom.

#### *Focus of the parable*

What is the focus or key point made by this parable?

In verse 19 He says, *Now after a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them.*

And the key point made by the parable is that there will be an accounting when the master returns.

#### *Contrast*

What is the contrast brought out in this parable?

The contrast is between the *good and faithful slave* and the *wicked, lazy slave*.

And it is first of all between their two different responses to their master, and secondly it is between the two different outcomes of the settlement of accounts.

The *good and faithful slaves* are rewarded with responsibility for many things and enter into the joy of their master.

But the wicked slave is thrown out into the outer darkness, where *there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth*, again weeping over their unbelief and gnashing their teeth in pain.

#### *Message*

So how could we summarise the message of this parable?

The message of the parable is that everyone will be given an opportunity to serve their master, and when he comes they will have to account for how they used that opportunity.

Those who were faithful will be rewarded and enter into the joy of their master. But the wicked will be punished in outer darkness.

#### *Application*

Jesus Himself gives us the application in the passage that follows.

### 14. *The Judgment of the Gentiles, Matthew 25:31-46*

Read Matthew 25:31-46.

#### *When*

When does this judgment take place?

*When the Son of Man comes in His glory,* which He has already told us occurs at the end of the tribulation.

#### *Where*

Jesus did not tell us where this would take place, but the prophet Joel gives us that detail.

Read Joel 3:1–3.

<sup>1</sup> *“For behold, in those days and at that time, When I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem, <sup>2</sup> I will gather all the nations And bring them down to the valley of Jehoshaphat. Then I will enter into judgment with them there On behalf of My people and My inheritance, Israel, Whom they have scattered among the nations; And they have divided up My land. <sup>3</sup> “They have also cast lots for My people, Traded a boy for a harlot And sold a girl for wine that they may drink.*

He will gather all the nations in the valley of Jehoshaphat.

Jehoshaphat means ‘Jehovah judges’, and the valley is thought to be the Kidron Valley which is between Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives.

#### *Who*

Who is gathered?

In verse 32 it says, *All the nations will be gathered before Him.*

The Greek word translated nations here simply means Gentiles, and that is its meaning here.

Joel’s prophecy also makes it clear that it is the Gentile nations that are gathered before Him for judgment.

And who are *these brothers of Mine* mentioned in verse 40?

There are three distinct groups of people mentioned in this passage: the sheep Gentiles, the goat Gentiles, and His brothers.

His brothers are clearly the Jewish people who survived the tribulation. They are all believers.

The sheep are the believing Gentiles, described in verse 37 as *the righteous*, and in verse 34 are told to *inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world*. They are clearly saved people.

And the goats are the unbelieving Gentiles. They are told to *depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels.*

#### *Basis for judgement*

And what determines whether a Gentile is a sheep who will stand on His right or a goat who will stand on His left?

It will be determined by their treatment of the Messiah’s brothers, the Jews, during the tribulation.

So is this salvation by works?

No. But as James tells us (James 2:14 – 26), our works demonstrate our faith. And if there are no works then faith is dead.

### Sheep

Because the sheep Gentiles are already believers in Jesus the Messiah, they will refuse to cooperate with the Antichrist's attempts to destroy the Jews, and they will do what they can to help the Jews.

Thus they will prove their faith. And they are the ones who are alert, ready, and laboring as Jesus has described in His exhortation and in His parables.

### Goats

On the other hand, the anti-Semitism of the goat Gentiles will prove their unbelief. They will submit to the Antichrist and join the ranks of the persecutors.

So they will not be on the alert and ready when He comes.

### Immediate destinies

Notice that Jesus describes both the immediate destiny and the eternal destiny of the sheep and the goats.

Look at verses 34 and 41.

What are the two immediate destinies?

The sheep are told to *inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world*.

And the goats are told to *depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels*. They will be killed and spend the period of the Kingdom in hell.

### Ultimate destinies

Now look at verse 46.

What are their ultimate destinies?

Eternal punishment for the goat Gentiles, and eternal life for the sheep Gentiles, who are again described as righteous.

## 15. Luke's Summary, § 131, Luke 21:37-38

A.T. Robertson includes these verses with section 131, but this is where they belong.

Read Luke 21:37 – 38.

<sup>37</sup> *Now during the day He was teaching in the temple, but at evening He would go out and spend the night on the mount that is called Olivet.* <sup>38</sup> *And all the people would get up early in the morning to come to Him in the temple to listen to Him.*

So we see His daily routine at this time was to spend the night on the Mount of Olives, and during the day He would go into the temple to teach all the people who would get up early in the morning to listen to Him.

## 16. A Summary of the Olivet Discourse

### *A shorter summary*

The disciples were puzzling over the establishment of the kingdom and brought three questions to Jesus, thinking that the answers to these simple questions would fill in the gaps necessary for them to complete their puzzle.

Jesus' answer exceeds their greatest imagination and gives them a vivid picture of the last days of this age.

<sup>(3)</sup> He begins by describing the characteristics of this age. There will be wars and rumours of wars until the end. These are not the signs to be looking at.

<sup>(4)</sup> Against that background, when you see nation rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom, that is, when you see a world-wide war which will be accompanied by famines and earthquakes, then know that this is the beginning of birth pangs.

There will be a series of events that will precede the end of the age, and the world war will be the first of them.

<sup>(5)</sup> But you will not see these things. Before these things take place you will be persecuted, betrayed, and some of you killed. And your persecution will provide opportunity for your testimony.

<sup>(6)</sup> Then Jerusalem will be surrounded by armies. It will fall and be destroyed and trodden under Gentile feet until the end.

<sup>(7)</sup> At the end of the age there will be a period of tribulation

<sup>(7a)</sup> In the first half many will stumble and betray and hate one another. Lawlessness will increase. But there will be those who survive to the end, and they will be saved.

Also during this time the gospel will be preached to the whole world as a testimony to the Gentiles.

<sup>(7b)</sup> The second half of the tribulation will begin with the abomination of desolation.

When that happens, those in Judea must flee to the mountains. This is urgent. Don't stop or go back for anything. Just flee.

Then there will be the greatest tribulation that has ever occurred or will ever occur.

And don't listen to those who say the Messiah has come and he is here or there.

When the Son of Man comes everyone will see Him, just as lightning flashes and is seen from the east to the west.

<sup>(8)</sup> Then there will be great distress on all the earth. The sun, moon, and stars will not give their light to the earth. The sea will be roaring. Men will be dismayed, perplexed, and fainting from fear.

Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky.

The blackness of that sky will be dispelled by the great glory, the Shekinah glory of the Lord as He comes on the clouds.

<sup>(9)</sup> Then He will regather all Israel, both living and dead, from all parts of the earth and heaven.

<sup>(10)</sup> He finishes this part of His discourse with an exhortation to take hope and courage when these things begin.

<sup>(11)</sup> He gives the parable of the fig tree and all the trees. As Spring gives way to Summer, so these things precede His coming.

When you see all these things and find yourself in the midst of them, then know that He is near, right at the door, about to enter.

And furthermore, that generation will not be destroyed as Satan would hope. It will still be there at the end.

As surely as His words will not pass away, that generation will not pass away.

<sup>(12)</sup> Now He has answered all their questions, but there is more to tell which they could not have imagined.

Not only will He come at the end of the age when circumstances on the earth are very distressing, He will also come unexpectedly at a time when life is proceeding quite normally.

Then the believers will be taken up to be with Him in heaven. And so they will escape all these things that are about to take place.

<sup>(13)</sup> Then He spends a large amount of time exhorting those who will see these things to be alert, and to be ready.

If they are to escape the things that are coming upon the earth, they must believe Him now.

And then He describes His coming at the end of the age. Only those who believe will enter into the kingdom with Him.

<sup>(14)</sup> And when He comes He will sit upon His glorious throne and judge all the Gentiles. The righteous will have been caring for the persecuted Jews. The evil will not.

The righteous will inherit the kingdom. The evil will not.

And beyond the kingdom, the evil will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.

Judging by the volume of text, the exhortations and parables at the end of His discourse occupied nearly as much time as His prophecies about what would happen.

He is coming! When He comes there will be a judgment with eternal consequences, and the basis of the judgment will be one's response to the Messiah.

Therefore be ready! Believe!

### *A fuller summary*

- 1) As Jesus and the disciples were leaving the temple that day, the disciples made a comment about the stones and the buildings of the temple and Jesus told them that not one stone would be left upon another.
- 2) This stirred up questions in their minds. They knew He is the Messiah who would one day set up His kingdom. But He has been rejected by the leaders of Israel. And Jesus has denounced them and pronounced a judgment of destruction to come upon Jerusalem.

They don't understand how all the pieces fit together. When and how will the kingdom be set up?

And as they went down from Jerusalem into the Kidron Valley and then up onto the Mount of Olives, they came up with three specific questions that they thought would give them the missing pieces to their puzzle.

- i. When will these things, the destruction of Jerusalem, happen? And what will be the sign that it is about to happen?
  - ii. What will be the sign of His coming?
  - iii. What will be the sign of the end of the age?
- 3) Before He can answer their questions He needs to describe this present age. He says there will be wars and rumours of wars until the end. And there will be false messiah's. These are not signs of the end of the age. They are normal characteristics of this age.
- 4) But when they see a world-wide war that will be the beginning of birth pangs.

In other words, there will be a series of events to mark the approaching end of the age, and the first of these will be a world war, accompanied by earth quakes and famines.

- 5) By the way, He says, they will not live to see these things.

They will be persecuted and they will be given what to say when they need it.

They will even be betrayed by relatives and friends and put to death.

- 6) Then He tells them about the fall of Jerusalem that would happen in AD 70. The sign that it was about to happen would be the surrounding of Jerusalem by the Roman armies. Then they must flee to the mountains.

And Jerusalem will be trampled under foot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

- 7) Then He paints a picture of the tribulation.

He begins with the first half of the tribulation in which Israel will be hated and killed by all the nations because of His name. Many of them will stumble over Him because of their unbelief and disobedience. Consequently they will betray each other and hate each other.

And false prophets will mislead them. And their love will grow cold.

Nevertheless, there will be those who survive until the end. And they will all be saved!

And the good news of the kingdom will be preached to all the gentile nations.

The second half of the tribulation will begin when the Abomination of Desolation is set up in the temple.

Then those who are in Judea are to flee to the mountains, because then there will be a great tribulation, the greatest ever seen.

And at that time there will be false messiahs and false prophets. And false reports that the Messiah has come.

But do not believe them, because the coming of the Son of Man will be as visible as lightning that flashes from the east to the west.

Now He has given the background necessary for the sign of His second coming.

- 8) At the end of the tribulation the sun, the moon and the stars will stop giving their light to the earth. And the seas will be roaring. Men will be in a state of dismay and perplexity. And they will be fainting with fear.

Then the Shekinah glory will pierce the darkness, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds with power and great glory.

- 9) Then, He says, there will be a regathering of Israel, both the living and the dead, from wherever they are in heaven or on the earth.

- 10) Then He exhorts them to take hope and courage when they see the destruction of Jerusalem, because then their redemption is drawing near.

- 11) And just as the blossoming of the fig tree and all the trees tells you that it is spring and therefore summer is near, so when you see the Abomination of Desolation you will know that the return of the Messiah to set up His kingdom is near. In fact, He is right at the door!

And the Jewish generation that sees the Abomination of Desolation will survive Satan's best attempts to destroy it. They will still be there when He comes.

- 12) Now, having described the events that will take place at the end of the age and the sign of His second coming, He now tells them about the coming of the Son of Man that will have no sign.

At this coming believers will be taken from the earth into heaven to stand before Him, and unbelievers will be left to experience the events of the tribulation.

So He exhorts them to believe while there is still time before He comes.

Once He comes there will be no escaping the earth and the tribulation will come upon all those who dwell on the face of all the earth.

It will be like a trap without escape.

Therefore believe now, while there is still time!



13) Then He gives them five parables, first of all to explain and illustrate what He means by being on the alert, and secondly to illustrate the last detail He wants to add to His description of the end times.

- i. The first parable illustrates what it means to be on the alert and reiterates that exhortation four times.
- ii. The second parable answers the question that arises about what needs to be done. The head of the house needs not only to be alert, but to be ready to stop the thief when he comes. So we need to be ready to meet Him when He comes.
- iii. But what does it mean to be ready? He answers that question in the third parable, in which He contrasts the faithful and sensible slave with the evil one. To be ready means to believe the master and consequently to be labouring in his business. That one will be put in charge of all his possessions, but the evil one will be punished severely and cast out with the hypocrites.
- iv. The fourth parable, the parable of the ten virgins, describes what will happen when the Kingdom is established.

Jesus, the Messiah, will return with His bride, the church.

Those who have become believers during the tribulation will enter into the Kingdom with Him, and the door will be shut.

There will be no further opportunity for people to enter the kingdom and the unbelievers will be excluded.

Again He gives the exhortation to *be on the alert*.

And just as there are two occasions when He will return, He gives two reasons for being on the alert.

Those living before the Rapture have the opportunity to participate in the Kingdom as His bride and therefore to escape the tribulation.

Those living during the tribulation have the opportunity to accompany the bride and Groom into the Kingdom.

And this opportunity will be the subject of His last parable.

- v. The message of the parable of the talents is that everyone will be given an opportunity to serve their master, and when he comes they will have to account for how they used that opportunity.

Those who were faithful will be rewarded and enter into the joy of their master. But the wicked will be punished in outer darkness.

And again the contrast is between those who believe their master and those who do not.

14) And the application of the last parable is His description of the judgment of the Gentiles.

When He comes in His glory, He will sit on His glorious throne. All the Gentiles will be gathered before Him and He will separate them according to how they treated the Jews during the tribulation.

The righteous will care for the Jews who are being persecuted, while the unrighteous will not.

The righteous will inherit the Kingdom and then enter into eternal life. The unrighteous will be excluded from the kingdom in hell and ultimately will enter into eternal punishment.

## B. The Preparation for Messiah's Death, § 140-148

It is still Tuesday the 12<sup>th</sup> of Nisan, April 4<sup>th</sup> AD 30.

### 1. The Prediction of His Death, § 140a, Mark 14:1a; Matthew 26:1-2; Luke 22:1

Read all three accounts here.

#### *Passover and Unleavened Bread*

What is it that is two days away?

Matthew simply calls it *the Passover*. Mark calls it *the Passover and Unleavened Bread*, and Luke calls it *the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which is called the Passover*.

In the Mosaic Law the feast of Passover was one day, followed by the seven days of unleavened bread. And those were two separate festivals, though one immediately followed the other.

By first century Israel, and even among Jewish people today, they have combined the two in their thinking, and therefore you will hear people talk about the eight days of Passover.

Technically Passover was only one day followed by seven days of unleavened bread. And by New Testament times you find all eight days called Passover and Unleavened Bread, or just Passover, as it is here.

#### *Two days away*

He points out what they already know, that the Passover is now two days away.

And Passover will begin at sundown Thursday.

#### *Announcement*

Then He makes the fourth announcement of His death.

But this time He even dates it. It will happen in two days time.

Again they don't understand this until it finally happens, and when it happens it takes them by surprise as we will see.

### 2. The Conspiracy of the Rulers, § 140b, Mark 14:1b-2; Matthew 26:3-5; Luke 22:2

Now read all three accounts of the next section, 140b.

Here we see the conspiracy of the rulers.

#### *Who?*

Who is involved here?

The chief priests are Sadducees. The scribes and the elders are Pharisees. So the conspiracy involves both the Pharisees and Sadducees.

And the one in charge of the conspiracy is Caiaphas, who is the high priest with authority over the 24 chief priests. He is also a Sadducee.

### *Goal*

And what was their goal?

Matthew gives us the goal of their conspiracy in verse 4:

*they plotted together to seize Jesus by stealth and kill Him.*

As we shall see shortly, Judas will give them the opportunity they are looking for.

Their ultimate goal is to kill Jesus.

And in order to do that they plotted together to seize Him by stealth.

Why by stealth?

They are afraid of causing a riot among the people.

### *Not during the festival*

Now look again at Matthew verse 5. Here they put an important constraint on their conspiracy.

What is it?

*Not during the festival, otherwise there might be a riot of the people.*

This was an important part of their conspiracy. They would not carry out the conspiracy during the festival.

Why was this?

At Passover time the city is very crowded. So they want to wait until after Passover, when the pilgrims go back home, and Jerusalem returns to a smaller size. Then they would carry it out.

### *Satan's goal*

Here we have the satanic element in the conspiracy, because, while Satan wants Jesus dead, he doesn't want Him to die at the right time, at this Passover, or in the right way, by crucifixion.

And so we read of attempts to have Him killed at the wrong time, as happens right here, either before or after Passover; or in the wrong manner, by sword, or by stoning.

If Jesus had died at any other time than this Passover, or in any other way than by crucifixion, there would have been no atonement.

It was not merely the death of the Messiah which was essential for the atonement, otherwise He could have died as a two year old with the others in Bethlehem and that would have been sufficient. But that would have been insufficient! His death had to come at the proper time, this very Passover, and in the proper way, by crucifixion.

Therefore attempts are made to kill Him at the wrong time or in the wrong way.

### *Not during Passover!*

Keep this in the back of your minds, because we will be coming back to it a little later.

An important part of the conspiracy is to avoid doing it on the night when they will end up doing it. They want to avoid doing it on the Passover.

### 3. The Pouring of Ointment, § 141, Mark 14:3-9; Matthew 26:6-13; John 12:2-8

Now read Matthew 26:6 – 7 and John 12:2 – 3.

#### *Simon the leper*

Where are they having supper?

In the home of Simon the leper.

Would a leprous man be able to do this?

No. And the fact that he is called the leper doesn't mean that he still had leprosy, otherwise he wouldn't be allowed to live in town.

So this was a former leper, and one of the lepers that Jesus would have healed.

He is in Bethany, the same town where Mary, Martha, and Lazarus live. And now they are all together in this household as guests of Simon the leper.

#### *Pouring*

What does Mary do?

She chooses to do something that would be very unusual to do.

She takes a bottle of very expensive perfume and she pours it over His head and on His feet.

#### *Costly perfume*

How do all three writers describe this perfume?

This was pure nard, a very expensive type of perfume.

It doesn't mean that they were necessarily a wealthy family, but it does mean that she was giving something up, because this was something that even the poor class of women would keep and reserve for their wedding night.

The wealthy class could use it more often, but for the non-wealthy class it was usually only on their wedding night that they would use it.

And so essentially she is giving up something that she would have used on her wedding night to anoint Jesus.

#### *How expensive?*

Just how expensive was this perfume?

Read John 12:4 – 6.

What was the value of 300 denarii?

About one full year's salary.

That's how expensive this perfume was with which she anoints His head and His feet.

### *Judas*

Now this troubled the disciples, and especially Judas.

They were saying that it was a wasteful way to use the expensive perfume. It could have been sold and the money given to the poor.

And while the others may have been motivated by concern for the poor, what was Judas's concern?

He was the group treasurer and he was guilty of embezzlement. He often withdrew for his own use the money that was put into it.

### *Mary's understanding*

Now read Matthew's account of Jesus' response in verses 10 – 13.

What did Jesus say was Mary's purpose for anointing Him with perfume?

*For when she poured this perfume on My body, she did it to prepare Me for burial.*

What does this tell us about Mary?

This shows that she understood something that His own disciples did not understand.

Somehow she understood what He taught about His death and resurrection.

So, understanding that this Passover would be the time of His death and burial, she goes ahead and anoints Him for that purpose.

When we come to the section where the women come to the tomb looking for His body we will notice that this Mary was not among them. Others named Mary were there, but not this one.

And why would she not be among them?

Because she already understood and believed that He would die and rise again. Therefore there was no need to try to find a body.

So she doesn't participate in those Sunday morning activities.

And how did Mary gain this understanding?

Remember how we read in section 104, in Luke 10:38-42, that she *was seated at the Lord's feet, listening to His word*; and when Martha complained that she wasn't helping with the meal preparations, He commended her for it saying: *Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her.*

### *Mary honoured*

Now in Matthew verse 13 Jesus points out that this is going to be a place of honour.

And in fact, everywhere in history, wherever the gospel is preached, people will be speaking of this event as a memorial to her, just as we are doing right now.

### *Judas' decision point*

But for Judas, his decision to betray Jesus has already occurred at this point of time. (John 12:4)

#### 4. The Promise to Betray, § 142, Mark 14:10–11; Matthew 26:14–16; Luke 22:3–6

##### *Satanized*

Read Luke 22:3.

We have seen examples of people being demonised throughout the gospel accounts.

But in the case of Judas, he was not merely demonised. He is satanized. In place of a normal demon entering a person it is now Satan entering Judas.

This sets the stage for him to communicate with the Jewish leaders.

##### *Betrayal agreement*

Read Luke 22:4 – 5.

He goes to the chief priests and officers.

Who are they?

The chief priests are Sadducees. And the officers or captains are the Jewish temple police.

Gentile soldiers could be stationed in the outer court to maintain order. And so, when Paul was mobbed in the outer court, Gentile soldiers could run down and rescue Paul from the mob.

But no Gentile could be inside the inner court. Therefore there was a Jewish temple police force to maintain order in the inner court.

And they were involved in the conspiracy here.

Why was their involvement necessary?

They were needed because it would be their role to arrest Jesus.

Now why were these Jewish leaders glad that Judas offered to help them?

They needed Judas to do three things. And he will accomplish the first two, but not the third.

- 1) He was needed to show where Jesus could be arrested apart from the multitudes.

We saw in section 140 that they were trying to find a way to arrest Him by stealth away from the multitudes. And so they needed Judas to show them where they could have an opportunity to do that.

He will accomplish this.

- 2) The second reason he was needed concerned a point of Roman law.

By Roman law, a Roman cohort could not be released to make an arrest until someone first appeared before the Roman governor accusing another of a crime punishable under Roman law.

Therefore they needed Judas to appear before the Roman governor, who was then Pontius Pilate, and accuse Jesus of a crime punishable under Roman law.

And he will accomplish this purpose too, as we shall see later.

- 3) The third reason he is needed is to serve as the prosecuting witness at the civil or Roman trial.

He won't be needed for the Jewish trial. But he will be needed for the Roman or civil trial.

And as we shall see, he will fail to fulfil this third element.

### *The price*

Read Matthew 26:15.

And negotiations over how much they were going to pay him ultimately came down to thirty pieces of silver.

This fulfilled Zechariah's prophecy that the Messiah would be sold for thirty pieces of silver in Zechariah 11:4-14.

### *30 pieces of silver*

But before turning to Zechariah, let's focus on the significance of the thirty pieces of silver because this was not an accidental price.

Read Exodus 21:32.

<sup>32</sup> *"If the ox gores a male or female slave, the owner shall give his or her master thirty shekels of silver, and the ox shall be stoned."*

The Mosaic Law said that if you owned an ox and your ox gored to death a neighbour's slave, you are obligated to pay your neighbour thirty pieces of silver.

That was the valued price of a dead slave.

And as Old Testament history progressed that number became symbolic of contempt.

If you wanted to show contempt for somebody you would give him thirty pieces of silver, conveying to him that he is worth as much as a dead slave is worth. So, if someone was purchasing a thing and negotiating a price, to avoid the figure of thirty they would settle for either 29 or 31.

Now, when Zechariah became a prophet God asked Zechariah to play a Messianic role, a role the Messiah would fulfil, the role of a good shepherd. This is found in Zechariah 11:4-14.

For a period of time he was to feed the flock destined for slaughter. (Zechariah 11:4-11.)

Now read what happened next in Zechariah 11:12 – 13.

<sup>12</sup> *I said to them, "If it is good in your sight, give me my wages; but if not, never mind!" So they weighed out thirty shekels of silver as my wages.* <sup>13</sup> *Then the Lord said to me, "Throw it to the potter, that magnificent price at which I was valued by them." So I took the thirty shekels of silver and threw them to the potter in the house of the Lord.*

After a period of feeding this flock he was then to go before the Jewish elders and say, "We did not agree to a salary in advance, so pay me what you think my work is worth. If it is worth something to you, pay me accordingly. If it is worth nothing to you, it is ok to pay me nothing."



It would have been a lot less insulting to Zechariah to pay him nothing. But to show their contempt for the prophet they paid him thirty pieces of silver, saying to him, “How much is your work worth? It is worth the price of a dead slave.”

And then God told Zechariah two things.

- 1) First of all, He told Zechariah to take the thirty pieces of silver and dump it in the temple compound area, just as Judas will do with his thirty pieces of silver.
- 2) And secondly He told Zechariah, “This was *that magnificent price at which I was valued by them.*”

What God told Zechariah was: the day will come when God Himself, the God of Israel, will be sold for the price of a dead slave.

And so when the chief priests were negotiating with Judas for the price of betrayal they did not settle for 29 or 31.

They settled for thirty pieces of silver to show their contempt, and they sold the Messianic God-man for the price of a dead slave.

#### *Purchased a sacrifice*

There is one more important thing to notice here in this context.

All of the finances of the chief priests came out of the temple treasury. So ultimately all of those thirty pieces of silver came out of the temple treasury.

One major purpose for the temple treasury was to purchase sacrifices.

Now this was not their intent that day, but this is what they did that day.

They purchased a sacrifice, the final sacrifice for sin!

#### *Judas consented*

Read Luke 22:6.

*So he consented, and began seeking a good opportunity to betray Him to them apart from the crowd.*

## **5. The Last Passover and the First Lord's Supper, § 143-148**

### *A note about Robertson's Harmony*

A.T. Robertson, who put this harmony together somewhere in the late 1800's or early 1900's, obviously didn't have any Jewish friends that he could enquire of. He didn't quite understand the order of the Passover and so got the order here wrong. Had he stayed with Luke's order he would have made a lot fewer mistakes, but he violates the order that Luke gives us. And he felt that Luke had one cup too many. In reality Luke has two cups too few. So I have rearranged his harmony so that most of it follows Luke's order and it follows the order in which the Jewish people observe the Passover to this day. Nevertheless, I have kept his section numbering since it is used by Arnold Fruchtenbaum in his teaching.

a. *The Preparation for the Seder, § 143, Mark 14:12-16; Matthew 26:17-19; Luke 22:7-13*

In section 143 we have the preparation for the Seder.

The Seder is the Hebrew name for the Passover meal. The word Seder means order, and the meal follows the order in a very specific step by step process.

*Passover and Unleavened Bread*

Read Luke 22:7.

Notice once again that by this time Passover and Unleavened Bread were tied together.

*Date – 14<sup>th</sup> of Nisan – 6 April, AD 30 – Thursday*

It is the day *on which the Passover Lamb had to be sacrificed*.

So it is now the 14<sup>th</sup> of Nisan, Thursday, April 6<sup>th</sup>, AD 30.

*Preparation*

Read verse 8.

Two men, Peter and John, are charged with getting the Passover ready.

What did that involve?

In the days when the Temple stood, there were nine specific steps in getting the Passover ready. And there are other orderly steps, the Seder steps, once you come to have the meal.

- 1) First of all they had to go with the lamb to the temple compound. And the lamb would be tested to make sure it was without spot and without blemish.
- 2) Secondly, they would then kill the lamb inside the temple compound.
- 3) Thirdly, the blood would be poured out into a bowl of some kind.

And because everyone had to do this in the temple compound, it was quite crowded at this time.

They would kill the lamb and catch the blood in the outer area of the temple compound.

- 4) Then fourthly, the blood would be taken to the altar.

To do this they had three long lines of Levites going from the outer court to the inner court where the altar was.

The bowl would be passed from one priest to another until it reached the altar. And then the blood was poured out on the base of the altar.

All this was accomplished in a three hour period from about three in the afternoon until 6 in the evening.

- 5) Fifthly, they would sing certain Psalms. Psalms 113-118.
- 6) Sixthly, the lamb would be cleaned.

That means they would skin the lamb, and the entrails would be removed.

- 7) Seventh, a part of the lamb would be left for the priesthood to partake of. And the priests would bring that upon the altar.
- 8) Eighth, the rest of the lamb was taken home to be roasted by fire.
- 9) And ninth, the other Passover items would then be prepared and made ready.

That included especially the unleavened bread, the bitter herbs, and the wine.

Essentially this is what Peter and John would be doing.

### *Where?*

Read Luke 22:9 - 13

Now, because so many pilgrims would be coming to Jerusalem for the Passover, it was impossible to house everybody within the walls of the city.

So outside the city walls they erected huge tent cities. And most pilgrims would eat their Passover in these tents outside the wall.

So, unless you lived inside the city or made special preparations, you would not be able to have it within the city.

This shows that Jesus made special preparations.

### *A man carrying water*

He tells these two men that when they go back into the city and go by the well, what they will see is a man with a pitcher of water.

Why is that unusual? Why would that stand out to them?

In the context of the Middle East, and it is still true in the Arab towns in Israel to this day, it is the women who go out for the water, not the men.

So it would be very unusual to see a man with a pitcher and drawing water.

They are to follow the man to the house that he enters.

### *My time is at hand*

Now read the second part of Matthew's verse 18.

Jesus points out that this is a very significant Passover, because, He says, *My time is at hand*.

This will be the Passover fulfillment. At this Passover He will die.

Remember that, in the Jewish reckoning of time, the Passover will be from sundown until sundown – from sundown on Thursday evening to sundown on Friday evening.

### *An upper room*

Now read Mark verse 15.

What will the owner of the house show them?

Jesus points out that they will be shown a large upper room.

It would be a second level room, which was typical of only the wealthy class. It would be a separate room on the second floor.

And furthermore the stairwell leading to it would be outside the house, not inside the house. So they could go in and out without going through the lower part of the house.

#### *Furnished and ready*

Now what two things does He tell them about this room?

- 1) Number one, it is already furnished.

That would include the table.

#### *Reclining*

There wouldn't be any chairs because at Passover they sat on the ground and leaned against large pillows because at the Passover meal they recline. They don't sit in chairs, they recline.



The exact origin for this reclining is not known, but its meaning is clear.

Those who were slaves in the ancient world had to eat their food either standing up or sitting, but those who were free could recline at their banquet tables.

Since the Passover celebrates their freedom from slavery in Egypt, they all recline on that night.

The symbolism is that every Jew is free, even though his present reality may be bondage.

The first thing He tells them about this room is that it is already furnished.

- 2) And secondly, it was ready.

In other words, everything else needed for the feast was already prepared.

All they need to do is deal with the lamb which had to be done at the temple compound.

But everything else was already prepared and there would be no further work they would have to do.

And so Jesus made all the arrangements to have everything ready well before this night.

And now Peter and John *prepared the Passover*.

#### *Passover's purpose*

The purpose of the Passover meal is to relate the historical facts of the exodus from Egypt and to affirm the hope of a future redemption.

#### *Passover's order*

It has a very carefully defined order of ceremony with fifteen divisions in it, which we won't detail in this course.

But there are some important details we need to have in mind as we read on.

### *The Four Cups*

On this night, everyone will drink four cups of wine, and each cup has its own name.

- 1) The first cup is known as the Cup of Blessing, and it begins the ceremony.
- 2) The second cup is called the Cup of Plagues, symbolizing the ten plagues that fell upon the Egyptians.
- 3) The third cup is the Cup of Redemption, symbolizing the blood of the animal that saved the Jews from the last plague.
- 4) The fourth cup is the Cup of Praise, and it refers to the praise psalms (Ps. 115-118), which are sung at the conclusion.

They drink the first two cups before the main meal, and the third and fourth cups after the meal.

### *The Three Matzahs*

Also, on this night, everyone will eat unleavened bread or Matzah.

There are three matzahs, three unleavened loaves of bread.

And in the centre of the table is a single bag called a Matzah Tash. It is one bag, either square or round, with three separate compartments.

A loaf of unleavened bread is placed into each compartment. And while there are three loaves of unleavened bread in one bag, each loaf is separated from the other by a single sheet of cloth.

And there are three requirements for this bread to qualify for the Passover.

- 1) First, it must be unleavened in accordance with the Law of Moses.
- 2) Secondly, it must be striped to make it more brittle.
- 3) Thirdly, it must be pierced in order to impede the fermenting or leavening process.

If any one of these three things is missing, the matzah would not qualify for Passover.

### *Breaking of the Afikomen*

The central feature of the Passover makes use of these three matzahs, and is called the Afikomen Ceremony or the Breaking of the Afikomen.

In this ceremony, the middle matzah is taken out of the matzah tash and broken in two.

The smaller piece is used for the special benediction over the matzah just before the meal starts. It is returned to its place in the matzah bag.

The larger piece is wrapped in a linen cloth and hidden away to be used later, after the meal.

### *Finding of the Afikomen*

Then after the meal is over, and in conjunction with the third cup of wine, it is removed from its hiding place, unwrapped, broken into small pieces about the size of an olive, distributed to all, and eaten.

### *Afikomen*

The middle matzah that was broken, wrapped, hidden, and later unwrapped is the afikomen.

The word itself is a Greek word that literally means “to the entertainment.” It marked the formal end of a Greek meal, the dessert.

### *We do this in remembrance of that*

Now here is an interesting aspect of Judaism: In all their rituals, both Biblical ones and rabbinic ones, they always have reasons for the rituals they perform.

We do this because of that. For all the other rituals of the Passover, and there are quite a few, there is an explanation as to why they do it: we do this in remembrance of that.

### *No explanation*

But for this one, strangely enough, they have no explanation.

All the rabbis have come up with so far is that the three loaves represent the Cohens which is the priesthood, the Levites, and the House of Israel.

But they don't explain why the middle one is taken out, why it is broken, why it is wrapped in a cloth, why it is hidden away, and why it is brought out again.

When a Jew becomes a believer in Jesus he finally recognizes what this signifies and why Jesus said *this is my body given for you*.

### *Significance of requirements for the unleavened bread*

We mentioned earlier that there are three requirements for the bread to qualify for the Passover.

- 1) The first requirement is that the bread had to be unleavened, and leaven was the symbol of sin in the Scriptures.

Jesus had an "unleavened" body in that He was sinless (II Cor. 5:21).

<sup>21</sup> *He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*

If He had committed only one sin, that would have disqualified Him from being the Passover sacrifice. But Yeshua was the only Jew who ever lived and kept the Mosaic Law perfectly.

And by His perfect keeping of the Law, He did have an "unleavened" body.

- 2) Secondly, the bread had to be striped.

And the body of Jesus was striped by means of the Roman scourge (Jn. 19:1).

This was prophesied by Isaiah in Isaiah 53:5.

<sup>5</sup> *But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed.*

- 3) The third requirement is that it also had to be pierced.

The body of Jesus was pierced at His Crucifixion on two occasions: first, by the nails, and secondly, by the spear of the Roman soldier (Jn. 19:34, 37).

And Zechariah 12:10 prophesied that one day all Jews will look on Him *whom they have pierced*.

<sup>10</sup> *"I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn.*

### *Afikomen Ceremony's symbolism*

Now earlier we mentioned that three loaves of unleavened bread were placed in a special bag called the matzah tash, one bag with three compartments. The three loaves of unleavened bread represent the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

And in the afikomen ceremony, the middle matzah is removed from the bag, broken in two, wrapped in linen cloth, hidden away, and later found again in conjunction with the third cup.

Then it is broken into smaller pieces and given to each person around the table.

Each of these actions is symbolic:

- 1) The removal of the middle matzah from the bag represents the Incarnation, when God became man in the person of Jesus.
- 2) The breaking of the middle loaf is a picture of the death of the Messiah. At this point in the ceremony He said, *this is My body broken for you*.
- 3) The wrapping in the linen cloth pictures the body of Jesus, which was removed from the cross, and wrapped in linen cloth (Luke 23:52-53).
- 4) The hiding is a picture of His burial.
- 5) The finding and unwrapping in conjunction with the third cup of wine represents the Resurrection on the third day.
- 6) The eating of it is a picture of John 6:22-59 (section 76 of the Harmony), where Jesus taught that one must eat His body and drink His blood to have eternal life, by which He means to believe that He is the Messianic King (Jn. 6:35, 47, 40, 54).

So eating the bread is symbolic of believing that He is the Messiah, who became the man Jesus, who died for our sins, who was wrapped in a linen cloth and buried, and who rose again on the third day.

And this is the significance of eating the bread at the Lord's supper.

### *Central ceremony*

There are many ceremonies during the Passover meal, but this is the central one.

And the gospel writers do not set out to describe every ceremony of the Passover. Rather, they focus on those parts that are relevant to their theme.

Now with that background let's read on.



**b. The Passover Observance, § 144a, Luke 22:14–16**

Read Luke 22:14 – 16.

Jesus is very careful to keep the Mosaic Law so He came to Jerusalem every year for Passover.

But this particular Passover is unique. Jesus says:

*I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you ...*

*This Passover.*

How is this Passover different from all others?

- i. First, He says, “*before I suffer.*”

It is unique because this is the Passover in which the feast will finally be fulfilled by His own blood.

And what Isaiah predicted in Isaiah 53:1 – 9 was fulfilled by Jesus. The Messiah is the Lamb of God.

- ii. And secondly, He points out that this will be His last Passover until the Messianic Kingdom.

And in the Kingdom He will again observe the Passover, and later, as we will see, He specifies that it will be with the apostles.

c. *The First Cup, § 148a, Luke 22:17-18*

*Harmony sequence – confused cups*

During the Passover dinner there are four cups of wine. And the first two cups come before the dinner. And here A.T. Robertson just put all the cups together, not recognising the distinctions between them. So we consider section 148a here before section 145.

*The first cup*

Read Luke 22:17 – 18.

Notice that Jesus gives thanks for the cup. The first cup in Judaism is called the cup of thanksgiving. So this is a reference to the first cup of wine.

And the way the ceremony begins is: The candles are lit by the woman of the household. If she is not present, and there are no women in this passage, a man does it.

And then comes the drinking of the first cup, and this actually begins the ceremony.

*Last Passover*

So He took this cup and He gave a special thanksgiving over it. And again He points out in verse 18 that this will be His last Passover until the establishment of the Kingdom.

*Fruit of the vine*

Also notice the phrase *the fruit of the vine*.

People who believe that they drank grape juice point out that it doesn't say "wine", it says "fruit of the vine". That phrase will be found in any Passover book, but the wine you sip in the Jewish context will always be fermented.

The term "fruit of the vine" was a term used for Passover wine because other wines, in order to cause it to ferment quickly, would have some leavening added into it.

But Passover wine had to ferment naturally, without added leavening.

And therefore, if you go to a Jewish store for example, you will see wines listed there as kosher for Passover or not kosher for Passover.

d. *The Washing of the Feet and the First Prediction of Judas' Betrayal, § 145, John 13:1-20*

*Passover background – what Jesus already knew*

John points out four things that Jesus was aware of during and even before the time of this Passover meal. Four things that give meaning and significance to what He would do and say.

Read John 13:1 – 3

What are the things that Jesus knew both before and during this Passover?

- i. Even before this Passover Jesus in His humanity already knew that his hour had come to make the atonement.
- ii. While He was in this world He loved His own who were in the world, and He loved them to the end.
- iii. And *during Supper* He was aware that Judas had already made the decision to betray Him, and that this decision was inspired by Satan.
- iv. And He was aware *that He had come forth from God and was going back to God*.

These four facts are the foundation for all that He would say and do during this Passover.

*Washing of hands*

In the Jewish observance of the Passover, following the first cup comes the washing of the hands.

Normally the one who washes the hands is a servant, and he would go to each one with a bowl and a pitcher.

And they put their hands over the bowl and the servant would pour the water over the hands. And there is a towel wrapped around the side of the servant. They take the towel and dry their hands.

*Jesus*

But read what Jesus does in verses 4 – 5.

What does He do?

First of all Jesus takes the servant role and does the washing. And this illustrates what Paul teaches in Philippians 2:5-8, that He came as a servant.

Secondly, in place of washing the hands He washes the feet. And His reason for doing so is found in what He knew, as we shall soon see.

*Peter*

Read Peter's reaction to Jesus is doing in verses 6 – 11.

In the Greek, Peter's response is a bit more emphatic. He says:

*Is such a one as you to wash the feet of such a one as I?*

And the grammar requires a negative answer: *no you won't; you won't wash my feet!*

But then Jesus says:

*If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me.*

In other words, you won't be part of my household.

So Peter says: in that case wash all of me. He enthusiastically wants to be part of Jesus' household.

But then Jesus replied:

*He who has bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you.*

#### *Contemporary context*

Now in the context of Jesus' day, why does someone who has had a bath need to wash his feet?

Most people, unless they were wealthy, didn't have their own bath house in their own home. So there was a public bathhouse they would go to.

And in the dry streets of Israel, and in the long summer months, by the time they arrived home their feet would be dirty again because of the dust and so on.

So there was always a place at the door where they would wash their feet before going into the house.

#### *Meaning*

Jesus uses this common practice from their every day lives to illustrate a spiritual reality. What is it?

Being bathed illustrates being saved and consequently being free from sin.

And just as feet become dusty on the road, so we still sin along the way.

But in spite of the dust on their feet they were still considered clean, only needing to wash their feet.

Even so, we do not lose our salvation as a result of our sins, we only need to cleanse ourselves of sin, which we do by confessing our sins according to 1 John 1:9.

#### *Application*

Then Jesus gives them the application for this lesson. Read verses 12 – 17.

What is the point that He is drawing out of this lesson?

He comes to the point explicitly in verses 15 – 16. He says He set them an example to follow.

Then He announces the meaning of the example with those words "*Truly, truly ...*".

Do you remember the significance of those words?

Jesus is the only one in the New Testament to use them at the beginning of a sentence. And the Greek word is *amen*, which is actually a transliteration of a Hebrew word meaning to be firm, steady, or trustworthy.

And it could be rendered, “I who am the Amen [Truth itself] tell you as a most certain and infallible truth.”<sup>xii</sup>

And thus He highlights the application He wants them to draw out of this lesson:

*“Truly, truly, I say to you, a slave is not greater than His master, nor is one who is sent greater than the one who sent him.”*

So this is not an ordinance, as some churches teach. Rather it is an example showing that we are to take on the role of a servant.

We are those who have been sent by our Master and we are His servants.

### *Judas*

Having made His application, He returns to another issue that He raised in passing when He said, “*you are clean, but not all of you.*”

Read verses 18 – 20.

Jesus points out that someone is present who will betray Him. No one is named or identified yet.

This is the first prediction of betrayal within the Passover dinner.

### *Purpose*

And what did Jesus give as His purpose for telling them this?

So that, when it does occur, they may believe that He is the Messiah.

This is a prophecy to be fulfilled in the very short term that will verify that He is who He says He is.

### *Receive Him*

Then He draws a contrast with Judas’ rejection of Him and says:

*“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who receives whomever I send receives Me; and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me.”*

e. *Carpas: The Second Prediction of Judas' Betrayal, § 146a, Mark 14:18-21; Matthew 26:21-23; Luke 22:21-23*

*[ Robertson's Harmony ]*

[ In his harmony, A.T. Robertson puts John 13:21 – 30 alongside Mark:14:18 – 21; Matthew 26:21 – 23; and Luke 22:21 – 23. He does this because he didn't understand the order of the Passover. John is describing a later event than the other three gospel writers, and we will look at that in its place in the order. ]

*Reclining*

Now read Mark verse 18.

He says *they were reclining at the table and eating*.

Some translations say they sat at the table, but the meaning of the word here is to recline, because at the Passover table you recline.

*Second prediction of betrayal*

As they recline at the table, what does Jesus tell them?

One of them, even one who is eating with Him, will betray Him.

This is His second prediction during this Passover that one of them would betray Him.

*Carpas*

Now notice how they respond to this and what happens next.

Read Mark verses 19 – 21.

What happens here is a ceremony called Carpas.

In the Carpas ceremony each person takes a green vegetable, normally a piece of parsley, and dips it into salt water, and then eats it.

*Symbolism*

Why do they do this?

Parsley is the preferred vegetable because it is a symbol of the hyssop which was dipped in the blood and applied to the lintel and doorposts of the house in Egypt.

And green is a symbol of spring, and spring is a symbol of youth. This signifies that they were just a young nation.

And the salt water represents the Red Sea.

In the springtime of their nationhood God saved them by means of the salt waters of the Red Sea.

*Second prophesy of betrayal*

Therefore, scattered across the table would be several salt water dishes so that there is a salt water dish within easy reach of three or four people.

When He makes the announcement that one of them is going to betray Him, of course they all want to know who it is. He does not name anyone.

This is the second time He prophesies about a betrayer, and He doesn't name anyone.

But He does give a clue. Read Matthew verse 23.

*"He who dipped his hand with Me in the bowl is the one who will betray Me".*

At that point of time Jesus would have taken His parsley or green vegetable and dipped it in the salt water dish.

And at that same point of time Judas took his green vegetable and dipped it into the same salt water dish.

And that act of Judas identified him as the betrayer.

But the apostles elsewhere at the table did not catch the signal.

***f. The Breaking of the Middle Matzah, § 148b, Mark 14:22; Matthew 26:26; Luke 22:19; 1 Corinthians 11:23-24***

Now we come to the breaking of the middle matzah, the middle loaf.

Read Luke 22:19

At this point He took out the middle loaf, broke it in two, wrapped the larger half of it up in a linen cloth and hid it.

Then He says two things about this bread. What are they?

- i. *This is My body which is given for you.*

Is He teaching, as some say, that the bread turns into His real body?

What does He mean?

He says, this particular piece of bread in the context of the Passover is symbolic of His body.

The very purpose of the Passover is to remember the historical facts of their deliverance from Egypt.

And every part of the ceremony is symbolic. They do this to remember that. The focus is on remembrance.

He is not referring to any bread or wafer commonly used in churches today.

He is referring to the middle loaf of unleavened bread, and saying that just as each other item in the Passover is symbolic, so the ceremonies surrounding that piece of bread are picturing His body, just as we described earlier.

And this aspect of the Passover, for which they previously had no explanation, now has an explanation!

This bread, broken in this ceremony, represents His body, the body of the Messiah, who became the man Jesus, who would die for our sins, who would be wrapped in a linen cloth and buried, and who would rise again on the third day.

These events are about to happen, but as we shall see, the disciples do not yet understand.

ii. *Do this in remembrance of Me*

Secondly, He instructs them to continue the practice of breaking bread in remembrance of Him.

The Greek tense is the Present Imperative, which denotes a command or entreaty to continue to do an action or to do it repeatedly.

Therefore, continue to break bread in remembrance of Him.

So He's not teaching that the bread turns into His real body (transubstantiation), and He's not teaching that the true body is with the bread (consubstantiation).

Rather, it is a remembrance. It is a memorial of His body which was broken, wrapped in linen, buried, and rose again three days later.

*Summary of three ceremonies*

Here the three gospel writers, and Paul, all summarise three of the fifteen ceremonies that occur during Passover:

- i. Yachatz, the breaking of the middle loaf of bread,
- ii. Matza, the blessing for the unleavened bread, and
- iii. Tzafun, the finding and eating of the Afikomen.

The first two of these happen before the supper, and the third, the distribution and eating of the bread, happens immediately after the supper and immediately before the third cup.



*g. The Sop: The Third Prediction of Judas' Betrayal, § 146b, Matthew 26:24-25; John 13:21-30*

Now we come to the sop in section 146. Its Hebrew name is Coreich, meaning “combining.” And it’s the last ceremony before the supper is served.

*Charoset*

On the table is a mixture called charoset.

It is a mixture of apples, nuts, honey, cinnamon, wine and lemon juice. These are all chopped up very finely, mixed together, and then left standing for about twenty four hours until it turns a deep brown colour, the colour of brick mortar.

And it’s eaten for the purpose of reminding the Jewish people of the work they had to do in Egypt as slaves – to make bricks and mortar to build storehouses for Pharaoh.

Now this is what they do in this ceremony:

- i. They take a small piece of unleavened bread (from the bottom loaf) and they dip it into the charoset.
- ii. Then they also dip it into horse radish to make the tears come as a reminder of the bitterness of slavery and the mourning for the sons who were killed by drowning.
- iii. And then they take a second small piece of bread and put it on top to form a small sandwich.

Now everybody dipped their own green vegetable into the salt water, but this sandwich is made by the one who officiates.

In this case Jesus would make it. And He would do it thirteen times, once for each of the twelve and once for Himself.

Now with that background in mind, let’s see what happens.

*Announcement*

Read John 13:21.

Now for the third time Jesus announces that one of them will betray Him.

And again they all want to know who it is.

### Reclining

Read verses 22 – 25.

There is something Jewish to notice here, and it helps us to picture the scene.

What was happening in verse 23?

One of the disciples (*whom Jesus loved*) *was reclining on Jesus' bosom*. And *reclining* is the correct term.

At Passover time they recline, but for certain intervals they make a further reclining towards the left. And one of the times when they recline further to the left is when they eat this particular sop.

So, while they are reclining, John asks: *"Lord, who is it?"*

### The clue

Read the answer in verses 26 – 27.

How does He answer them?

Again He does not name anyone, but He does give a second clue.

The first one to receive the sop is the betrayer.

And then He dipped the sop and gave it to Judas.

### Bitterness

Now remember: what was this piece of bread dipped into, and why?

It is dipped twice: into the brown fruit mixture, and into the horse radish.

And therefore there are two purposes in eating it.

The first purpose is to remember their slavery in Egypt.

And secondly, the purpose is to bring tears into the eyes as a reminder of the bitterness of slavery and the mourning for the sons who were killed by drowning.

And for Jesus this was indeed a bitter moment. One of His own was about to betray Him, which would have brought Him some tears as well.

### Satan

Then what happens after Judas eats the morsel?

He has been given at least three opportunities at this meal to turn back from his plan to betray Jesus, but he did not.

At this time, Satan again enters into Judas. And his actions are now going to be inevitable.

And so Jesus tell him, *"What you do, do quickly."*

### *Disciples don't understand*

Do the disciples understand?

Read verses 28 – 29.

Even at this point, and in spite of all the clues they were given, the disciples still don't understand.

They are assuming that Jesus sent him out to get some other things for the festival, or to make a donation to the poor.

### *Judas departs*

Now Judas responds. Read verse 30.

*So after receiving the morsel he went out immediately; and it was night.*

At that point Judas leaves the festival. And he is not there for the rest of the feast and he is not there when they partake of the communion.

### *Night*

Why did John add *and it was night*?

Of course it was night. The Passover is only observed at night, never in the daytime! It looks like an irrelevant statement.

So why does he add that detail?

One of John's themes throughout his gospel is the conflict between light and darkness.

He's not merely referring to a fact of history that it was nighttime when this happened. This was true, but it isn't the point that John is making.

The point is that Judas himself is of the night, of the kingdom of darkness. And the deed he is about to perform is a deed of the kingdom of darkness.

***h. The Third Cup, § 148c, Mark 14:23-25; Matthew 26:27-29; Luke 22:20; 1 Corinthians 11:25-26***

After they have eaten the sop, the bread dipped in fruit mince and horse radish, they would have the main festival meal itself.

Immediately following the meal they would find the afikomen and eat it.

And then they would drink the third cup of wine.

*The third cup*

Read Luke 22:20 and Matthew 26:27 – 28.

How do we know this is the third cup?

Luke says He took the cup after they had eaten. And the cup taken after they had eaten would be the third cup, which the Jewish people call “the cup of redemption”.

*This cup*

So when Jesus says, “*this cup*”, it is the third cup of the Passover, the cup of redemption that He is referring to.

*Redemption*

In Judaism it is a symbol of their physical redemption. It symbolizes the blood of the animal that saved the Jews from the last plague.

But now Jesus gives it a new meaning. What does it represent now?

Now it symbolizes His blood, His *blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins*.

So now it becomes symbolic of spiritual redemption.

*Remembrance*

Read 1 Corinthians 11:25 – 26.

What is the reason Jesus exhorts us to drink the cup?

He says, *do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me*.

And, just as it was with the bread, so it is with the cup. Both eating the bread and drinking the cup are ceremonies we do in remembrance of Him, specifically in remembrance of His death and resurrection.

Again, it is not transubstantiation and it is not consubstantiation. It is a remembrance of Him.

*Observance frequency*

How often should we eat the bread and drink the cup?

Neither Jesus nor Paul answers that question.

Jesus said, *as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup ...* And that indicates that it is a repeated observance.

And since He is referring to the elements of the Passover which is observed annually, the we should observe the Lord's Supper at least once a year. Some do it quarterly, others monthly, and others weekly. These are all valid options.

#### *Until He comes*

Why does Paul finish verse 26 with, *until He comes*?

That means that the ceremony will be terminated with the second coming.

In the Kingdom the communion service, which is to remember His body and His blood, will be replaced by a sacrificial system with the same purpose. This will not be the Mosaic system, which has ended forever, but it will be the one that Ezekiel describes in chapters 40 – 48 of his book.

So the Lord's Supper is to proclaim His death - untill He comes.

#### *When Jesus comes*

Now He has a personal message for the eleven disciples.

Read Matthew verse 29.

Is this Jesus' last Passover?

Yes, it is His last Passover before His death and resurrection.

But it is only His last Passover, He says, *"until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom."*

#### *With you*

Notice the phrase "with you".

When the Kingdom begins and the first Passover comes, He will have a private Passover service once again with these apostles, the eleven men who are still with Him.

#### *A guarantee*

What does this statement guarantee?

At least three things:

- i. It guarantees His return,
- ii. It guarantees their resurrection, and
- iii. It guarantees their place in the Kingdom and hence their eternal life.

#### *Summary*

And now to summarize:

This cup, the third cup of wine in the Passover, which symbolizes physical redemption from Egypt for the Jews, becomes a symbol of spiritual redemption for believers today.

i. *A Lesson in Greatness, § 144b, Luke 22:24-30*

*Disputing disciples*

Now the disciples still don't understand what is about to happen. They are thinking that when the days of the feast are over He will set up His Messianic Kingdom. This is what they are anticipating.

And with the third cup He has just told them that He will not drink of this fruit of the vine until He drinks it new with them in the Kingdom.

Now notice how they respond.

Read Luke 22:24 – 30.

What are they doing?

They are arguing about who among them is the greatest.

*Three lessons*

Jesus takes this opportunity to teach them three lessons.

i. *The principle of greatness*

What is He telling them in verses 25 – 26?

He draws a contrast between the Gentile world, which is the unbelieving world, and the disciples in the Kingdom.

The kings of the world show their greatness by exercising their authority over their subjects.

But the leaders in His body show greatness by means of serving.

This is the principle of greatness.

ii. *The example of greatness*

Then, in verse 27, He provides them with a specific example of greatness.

As we read earlier, He Himself took on the role of a servant at the very table where they are now reclining.

Though He is the Messiah, He is among them as one who serves.

Therefore He is their example of what greatness involves.

iii. *His promise to them*

And thirdly, in verses 29 – 30, He promises them two things which are as certain as the fact that God the Father has granted Him a kingdom. What are they?

They will eat and drink at His table in the His kingdom.

And, concerning their future role, He repeats a promise He made earlier: they will sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel in the Messianic Kingdom.

j. *The Prediction of Peter's Denial, § 147, Mark 14:27-31; Matthew 26:31-35; Luke 22:31-38; John 13:31-38*

During the Passover service there is always room for discussion, especially between the third and fourth cup. And that's what happens at this Passover in section 147.

Here Jesus begins a lengthy teaching session, in which He gave His final instructions to the apostles.

*Glory*

Read John 13:31 – 32.

Jesus begins by saying, *"Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him."*

Why does He begin, *"Now ..."*?

Because the departure of Judas has guaranteed His betrayal. And His betrayal in turn assures His coming death.

And by means of His death the Son will glorify the Father, but the Son will also be glorified by the Father.

And this will happen immediately.

*Imminent departure*

Read verse 33.

Two days earlier Jesus announced His coming betrayal to the disciples and dated it for them. He said (Matthew 26:2),

*"You know that after two days the Passover is coming, and the Son of Man is to be handed over for crucifixion."*

But they don't understand Him.

Two days have passed, and again He tells them very plainly of His coming departure. In a few hours He would leave them, and it would be impossible for them to come with Him.

How do you think they would be responding to this within themselves?

They have been with Him for three years now, all the while believing that He is the Messiah. And during those years, as they waited for Him to establish His kingdom, they had learned to trust Him completely for every need. He had been like a father to them, providing, protecting, guiding, and teaching them as the children He loved.

He loved them with His divine agape love, and they enjoyed close fellowship with Him.

Now in a few hours He would leave them!?

This would be hard to understand, and perhaps it overwhelmed them and caused them to grieve.

### *A new commandment*

Now read what Jesus tells them next in verses 34 – 35.

He leaves a new commandment with them. They are to love one another, even as He has loved them.

He will no longer be with them, but His love which they have been enjoying is to continue as they follow His example and love one another.

### *A new standard for love*

Why does He call this a new commandment?

The command to love is not new. In the Law of Moses they are commanded to love God and they are commanded to love their neighbour.

In what sense is this command new?

He changes the standard. Now the standard is not one's love for oneself, but His love for us. And that is a much higher standard than in the Mosaic Law.

Both the very nature of the disciples' love for each other and the expression of it are to be as He loved them.

And this would be their badge, the sign by which *all men will know that you are My disciples*.

### *Sheep scattered*

Next He tells them more of what is about to take place. Read Matthew verse 31.

Here Jesus quotes from the prophet Zechariah.

Read Zechariah 13:7.

*<sup>7</sup> "Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, And against the man, My Associate,"  
Declares the Lord of hosts. "Strike the Shepherd that the sheep may be scattered;  
And I will turn My hand against the little ones.*

And He tells them that He is about to depart, to be struck down, and on this very night they are all going to be scattered away from Him.

### *Meet in the Galilee*

And then gives them an important instruction – one which they miss. Read verse 32 of Matthew.

What is He telling them to do here?

Basically He is telling them: "Do not stay in this city. Once I am arrested leave the city and head up to the Galilee, a three days journey." And three days later He will rise again and He will meet them there.

But again, they never understand what He is trying to tell them.

The events that follow take them by surprise, and they don't leave for Galilee until much later.



### *Peter's question*

Now Jesus' announcement of His departure raised several questions in the minds of the disciples. Four of their specific questions are recorded in the discourse that follows, and the first is asked by Peter.

Read John 13: 36 – 37a.

Peter's question concerns Jesus' destination. Jesus had left Jerusalem and Judea on previous occasions, and had stayed outside the land of Israel to avoid opposition and arrest. On each of these occasions the disciples had accompanied Him.

Peter could not understand where He might go that they could not go with Him.

### *Peter will follow Him (in crucifixion)*

So Jesus reiterates that it is impossible for them to follow Him at that time. And then He adds, "*but you will follow later*".

And "*you*" is singular, meaning Peter specifically.

What is He telling Peter here?

Where is Jesus going?

He is going to crucifixion.

So He tells Peter that someday he will follow Jesus in the same manner.

And indeed, if the church records are correct, Peter was also crucified on an X type cross, upside down.

But Peter doesn't understand any of this, and wants to know why he can't follow Jesus *right now*!

### *Spiritual battle*

Jesus doesn't answer his question. Instead He shows Peter the path that lies ahead for him.

Read Luke 22:31 – 32.

What is He telling Peter here?

- i. First, that what is about to take place is the result of a tremendous spiritual conflict over Peter – a conflict between the Messiah and Satan.

And as a result of this conflict Peter will follow the wrong path, but his faith will not fail, and he will turn again to the right path.

- ii. And secondly, once he has turned back to the right path, he is to strengthen the other apostles.

The Greek word is *stērizō*, meaning "to fix, make fast, to set" and it is often translated "establish."

Peter himself will use the word when he writes in 2 Peter 1:12,

*<sup>12</sup> Therefore, I will always be ready to remind you of these things, even though you already know them, and have been established in the truth which is present with you.*

This is how he is to strengthen them, by establishing them in the truth.

And, as we shall see, Peter will be the first member of the apostolic group to see the resurrected Messiah. And at that time Jesus will remind him of this role.

#### *Peter's claim to loyalty*

But, for now, Peter does not understand.

Read his emphatic response to Jesus in Matthew 26:33 and in Luke 22:33.

What is he saying here?

Peter claims to have a loyalty to Jesus that the others don't have.

And he emphasizes his sureness of his loyalty and his willingness to die with Jesus.

#### *Denial prophesied*

But Peter does not know his own heart.

Read Jesus' prophecy concerning Peter in Mark 14:30.

Jesus also is very emphatic!

*You yourself, Peter, who claim this steadfast loyalty, will this very night, before twice a rooster has crowed, three times will deny Me.*

#### *Rooster crowing*

Now there are two ways to take this reference to a rooster crowing.

- i. It could be talking about a rooster crowing once and then crowing a second time later on.
- ii. But it could also be talking about something else.

This expression was also used to refer to the sounding of a trumpet to announce the changing of the guard at the Antonia fortress at the end of each 3 hour watch. This would happen at 9 pm, midnight and 3 am.

And most likely Jesus is referring, not to a bird crowing, but rather to the cock crowing of the night watch.

Before the second cock crowing, meaning before midnight, Peter will deny Him three times.

### *Peter's assertion*

But Peter will have the last word on the subject.

Read Mark 14:31

Peter affirms that he will never deny Him. And the other apostles emphasize the same sureness. They are ready to die with Him, even this very night.

But remember, they are not expecting a death at the end of this meal, they are expecting a Kingdom to be established.

### *An earlier instruction repealed*

Now Jesus moves on with His discourse.

Read Luke 22:35 – 38.

What is He doing in verse 35?

He is reminding them that when He sent out the twelve in section 70, and when He sent out the 70 in section 102, they were to carry no purse and no sandals with them. And they didn't lack anything. Everything was provided for them.

Then, with the words "*but now*", He draws a contrast between His instruction to them on those occasions and what they are to do now.

Now He is repealing that earlier instruction and they need to make their own provision for these things.

Why?

Because while He was here on earth they were experiencing Kingdom living and these things would simply be provided for them automatically.

But now, because the King has been rejected and is departing, they need to make their own preparations. They need to take a coat, to take a wallet, and to prepare what they need for their journeys.

And why would they need a sword?

This was not a sword to be used for evangelism, nor was it a sword to defend their faith, but the purpose of the sword would be personal defense.

We are not allowed to kill for the faith, but for our faith we must be willing to become martyrs.

### *Prophecy fulfilled*

Here Jesus quotes from Isaiah the prophet.

Read Isaiah 53:12.

*<sup>12</sup> Therefore, I will allot Him a portion with the great, And He will divide the booty with the strong; Because He poured out Himself to death, And was numbered with the transgressors; Yet He Himself bore the sin of many, And interceded for the transgressors.*

This is a messianic prophecy, and He asserts that messianic prophecy will be fulfilled in Him.

He is the Messiah, and what is written about the Messiah is written about Him, and it will be fulfilled.

### ***k. The Hallel, § 152a, Mark 14:26; Matthew. 26:30***

#### *The Hallel*

Read Mark's account.

In English that's the way we have to translate it because we don't have a verb equivalent to the Greek one.

The English word "hymn" is a noun.

But literally it doesn't say they sang a hymn. The word hymn (*humnéō*) is a verb in Greek. It literally says and they hymned.

And what they hymned is Psalms 113-118, with Psalm 118 being a very important Messianic Psalm.

The word hallel means praise.

And that is how the Passover ends:

They drink the fourth cup of wine, which is called the Cup of Praise,  
they sing these psalms,  
and then Passover is finished.

#### *Place in the Harmony*

Turn for a moment in your Harmonies to section 149, and look at the last sentence in the last verse, verse 31.

Here Jesus says, "*Get up, let us go from here.*"

The singing of hymns and drinking of the fourth cup probably occurred just before these words at the end of section 149.

They are still in the upper room throughout section 149, and then they finish the Passover and leave for Gethsemane, but the conversation continues as they go in section 150.

This conversation, by the way, is referred to as the Upper Room Discourse.

## C. The Promises and Admonitions by the King, § 149-150, John 14:1 – 16:33

### 1. In the Upper Room, § 149, John 14:1-3

At the time of this Passover, Jesus has spent three and a half years with these eleven men. And they have seen all that He has done and heard all that He has said.

Since His rejection by the Jewish leaders He has focused His attention on teaching His disciples and preparing them for the ministry they will have as a result of His rejection.

What would you say is the single most important lesson He taught them while He was with them?

...

The answer to that question will become apparent in what He is about to tell them now that there are only a few hours left before His crucifixion.

Read John 14:1-4.

#### *Troubled hearts*

Do you think their hearts were troubled? ... Why were their hearts troubled?

Just now Jesus has been telling them that He is about to leave them and they will not be able to come with Him.

He told them He would be struck down and they would be scattered like sheep.

Then He told them to meet Him three days later in the Galilee.

He predicted Peter's denial that very night and spoke of the great spiritual battle going on over him.

And He told them that now they would need to take provisions for themselves, and even a sword for their defence.

They hear all these things and more, but they don't yet understand.

And no doubt their hearts are indeed troubled.

So He said to them, "*do not let your hearts be troubled.*"

But He didn't leave it there. How did He help them to calm their troubled hearts?

#### *Trust God, Trust Him*

First, He directed their attention away from the storm that troubled them to the ever faithful God, both God the Father and God the Son, whom they could trust.

Just a few moments ago He told them that everything written about the Messiah will be fulfilled, and it will be fulfilled in Him.

Now He tells them to trust God the Father and Jesus the Messiah to bring about everything that is written and everything that He has spoken and that He is now telling them.

### *Promises*

And then He gives them more content for their trust to take hold of. He promises them two things. What are they?

- i. He promises to go to His Father's house in heaven for the purpose of preparing a place for them.

This promise is not only for these disciples, but it is a promise to all believers. Everyone who becomes a believer is having a place prepared in Heaven. Once all the preparations are complete, once every single believer has his own niche in the New Jerusalem presently in Heaven, then Jesus will fulfill His next promise, and that is to return.

- ii. In verse 3 He promises to return.

And what will He do when He returns?

He will receive us to Himself for the purpose that where He is, there we may be also.

### *Rapture*

Now where was He then going?

He was going to heaven.

So, to be where He is means to be in heaven with Him.

Here is a hint of the pre-tribulation rapture.

How is this coming of Jesus for the saints different from the Second Coming?

At the Second Coming He is coming to judge the living and the dead, a judgement that will take place here on earth. And He is coming to establish His Messianic Kingdom here on earth for 1,000 years.

But according to this promise He will come for believers to take them to heaven where He is now preparing a place for them, just as the bridegroom would go to his father's house to prepare a place for his bride. And when it was ready he would return to take her to the place he had prepared.

So the second coming and the rapture are two quite distinct events.

### *Believe Him*

Just moments ago He told them that He would die in a few hours time, that He would be raised again, and that three days later He would meet them in Galilee.

Now here He adds that He will ascend into heaven, and we know that happened forty days after the resurrection. And He will be gone for a much longer period of time.

But their hearts are not to be troubled. Rather they must believe God and believe Him, the Messiah, trusting that all these events are unfolding according to the divine plan, and that He will indeed return to take them to the place He is going ahead to prepare for them in heaven.

### *The Way*

Then He tells them that they know how to get there: “*You know the way where I am going.*” But again they don’t understand, as the question of Thomas shows.

Read verses 5 – 7.

Here is the seventh “I am” statement, and we are quite familiar with it. But do we understand what He means?

There are four parts to His statement.

- i. *I am the way.* The way to where?

The way to the Father’s house where He is about to go to prepare a place for them.

What this means is explained by the next two statements.

- ii. *I am ... the truth.* What does He mean by saying that He is the Truth?

His own explanation of this is found in verse 7: “*If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also.*”

To know Him is to know the Father because He is the truth about the Father.

- iii. *I am ... the life.*

He is the eternal life.

And how do we get eternal life?

He gave the answer in John 6:40 (and many other places)

<sup>40</sup> “*For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day.*”

We receive eternal life when we believe in Him and only by receiving eternal life can we come into the Father’s house.

- iv. *No one comes to the Father but through Me.*

There is no other way. He is the only way to the Father.

So there is only one possible way to get to heaven and to dwell with Him there.

He is the way to the Father’s house, He is the truth about the Father, and He is the life, the eternal life which we must have in order to come into the Father’s house.

And that answers Thomas’ question.

### *Father and Son are one*

Then Jesus adds, “*from now on you know Him and have seen Him.*”

Why does He begin, “*from now on ...*”?

From now on, from that point in time on, because they have known Jesus for the past three years they also know the Father and have seen Him.

Now Philip has a problem. He's been following this closely, but he doesn't understand.

Read verses 8 – 11.

What is Philip thinking?

He knows Jesus, but no doubt he feels that he doesn't know the Father. And his question shows that he didn't understand that all this time Jesus has been revealing the Father to them.

How does Jesus help him to understand?

He begins by reiterating that to see Him is to see the Father, or to know Him is to know the father. Then He explains why this is so and gives two lines of evidence to support His assertion.

Why is knowing Him the same as knowing the Father?

The reason is: He is in the Father and the Father is in Him.

And what is the evidence for this?

It is evidenced both by His words and by His works which are the words and works of the Father.

And if Philip has difficulty believing His words alone, he can believe on account of the works themselves.

#### *Greater works*

Now, having raised the subject of His own works, He has more to say to them about works. And He highlights the importance of what He is saying with His spotlight, *"Truly, truly, I say to you ..."*

Read verses 12 – 13.

What was the work of Jesus? What has He been doing?

In answering Thomas He has told them that He is the truth about the Father and that if they have seen Him they have seen the Father. And He has just told Philip that His works provide evidence that He and the Father are one.

As John declares in John 1:18,

<sup>18</sup> *No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.*

The works of Jesus were to make the Father known.

Now He begins this statement with a condition. What is it?

*"He who believes in Me, ..."*

This points back to His opening exhortation: *"believe in God, believe also in Me"*.

If they trust God to bring about everything that is written by His prophets and to bring about everything that Jesus has revealed, then just as the Father has revealed Himself through His Son's works, so also the Father would reveal Himself through their works.

But then He adds that their works will be greater.



Now in what sense are the works of the believer greater than the works that Jesus Himself did?

It would not mean greater in quality because it would be impossible to supersede the quality of the miracles He performed.

But it means greater in quantity or greater in number. And the Father will be more widely revealed through the disciples than He was through Jesus.

This will be so He says, *“because I go to the Father.”* This is only possible because He is going to the Father. Why?

Because, while He was on earth He was limited to one place just as we are. But because He has returned to the Father and He is also present in every believer, His work will be accomplished in many places at the same time.

This also reminds them that He is returning to the Father, which is where He began.

### *Theme*

Now there is a progression of thought and a theme emerging in all these things Jesus is saying to them. Far from being a collection of isolated promises and exhortations, as is often taught, Jesus is developing a unified theme.

He began by pointing out their belief in God and in Him.

He has been telling them that He is going on ahead of them to prepare a place for them in His Father’s house in heaven, and they know the way there.

The way to get there is to believe in Him. He is in the Father and the Father is in Him. And He has shown the Father to them by His words and by His works.

Now they too, and those who also believe in Him, are to carry on this same work of revealing the Father.

How can they do that?

He now begins tells them about a number of things that will enable them to do this work. Things that He will expand upon shortly.

### *Ask in His name*

Read about the first of these in verses 13 – 14.

What is He telling them for the first time here?

Until now He has not told them to pray in His name. But after His death and resurrection they, and we, are to pray in His name.

What does it mean to pray in His name?

It means to ask on the basis of His authority, to ask for His sake, to ask because of our relationship with Him.

And because we believe in Him, we are in Him and He is in us, and we have the privilege of exercising His authority in prayer. And whatever we ask in His name He will do.

And what will be the outcome of this asking and this working?

He says, “*So that the Father may be glorified in the Son.*”

Just as the Son has glorified the Father while He was on earth, so He would continue to glorify the Father on earth through them, even though He would be in the Father’s house in heaven.

Thus He has given them the means they need to accomplish the work of revealing the Father – His very own authority.

And He will come back to this later in the discourse.

### Love

Now read about the next thing He tells them in verse 15.

Is this a command?

No. In both the English translation and the Greek original this is an indicative statement. It presents a statement of fact.

How are love and keeping His commandments related?

We do not keep His commandments in order to love, or even to demonstrate our love!

Our keeping is the natural expression of our love.

As a result of our belief we will have eternal life, and as a result of having eternal life we will have love. And as a result of having love we will keep His commandments.

And what does it mean to keep His commandments?

Again the Greek word translated *keep* is richer in meaning than the English word. It is **τηρέω** **tēréō**; from the noun *tērós*, a warden or guard. It means to keep an eye on, to watch or observe attentively, and hence to guard, keep, obey.<sup>xiii</sup>

So the second thing making it possible for them to accomplish His work is the fact that their keeping His commandments will arise of itself out of their love for Him.

Again He will return to this later in the discourse.

Now read about the third thing in verses 16 – 17.

There are a number of points to notice in what Jesus says here.

- i. First notice that the Spirit is another Helper. Who was their first Helper?

Jesus.

And the Greek word, *another*, here means another of the same kind or another of equal quality.

So the Spirit is another Helper who, like Jesus, is also God.

- ii. Second, do you know what the Greek word for *Helper* means?

It is the word *Paraclete*, which literally means *one who is called alongside to help*.

The Spirit, who like Jesus is God, is called alongside to help them accomplish their work.

- iii. Thirdly He says, “*that He may be with you forever.*” Literally this says *unto or throughout the age*.

What does this imply?

He is not with them until they next sin! He is with them forever!

It also stands in contrast to Jesus’ imminent departure to the Father. He is going to the Father, But the Spirit will be with them forever.

- iv. Fourthly, notice the end of verse 17, “*... He abides with you and will be in you.*”

Here is the difference between the new and the old. He says the Spirit is with them, but soon He will be in them.

The Spirit was always with believers, but never in believers with just a few exceptions, like the prophets. In the Old Testament the Spirit indwelt only some believers, but not all. Furthermore the indwelling was not necessarily permanent.

So David’s prayer in his penitential prayer, Psalm 51, is “take not your Holy Spirit from me.” That was a valid Old Testament prayer, but not a valid New Testament prayer. Because here He says that once the Spirit indwells us, He indwells us forever.

Now what saves is not the indwelling, what saves is the work of regeneration, and once we believe, the Spirit regenerates our dead human spirit and we become alive to God.

And with the Old Testament saint, once he believed the Holy Spirit was with him. But now, as we believe, He is in us.

- v. Lastly, the world cannot see Him or know Him because they have denied the Truth.

Now that He is leaving them, they are to carry on His work of making the Father known. Their works will be greater in number because He goes to be with the Father. And to make this possible whatever they ask in His name will be done for them, their love for Him will express itself in their keeping His commandments, and the Holy Spirit will be called alongside to help them forever. And He will be in them.

### *You will see Me*

Then He returns to the subject of His departure, which He does frequently throughout the discourse.

Read verses 18 – 21.

He told them earlier that He is about to be crucified and that He is going to the Father in heaven.

What does He add in verse 18?

He will not leave them as orphans, but He will come to them.

How will this be possible?

Because, although He dies on the cross, He will be resurrected. And when He is resurrected He will come to them and they will see Him. He mentions this very point a total of six times during this discourse (18, 19, 28; 16:16, 19, 22). He will come to them and they will see Him when He is resurrected.

### *You will live*

What does He tell them next?

*“because I live, you will live also.”*

What does this mean?

His resurrection guarantees their resurrection. And because He lives even after His death, they too will live even after they die. As He said to Martha before He raised Lazarus,

*“I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies.”*

### *What He adds*

Now verses 20 – 21 sound like what He has already told them. Is He just repeating Himself, or has He added something new?

- i. He already told them that He is in the Father and the Father is in Him.

Now He adds that they will be in Him and He in them.

- ii. He already told them that the one who loves Him will keep His commandments.

Now He adds that the one who loves Him:

- a. Will be loved by the Father,
- b. Will be loved by Him,
- c. And He will disclose Himself to him.

### *Father and Son abide in the believer*

Now Judas has a question.

Read verses 22 – 24.

How does Jesus answer Judas' question, *"what then has happened that you are going to disclose Yourself to us and not to the world"*?

There are two groups of people: those who love Jesus, and those who do not.

Jesus will be able to disclose Himself to the one who loves Him because He and the Father *"will come to him and make Our abode with him."* He and the Father will be abiding in the one who loves Him.

He told them earlier that the Spirit will be in them, so now we have learned that all three persons of the Trinity (Father, Son, and Spirit) abide in the believer.

This is not so for the one who does not love Him.

Where did this idea come from?

It did not originate with Jesus. It is the word of the Father who sent Him.

### *The Helper's role – to teach them and remind them*

Now He gives them one of the roles of the Holy Spirit. Read verses 25 – 28.

What is the role of the Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit will teach them all things and bring to remembrance everything He taught them.

And what is the significance of that for us?

It answers the question about how they can remember decades later what He actually taught.

Keep in mind that John writes his gospel in the early nineties. That's about sixty years after Jesus was here. How did he remember all those detailed messages? Because the Holy Spirit brought to his remembrance all that they had been taught.

### *Peace*

What kind of peace does Jesus give them?

Not the kind of peace that the world talks of, but a peace of heart that stands in contrast to a troubled and fearful heart.

And that reminds us of where He began in verse 1: *"Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me."* So this peace of heart stands on the firm foundation of trusting God the Father and trusting God the Son that exactly what they have spoken will come to pass.

What kind of peace does the world give?

When the world talks of peace it talks of the absence of conflict. But the peace that Jesus gives does not depend upon the absence of conflict.

Jesus will have more to say about peace at the end of His discourse.

### *He will come to them*

Again He reminds them that He will come to them after the resurrection. And He also reminds them of His ascension to the Father.

And rather than giving rise to troubled and fearful hearts, this news should have inspired rejoicing in their hearts.

### *Purpose*

Five times throughout this discourse Jesus tells them why He is speaking these things to them.

Read His first statement of purpose in verses 29 – 31.

Why is Jesus telling them all these things?

So that when they happen, they may believe. When they see these things happen, it will strengthen their belief that He is the Messiah.

And again, the fulfillment of the near term prophecies will verify Him as a prophet so they will be able to trust that the more distant prophecies will also come to pass.

### *The ruler of the world*

In verse 30 He describes the spiritual realities behind what is about to take place. What are they?

- i. *The ruler of the world is coming.*

Why does Jesus say, “*he has nothing in Me?*”

He is without sin and therefore Satan has no authority over Jesus, and so he has no ability to bring about what is soon to take place.

Why then will Jesus die?

Satan has not authority or power to cause Jesus’ death, but ...

- ii. *So that the world may know that I love the Father, I do exactly as the Father has commanded Me.*

He will die voluntarily because the Father has commanded Him to do it, and He always does *exactly as the Father has commanded Him*.

And what is His purpose for obeying the Father?

So that the world may know that He loves the Father.

### *Departure*

At this point as we already noted, they sang hymns, drank the fourth cup, the cup of praise, and went out across the Kidron Valley and up to the Garden on the Mount of Olives, but the discourse continued as they went.

## 2. On the Way to Gethsemane, § 150, John 15:1-27 16:1-33

Now Jesus gathers together some of what He has just told them and wraps it in the illustration of the vine and its branches to increase their understanding of what He is teaching them.

Read John 15:1 – 11.

Has this passage ever raised questions for you? Perhaps it still does. Hopefully this study will shed some light on these questions for you.

Now let's begin with verses 1 – 3. Read them again.

Verse 2 needs some revision in the light of both the original language and the vine dressing practices of the first century. It begins:

*Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away.*

### *Airo*

The word translated *He takes away* is αἶρω (*airō*). It can mean to take up and carry away, or to take away. And in the light of our vine dressing practices that may make sense.

But it also means to lift up or raise. And that would be a better translation in view of first century vine dressing practices.

The kind of vines they had in the first century Israel, and that are still used by the Arab population within the Land, grow parallel to the ground. And as long as they are sitting on the ground they won't produce fruit. So they lift up the vine and put a rock underneath it, and once the vine is lifted up it can produce fruit.

So if a believer is not bearing fruit, the Father will lift him up so he will be able to bear fruit.

### *Kathairo*

What does He do to the branch that is bearing fruit?

The Greek word is καθαίρω (*kathairō*), which means to cleanse from filth or to purify.

And even here in Australia I have known a vine grower to spend many long days cleaning the leaves of his vines after a storm has covered them with dust and mud so that he will have a good crop of grapes.

So if a believer is bearing fruit, the Father will cleanse him from filth so that he will be able to bear more fruit.

### *Katharos*

Then He says they are already clean. And the word is καθαρός (*katharós*) meaning pure, clean, without stain or spot.

And the means of their cleansing is the word which Jesus has spoken to them.

### *The Father's role*

So, as Jesus describes it in these three verses, what is the role of His Father?

The Father is the vinedresser who cares for the branches of the vine.

He lifts up those branches that do not bear fruit so that they will be able to bear fruit.

He cleans those branches that do bear fruit so that they will be able to bear more fruit.

And the eleven, He says are already clean because of the word which He has spoken to them.

So clearly, the purpose of the branches is to bear fruit and the Father does everything possible to enable them to bear fruit.

### *Abide*

Next He turns to their responsibility, and it is the focus for the rest of His these verses.

Read verses 4 – 5.

What is the key concept and their primary responsibility?

It is to abide in Him.

His primary work while He has been with them has been to reveal the Father. And now that He is departing this will be their primary work. But unless they abide in Him it will not happen. Just as the only fruitful branches are those that abide in the vine, so the only fruitful disciples will be those who abide in Him.

The next two verses both begin with the word *if*, and they define the only two possibilities.

Read verses 6 – 8.

What are the only two possibilities and their outcomes?

### *If anyone does not abide in Me ...*

The first possibility is that one will not abide in Him.

And the outcome for that one is fruitlessness. He will be thrown away, and he will dry up and wither.

What is the burning in the fire that will result?

Read 1 Corinthians 3:10-15.

<sup>10</sup> According to the grace of God which was given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building on it. But each man must be careful how he builds on it.

<sup>11</sup> For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. <sup>12</sup> Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, <sup>13</sup> each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is to be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. <sup>14</sup> If any man's work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward. <sup>15</sup> If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

Notice that what is burning is not the man, but his works or his fruit.



In the context of John 15 Jesus is not discussing salvation. He is discussing the fruit bearing of believers. And believers are assured of eternal life.

The fruitless believer is fruitless because he does not abide in Jesus. And any work that he produces will be burned up in the fire. Thus he will suffer loss, but he himself will be saved.

*If you abide in Me ...*

The second possibility stands in contrast to this. And there are two parts to it. What are they?

Abiding in Him ,and

His words abiding in us.

And what is the outcome of this abiding?

*Ask whatever you wish and it will be done for you.*

The ability to ask and have it done for us depends on the abiding, us in Him and His words in us.

And what will be the result of this asking?

Our abiding in Him and His words abiding in us will enable us to ask and receive what we ask. And by this means we will bear much fruit and so prove to be His disciples.

And the end result is glory to God. This is His design working out to His glory.

*Abide in His love*

And Jesus Himself is our example. Read verses 9 – 10.

How do we abide in His love?

By keeping His commandments.

He is our example because He was abiding in His Father's love by keeping His Father's commandments.

*His purpose - Joy*

Then for the second time He tells them why He is saying these things to them.

Read verse 11.

What is the source of His joy?

Abiding in the Father's love, keeping His commandments, and bearing fruit.

*Fruit*

What was His fruit?

Turn back to John 14:9.

*<sup>9</sup> Jesus said to him, "Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"*

His work has been to reveal the Father, and His fruit is those who have seen the Father because they have seen Him. And this fruit is the source of His joy.

And He has spoken these things to them so that this same joy will be in them, and that their joy may be full.

### *Love one another*

Now with this background in place, He gives them His commandment.

Read verses 12 – 17.

He is their example. Just as He loved them, they are to love one another.

How has He loved them?

Yes, He is about to die for them and for all the world. But how has He loved them while He was with them?

He told them back in verse 9:

*“Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love.*

So how has He love them? *“Just as the Father has loved Me.”*

In other words, in loving them He was following the example of the Father who loved Him.

Now His instruction to them is to abide or remain in His love, and, following His example, to love one another.

### *Friends*

And now He calls them friends. What distinguishes a friend from a slave?

The difference between servanthood and friendship is that a servant simply obeys what his master says. He is not told what the master’s plans are in advance or in detail. He knows the master’s plans only insofar as the master has chosen to reveal them and only insofar as the servant needs to participate in those plans. A servant, Jesus said, *does not know what his master is doing.*

Notice, in verse 15, that he *“no longer calls them slaves.”*

Until now, Jesus had been teaching the disciples piece by piece. Only now will they begin to receive the overall, comprehensive truth. Now they can know what the plan of God is. Now they can know about things to come.

Because of this greater knowledge of His plans, His intentions, and the program of God, Jesus now is able to call them friends and say to them, *all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you.*

Nevertheless, even as His friends, the apostles wrote that they were servants of the Lord Jesus the Messiah.

And believers who are His friends because they know what He is doing are able to choose to be His servants.

### *Chosen*

Then here in verse 16 He gives these eleven men their commission. Read it again.

What are the details of their commission?

- i. They are chosen and appointed by Him.
- ii. They are appointed to be going and bearing fruit, fruit that remains.

And the word *remains*, by the way, is the same Greek word translated *abide* earlier.

This is the purpose of their commission.

- iii. They were chosen so that whatever they ask of the Father in His name He may give to them. They are able to ask with His authority.

And this is their empowerment to carry out their commission.

### *The world's reaction*

Now as they abide in Him and begin to fulfil this commission to bear fruit, what kind of reaction can they expect from the world?

Read verses 18 – 19.

Why will the world hate them?

Because believers are no longer part of the world system.

It is one thing to be in the world. It is quite another thing to be of the world. Every believer is no longer of the world because he has been transferred from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light.

And that will be one reason the unbelieving world is going to hate believers.

### *The Jews' reaction*

There are other reasons. Read verses 20 – 25.

Who is Jesus referring to with the third person plural, *they*?

He came and spoke to them (verse 22).

He did works among them that no one else did (verse 24).

And they did what they did *to fulfil the word that is written in their Law* (verse 25).

He is referring to the Jewish people as a nation and to their leaders in particular.

And they are guilty of sin because He came and spoke to them and performed His works among them and they chose to reject Him without excuse.

In verses 20 and 21 He gives two more reasons for the persecution of believers.

What is the reason given in verse 20?

Because they persecuted the Messiah, they will persecute His followers also. Jesus will be out of their reach so it will be easier for them to persecute the believers.

And what is the reason found in verse 21?

Their persecutors do not know the Father, the One who sent Him. Had they known the Father they also would have known the Son and not persecuted Him.

But because they did not know the Father, they did not recognise the Son whom He sent. Therefore they will hate those who do know the Father and who believe in the Son.

### *Persecution*

So they will be persecuted by the world and by the Jews in particular and the reason is one three-fold reason:

- i. The disciples are not of the world,
- ii. The world has hated Jesus, and now He is out of their reach it will hate His followers,
- iii. And those who belong to the world do not know the Father. Consequently they hate those who do know the Father and believe in His Son

### *The Helper's role – to testify about Him*

Earlier (John 14:16), having told them that their work would be the same as His work, that is to reveal the Father, Jesus told them that the Spirit of Truth would come to be in them as the Paraclete, the One called alongside to help. And He is another helper of the same kind as Himself.

And He told them one of the ways the Helper would help them. What was it (John 14:26)?

<sup>26</sup> *"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you."*

Now He gives them another role of the Helper.

Read verses 26 – 27.

What is the role of the Spirit of truth?

To testify about Jesus.

And what is their role?

The same, to testify about Jesus.

How are the testimony of the Spirit of truth and the testimony of the believer related?

The believers give the verbal testimony to the gospel. They preach the gospel and make known the content of the gospel.

The Spirit authenticates their testimony with His internal testimony convincing the unbeliever of the truth of what the believers are saying.

### *His purpose – to keep them from stumbling*

Now for the third time He tells them His purpose for saying these things to them.

Read verses 16:1-4.

What is His purpose?

His purpose is to keep them from stumbling.

Why might they be stumbling?

Because they will face persecution, even extending to being outcast from the synagogue and killed.

So when these things happen, they will remember what He told them, and their trust in Him will be firm and they will not stumble.

He did not tell them at the beginning because He was with them, and being with them He was protecting them.

### *His departure is to their advantage*

But now He is leaving them to return to the Father.

Read verses 5 – 11.

Sorrow has filled their heart because He is going. But it is to their advantage that He goes away.

What is the advantage?

The Helper will only come to them if He goes to the Father.

### *The Helper's role – to convict the world*

Now for the third time He explains the role of the Helper.

What is His role?

The Holy Spirit is going to convict the world concerning three things.

- i. First of all concerning sin, their sin of unbelief, because they failed to believe in the Messiah.
- ii. Secondly they will be convicted concerning righteousness, the righteousness of Jesus the Messiah as will be evidenced by His ascension to the Father.
- iii. And thirdly, the Spirit will convict the world concerning judgement, the final judgement. The prince of this world has been judged and condemned. And if the prince of this world has been judged, how much more those who follow him.

What does He mean by the word “convict”?

It means to prove them to be in the wrong in view of adequate evidence of their wrong doing, and thus to shame them.

What is their wrong doing?

It is their sin of unbelief. They do not believe He is the Messiah.

And what is the adequate evidence of their sin?

Firstly, Jesus ascended to be with the Father. This proves His righteousness, which in turn proves that He is the Messiah.

And secondly, the prince of this world has been judged and condemned, a fact that is established by the resurrection of Jesus.

His ascension and His resurrection are the adequate evidence that their unbelief is wrong.

#### *The Helper's role for the world*

So to summarise the role of the Helper toward the world,

- i. He will testify to them about Jesus as the believers also testify about Him.
- ii. And He will convict them that their unbelief is wrong in view of Jesus' resurrection and ascension.

#### *The Helper's role – to disclose to you what is to come*

Now there are still many more things He has to say to them.

Read verses 12 – 15.

Jesus has many more things to say to them, but they were unable to bear them at that time due to their limited ability to comprehend. And His time with them is rapidly coming to an end.

But He has a plan to teach them these extra things. What is it?

He already told them that when He goes He will send them the Spirit of truth, who is another Helper of the same kind as Himself.

Now, for the fourth and final time, He explains the role of the Spirit to them.

What is His role?

*"He will guide you into all the truth, ... and He will disclose to you what is to come."*

In John 14:26 He told them that The Holy Spirit will teach them all things and bring to remembrance everything He taught them.

And here He adds that He will disclose to them what is to come.

So the role of the Spirit for these disciples was threefold:

- i. He would teach them all things, all the truth.
- ii. He would remind them of everything He taught them.
- iii. And He would show them what is to come.

Thus they would remember all that He already taught them, and they would also learn the many more things that they were unable to bear at that time.

And this explains how we have the inspired New Testament record.

The Holy Spirit inspired the apostles to write the Gospels, the Epistles, and the Book of Revelation, where the Holy Spirit showed John the things that are to come.

#### *The initiative and the source*

Notice what else Jesus tells them here about the ministry of the Spirit.

What is the source of the Spirit's teaching?

He speaks whatever He hears. And who is He listening to?

He is listening to Jesus, and He will take whatever Jesus gives Him and disclose it to them. And the initiative will come from Jesus. So both the initiative for the teaching and the content of the teaching come from Jesus.

And where did Jesus get these things?

From the Father.

So the Father is the source of what the Spirit discloses to them. The Father gave these things to the Son

so that He would give them to the Spirit

so that the Spirit would disclose them to the apostles

so that the apostles could write them down

for us to read and understand, again with the help of the Holy Spirit.

And so we have the New Testament.

Before we move on, there is one more thing to notice here about the ministry of the Spirit. What is the focus and purpose of His ministry?

Jesus says, "*He will glorify Me.*"

The Holy Spirit does not draw attention to Himself but to Jesus, and He takes the teaching of Jesus, which comes from the Father, and discloses it to them.

#### *You will see Me*

Now He begins to wrap up His discourse.

Read verses 16 – 22.

What is He telling them?

In a little while He will die and they will no longer see Him. But again after a little while they will see Him again because of His resurrection.

His death will cause them to grieve. But just as a woman's pain in labour is replaced by joy that a child has been born, so too, their grief will be followed by joy when they see Him after His resurrection.

Their heart will rejoice, and no one will take their joy away from them.

*In that day ...*

Read verses 23 – 28.

In which day?

The day when their hearts are rejoicing with a joy that no one can take away because they have seen the resurrected Messiah.

*Authority to ask in Jesus name*

And what will make their joy full in those days?

Whatever they ask the Father in Jesus' name, He will give to them.

*Plain teaching*

And why does He say that in that day they will not question Him about anything?

As He explains in verse 25, ever since His rejection He has been speaking in figurative language, but the hour is coming, and it will come after His resurrection, when He will no longer speak to them in figurative language, but instead will speak plainly of the Father.

Ever since His rejection by the leaders of Israel He has been teaching them in parables and figurative language and then interpreting what He said to His disciples in private.

But now that His public ministry has come to an end He won't be teaching that way any longer.

And from that point on He did not use any more parables.

*Purpose*

Now read how He finishes His discourse in verses 29 – 33.

In response to their declaration of belief in Him, what does He tell them?

The time has come for them to be scattered from Him, each to his own home.

*Peace*

Then He concludes His discourse by telling them His purpose for giving it to them.

What was His purpose?

*"So that in Me you may have peace."*

And this peace stands in contrast to the tribulation they will have in the world.

Early in the discourse (John 14:27) He said,

<sup>27</sup> *"Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful."*

How did He give them His peace?

By speaking to them the things He said during this discourse.



What has He spoken that will bring them peace in the face of persecution and tribulation?

They have come to a fork in the road where their paths must diverge. He must go to the Father's house to prepare a place for them, and they must remain on earth until He returns for them.

He told them about what will happen for Him along His path, and He told them about what will happen for them along their path.

He told them what their work would be and that they would be able to do it because they would have His authority, His love, and the help of the Spirit of truth.

The peace He is speaking about will come from their knowledge of the truth about God's plans for the future, their role in those plans, and their security in His love and provisions for them.

And not even the tribulation of the world will cause God's plans to fail. Jesus has overcome the world.

## D. The High Priestly Prayer, § 151, John 17:1-26

Now, having finished His discourse, Jesus lifts His eyes to heaven and prays to His Father.

And He prays for Himself, for His apostles, and for all believes.

### 1. Concerning Himself, John 17:1-8

Read His prayer for Himself in verses 1 – 8 of John 17.

What does He ask for Himself?

He asks that the Father would glorify Him with the glory that He had with the Father before the world was.

His glory was veiled during the incarnation. It was temporarily unveiled on the mount of transfiguration, but it was veiled again when they came down from the mountain.

And now He prays for a final unveiling of His glory and gives two reasons for His request. What are they?

- i. That the Son may glorify the Father.
- ii. He has accomplished the work which the Father has given Him to do.

What was this work?

His work was to reveal the Father to these men whom the Father gave to Him out of the world. And the success of His work is evidenced by their recent declaration that they believe He was sent by the Father.

### 2. Concerning the Apostles, John 17:9-19

Now He prays for the apostles and He has three specific requests for them.

#### a. Preservation, John 17:9-14

Read the first request in verses 9 – 14.

What does He ask for them?

He says, in the last half of verse 11,

*Holy Father, keep them in Your name, the name which You have given Me, that they may be one even as We are.*

What this means becomes clear as we look at His reasons for this request. What reasons does He give?

- i. In verse 9 He says that they are the Father's and they are His.
- ii. He has been glorified in them.
- iii. He is no longer in the world, but is coming to the Father, but they are in the world.
- iv. While He was in the world He was keeping them in the Father's name and guarding them so that none of them perished except the son of perdition.

Although these men are in it world, they belong to the Father and they are in Him. Jesus has been keeping them and guarding them so that they will remain in Him.

Now He is returning to the Father, He asks the Father to keep an eye on them, to watch and guard them, to keep them in Him.

And the outcome will be that they are one even as the Father and the Son or one, they in Him and He in them.

**b. Protection, John 17:15-16**

Read His second request for them in verses 15 – 16.

What is His request for them?

Protection from Satan.

Why do they need protection from Satan?

Because they are in the world which is ruled by Satan, but they are not of the world.

**c. Sanctification, John 17:17-19**

Read His third request for them in verses 17 – 19.

What does the verb, to sanctify, mean?

It means to purify and set apart from a common to a sacred use.

Spoken of persons, it means to consecrate as being set apart by God and sent by Him for the performance of His will.

At the feast of dedication (section 111, John 10:36), when answering the charge of blasphemy, Jesus says:

<sup>36</sup> *do you say of Him, whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'?*

He was sanctified and sent into the world by the Father. And now He is sending them into the world.

So He asks the Father to set them apart in the truth, which is the Word of God, even as He sanctified Himself.

The detailed significance of this will be found in the epistles and is beyond the scope of this particular study. It includes their abiding in the Word and becoming more and more conformed to the image of the Son of God.

### 3. Concerning All Believers, John 17:20-24

Now, having prayed for Himself, and having prayed for the apostles, He turns His attention to all those who will believe in Him through their word.

#### a. Unity, John 17:20-23

Read verses 20 – 23.

So now He is praying for all believers, both the apostles and those who will believe through their word.

What does He ask for them?

He asks that they all may be one.

And the explanation He gives for what He means by this is, *“even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us.”*

And what is the reason for this request?

He says, *“so that the world may believe that You sent Me.”*

His purpose is to make the Father known so that the world may believe.

#### b. Glorification, John 17:24

Read His final request in verses 24.

What does He request for them?

At the beginning of His discourse He told them He was going to prepare a place for them in His Father’s house, and that He would return to take them there with Him.

Now He is asking the Father to bring this about.

### 4. Concerning His continued work, John 17:25-26

Read how He finishes His prayer in verses 25 – 26.

At the beginning of His discourse He was pointing out to them that His work among them was to make the Father known.

The world has not known the Father, but He has known the Father, and He has made the Father known to His apostles.

Now He promises to continue making the Father known, *“so that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them.”*

... Father

## *Father*

Before we leave His prayer, notice how He addresses God.

Six times in this prayer He refers to God as Father.

- i. In verse 1. *Father, the hour has come.*
- ii. In verse 5. *Now, Father.*
- iii. In verse 11. *Holy Father.*
- iv. In verse 21. *Even as You, Father.*
- v. In verse 24. *Father.*
- vi. In verse 25. *O righteous Father.*

This is very significant as we shall see when we come to the crucifixion.

So keep in mind that six times He calls Him Father.

## E. The Agony of Gethsemane, § 152, Mark 14:32-42; Matthew 26:30, 36-46; Luke 22:39-46; John 18:1

Read John 18:1 and Mark 14:32a.

### *Gethsemane*

They have crossed the Kidron Valley from Jerusalem to the Mount of Olives and there they entered the Garden of Gethsemane.

The word gethsemane means “oil press”. It is derived from two Hebrew words: gat, which means "a place for pressing oil (or wine)" and shemanim, which means "oils."

The Mount of Olives is where Olive trees were grown to produce oil for use in the temple compound.

### *Preparation*

Now, as we read the next section, look out for two things in particular. Notice what He does with His disciples, and notice all the descriptions of His agony.

Read Mark’s account in 14:32b – 36, and the last part of Luke’s account, Luke 22:43 – 44, where he adds some details that Mark doesn’t include. Read Mark 14:32b – 36 and Luke 22:43 – 44.

What does Jesus do with His disciples in preparation for His prayer?

As He enters the garden He leaves eight of His disciples by the gateway, telling them, “*Sit here while I go over there and pray.*” Then He took Peter, James, and John further up and left them behind as a second watch.

### *Jesus’ agony*

Now Jesus experiences a tremendous struggle and before we go on to look at what He is struggling over, lets look at how it affected Him.

What are the words used to describe His agony on this occasion?

There are six different words and phrases used here to describe the agony of His struggle.

- (1) The first description is in Mark 14:33. The NASB says, “*He began to be very distressed ...*”. The ASV says, “*He began to be greatly amazed.*”

The Greek word, ἐκθαμβέω (*ekthambéō*), means to utterly astonish, or to greatly amaze.<sup>xiv</sup>

- (2) The second description is also in Mark 14:33. The NASB says simply, “*and troubled.*” The ASV says, “*and sore troubled.*”

The Greek word, ἀδημονέω (*adēmonéō*), means to faint, to be depressed and almost overwhelmed with sorrow or burden of mind.<sup>xv</sup>

It means to be pressed upon, emphasizing the extreme pressure that Jesus was under at this point of time.

- (3) In verse 34 His soul was *deeply grieved* (NASB), or *exceeding sorrowful* (ASV).

The Greek word, περίλυπος (*perilupos*), means surrounded with grief, severely grieved, very sorrowful.<sup>xvi</sup>

- (4) And He was *deeply grieved to the point of death*.

The point is that His sorrow was so great, the pressure so severe, the trouble so heavy, that there was a real danger of the total collapse of His physical frame.

- (5) Luke adds two other points. In Luke 22:44 He was in *agony*.

And the word “*agony*” means conflict, emphasizing the pain and labor of the conflict. It is used to refer to the trembling excitement and anxiety produced by fear or tension before a wrestling match or a fight<sup>xvii</sup>. Just what the conflict was about we will discuss in a moment.

- (6) Luke also adds the sixth description of His agony. *His sweat became like drops of blood, falling down upon the ground*.

The medical term for this is *hematidrosis*. It means that you are in such agony that the blood begins to seep through your vessels and comes out as bloody sweat.

This will be the reason that an angel came down at this time to strengthen Him.

Now the question is: what was He agonizing over?

#### *His rejection by Israel*

Certainly He was *grieved and distressed* over Israel’s rejection of His Messianic claims.

This is brought out in the prophet Isaiah in Isaiah 49:1-13.

The Messiah is speaking in Isaiah 49:4,

*<sup>4</sup> But I said, “I have toiled in vain, I have spent My strength for nothing and vanity; Yet surely the justice due to Me is with the Lord, And My reward with My God.”*

He is distressed over Israel’s failure to accept Him.

But in this manner the Father has chosen for the light to go out to the Gentiles, and because of Israel’s rejection He will become the light to the Gentiles. And mostly Gentiles will believe, but once the fullness of the Gentiles has come in the body is complete, and all Israel will believe.

That is the point of Isaiah 49:1-13. And in that context we see the Messiah’s distress over Israel’s failure to accept His Messianic claims.

#### *The prayer*

But this is not the focus of the gospel accounts here. Look at His prayer in Mark’s account, 14:36.

*He was saying, “Abba! Father! All things are possible for You; remove this cup from Me; yet not what I will, but what You will.”*

This is a summary of His first prayer.

Read Matthew verses 40 – 44.

How long did His first prayer take?

About an hour.

What did He find when He returned to His disciples?

He found them sleeping. So He tells them they need to keep on watching lest they *come into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.*

And this explains why they end up scattering, and why Peter will end up denying Him - because they were not on guard.

Three times He went away and prayed the same thing.

*“My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will.”*

*Meaning of “this cup”*

Now question is: what does He mean by *this cup*?

There have been three suggestions over the years.

- (1) One common suggestion is that the cup represents His coming physical death, and that He is asking is not to have to die physically.

What would result if He were asking to avoid dying physically?

Several things.

- i. Lets begin with the purpose of the incarnation.

What was His whole purpose in coming in bodily form?

Read Hebrews 10:5-9.

- 5 Therefore, when He comes into the world, He says,  
“Sacrifice and offering You have not desired,  
But a body You have prepared for Me;
- 6 IN WHOLE BURNT OFFERINGS AND sacrifices FOR SIN YOU HAVE TAKEN NO PLEASURE.
- 7 “THEN I SAID, ‘BEHOLD, I HAVE COME  
(In the scroll of the book it is written of Me)  
To do Your will, O God.’ ”
- 8 After saying above, “SACRIFICES AND OFFERINGS AND WHOLE BURNT OFFERINGS AND  
sacrifices FOR SIN YOU HAVE NOT DESIRED, NOR HAVE YOU TAKEN PLEASURE in them”  
(which are offered according to the Law),
- 9 then He said, “BEHOLD, I HAVE COME TO DO YOUR WILL.” He takes away the first in  
order to establish the second.

Why does He say, *“Sacrifice and offering You have not desired, but a body You have prepared for Me”*?



The animal sacrifices only provided a temporary covering for sin and therefore needed to be repeated regularly.

A better sacrifice was required, but God as God cannot die.

So what did He do?

He prepared a body for the Messiah for that purpose.

What, therefore, was the purpose for which He came?

His purpose was to come in the body which the Father had prepared for Him in order to replace the sacrifices for sin which needed to be repeated continually by His once and for all sacrifice.

His purpose in coming was to die for sin once and for all.

So, if He didn't die physically He would not have achieved the very purpose for the incarnation.

- ii. Another reason He could not be asking to avoid physical death can be seen in passages such as Matthew 26:2. Turn back to section 140 and read it.

*<sup>2</sup> "You know that after two days the Passover is coming, and the Son of Man is to be handed over for crucifixion."*

And many times He predicted that He would die. (John 10:11 – 18 is another example.)

And if He does not now die that would render Him a false prophet.

- iii. Read also Philippians 2:8.

*<sup>8</sup> Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.*

What is the issue here?

Part of His obedience was His obedience to die.

If He does not die that would make Him disobedient.

- iv. And another thing we saw in section 130, John 12:27-33.

*<sup>27</sup> "Now My soul has become troubled; and what shall I say, 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour. <sup>28</sup> "Father, glorify Your name." Then a voice came out of heaven: "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." <sup>29</sup> So the crowd of people who stood by and heard it were saying that it had thundered; others were saying, "An angel has spoken to Him." <sup>30</sup> Jesus answered and said, "This voice has not come for My sake, but for your sakes. <sup>31</sup> "Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out. <sup>32</sup> "And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself." <sup>33</sup> But He was saying this to indicate the kind of death by which He was to die.*

Again this was His purpose in coming, and He also said here that He would not ask the Father to save Him from this hour. He would not ask the Father to save Him from dying physically.

If He is now asking the Father that He not die physically it would mean that He was not truthful in section 130, and therefore sinned.

And so interpreting the cup as being physical death doesn't fit the evidence. It would contradict the very purpose for His incarnation, and it would render Him a false prophet, disobedient, and a liar.

Also, Mark described His agony using a word that means He was greatly amazed or utterly astonished. His death and the manner of His death were well known to Him from His youth, when His Father taught Him morning by morning (Isaiah 50:4 – 7).

- (2) A second interpretation of the cup is that it doesn't represent physical death per se, but premature death, or dying before He got to the cross.

But there was simply no danger of it happening.

As it comes to the time of His death it is not Satan who is in control, it is not the Jewish leaders who are in control, and it is not the Romans who are in control. He is in full control of His death.

When we come to the section describing His actual death (Luke 22:46) we will see that Luke uses a Greek word meaning "to dismiss". He dismissed His spirit from His body. He will choose the moment of His death.

In an earlier section (101), in John 10:19, He declared:

*"No one has taken [My life] away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father."*

And as we will see in the next couple of sections, when the soldiers come to arrest Him, all He has to say is "I am", and they all fall down to the ground. He is in control and they won't even arrest Him unless He allows it.

There is simply no danger of Him dying prematurely. He will choose the moment of His death.

- (3) So what does He mean by *this cup*?

What was it that caused such agony, and which He could legitimately ask His Father to allow Him to avoid?

The best answer is that the cup signifies the wrath of God resulting in spiritual death, which is separation from God the Father.

### *Prophecy*

Would this be consistent with what we read in the prophets of the Old Testament?

While it is definitely prophesied in the Old Testament that He would die physically, nowhere in the Old Testament was it ever prophesied that He would die spiritually.

There is no evidence that He would die spiritually in the prophecies about the Messiah.

### *Atonement*

What about the atonement. What did He have to do to make atonement for us?

Read Leviticus 17:11.

<sup>11</sup> *'For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood by reason of the life that makes atonement.'*

Atonement comes by the shedding of innocent blood.

For the atonement it was not His spiritual death that was essential, but His physical death.

### *Death*

Now since His physical death was prophesied and it was essential for the atonement, He could not legitimately ask not to die physically.

But His spiritual death was not essential for the atonement. Nor was it prophesied. And He could, therefore, legitimately ask not to die spiritually.

### *Agony?*

Can we appreciate the extent of His agony? We were all born spiritually dead. And only when we are born again do we become spiritually alive. And until then we were spiritually dead.

But from the moment of His incarnation Jesus was spiritually alive.

### *Human spirit*

Now Jesus has both a divine and a human spirit. Which one are we talking about in this context?

We are dealing with His human spirit. The divine Spirit couldn't die anyway.

In His human spirit He was in constant fellowship with God the Father. It was never interrupted.

### *Separation*

But now, as we will see when we get to the crucifixion scene, when the sin of the world is placed upon Him, God the Father turns away from Him.

And that was something that caused Him this tremendous agony. And He prayed that He would not have to partake of this cup.

But it was the will of God the Father for Him to partake of the wrath of God, and in the second three hours on the cross, as we will soon see, He does partake of the wrath of God.

And for three hours He will be suffering the wrath of God and be separated from God the Father.

### Purpose

Now, if it was not prophesied that this would happen, and it was not essential for the atonement, why was it important that He die spiritually?

Read Hebrews 2:16–18.

<sup>16</sup> *For assuredly He does not give help to angels, but He gives help to the descendant of Abraham.* <sup>17</sup> *Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.* <sup>18</sup> *For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted.*

Why was it necessary for Him to die spiritually?

It was important for Him *to be made like His brethren in all things*, including spiritual death, so that He is able to come to our aid as our merciful and faithful high priest.

Read also Hebrews 4:14–16.

<sup>14</sup> *Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.* <sup>15</sup> *For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.* <sup>16</sup> *Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

How is it possible for our high priest to sympathize with our weakness?

*He has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.*

What are we able to do as a result?

Because we have a high priest who has been made like us in all things, and who is therefore able to sympathize with our weaknesses, we are able to *draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

So His spiritual death is an essential aspect of His role as our High Priest.

### This cup

And “*this cup*”, which He asks His Father to remove from Him, is the cup of God’s wrath against sin which results in spiritual separation from God.

### *Prayer principles*

Now His experience at Gethsemane teaches two principles that are counter to what you often hear on Christian radio and TV networks.

### *Positive confession*

Often you will hear that when you pray, do so with a positive confession. Just name it and claim it, it is yours. And don't throw in the little phrase, "if it is your will" because that's a negative confession.

But the best model of prayer life we have is the life of Jesus. How did He pray?

First of all He made His desires known to God, *let this cup pass from Me*. Then He said, *not My will but your will be done*.

That is the proper way to pray. We should make our request known to God, but then leave to His will how He will answer that prayer.

### *Enough faith*

Another misconception is that if you ask for something and you don't get it, it is because you didn't have enough faith.

Did Jesus get His request? In this case, no!

Was it because of a lack of faith? If that is what it was, it makes Him a sinner because the Bible also teaches that what is not of faith is sin.

The Bible also teaches that sometimes God says no due to of lack of faith. That is found in James chapter 1.

But sometimes God says no because He knows better what His goal is for our life further down the road. We don't know His plans for the future, but He does. And sometimes a "no" answer is better for our maturity and our spiritual growth.

### *The hour has come*

Now read Mark verses 41 – 42.

And now He comes back to the disciples and finds them sleeping again. And He tells them:

*It is enough; the hour has come; behold, the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners.*

[See also mbs147, page 14, and mp3 #5 for more another discussion of this prayer.]

## IX THE REJECTION OF THE KING: THE TRIAL AND THE DEATH OF THE MESSIAH, § 153-168

### A. The Arrest, § 153, Mark 14:43-52; Matthew 26:47-56; Luke 22:47-53; John 18:2-12

In section 153 we come to the arrest.

#### *Broken rules*

We have been studying the Life of Jesus thematically. And we've been noticing how the events recorded in the gospels all contribute to a continuous theme.

Recall the period of His life leading up to the rejection of His Messiahship by the leaders of Israel.

What was one of the fundamental reasons they rejected Him?

While He kept the Mosaic Law to the smallest letter and stroke of a letter, He refused to accept Pharisaic authority and rejected their oral laws known as the Mishnah.

This was the key reason for His rejection. Because He would not submit to their oral law they would not recognise Him to be their Messiah, and so they rejected Him.

Now in the sections we are about to read we will see these leaders themselves breaking 22 of their own rules and regulations governing how an arrest and trial should be conducted.

Turn to Appendix 10 of the Harmony where these 22 rules are listed.

1. There was to be no arrest by religious authorities that was effected by a bribe (Exodus 23:8), and as we already noticed this arrest was affected by a bribe of thirty pieces of silver.
2. There were to be no steps of criminal proceedings after sunset.

The purpose here was to avoid conspiracy, and using night time to carry the conspiracy out. Once the sun has officially set they could not proceed with criminal proceedings, and the sun officially sets, by Jewish law, once you can see three stars. Once three stars are visible the sun has set.

3. Judges or Sanhedrin members were not allowed to participate in the arrest. That was to keep them neutral. If they participate in the arrest they have taken sides.
4. There were to be no trials before the morning sacrifice. All of the daily morning rituals have to be out of the way before a trial could be conducted.
5. There were to be no secret trials, only public. Secret trials were forbidden, again, to avoid conspiracy.
6. Sanhedrin trials could only be conducted in the Hall of Judgment of the Temple Compound.

Because all trials were to be public, the public had to know where to go to observe a trial. And that's why, if it was a Sanhedrin trial, it could only be held in this place.

7. The proper procedure was to be first the defence and then the accusation.

That is the opposite of our western system. All the reasons why the person could not be guilty had to be presented first. His character witnesses had to be first, before the charge was presented by the two witnesses.

The judges who argue for innocence were to speak before the ones who argue for guilt.

8. All may argue in favour of acquittal, but all may not argue in favour of conviction.

It was alright to stack the deck in the accused's favour, so all the judges could argue in favour of acquittal. But they could not all argue in favour of guilt.

The accused had to have at least one defender.

9. There were to be two or three witnesses and their testimony had to agree in every detail, Deuteronomy 19:15.

10. There was to be no allowance for the accused to testify against himself.

This was to avoid two possible situations.

- i. Firstly: the person might be suicidal, confessing to a crime he did not commit.
- ii. Or secondly: he might be protecting someone else and confessing to a crime he did not commit.

Therefore the two witnesses had to be apart from the accused and he could not testify against himself in a court of law.

11. The High Priest was forbidden to tear his garments. This rule is found in Leviticus 21:10.

Now in the Jewish society the rending of the garments is a sign of the emotions.

When a family member dies, other family members tear their clothing and walk around in torn clothing for seven days. And if a member of the family marries a non-Jew, other members of the family will tear their clothing. When a member becomes a believer in Yeshua the Messiah, other members will tear their clothing.

Because the trial had to be determined based upon facts presented by the witnesses, not based upon emotions, the high priest could not tear his garments at a Jewish trial.

12. Charges could not originate with the judges; they could only investigate charges brought to them. Again. This was to keep them neutral. If they originate the charge, they have taken sides.

13. The accusation of blasphemy was only valid if the name of God itself was pronounced.

Guilt could only be established if the person pronounced the actual name of God. The Hebrew name of God comprises four Hebrew letters that would correspond to the Latin letters YHWH. Unless he pronounced this name of God he could not technically be accused of blasphemy.

14. A person could not be condemned on the basis of his own words alone. Again, there had to be two separate witnesses.

15. The verdict could not be announced at night, only in the daytime.

This was to avoid a rush to judgement. It may have been a very long day, listening to witnesses, questioning the accused, getting tired and touchy and edgy.

So to make sure they don't rush to judgement, even if they know what the verdict is going to be, if those three stars are visible, it would be postponed until the next day.

16. In cases of capital punishment, the trial and guilty verdict could not occur at the same time but must be separated by at least 24 hours. This is to allow more time for more information to come in that would favour the accused.

17. Voting for the death penalty had to be done by individual count beginning with the youngest so the young would not be influenced by the elders.

18. A unanimous decision for guilt shows innocence since it is impossible for 23-71 men to agree without plotting.

This is Arnolds favourite one of these laws. The figure 71 is the full membership of the Sanhedrin. Not all 71 had to be present for a trial to be conducted, but there had to be a minimum of 23. In a Jewish society it was inconceivable that 23 men could agree unless there was a plot involved. Based upon the observation mentioned in the past, that Jews happen to like to argue with each other, and again, if there are two Jews there will be three different opinions. This rule illustrates that particular situation.

19. The sentence could only be pronounced three days after the guilty verdict.

While the trial and the verdict had to be separated by 24 hours, three more days would have to pass before the sentence was pronounced - for the same reason: more time for more information to come in to favour the accused.

20. Judges were to be humane and kind.

21. A person condemned to death was not to be scourged or beaten beforehand.

22. No trials are allowed on the eve of the Sabbath or on a feast day.

There are hundreds, if not thousands, more laws of the Sanhedrin, but these ones were taken from Jewish writings because they were broken either during the arrest or during the trial that follows.

And as we read on in the text we will see where each of them is broken.

#### *Rule 1 broken*

The first is found in the next verse.

Read John 8:2.

Here is an arrest affected by a bribe as we saw earlier.



## Conspiracy

When Judas came to the leaders they were pleased to have his help in their conspiracy. Do you remember why?

He was useful to them for three reasons.

- i. To show them where they could arrest Jesus away from the crowds.
- ii. To make an accusation against Jesus to the Roman governor so that he would release a Roman cohort to arrest Jesus.
- iii. To testify at the Roman trial.

### *Judas' first purpose – arrest apart from the crowds*

And here we find Judas fulfilling the first of these purposes.

Here he is showing them where Jesus could be arrested apart from the multitudes.

How does Judas know where to find Jesus?

Because he had been a disciple of Jesus for some time, he knew the habits of Jesus. And he knew that one of His habits was that when He came to Jerusalem He would go to the Garden of Gethsemane for a time of prayer.

Although this is the only time the gospels mention this, John tells us that *Jesus often met there with His disciples*.

At least three times a year Jesus came to Jerusalem, possibly more often. He would come at the times of the feasts to fulfil the Law of Moses. And the Garden of Gethsemane became the place of His prayer.

Therefore Judas could show them where He could be arrested apart from the multitudes.

This was his first purpose.

Now to see how he fulfilled his second purpose, read John 8:3.

### *Rule 2 broken*

How do we know that it is still night time?

John records that they came carrying lanterns and torches.

So it is still night time, and they break the second rule on our list – no steps of criminal proceedings are to occur after sunset.

### *Judas' second purpose – Roman cohort*

What is significant about the fact that Judas has *received the Roman cohort*?

A Roman cohort could not be released to make an arrest until someone first appeared before the Roman governor accusing someone of a crime punishable by Roman law.

So Judas has fulfilled his second purpose in the conspiracy.

But under what circumstances did he do it?

### *A forced move*

An important condition of the conspiracy was that no action would be taken until after the festival in order to avoid a riot. And so carrying out the arrest on this night was to be out of the question.

So why did they do it on this night?

When Jesus twice identified Judas as the betrayer He forced their hand. It became obvious to Judas that Jesus knew about the conspiracy. And so, when he left the Passover meal he went to the chief priests who paid him.

Obviously they were afraid that they would lose the opportunity to arrest Him because He might simply escape them as He had done before.

So they hastily took Judas to Pontius Pilate, who normally would be stationed in Caesarea, two days away. But he always came up to Jerusalem to help maintain order during the festivals, which was convenient.

They brought Judas to Pontius Pilate and accused Jesus of a crime punishable by Roman law. And that is how he received a cohort of Roman soldiers.

This helps to explain two things.

1. First, it helps to explain why, in the initial stages of the Jewish trial, things are very confused and disorganised.

They don't have their act together. They have to go out to find false witnesses. And it takes them a while to finally get their trial organised.

2. Secondly, it helps to explain, although it is the wee hours of the morning, why Pilate is dressed ready to conduct the trial.

He was anticipating a trial because he had released a Roman cohort to make an arrest.

### *The arresting party*

Now before we read on, let's get an idea of the size of the group that came to arrest Jesus.

Mark and Luke call it a *crowd* and Matthew says it was a *large crowd*. John gives us some more detail.

Just how big was this crowd which came to arrest one individual?

1. First of all there is the Roman cohort. How big was a Roman cohort?

The Roman cohort was anywhere from 400 up to 600 soldiers. But they are not alone.

2. The second group John mentions is *officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees*.

These are the Jewish temple police. They are mentioned again in Luke 22:52.

Look ahead to Luke 22:52 and read it.

3. Who else does Luke mention here?

He also mentions the chief priests and the elders. These are two categories of Sanhedrin members. And they participate in the arrest.

*Rule 3*

So here is the violation of the third rule: Judges or Sanhedrin members were not allowed to participate in the arrest. And they do.

4. And there is also a significant single individual in the party.

Read John 18:10 to see who it is.

We'll consider this incident when we get to it. For now just notice who Malchus is.

He is the servant of the high priest.

What is the significance of his presence in the party?

The high priest would probably have been there himself, but these were the crucial hours between the first night of the Passover and the first day of the Passover.

During those crucial hours the high priest could not leave the temple compound lest he come into contact with something to make himself unclean. And if he became unclean he could not offer up the special Passover sacrifice to be offered up on the first day of Passover.

Therefore he could not leave the compound, but he sent out his servant to make sure things went correctly.

So, as Matthew points out, there is a *large crowd* with Judas: 400 to 600 Roman soldiers and their commanders, a number of temple police, chief priests, elders, and the servant of the high priest.

*I am*

And as this large body of men comes to arrest one individual, Jesus takes the initiative.

Read John 18:4 – 9.

Jesus is fully aware of *all the things that were coming upon Him*, and He takes the initiative by going forth to meet them and asking them, "*whom do you seek?*"

Why did He ask them this question a second time?

There are two different ways to understand the phrase, *I am*, as it is written here.

- i. It could be the same *I am* that Jehovah used when He revealed Himself to Moses as "*I am that I am*".

The first time He said, "*I am*", it was a display of His deity. And as a consequence they all fell down backward to the ground.

This shows who is in control. He will not be arrested until He allows Himself to be arrested.

When people encountered the Lord in a positive sense in the Scripture they always fell forward. Falling backwards is not a blessing, but a sign of judgement.

- ii. The second way to understand these words is simply *"I am he", "I am that Jesus you are looking for"*.

So after showing them who is in control He repeats the question, *"Whom do you seek?"* And when they answer, *"Jesus the Nazarene"*, He uses the simple, *"I am he", "I am the one you are looking for"*.

And He adds (with the Greek word order), *"if therefore Me you seek, let these go"*, meaning to let these men go since I am the one you are looking for.

So Jesus takes the initiative with two purposes in mind: to demonstrate that He is in control, and to protect His disciples.

### *The sign*

By now Jesus has already identified Himself twice to the soldiers who came to arrest Him. But that is not enough for Judas.

Read Matthew 26:48 – 50.

Judas and the captain of the cohort had agreed on a sign or signal.

His kiss will be the sign showing whom they should arrest. Therefore they are not to arrest anyone until they see who he kisses.

And although there is no need for him to proceed because Jesus has already identified Himself, he insisted on earning his keep.

### *Warning for Judas*

Read Luke's account, verses 47b – 48.

What happens as Judas approached Jesus?

Even before the kiss is applied Jesus warns him against proceeding. Once again He gives Judas an opportunity to turn back to Him.

### *Kiss*

But still Judas persists, and as Mark and Matthew record He said *"Rabbi!"* and kissed Him.

And the Greek word, καταφιλέω *kataphiléō*, means to kiss eagerly, affectionately, or repeatedly<sup>xviii</sup>. So he kissed Him much, not one simple kiss, but many kisses.

Now the kissing of a rabbi was the means of submission to the rabbi and for that reason it was considered sacred among the Jewish people. And when a man became a disciple of a particular Rabbi he would kiss the Rabbi.

And although Judas uses the term Rabbi here, it is not a kiss of honour or of homage, it is a kiss of betrayal.

He was profaning something that was sacred among Jewish people of that time.

### Peter

At that point Peter decided to take action. Read John 18:10.

The word, *sword*, here refers to a long ceremonial knife, the kind of knife used to kill the Passover lamb. And it is likely to be the one which he and John used when they slaughtered the lamb for their Passover meal.

Now visualise the scene in the garden at this moment.

There are between four hundred and six hundred Roman soldiers, plus some Jewish temple police, all carrying their swords.

And Peter pulls out his one long, lone knife. And he thinks he can pull off a Jewish Rambo.

He very quickly proves that by profession he was not a soldier but a fisherman. He takes one swing at someone's head, misses, and cuts off the man's right ear.

But notice His good Jewish wisdom. He did not attack a Roman soldier. He did not attack a Jewish police officer. He attacked the servant of the high priest who may or may not have been armed. And he cuts off the man's right ear.

### Malkus' ear

Now read Luke verse 51.

Notice that all four gospel writers record the fact that Peter pulled out his sword and cut off the man's right ear. But only Doctor Luke chooses to record that the ear was healed.

For Matthew, Mark, and John, the most exciting thing is that in front of all these soldiers and police officers Peter cut off the man's right ear. As far as putting the ear back on the head, they have seen greater things than that.

But for Doctor Luke it was significant enough to mention.

And the healing no doubt saved Peter's life.

### A lesson for Peter

Then Jesus teaches Peter a very significant lesson.

Read it in Matthew 26:52 – 54.

What does Jesus mean by saying, *all those who take up the sword shall perish by the sword*?

Is it true that everyone who every took up the sword was killed by a sword?

For example, has every soldier who used a sword died from the wounds of a sword?

I doubt it.

What then does He mean?

### *Context and structure*

To understand His meaning we need to look at the statement in its context.

Notice first of all the structure of what He says to Peter.

Having told him to put away his sword, He then explains why the use of the sword is inappropriate. And the explanation has three parts. But they are not disjointed parts.

Notice the connecting words He uses.

He begins with the word, *for*. So we expect what follows to explain why the sword is inappropriate.

Then verse 53 begins with the word, *or*. What is the function of that word?

It stands between two alternatives. And the Greek word, ἢ ἔ, introduces a question expressing a choice between two mutually exclusive possibilities.

Verse 54 begins, *how then*. And what follows considers the implications of verse 53.

So we have a contrast between two mutually exclusive possibilities followed by some implications of the second possibility.

### *Meaning*

Now, let's see if understanding the second of these mutually exclusive possibilities will shed light on the first.

What does He say in verse 53?

The father has more than 12 legions of angels ready for immediate deployment at the request of His Son.

And each legion is from three to six thousand angels. So He did not need Peter's one long knife!

So then, what is the contrast He is making?

The contrast is between the use of physical force and the use of spiritual force.

This actually happens to be a spiritual conflict, and therefore it must be fought by spiritual means.

And He is telling Peter to put away his sword because it is powerless in a spiritual conflict. In effect He is saying,

"Peter, why are you using a sword? Don't you realise that this is a spiritual conflict?"

### *Prophecy fulfilled*

But He doesn't leave Peter there wondering, "If it's a spiritual conflict, and there are 12 legions of angels ready for you, why aren't you calling upon them?"

He answers this question too. If He uses the angels, how would prophecy be fulfilled?

And why is it relevant that prophecy be fulfilled?

If ever prophecy is not fulfilled then God would become a liar!

### *Peter's lesson*

So this is His lesson to Peter:

Peter, this is actually a spiritual battle and swords are ineffective in spiritual battles.

I have enough spiritual resources at my disposal to win the battle you see before you.

But God has already determined and prophesied what must take place. And it will be so.

### *A lesson for the crowds*

Jesus then speaks to the crowds in similar terms.

Read Matthew 26:55 – 56.

What is He saying to the crowds?

Essentially He is emphasising that He is the one in control. Every day He was teaching among them and they did not seize Him. It was not for lack of trying, but they could not seize Him before His time.

But now they will be able to take Him in order to fulfil the Scriptures of the prophets.

And read Luke verse 53 to see another point that He makes here.

They are acting in the power of darkness. And the spiritual conflict is a conflict between the power of darkness and the kingdom of light.

### *The disciples fled*

Read the last part of Matthew verse 56 and John 18:12.

The disciples decide to do no more to defend themselves. They left Him and fled.

### *Jesus arrested and bound*

Here Jesus is arrested and bound. And this is only possible because He chooses to submit to them. As He demonstrated when He identified Himself to them, He is the one in control of the situation.

### *Mark - eyewitness*

Mark then adds an interesting detail the others don't record.

Read Mark 14:51 – 52.

Then Mark adds a small incident about someone in the crowd having to flee away naked. Is this just comic relief?

The purpose for these verses is not to lay down a biblical basis for streaking!

What is the purpose of this story?

In ancient biographies, if the author was an eye witness to some of the events, he would often include himself in the story where he was an eye witness. For example, in John's gospel he refers to himself as the disciple whom Jesus loved, not implying that He didn't love the others as well. That's the way John wrote himself into the story when he was an eye witness.

In the book of Acts, whenever Luke switches from the third person into the first person that's where Luke is an eye witness.

So based upon the way biographies were written, the one mentioned here would be Mark himself. He happened to be there and was an eye witness to the event that had just occurred.

And this is how Mark declares that he was an eye witness to these events.



## B. The Religious Trial, § 154-158

### *Two trials*

Now, as the night wears on, we will find six different trial proceedings which some describe as six different trials.

But actually there will be two separate trials, each of which proceeds in three separate segments.

First there will be a religious trial, which is the Jewish trial, and then there will be the civil trial which is the Roman and Gentile trial.

And both of these trials have three separate segments giving a total of six segments.

But there are only two trials, a Jewish one and a Gentile one.

### 1. The Trial Before Annas, § 154, John 18:12-14, 19-23

Now read John 18:12 – 14.

Having arrested and bound Jesus, where do they take Him?

The first place they take Him is to Annas.

#### *Rule 4 broken*

And bringing Him before Annas for trial violates the fourth rule in our list: There were to be no trials before the morning sacrifice.

This one occurs before the morning sacrifice.

#### *Annas*

Who was Annas?

Annas served as high priest from the year 7 to the year 14 AD. After that he was deposed by the then Roman governor Vilarius Gratus.

But, although he was deposed, he was still able to maintain control of the high priesthood because he was followed in succession by four of his own sons, then by his son in law, and towards the end of his life by his grandson.

He was a Sadducee.

He controlled the business ventures of the temple compound like the changing of the money and the selling of sacrifices. And when Jesus overturned the tables of the money changers and drove out the animals from the temple at the first and the last Passovers of His public ministry, it was the business venture of Annas He was overthrowing.

And so Annas had his own private grudge against Jesus.

#### *Questioning*

Now Annas questioned Jesus.

Read verse 19 – 23, noticing both the nature of the questions and the response of Jesus.

What was the subject of Annas' questions?

He questioned Jesus about two things. First of all about His disciples to incriminate them. And secondly, about His teachings to incriminate Him.

#### *Jesus' response*

Does Jesus answer his questions?

No. And why not?

Because under Jewish civil law dealing with trials He is not responsible to answer the question. They are responsible to produce the two or three witnesses.

So He points out to them, since everything He taught He taught publicly, if He said anything amiss or blasphemous, they should have no trouble producing the two witnesses they need to condemn Him.

#### *He is beaten*

It was His right to make this response, but for this response He is beaten. This is the first of several beatings He will receive on this night.

#### *Confusion*

As we begin to see here, and as we will continue to see throughout these proceedings, they are confused and disorganised.

Why would they be disorganised?

The reason they are confused and disorganised is that they did not anticipate having to conduct the religious trial on this night.

The original conspiracy included waiting until after the Passover. But now Jesus has forced their hand, and they have acted before they are ready.

And so their purpose for the Jewish trial is to establish a religious charge against Him. And the issue will be blasphemy.

#### *Rule 5 broken*

Now Jesus is not only pointing out to them that they are responsible to bring witnesses against Him and that they should have no difficulty in finding them.

There is another implication in His response to them.

Why does He emphasise how publicly He taught with the words, "*and I spoke nothing in secret*"?

Because this stands in contrast to the trial. He said nothing in secret, but this trial is being conducted in secret.

Therefore they are breaking rule number 5 on the list.

### *Outcome of this stage of the trial*

And what was the outcome of the trial before Annas?

The end product of the first stage of the Jewish trial is that they were unable to produce a specific charge against Him.

## **2. The Trial before Caiaphas, § 155a, Mark 14:53, 55-65; Matthew 26:57, 59-68; Luke 22:54; John 18:24**

### *Caiaphas*

How does Annas respond to this impasse?

Read John 18:24.

Who was Caiaphas?

Caiaphas is the son-in-law of Annas. He served as high priest from the year 25 until the year 36 AD. And this trial takes place in the mid-point of his high priesthood, in AD 30.

### *Rule 6*

Read Luke 22:54.

Where was Caiaphas when they brought Jesus to him?

At his home.

And this will break rule number 6 on the list: Sanhedrin trials could only be conducted in the Hall of Judgment of the Temple Compound.

### *The Sanhedrin*

Now read Mark 14:53.

Who else was there?

All the chief priests together with the elders and the scribes were there with the high priest.

The Sanhedrin was comprised of 71 members carefully divided along party lines.

- 24 seats went to the chief priests, and all 24 chief priests were Sadducees.
- 24 seats went to the elders, and the 24 elders were Pharisees.
- 22 more seats went to the scribes, and all 22 scribes were Pharisees.
- The last seat went to the high priest, who was a Sadducee.

And so the majority vote was by the Pharisees, but the proceedings were conducted by a Sadducee.

It was not necessary to have all 71 members there, but they had to have a minimum of 23. If you had only the minimum, 11 votes were sufficient to acquit. Thirteen votes would be necessary to convict. Conviction had to be by a majority of two, not only one.

We are not told how many of the 71 members were there. Mark tells us that all the chief priests were there.

We know that not all 71 members were there because later in the gospels we notice that Nicodemus was not there and Joseph of Arimathea was not there. So the most would be 69, and there may have been fewer.

So in this section we come to the second stage of the Jewish trial, the trial before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin.

#### *Rule 7*

And how does this trial begin?

Read Mark 14:55-59.

They begin by trying to obtain false testimony against Him.

Therefore they were breaking rule number 7 on the list: they were to begin with the defence and then the accusation.

#### *Confusion*

And notice their disarray.

*The chief priests and the whole Council kept trying to obtain false testimony against Jesus.*

Why don't they have their witnesses ready?

Because they were not intending to have this trial this on this night, but after the feast.

#### *Rule 8*

Notice also that it is *the whole Council* that is acting here, all trying to put Him to death.

This breaks rule number 8 on the list: All may argue in favour of acquittal, but all may not argue in favour of conviction.

#### *Witnesses disqualified*

They bring one false witness after another, trying to find two who say the same thing, but, although they had many false witnesses, they were all disqualified because their testimonies were inconsistent.

Finally they find two men who seemed to say the same thing. And they stood up in the court to give their testimony.

But as Mark point out in verse 59, *Not even in this respect was their testimony consistent.*

We can see the discrepancy in their statements by comparing Mark and Matthew.

Read verse 61 of Matthew's account.

He quotes one of them as saying, *"This man said, 'I am able to destroy the temple'".*

How does that differ from Mark verse 58?

Mark quotes the witness as saying *“I will destroy this temple”*.

So did He say I will do so, or did He say I am able to do so?

One is a statement of ability. The other is a statement of actual intent.

It was this small discrepancy that disqualified the last two witnesses that they have.

#### *Rule 9*

Failure to release Him at this point in the proceedings will violate rule number 9 on the list: There were to be two or three witnesses and their testimony had to agree in every detail.

#### *Rule 10*

All of this exasperates Caiaphas.

Read what he does next in Mark 26:60 - 61.

By asking Jesus to respond now, when they did not have two witnesses presenting the official charge, he will break rule number 10: There was to be no allowance for the accused to testify against himself.

And in keeping with Jewish civil rights, verse 61 says He kept silent, He didn't have to respond at this stage.

#### *Two things Caiaphas knows*

And that frustrates Caiaphas even further.

Read the next section in Matthew's account, verses 63b – 64.

What Caiaphas asks Him at this point reveals two things that he knows. What are they?

- i. He clearly understood who Jesus claimed to be. Jesus claimed to be the Messiah.
- ii. And secondly, he knew who the Messiah was supposed to be. The Messiah was supposed to be the Son of God.

#### *Under oath*

Here he puts Jesus under oath, *“I adjure You by the living God, that You tell us whether You are the Christ, the Son of God.”*

Now, by Jewish civil law, if you are placed under oath you must respond. And so He does.

#### *Someday they will know*

Read Mark 14:62.

He answers the question with: *“I am”*, meaning “yes, I am the Messiah, the Son of God”.

Then what does He add?

- i. They will see Him seated at the right hand of God the Father.
- ii. They will see Him come in the clouds of heaven.

Why did He add this to His answer?

They do not believe Him at this time, but there will come a day when they will know the truth of what He claims because of these two things!

- i. They will see Him seated at the right hand of God the Father.
- ii. They will see Him come in the clouds of heaven. And this they will see from hell itself.

#### *Rule 11*

Now several things happen in rather quick succession.

Read Matthew verse 65.

By tearing his robes he breaks rule number 11 in our list, which is a rule taken from the Law of Moses in Leviticus 21:10.

#### *Rule 12*

What is the charge against Him?

*He has blasphemed.*

And who made the charge?

The high priest, who is the judge in this case.

So the charge originates with the judge, breaking rule number 12: Charges could not originate with the judges; they could only investigate charges brought to them.

#### *Rule 13*

Furthermore, because the charge is blasphemy, it breaks rule number 13: The accusation of blasphemy was only valid if the name of God itself was pronounced, which He did not do at this trial.

#### *Rule 14*

What does he add immediately after making the charge?

He goes on to add, *What further need do we have of witnesses?*

And he doesn't have any witnesses anyway because they were all disqualified.

So he is asking for a condemnation strictly on the basis of what Jesus just said.

Therefore he violates rule number 14: A person could not be condemned on the basis of his own words alone.

#### *Rule 15*

Read how the council responds in verse 66 of Mathew's account.

Here they break five rules all at once!

They go ahead and pronounce Him guilty, breaking rule number 15: The verdict could not be announced at night, only in the daytime.

#### Rule 16

Furthermore, because this is a capital offence, they break rule 16: In cases of capital punishment, the trial and guilty verdict could not occur at the same time but must be separated by at least 24 hours.

#### Rule 17

Furthermore, it was done by acclamation, which breaks rule number 17: Voting for the death penalty had to be done by individual count beginning with the youngest so the young would not be influenced by the elders.

#### Rule 18

Mark adds a small detail that Matthew omits.

Read the last part of verse 64 in Mark's account.

*And they all condemned Him to be deserving of death.*

What is the significance of the word, *all*?

It was a unanimous decision.

So by Jewish law Jesus should have been released. Failure to release Him would violate rule number 18: A unanimous decision for guilt shows innocence since it is impossible for 23-71 men to agree without plotting.

#### Rule 19

They also pronounce the sentence, adding that He is worthy of death, which would break rule number 19: The sentence could only be pronounced three days after the guilty verdict.

#### Rules 20 & 21

Now read Mark verse 65.

*Some began to spit at Him, and to blindfold Him, and to beat Him with their fists, and to say to Him, "Prophesy!" And the officers received Him with slaps in the face.*

Here they break rule number 20: Judges were to be humane and kind.

And also rule number 21: A person condemned to death was not to be scourged or beaten beforehand.

#### Second mistreatment

During this night Jesus is physically mistreated several times.

The first time occurred at the trial before Annas when He was struck by an officer.

Now here, at the trial before the Sanhedrin, He is mistreated for the second time.

And here He suffers three great indignities under Jewish law.

- i. Some of them hit Him with the fist.

And hitting someone with the fist was punishable by a fine of four denarii. One denarius was equivalent to one days wages, so four denarii was four days wages.

- ii. Even more insulting is to be hit with the palm of the hand. And they slap Him.

That was punishable by a fine of 200 denarii, or 200 days wages.

- iii. And the third thing He suffers is that some of them spit into His face.

That was even more insulting and was punishable by a fine of 400 denarii, or 400 days wages.

And while He suffers these three high indignities under Jewish law, one thing is certain: no one was fined for their actions on this night.

#### *Rule 22*

The last thing to notice in this section is that this trial happens to fall between the first night of Passover and the first day of Passover, and it therefore violated rule number 22: No trials are allowed on the eve of the Sabbath or on a feast day.

And already they have broken all 22 rules on our list.

### **3. The Denial by Peter, § 156, Mark 14:54, 66-72; Matthew 26:58, 69-75; Luke 22:54-62; John 18:15-18, 25-27**

Meanwhile, as this trial is taking place in the house of the high priest, outside, in the court of the high priest events are unfolding that lead to Peter's denial of Jesus.

#### *Peter enters the court*

Read Luke verse 54 and John verses 15 – 16.

When Jesus was first arrested the apostles were scattered, but now two of them begin to follow the crowd to where Jesus was taken, but from a distance.

How was Peter able to enter the court of the high priest?

John's family and the family of the high priest were somehow related. So John says: *Now that disciple was known to the high priest.*

And because of his familiarity, the servants of the high priest knew John, and they let him into the compound.

In verse 16, Peter was standing outside and John used his influence to get him into the compound, inadvertently setting the stage for Peter's three-fold denial as was prophesied by Jesus during the last Passover supper.

#### *The first denial.*

Read John 18:17 – 24.



Who recognised Peter?

Soon after he entered the courtyard the servant girl who kept the door accused Peter of being one of the disciples.

And he denies knowing Jesus for the first time.

It is a simple denial, nothing more than a mere denial of knowing Jesus, or of being His disciple.

In Mark's account here, at the end of verse 68, later manuscripts add, *and a rooster crowed*. This is the first rooster-crowing, and if it refers to the changing of the watch, it would now be 9 pm. [Or possibly midnight.]

#### *The second denial.*

Read Matthew 26:71 – 72.

Now another servant-girl recognises that Peter has been with Jesus, and for the second time he denies knowing Him.

What is different about Peter's second denial?

This time it is not a simple denial, but a denial with an oath, probably using the name of God.

#### *The third denial.*

Read Matthew 26:73 – 74, Luke 22:59 – 60, and John 18:26.

According to Luke about an hour passes. And once again he is identified as being among the disciples of Jesus.

Who recognises Peter this time?

Some of the bystanders and a man whom John identifies as a relative of Malchus, whose ear Peter had cut off.

How did the bystanders recognise that Peter had been with Jesus?

They recognised that, like Jesus, he was also a Galilean. His speech revealed that he was from Galilee. The Galilean and Judean dialects were quite distinct and to the Judean ear a Galilean was obvious.

Now Peter's third denial is even stronger than his second denial. What does he add this time?

In addition to swearing an oath as before, he now begins to curse. And the Greek verb requires an object. He is calling down divine curses, either upon himself, or upon Jesus.

So there is a progression in his denials. He went from a simple denial of knowing Jesus, to using an oath in which he probably used the name of God, and now he actually uses a curse as well as an oath.

#### *The rooster crows*

Read the rest of Luke's account here, Luke 22:60b – 62.

Now immediately, even as he was still speaking, the cock crows, and according to Mark's account it crows for the second time. That would make it midnight. [Or possibly 3 am.]

Then what happened?

At that time Jesus turned and the eyes of Jesus and Peter actually met.

And Peter suddenly remembered the prophecy of Jesus that before the second cock crowing he will deny him three times.

In that moment, its as though a veil is removed from Peter's eyes, a veil he didn't even know was there, and for the first time he sees himself.

He remembers what Jesus had said to him. He remembers his enthusiastic and proud confidence.

And he went out of the compound weeping bitterly.

This is also the outworking of the spiritual battle that Jesus explained to him earlier.

#### **4. The Mockery and Beating, § 155b, Luke 22:63-65**

[Now we go back to section 155 because here again Robertson broke Luke's order.]

Read Luke 22:64 – 65.

This is the third time He suffers physical mistreatment on this night.

And it is the first of eight mockeries.

He will suffer four mockeries before the cross, and He will suffer four mockeries on the cross.

This is the first of the four mockeries before the cross.

#### **5. The Condemnation by the Sanhedrin, § 157, Mark 15:1a; Matthew 27:1; Luke 22:66-71**

Read all three passages here, Mark 15:1a; Matthew 27:1; and Luke 22:66a.

*Date – 15th of Nisan – 7 April, AD 30 – Friday*

As the sun rises it is now Friday, the 15<sup>th</sup> of Nisan, April 7<sup>th</sup> AD 30.

*Sanhedrin conference*

And who is assembling together?

Again it is the whole council of the Sanhedrin.

And what is their purpose?

Their purpose is to *confer together against Jesus to put Him to death.*

This is the third stage of the religious trial, His condemnation to death by the Sanhedrin.

Why did they wait until morning?

Perhaps by this time someone may have come to his senses enough to realise that all of the preceding segments of the trial have been totally illegal.

So now they attempt to give a measure of legality to a procedure that has become totally illegal.

#### *Questions for Jesus*

And they have two questions for Jesus. Read Luke 22:66b – 71.

- i. What is their first question?

*“If You are the Christ, tell us.”* If you are the Messiah, tell us.

How does He answer them?

It is useless to tell them because they have already determined not to believe.

And some day they will know the truth of His claims when they see Him seated at the right hand of God the Father.

- ii. And what is their second question?

*“Are You the Son of God, then?”*

How does He answer?

*“Yes, I am.”*

The ASV translates it more literally: *“Ye say that I am”*. In Greek it is a very emphatic way of saying, “You yourselves said it! And yes indeed, that’s exactly who I am”.

In modern English we have a similar way of doing this: somebody makes a statement; and we respond, “You said it!” When we say it with that tone of voice we are not saying that’s only your opinion. We are affirming the truth of what the person just said.

And that is the emphasis here: “You said it! And yes indeed that’s exactly who I am!”

#### *Condemnation to death*

And now the third and last stage of the Jewish trial comes to an end.

They have achieved their purpose, and they officially condemn Him to death.

### **6. The Death of Judas, § 158, Matthew 27:3-10; Acts 1:18-19**

#### *Judas’ third role in the conspiracy*

While the Sanhedrin could condemn somebody to death, they could not, at this point of history, actually carry out the death sentence, because the Roman Senate had taken away from the Jewish Sanhedrin the right of capital punishment.

So if Jesus was to die He will have to die based upon a point of Roman law and not on a point of Jewish law.

And that creates another problem for them: While blasphemy was punishable by death under Jewish law, it was not punishable by death under Roman law.

Therefore they have to change the issue for the civil trial.

Judas was not needed for the religious trial, but he will be needed for the civil trial to fulfil his third function: to serve as the prosecution witness.

But what happens between the Jewish and Roman trial?

Judas dies!

### *Remorse*

Read Matthew's description of how it happens in 27:3 – 5.

The question is often asked, was Judas saved?

Where the NASB says, "*he felt remorse*", the ASV says he *repented himself*, which leads some to think that perhaps he was saved at that point.

But was he?

There are two different Greek words which are translated as repentance in English.

And one of them is *metanoia* which means repentance, or a change of mind.

For the Jews salvation requires a change of mind about Jesus – a change of mind from believing that He is demon possessed to believing that He is the Messianic king. Such a change of mind is a radical change of world-view.

And *metanoia* is the word which is normally used when salvation is in view.

But that is not the word Matthew uses here.

The word here is *metamelomai*, which means to be filled with remorse or regret.

So the NASB has the better translation, and Judas was filled with remorse or regret. He did not change his mind about Jesus, and there was no repentance leading to salvation.

And the answer to the question is: No, he was not saved, and as prophesied, he goes to perdition.

### *Apparent discrepancies*

Now the next paragraph is bound to raise some questions in your mind.

Read Matthew 27:6 – 8 and Acts 1:18 – 19.

What are the questions here?

Critics of the New Testament use these passages to argue against its inspiration.

And there are two issues:

- i. How did Judas die? By hanging, or by falling headlong?
- ii. And, who purchased the field? Judas, or the chief priests?

### *How did Judas die?*

Let's begin with the first question: how did Judas die?

Matthew says *he went away and hanged himself*.

But Luke says, *falling headlong, he burst open in the middle and all his intestines gushed out*.

So how did he die?

When faced with this question, some postulate that he hanged himself, but the rope broke so he fell down and burst open.

But that is not very satisfying since he would not be falling headlong, and most likely he would not fall far enough to burst open.

### *Some Jewish background*

The picture will become clearer when we understand some Jewish background that was once well known.

First of all here, remember that in the Jewish reckoning of time the day begins at sunset and therefore first night of something comes before the first day of that thing. The first night of Passover comes before the first day of Passover.

And on the first night of Passover Jewish families eat the Passover meal. And so Jesus observed His last Passover meal on the first night of Passover with the apostles.

Then on the first day of Passover, at 9 o'clock in the morning there is a special Passover sacrifice. And from that sacrifice only 25 men partake in the afternoon: the high priest and the 24 chief priests.

Now why is all this helpful?

Because this is the context in which Judas dies.

And, by Jewish law, a dead body within the walls of Jerusalem would make the city unclean and they would not be able to proceed with the Passover sacrifice.

But the law also had a way to deal with such an issue so that the sacrifice could go ahead.

They were required to take the dead body and throw it over the wall of Jerusalem, the wall that faced the valley of Hinnom.

And once the body was thrown over the wall, they could proceed with the sacrifice. Later, the burial team can go out and bury the body.

### *Putting all this together*

Now, putting all this together...

When Judas was filled with regret and remorse, he tried to return the funds to the chief priests, who refused to take it. So he dumped it in the temple compound and *went away and hanged himself*.

He died by hanging.

And in order to keep the city clean to perform the sacrifice at 9 am, his body was thrown over the wall into the valley of Hinnom. *And falling headlong, he burst open in the middle ...*

And in the light of the Jewish law of that day both Matthew and Mark have correctly reported what happened. There is no contradiction in their statements.

#### *Who purchased the field?*

The second question raised by this passage is: Who purchased the field?

Matthew says it was the chief priests.

<sup>6</sup>*The chief priests took the pieces of silver and said, "It is not lawful to put them into the temple treasury, since it is the price of blood."* <sup>7</sup>*And they conferred together and with the money bought the Potter's Field as a burial place for strangers.*

But Luke says it was Judas.

*Now this man acquired a field with the price of his wickedness.*

So who bought the field: the chief priests, or Judas?

#### *Some Jewish background*

Once again the picture becomes clearer when we understand a little Jewish law.

And Matthew points to it in his text.

<sup>6</sup>*The chief priests took the pieces of silver and said, "It is not lawful to put them into the temple treasury, since it is the price of blood."*

By Jewish law, money wrongfully gained could not be put into the temple treasury.

And, if they could not put the money into the temple treasury, what were they expected to do with it?

Again by Jewish law, those who knew the money was wrongfully gained had to return the money to the donor.

But what were they to do if the donor dies before the money could be returned to him?

They still could not put it in the temple treasury, but in that case they had to use the money to purchase something for the public good.

#### *Answer:*

And that's exactly what they do. They purchase something for public good. They purchase a field to bury strangers in.

However the purchase had to be in the name of the donor even though the donor was dead, and therefore the actual legal documents for the sale would have the name of Judas in them.

So technically, by Jewish law, Judas purchased the field and the chief priests are viewed strictly as his purchasing agents.

So again, from the perspective of the Jewish law, both statements are true accounts of what took place.

### *Prophecy fulfilled*

Now Matthew adds that prophecy is being fulfilled.

Read verses 9 – 10.

<sup>9</sup> *Then that which was spoken through Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled: "AND THEY TOOK THE THIRTY PIECES OF SILVER, THE PRICE OF THE ONE WHOSE PRICE HAD BEEN SET by the sons of Israel; <sup>10</sup> AND THEY GAVE THEM FOR THE POTTER'S FIELD, AS THE LORD DIRECTED ME."*

Matthew attributes his quote to Jeremiah the prophet. And the critics like to say this is a mistake because he quotes, not Jeremiah, but Zechariah.

### *An unsatisfactory explanation*

Sometimes, when they were dealing with different scrolls, they would use the name of the first book in the scroll as the name for the whole scroll. So by mentioning the first prophet in the scroll of the prophets they would refer to all of the prophets.

Therefore, by mentioning Jeremiah, some might argue that Matthew was referring to the whole scroll of the prophets, including Zechariah.

However, Jeremiah is not the first prophet in the scroll of the prophets. The first book of that scroll is Isaiah.

So, if he had said Isaiah, it would have been a good way to respond. But he doesn't say Isaiah. He says Jeremiah.

### *A good question*

And the question remains: Why? Why does Matthew refer to Jeremiah here?

The pursuit of an answer will lead to an understanding of something often missed.

### *Only in Matthew's account*

Now, before we go and look at what the prophets wrote, notice how many of the gospel writers include an account of Judas' death. Only Matthew!

Why would that be?

Each gospel author writes for a different audience, and each has a theme relevant to his audience.

Who is Matthew's audience?

He is writing primarily to Jewish believers, and his theme is: Jesus the Messiah the King of the Jews.

He quotes the Old Testament (the Tanakh) over sixty times and makes extensive use of Messianic prophecies to show that Jesus really was the promised Messianic King.

But if Jesus is the Messiah then the question naturally arises in the minds of his audience: where is the Messianic Kingdom, and where is the world peace He will bring?

Therefore Matthew also writes to show why the Messiah didn't set up His Kingdom.

The Kingdom was not established because the leaders of Israel rejected the Messiah.

And so Matthew writes about the consequences of this rejection, including the impending judgment and destruction of Jerusalem that would come in 70 AD. (Matt. 22:7; 23:36-38).

### *What Matthew points out*

Now, in verses 6 – 8, what three things does he tell us about the purchase made by the chief priests?

He tells us:

- 1) The price they paid: thirty pieces of silver.
- 2) What they bought: the Potter's field.
- 3) What that field was called as a result: the Field of Blood.

### *Zechariah's prophecy*

Now turn to Zechariah and read Zechariah 11:12-13.

*<sup>12</sup> I said to them, "If it is good in your sight, give me my wages; but if not, never mind!" So they weighed out thirty shekels of silver as my wages. <sup>13</sup> Then the Lord said to me, "Throw it to the potter, that magnificent price at which I was valued by them." So I took the thirty shekels of silver and threw them to the potter in the house of the Lord.*

Why does Matthew quote this passage?

The chief priests have literally fulfilled Zechariah's prophecy, where the Lord said of the thirty pieces of silver, " ... *that magnificent price at which I was valued by them.*"

They valued Him at the price of contempt, the price of a dead slave, thirty pieces of silver. (Exodus 21:32)



### *Jeremiah's prophecy*

Now Matthew tells us that Jeremiah's prophecy is being fulfilled.

What does Jeremiah have to say about this field which was now called the Field of Blood?

Turn to Jeremiah chapter 19.

Read Jeremiah 19:1-2.

<sup>1</sup> *Thus says the Lord, "Go and buy a potter's earthenware jar, and take some of the elders of the people and some of the senior priests."* <sup>2</sup> *"Then go out to the valley of Ben-hinnom, which is by the entrance of the potsherd gate, and proclaim there the words that I tell you,*

Jeremiah is told to do four things:

- i. He was to *Go and buy a potter's earthenware jar*.
- ii. He was to take with him two groups of the leaders of Israel. *The elders of the people* are the civil leaders and *the senior priests* are the religious leaders.
- iii. *Then go out to the valley of Ben-hinnom, which is by the entrance of the potsherd gate.* This is one of the southern gates of Jerusalem, overlooking the Hinnom Valley just before it joins the Kidron Valley.
- iv. And there he was to proclaim the words that the Lord would tell him.

What he was to proclaim follows in verses 3 – 9.

Read verse 3.

<sup>3</sup> *and say, 'Hear the word of the Lord, O kings of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem: thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, "Behold I am about to bring a calamity upon this place, at which the ears of everyone that hears of it will tingle.*

This is the declaration of God's intent, which is to bring calamity upon Jerusalem.

And the reason follows. Read verses 4 – 5.

<sup>4</sup> *"Because they have forsaken Me and have made this an alien place and have burned sacrifices in it to other gods, that neither they nor their forefathers nor the kings of Judah had ever known, and because they have filled this place with the blood of the innocent <sup>5</sup> and have built the high places of Baal to burn their sons in the fire as burnt offerings to Baal, a thing which I never commanded or spoke of, nor did it ever enter My mind;*

Therefore God declares the judgement that will take place, a judgement on Topheth and a judgement on Jerusalem.

Read verses 6 – 9.

<sup>6</sup> *therefore, behold, days are coming,” declares the Lord, “when this place will no longer be called Topheth or the valley of Ben-hinnom, but rather the valley of Slaughter.* <sup>7</sup> *“I will make void the counsel of Judah and Jerusalem in this place, and I will cause them to fall by the sword before their enemies and by the hand of those who seek their life; and I will give over their carcasses as food for the birds of the sky and the beasts of the earth.* <sup>8</sup> *“I will also make this city a desolation and an object of hissing; everyone who passes by it will be astonished and hiss because of all its disasters.* <sup>9</sup> *“I will make them eat the flesh of their sons and the flesh of their daughters, and they will eat one another’s flesh in the siege and in the distress with which their enemies and those who seek their life will distress them.” ’*

Jeremiah is standing just outside of Jerusalem, in the valley of Hinnom, in a field called Topheth, which has become the place for burning their sons and daughters as sacrifices to Baal. Therefore God will make the city an astonishing desolation.

Then we see what Jeremiah was to do with the earthenware jar.

Read verses 10 – 13.

<sup>10</sup> *“Then you are to break the jar in the sight of the men who accompany you <sup>11</sup> and say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord of hosts, “Just so will I break this people and this city, even as one breaks a potter’s vessel, which cannot again be repaired; and they will bury in Topheth because there is no other place for burial [Or better: until there is no more room for burial].* <sup>12</sup> *“This is how I will treat this place and its inhabitants,” declares the Lord, “so as to make this city like Topheth. <sup>13</sup> “The houses of Jerusalem and the houses of the kings of Judah will be defiled like the place Topheth, because of all the houses on whose rooftops they burned sacrifices to all the heavenly host and poured out drink offerings to other gods.” ’ ”*

This is the judgement against Jerusalem. It will become like the broken jar, which cannot again be repaired; and they will bury in Topheth until there is no more room for burial.

#### *The field*



The field *Topheth*, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, is where the Israelites built high places to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire.

It is located in the Valley of Hinnom just before it meets the Kidron Valley at the southern end of Jerusalem.

And it became the potter’s field where the potter dug up clay to make his vessels.

It is this same field which the chief priests purchased, and which became known as the Field of Blood.

## *Gehenna*

In Hebrew by the way, the name of the Hinnom valley is Ge Hinnom.

In Greek that becomes Gehenna. And, because the Hinnom valley was the place for the physical burning of humans as they were offered up to certain idols and gods, Gehenna became the name of the place for the burning of humans in the eternal lake of fire.

## *Matthew's Point*

Now what was Matthew's point in referring to this prophecy?

He notes, in verse 8, that the field was given a new name, an Aramaic name, Hakeldama, meaning the Field of Blood.

Jeremiah prophesied *behold, days are coming," declares the Lord, "when it will no longer be called Topheth, or the valley of the son of Hinnom, but the valley of the Slaughter.*

There is a point of similarity here, or an application of Jeremiah's prophesy, in the renaming of this field. [The renaming of the field is not a fulfillment of Jeremiah's prophesy, but point of similarity between the prophecy and the current events.]

And the point that Matthew is making here is that when they purchased this field in Topheth, they bought the very field which Jeremiah had cursed, and so they purchased the curse of Jeremiah as well as the field.

They are the generation that will see the devastation of Jerusalem that God decreed through Jeremiah. And with that devastation they will bury in that field until there is no more room for burying.

This did not happen when Jerusalem was destroyed by the Babylonians in the year 586 BC.

But in the year 70 AD, when the judgment came for the unpardonable sin, they buried, and buried, and buried in Topheth until there was no more room for burying.

This is the consequence for them of their rejection of the Messiah!

And this is why Matthew mentions Jeremiah.

## *They no longer have the Prosecuting Witness!*

The result of this event, which occurs between the two trials, is that they no longer have their prosecuting witness.

Therefore the confusion that was evident in the religious trial will also be evident in the civil trial.

## C. The Civil Trial, § 159-162

Now, because the Sanhedrin did not have the power to carry out the death penalty, they needed to have Jesus convicted in a Roman court.

And there are two Roman laws that will play a role in this trial.

- i. All proceedings have to be public. And this trial is very public, much to Pilate's regret.
- ii. The trial had to begin with a prosecuting witness presenting a charge punishable under Roman law.

This is one of the reasons why Judas was important to the conspiracy. He was to be the prosecuting witness who would present the charge against Jesus. But they no longer have their prosecuting witness, and we'll see the consequences of this in a moment.

### 1. The First Trial before Pilate, § 159, Mark 15:1b-5; Matthew 27:2, 11-14; Luke 23:1-5; John 18:28-38

Read Luke 23:1.

*Pilate*

Who was Pilate?

Pilate was a Roman citizen born in Spain. He served as procurator from the year 26 to the year 36 AD. He was the longest ruling procurator in Judea's history.

This trial takes place at the midpoint of his term as procurator in the year 30 AD.

In contemporary Jewish writing he is noted for his cruelty, but he was normally a correct Roman following strict Roman procedure.

On this occasion, although it was still early in the morning, not long after dawn, he was anticipating a trial because the previous evening he had released a Roman cohort for Judas to make the arrest.

*Jesus taken to the Praetorium*

Now read John 18:28.

Wasn't the Passover eaten the previous evening?

Because this verse implies that the Passover had not yet been eaten, some suggest that Jesus ate His Passover meal a day early.

But how could He do that? He kept the Law of Moses perfectly, down to the smallest jot and tittle. And the Mosaic Law specified on which day of the month the Passover meal must be eaten, and Jesus would not violate that law.

Had He violated that Law, He would have sinned and therefore disqualified Himself from being our spotless Lamb.

So what is John referring to here?

### Passover

The origin of the name, Passover, is the fact that the angel of death passed over the Jewish homes during the tenth plague on Egypt.

But how many different things can be referred to by using the name, Passover?

It is used in four different ways.

- i. First, it is applied to the Feast of Passover by itself, which is a single day.
- ii. Secondly, because the seven days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread begin on the day after the Feast of Passover, the term Passover is also used to include both the Feast of Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread, a total of eight days.
- iii. Thirdly, the meal eaten by all Jews on the first night of Passover is called the Passover.
- iv. Fourthly, the name, Passover, is applied to the lamb that was sacrificed on the first day of Passover in the Temple Compound. This Passover lamb was sacrificed at the third hour of the day (9 am) and was later eaten by the high priest and the 24 chief priests.

If any of the chief priests became unclean he would not be able to partake of the Passover feast.

Therefore, as John records, they did not enter the Praetorium.

### The trial begins

Now see how the trial begins.

Read John 18:29 – 32.

In keeping with the second Roman law, Pilate begins with the question: *“What accusation do you bring against this Man?”*

And Judas was supposed to step forward to make the accusation, but he is dead.

So how do they respond?

*“If this Man were not an evildoer, we would not have delivered Him to you.”*

And what are they trying to do?

They don’t have a prosecuting witness anymore, so they try to pressure Pilate into merely passing a death sentence with no trial, no verdict, and no sentencing.

But how does Pilate respond to this pressure?

At this point Pilate, the correct Roman, will have none of it. They can judge Him according to their own law.

If there is no accusation there will be no trial. If there is no trial there will be no condemnation. If there is no condemnation there will be no sentencing either.

And they complain, *“We are not permitted to put anyone to death,”* meaning it is no longer lawful under Roman law.

### *Jesus' prophecy*

And notice John's editorial comment in verse 32,

*To fulfill the word of Jesus which He spoke, signifying by what kind of death He was about to die.*

Jesus said more than once that He will die by crucifixion.

But how does their statement, "*we are not permitted to put anyone to death*" fulfill the words of Jesus?

Crucifixion was not a Jewish method of execution. It was the Roman method. The Jewish method of execution was stoning to death.

If Jesus had died under Jewish law He would have been stoned to death.

But if He was stoned to death He would be rendered a false prophet, because He prophesied that He would die by crucifixion, not by stoning.

And there is a fact of history recorded in the Talmud that reveals the providence of God.

When did the Roman Senate take away from the Jewish Sanhedrin the right of capital punishment?

The Talmud states exactly what year it was. It says it happened forty years before the temple was destroyed.

The temple was destroyed in the year AD 70. And going back 40 years gives the year 30, the very year of this trial.

So, if this trial had taken place only six months earlier He would have been stoned to death and rendered a false prophet.

In the providence of God, at the proper time, God moved the Roman Senate to take away the right of capital punishment from the Sanhedrin, with the result that now if Jesus dies He will have to die under Roman law, not under Jewish law.

So He will die by crucifixion, just as He foretold.

### *The charge*

Now when the leaders realized that Pilate will not proceed until he has a specific accusation, they finally produce one.

Read Luke 23:2.

What is their charge against Jesus?

They accused Him of sedition or treason of three counts.

- 1) Perverting the nation, stirring up revolt.
- 2) Forbidding the giving tribute to Caesar, an act of rebellion.
- 3) Claiming to be a king. And if He claims to be a king He claims to be a competitor to Caesar.

### *Questioning of the accused*

Now that Pilate has a specific charge he can continue with the Roman trial.

Read John 18:33.

What normally follows the accusation is the questioning of the accused. So Pilate asks Jesus, *“Are You the King of the Jews?”*

Is he asking whether Jesus is the Messiah?

No, from a Roman perspective the point of his question is: Are you really claiming to be a competitor to Caesar?

### *Clarification requested*

In a typical Jewish response, Jesus responds with a question of His own.

Read John 18:34 – 35.

What is the purpose of Jesus’ question?

Pilate’s question, *“Are you the King of the Jews”*, has a different answer depending on whether it is asked from a Jewish or a Roman perspective.

So Jesus is seeking clarification from Pilate. Is he asking from the perspective of a Roman, or from the perspective of a Jew?

### *Clarification given*

How does Pilate answer?

*“I am not a Jew, am I? ... What have You done”*

He says, “I am not a Jew that I should be asking from a Jewish perspective. That’s not where I am coming from, You have been turned over to me by the Jewish chief priests with specific accusations. Now address the charges. Are you claiming to be a competitor to Caesar?”

### *His Kingdom*

Once that issue is clear Jesus can answer.

Read John 18:36 – 37a.

The simple answer to Pilate’s question is that He is not a competitor to Caesar.

And He gives two reasons.

- 1) What is the first reason?

Jesus says, *“My kingdom is not of this world.”*

And this has become a favorite proof text for those who are amillennial, those who don’t believe in a future Messianic kingdom.

They claim that when He said, *“My kingdom is not of this world,”* it shows that His kingdom will not be in this world.

But is that what Jesus means?

There is a difference between saying *in the world* and saying *of the world*.

And Jesus Himself made that same distinction in John 16 & 17. Concerning both Himself and believers He says we are in the world but we not of the world.

What does it mean to be of the world?

Now to be *of the world* is to be of this world's nature. And the believer is no longer of this world's nature. As long as he is living he is in the world but no longer of it.

The same thing applies here. His kingdom is not of this world's nature.

And when He returns, He is not coming back merely to depose Caesar and sit upon Caesar's throne. He is coming with His own throne, the throne of David. And with His own kingdom, the Messianic kingdom.

His kingdom will someday be in the world, but it will never be of the world, it will never be of this world's nature.

- 2) And the second reason He is not a competitor to Caesar is easy to miss in the translation into English.

The end of verse 36 might be better translated:

*But now, at the present time, the kingdom which is mine is not from this place.*

As a result of the rejection of the king, as a result of the unpardonable sin, which we saw in sections 61 - 64, His kingdom will not be set up at this stage of Jerusalem's history.

So clearly, in answer to Pilate's question, Jesus is a king. But His kingdom is not of this world and will never be of this world. And also His kingdom is not, at the present time, in this world ruled from this place (Jerusalem).

### *Inference*

Then Pilate draws an inference from what Jesus has just told him: "*So You are a king?*"

### *What is truth?*

He has understood correctly what Jesus has told him.

Read John 18:37b – 38.

Having already said that His kingdom is not of the world, here Jesus adds that He came into the world "*to testify to the truth.*"

And this stands in contrast to what Pilate is hearing in this trial!

And everyone who is of the truth hears His voice.

But how does this exchange end? ... With a sarcastic question, "*What is truth?*"

And what is so sad for Pilate is this: At this moment he was looking at the One who is the Truth and he failed to recognize Him.



### *Innocence declared*

Read Luke 23:4.

Here is the first of several declarations of innocence. So far as Pilate is concerned Jesus is no threat to Rome.

### *Jesus does not respond*

Read Matthew 27:12; Luke 23:5; and Mark 15:4- 5.

Why was Pilate amazed?

Following this first declaration of innocence, they began to accuse Him of many other things. And Jesus responds by saying nothing.

And even when Pilate asks Jesus to respond He made no further answer.

## **2. The Trial before Herod, § 160, Luke 23:6-12**

### *A Galilean*

Now Pilate finds a way out of his predicament.

Read Luke 23:6 – 7.

Why did Pilate send Jesus to Herod?

As these accusations are being dealt out, someone happens to mention that Jesus originated from the Galilee.

And, while both Samaria and Judea were under his jurisdiction, Galilee was not under Pilate's jurisdiction. It was under the authority of Herod Antipas, who had also come to Jerusalem to help maintain order during the festival.

So he chooses to send Jesus over to Herod Antipas.

### *Herod Antipas*

Read Luke 23:8 – 12.

Who was Herod?

Herod Antipas was the son of Herod the Great, the one who tried to kill Jesus when He was two years old in Bethlehem.

This Antipas is the one who, about a year or so earlier, had beheaded John the Baptist.

Only after hearing about the miracles of Jesus did he even send for him once, and Jesus simply said, "Go and tell that fox, 'No.'"

### *Herod's questions*

But now he has his opportunity, and he wants Jesus to perform those miracles for him. He wants to be entertained by these miracles.

But Jesus responds by not answering any question and doing no signs.

### *Mockery*

So Antipas subjects Him to the second mockery He suffers on this night.

And then sent Him back to Pilate dressed in a gorgeous robe.

### *Herod and Pilate became friends*

Verse 12 says, *Now Herod and Pilate became friends with one another that very day; for before they had been enemies with each other.*

Why were they enemies?

The enmity between them was created because of an event that occurred when Pilate became procurator. He brought legions up to Jerusalem and on the outer walls of the temple compound he hung the Roman shields.

And the problem for Jews is that these shields had images of gods and goddesses that the Romans worshiped. And that offended Jewish sensitivities concerning idolatry.

A riot broke out and many of his Roman soldiers were killed on that occasion. But he still refused to take the shields down.

Antipas knew that, as long as the shields were up there, they would be a constant boiling point for rebellion. So he asked Pilate to take the shields down and Pilate still refused.

And so Antipas wrote a letter to the Roman Senate. And the Roman Senate then ordered Pilate to take down the shields. So now he had no choice.

As a result enmity arose between the two because each felt that the other was not recognizing his authority.

But now that Pilate sent a Galilean to the one in charge of Galilee, and there is recognition of mutual or shared authority, they become friends at Jesus' expense.

### *What became of Herod Antipas?*

And what became of Herod Antipas?

Nine years later, in the year AD 39, his wife Herodias, who had instigated the beheading of John the Baptist, talked him into travelling to Rome to request the title of king, the same title that the Senate had given to Herod the Great. She desperately wanted to be called queen.

But the Roman Caesar that day was a man named Gaius Caligular. He was an insane mad man.

He spent the treasury rather freely, mostly on pleasures. And when he ran out of money he would simply accuse a wealthy land owner or Senator of some crime against the state, have the whole family executed and then replenish the funds again.

He was so insane he made his own horse a member of the Roman Senate. And that horse always voted his way. It finally got so bad that the Pretorian Guard that was there to protect him ended up being the ones to assassinate him.

And so when Antipas and Herodias came asking for the title of king, he simply deposed them into Leon which is now France, and the two died in abject poverty, and paid for their role in the beheading of John and the cursing and the mocking of Jesus.

### 3. The Second Trial before Pilate, § 161, Mark 15:6-15; Matthew 27:15-26; Luke 23:13-25; John 18:39-40; 19:1-16

#### a. *First attempt to release Him*

##### *Declaration of innocence*

Now Pilate will make several attempts to have Jesus released.

Read about the first in Luke 23:13 – 16.

What is Pilate's verdict?

Here we see two more declarations of innocence.

Herod, by sending Jesus back to Pilate declared Him to be innocent.

And now Pilate issues the third declaration of innocence. He found "no guilt in this man regarding the charges which you made against Him ... nothing deserving of death has been done by Him."

And with this declaration he attempts to release Jesus.

But that won't appease the mob outside.

#### b. *Second attempt to release Him*

Read John 18:39a.

Why does Pilate raise the prospect of releasing someone at the Passover?

He has declared Jesus to be innocent, and he hopes to release Him.

So now he falls back on a custom he has developed between the Jews and the Romans. On the feast day, as a goodwill gesture, he would release a political prisoner. And as Matthew and Mark note, it would be a prisoner of the Jew's choosing.

##### *Barabbas*

Now Barabbas comes into the story.

Read Mark 15:7; Matthew 27:16; and Luke 23:19.

Who was Barabbas?

And look ahead to John 18:40 to notice how John describes Barabbas.

*"Not this Man, but Barabbas." Now Barabbas was a robber.*

The word robber in English implies someone who went around stealing things, but that would not be punishable by death.

Barabbas was more than a robber in that sense.

He was a robber in the same sense that Josephus used the term in his works on the Jewish antiquities and the Jewish war of AD 70. It is a term that is used of Jewish bands that were actually rebels who would be characterised by robbing to supply their rebellion.

This can be seen in Mark verse 7:

*The man named Barabbas had been imprisoned with the insurrectionists who had committed murder in the insurrection.*

So Mark, as well as Luke in verse 19, makes it quite clear that Barabbas was more than someone who was stealing things.

He was a rebel robber. And he was facing his own death penalty in prison.

#### *The title, Barabbas*

What can we learn from the name of Barabbas?

Actually, Barabbas is not a name. It is a title. It is a Hellenized name from two Aramaic words: Bar Abba. Bar means “son of”, and Abba was the name of this person’s father.

But also in Aramaic Abba means “the father”. He was the son of Abba. He was the son of the father.

The gospels probably do not give us his actual name to avoid confusing the reader. But one of the sources where we can find his actual name tells us that it was the same name as Jesus in Hebrew: Yeshua.

He was Yeshua Bar Abba, Yeshua the son of the father. He had the title, but not the reality.

And he was actually guilty of the very crime the other Yeshua was accused of. The other Yeshua is the true Son of the true Father.

John points out several ironies in his gospel, and this is one of those ironies.

#### *Attempt to release Jesus*

And now Pilate is attempting to release Jesus.

Read Mark 15:8 – 10 and Matthew 27:17 – 18.

What would Pilate be thinking and hoping here?

They handed Jesus of Nazareth over to him out of envy, and by now they might be ready to cry out for Him to be released.

So he asks them to make a choice.

But at this very point the proceedings are interrupted.

Read Mathew 27:19.

He receives a message from his wife warning him not to get involved with this because of a dream she had.

Her name was Claudia, and in church tradition she became a believer.

Read Matthew 27:20 – 22.

What happens during the interruption?

The interruption is long enough for the chief priests and the elders to persuade the crowds to ask for Barabbas and to ask for Jesus to be put to death.

And so Pilate's second attempt to have Jesus released fails.

The first attempt came with the third declaration of innocence. The second attempt is giving them this choice, which also fails to have Jesus released.

### *c. Third attempt to release Him*

So he tries a third time to release him.

Read Luke 23:22 and John 19:1.

He tries a compromise of scourging.

#### *Scourging*

The gospels provide no details about the scourge because when the gospels were written everybody knew what a scourge entailed. But two thousand years later we don't always appreciate how much He suffered before He got to the cross.

There are two kinds of scourging: the Jewish scourge and the Roman scourge.

#### *Jewish scourge*

The Jewish scourge was called forty save one. Why forty save one?

In the Mosaic Law nobody could be lashed more than forty lashes. And the question came up: suppose the lasher miscounts and gives the victim 41 lashes and breaks the law.

So building a fence around the Torah as we talked about earlier in the series, they decreed that the lashing should stop at thirty nine just to play it safe. Hence forty save one.

The Jewish scourge had a wooden or leather handle with short leather strands. The only part of the body affected was the victim's back.

And while it was very painful, it was never deadly. No one ever died of a Jewish scourge.

And Paul says he suffered a Jewish scourge five times and survived all five scourgings.

#### *Roman scourge*

But Jesus does not suffer the Jewish scourge, He suffers the Roman scourge which is far more severe.

There was no limitation on how many lashes could be given.

The Roman scourge had a handle of wood or leather, but the straps were very long, wrapping around the whole body. The whole body was affected: front, back, sides and face.

At the end of each strap was a piece of sharp metal or glass or lamb bone. So after only a few lashes the skin was torn away, the muscle exposed. And after some more lashes pieces of muscle would go flying.

And many never survived the Roman scourge.

#### *Prophecy fulfilled*

And furthermore, because it went around His face, His face would have been rather disfigured. One of the misconceptions we have comes from crucifixion paintings that show the face of Jesus intact except for the crown of thorns. Actually the face was a very pulpy mass. And the records we have indicate that sometimes even family members could not recognise the victim any more.

And this fulfils the Messianic prophecy of Isaiah 52:14, *His visage was so marred*, or so disfigured, He no longer resembled a man.

#### *Mistreatment and mockery*

As if the scourge was not enough, now they mock Him and mistreat Him further.

Read John 19:2 – 6.

This is His fourth time He is physically mistreated. (Apart from the scourging.)

And it is also the third mockery.

The thorns in Israel are long and come to a razor sharp point. If you brush against one lightly it will still cause you to bleed.

#### *Behold, the Man!*

Why did Pilate bring Jesus out to the Jews *wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe* and then say to them, “*Behold, the Man!*”?

He hopes that the punishment and mocking He has received will be enough to satisfy the envy of the crowd which he believes caused them to hand Jesus over to him.

But the response of the crowd is still to cry out for crucifixion.

### **d. *Fourth attempt to release Him***

#### *Fourth declaration of innocence*

Pilate then makes his fourth attempt to release Jesus.

Read John 19:6b.

How does he attempt to release Jesus?

He issues the forth declaration of His innocence and simply refuses to pronounce a Roman sentence against Him.

From the perspective of that day, by Roman law, Pilate will have the final decision about whether or not Jesus will die. If he does not pass the sentence Jesus could not die.

And so he refuses to pass Roman sentence at this stage.

### *Jewish response*

Read how the Jews respond in John 19:7.

How did they respond?

The charge of sedition didn't bear fruit, so they drop it for now and go back to the issue that's been troubling them all along: the issue of Him claiming to be the Messiah, the Son of God.

### *Pilate's fear*

Read how Pilate reacts to this in John 19:8 – 11.

Why was Pilate already afraid?

In the first stage of the trial he learned that Jesus was a king of a kingdom that is not of this world and is not to be established at this time.

And a short while ago he received a warning from his wife who *suffered greatly in a dream because of Him*.

Now when he heard that Jesus claims to be the Son of God, *he was even more afraid*.

### *Another interview*

So what does he do?

He tries to have another interview with Jesus.

Why would Jesus not answer his question?

By now he has received sufficient light to respond correctly. But he responded to it with a sarcastic, "*what is truth?*", so now no further light will be given to him.

How does Pilate respond to Jesus' silence?

Pilate presses Him to answer because he has the authority to release Him or to crucify Him.

Then Jesus reminds him that all governmental authority is only delegated from above. He only has delegated authority and not final authority.

And furthermore, the ones who turned Jesus over to him will be guilty of the greater sin. There are differences in sin.

### ***e. Fifth attempt to release Him***

Read John 19:12.

Now for the fifth time Pilate attempts to release Jesus. But what happens?

It fails when they cry out,

*"If you release this Man, you are no friend of Caesar; everyone who makes himself out to be a king opposes Caesar."*

*f. Sixth attempt to release Him*

Now notice Pilate's response to that accusation.

Read John 19:13 – 14.

*Judgement seat*

What is the significance of Pilate sitting of the judgement seat?

From the judgment seat a verdict must be issued. And if the verdict is guilty, a sentence must be issued.

So Pilate has come to the point of making a decision.

*Intimidation*

Now Pilate would not normally care what they were calling out.

So the question here is: Why would he be intimidated by this particular outcry?

There were, at that time, events going on in Rome that caused Pilate to be in quite a difficult situation.

Pilate had a friend named Sejanus. Sejanus was the captain of the Praetorian Guard, which was an influential position.

And when he became captain of the Praetorian Guard Sejanus got Pilate the position of procurator of Judaea and Samaria.

But later Sejanus decided he would prefer to be emperor. So he organized a conspiracy against the emperor of that day, Tiberias. But the conspiracy was uncovered before it could be carried out, and Sejanus and his co-conspirators were executed.

Now at the time of this trial the Senate was investigating everybody who had anything to do with Sejanus to see if they were part of the conspiracy.

And so Pilate himself was under investigation.

The last thing he needed was for word to get back to Rome that he had released a man claiming to be a king and therefore a competitor to Caesar.

And that explains why that outcry from the Jews is sufficient to put him on the judgment seat to make his decision.

*Final attempt to release Jesus*

But even from the judgment seat he makes his sixth and last attempt to have Jesus released. He brings him out and declares, *"Behold, your King!"*



At this point John interrupts his narrative to observe that

*It was the day of preparation for the Passover; it was about the sixth hour.*

And this raises some questions.

- i. How can it be *the day of preparation for the Passover* at this time?

We have already notice *the day of preparation for the Passover* passing (in section 143). That was the previous day when Jesus sent Peter and John to prepare the Passover lamb in the temple for their Passover meal that evening.

And that evening was the first night of Passover, which comes before the first day of Passover.

And then we saw the Sanhedrin condemning Jesus early in the morning of the first day of Passover.

How can it be the day of preparation again?

- ii. And, whichever day it is, how can it be the sixth hour of the day?

Later, when we read of the crucifixion, we will read that it was the third hour when Jesus is crucified, and that there was darkness from the sixth hour to the ninth hour, and then he died at the ninth hour.

How can it be the sixth hour of the day when Pilate sits on the judgement seat?

Actually, if we examine the Greek text here we find that the translators have added their interpretation to the translation.

The words "*the day of*" are absent. And a more correct translation would be:

*Now, it was the preparation of the Passover. As to the hour, it was about the sixth.*<sup>1</sup>

And remember that when they led Jesus from Caiaphas to Pilate, the chief priests *themselves did not enter into the Praetorium*.

Do you remember why they wouldn't go in?

They didn't want to become unclean because they wanted to eat the Passover later that day.

And what was the word, Passover, referring to in that context?

It referred to the Passover lamb itself, the lamb that was to be killed at the third hour in the temple, and later eaten by the high priest and the 24 chief priests.

Now the word again refers to the same Passover lamb.

At the very time when Jesus was being sentenced by Pilate, the Passover lamb was being prepared in the temple, and as to the hour of that preparation, it was about the sixth.

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<sup>1</sup> Wuest, K. S. (1961). *The New Testament: an expanded translation* (Jn 19:8–15). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

And John's point, of course, is that Jesus, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world is also being prepared for the once for all sacrifice which is about to occur.

*g. Sentence pronounced*

*No king but Caesar*

In his final attempt to release Jesus, Pilate has brought Jesus out and declared, "*Behold, your King!*"

Read how they respond in John 19:15.

How do they respond?

*"We have no king but Caesar."*

They disown Jesus as their king, and own Caesar as their king.

And Pilate will make no further attempts to have Jesus released.

*Pilate washes his hands*

Read Matthew 27:24 – 25.

Instead of releasing Jesus, what does Pilate do?

He calls for a pitcher of water and washes his hands, assuming that merely washing his hands exempts him from any guilt. It does not!

The final decision whether Jesus lived or died was his, and only his, to make. He knew what the right decision should have been. But he made the wrong decision because of what they were saying.

And merely washing his hands didn't absolve him of his guilt. It was up to him to make the final decision from the human perspective.

And the early church did not absolve him of guilt. For example, when Peter preaches his message in Acts chapter 3, he names several men guilty of the death of Jesus. And Pontius Pilate is among those he names. Another example comes from the earliest church creed, called the Apostles' Creed. One of its sentences says he suffered under Pontius Pilate.

And God did not exempt him either. In the year 36 he was finally deposed, and banished to Gaul in the area of Vienna Austria today.

He was sent away by Caligula and later he committed suicide and paid for his role in this trial.

*Fifth declaration of innocence*

Also, his action of washing his hands is a fifth declaration of innocence.

And of the five declarations of innocence, this is the most significant one because it was made from the judgment seat.

*His blood shall be on us and on our children!*

How did the Jews respond (in verse 25 of Matthew)?

They respond, *“His blood shall be on us and on our children!”*

Notice that only Matthew mentions this response.

Matthew is the one who traces the consequences of the unpardonable sin.

Also notice that the curse of the blood is limited to them and their children. It goes no further. There is no mention of the third and fourth generation.

And in the year AD 70 it finally fell upon them and their children.

*Sentence issued*

Now read Luke verses 24 – 25, and John verse 16.

He issues the death sentence against Jesus. And he releases Barabbas.

And this is a symbolic substitution. The innocent one will die in the place of the guilty one.

Then he turns Jesus over to be crucified.

#### **4. The Mockery, § 162, Mark 15:16-19; Matthew 27:27-30**

Read Matthew 27:27 – 30.

Here is the fourth mockery and the last mistreatment before He goes on the cross.

## **D. The Procession to Calvary, § 163, Mark 15:20-23; Matthew 27:31-34; Luke 23:26-33; John 19:16-17**

Between the procession to Calvary and the sealing of the tomb there are 32 distinct stages. And we will look at each stage in chronological order, making comments as we proceeded. Some will have less comment than others.

And the first five stages happen in this section, The Procession to Calvary.

### **1) He carries His own cross**

Read John 19:16 – 17.

He carries His own cross out of the Pretorium. This was standard Roman procedure. The victim would carry his own cross to the site of the crucifixion.

### **2) Simon of Cyrene carries His cross**

Read Mark 15:21.

Now, if the normal procedure was for the victim to carry his cross to the scene of the crucifixion, why did the Roman soldiers press Simon into service to bear Jesus' cross?

Normally a person was not scourged beforehand. But as part of Pilate's attempted compromise he had Jesus scourged. So His body is greatly weakened and He could only carry the cross so far. At least He carried the cross beam, and not the whole cross.

So when Jesus was unable to carry it, they force a man named Simon of Cyrene to carry the cross the rest of the way.

#### *Simon of Cyrene*

Now, before we move on, where is Cyrene?

Cyrene is located in North Africa.

Why would a man from Cyrene be in Jerusalem at this time?

Simon was a Jew from North Africa who came to observe the Passover at Jerusalem.

Again, the city could not contain all the pilgrims who came for the Passover, so most pilgrims ate their Passover outside the city in the "tent cities erected" for them. And the next morning they were going into the city to observe the special Passover sacrifice. And as they were going in, Jesus and the Roman soldiers were going out. And apparently that's what Simon was doing when he found himself forced to carry the cross the rest of the way.

#### *The father of Alexander and Rufus*

Notice that Matthew, Mark and Luke all mention the fact that Simon of Cyrene was forced to carry the cross the rest of the way.

But only Mark makes the point that he was the father of Alexander and Rufus.

Why would that be?

It means that it was significant to the audience to whom he was writing, and not significant to the audiences that Matthew and Luke were writing to.

Why would this detail be significant to Mark's audience?

Keep in mind that Mark wrote his gospel for the Romans.

The apostle Paul also wrote a letter to the Romans. And when he comes to the end of his letter he sends greeting to specific people.

Read one of those greetings in Romans 16:13.

Paul mentions the same family, Rufus and his mother.

### *Simon's family*

What is significant about this?

Paul greets Rufus and his mother as believers in Rome.

So it shows that this event lead to the salvation of Simon and his family, his wife who is mentioned by Paul, and his two sons who are named here.

### *Simon's belief*

Now what caused Simon to respond favourably we are not told.

There are records of other crucifixions, and the way Jesus responds to His own crucifixion is radically different. Other victims would yell and scream, call out all kinds of curses to their tormentors. And sometimes the screaming and the yelling and the cursing got so bad the soldiers would cut out the tongue of the victim just to shut him up.

But Jesus didn't cry out, He doesn't curse, He even prayed for those crucifying Him.

And as Simon observed the scene he came to the conclusion that Jesus had to be the Messiah and he became a believer.

### *The church in Rome*

Who planted the church in Rome?

From Romans chapter 1 we learn that the church at Rome was not planted by one of the apostles.

It was planted by Jewish believers who migrated to Rome. And that would have included the family of Simon of Cyrene.

So this small event had long term consequences, all the way to Rome.

### 3) The Lament over Jerusalem

Now read about the third stage of Jesus' procession in Luke 23:27-31.

Notice that only Luke records this event. Why would he include it?

One of Luke's three special interests in his gospel is the role of women.

Why does he call them "*daughters of Jerusalem*"?

These are not the women who came up from the Galilee with Him. These are local women.

#### *Custom*

What is happening here is also a Jewish custom that when a Jewish man is being taken off for execution by Gentile authorities, as is the case here, professional wailers, lamenters, would go out with a loud lamentation that you can still hear at certain kinds of Jewish funerals.

#### *Lament*

And as the wailing goes on, He suddenly stops the procession and says, "*stop weeping for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children*" in keeping with the curse they took upon themselves at the trial.

Why does He say that?

While the judgement of the year 70 AD will be severe for the country as a whole, it will be especially severe for those in Jerusalem.

#### *An Idiom*

And in verse 31 He says, "*If they do these things when the tree is green, what will happen when it is dry?*"

What is that about?

This was a Jewish idiom meaning: If I have suffered this much when I am innocent, how much more are you who are guilty going to suffer!

The background to that idiom is Ezekiel 20:47.

<sup>47</sup> *and say to the forest of the Negev, 'Hear the word of the Lord: thus says the Lord God, "Behold, I am about to kindle a fire in you, and it will consume every green tree in you, as well as every dry tree; the blazing flame will not be quenched and the whole surface from south to north will be burned by it.*

### 4) The arrival at Golgotha

Read about the fourth stage in Mark 15:22.

#### *Golgotha*

What is the meaning of the name *Golgotha*?

Golgotha is an Aramaic term that means the place of the skull. And all four gospels make that point rather simply, the place of the skull.

### *Looks like a skull?*

Notice that not one of them says that it looked like a skull.

If you have seen the slides that people bring back from Israel, they will show you a low lying cliff with two holes in it that give the impression of a skull. This has become the Protestant site of the crucifixion since about the 1880's. But often what they don't tell people is that those holes were dug out in the 1800's when it was a quarry for Jerusalem.

To repeat: The word, Golgotha, doesn't mean that it looks like a skull, only that it was the place of the skull, or the place of crucifixions.

### *Boot Hill*

There is a similar thing in America in Dodge City, Kansas. You've probably heard of it, although you may not know where it is located. There is a place called "Boot Hill".

Why is it called Boot Hill?

It is not called "Boot Hill" because it is shaped like a gigantic boot. It is called "Boot Hill" because of what happened there. American fighters were buried with their boots on.

### *Meaning*

And that's how it is intended to be here. It doesn't mean it looks like a skull. It means it's the place of a skull, the place of execution.

### *Probable site*

And between the Protestant and Catholic sites for the location of the crucifixion, the Catholic site is the more correct site, not based upon Catholic tradition, but based upon Jewish traditions, Messianic history, and archaeology.

On page 226 of his Harmony Robertson has a footnote saying: "The place cannot have been where the so called 'Church of the Holy Sepulchre' stands, far within the walls." He wrote this in the late 1800s or early 1900's before archaeologists actually discovered the walls. The present day walls were built by the Turks in 1500. Where the church stands today was outside the wall in the first century.

## **5) The refusal to drink a mixture**

Now read Mark 15:23 and Matthew 27:34, the fifth stage.

Jesus refuses to drink a mixture offered to Him.

Why did they offer it to Him?

It was a mixture of wine, myrrh and gall. And it was a mixture given to a victim just before the nailing because it would help to deaden the pain.

Why did Jesus refuse it?

It also makes you very light headed. And because He must have full control of His senses for the spiritual conflict He will fight on the cross, He refused to partake of this mixture.

It also means that He will suffer the pain so much more severely than the others being crucified with Him.

## E. The Crucifixion, § 164-166

We come to sections 164-166, which record the crucifixion. It is still Friday the 15<sup>th</sup> of Nisan, April 7 AD 30.

### 1. The First Three Hours: The Wrath of Men, § 164, Mark 15:24-32, 40-41; Matthew 27:35-44, 55-56; Luke 23:33-43; John 19:18-27

As we will see, in the first three hours on the cross He will suffer the wrath of man.

#### 6) The Crucifixion

Read Mark 15:24a, 25 and John 19:18.

*9 am*

Mark records that *It was the third hour when they crucified Him*. This corresponds to our present day 9 am.

Why was it significant to record that it was 9 am when they crucified Him?

Keep in mind that this is 9 o'clock in the morning on the first day of Passover.

Visualize two Mounts: the Temple Mount, and the Mount of Golgotha. On the Temple Mount a literal lamb was now being offered up as the Passover sacrifice. And now on this other Mount the Passover Lamb of God was being offered up.

#### *Crucifixion*

Now as it was with the scourging, so it is with the crucifixion. No details are given because when the gospels were written people all knew what a crucifixion entailed. But now two thousand years later many don't quite understand the fullness of it. There are also some misconceptions we have because of the way the crucifixion has been painted in the preceding centuries. So we need to focus on this for just a few minutes.

#### *The cross*

The Romans used four different types of crosses.

- i. The first type was the telephone pole type, though not anywhere near as smooth.
- ii. The second type is a capital X format. And in church tradition Peter was crucified on this type of cross upside down.
- iii. The third type was the capital T format.
- iv. And the fourth type was the more traditional small T format.

How do we know which of these was used for Jesus' crucifixion?

We don't have enough information within the gospels to know with 100% certainty which kind was actually used. We can reach a high level of probability, but there remains a measure of doubt about which kind of cross was used.

Generally speaking the first two were not used outside of Italy. If we could say they were never used outside of Italy then we could just rule them out, but there are some exceptions and therefore they cannot be entirely ruled out.



If our choice was only between the third and fourth type of cross, then we would know which one was used. How?

Part of the procedure is to nail on the cross a document or piece of wood that will spell out the reason why the person was being crucified. In the capital T format they put it below the feet, but in the small T format they put it over the head.

We will see in a moment that they put it over the head of Jesus. And so if our only choice was between the third and the fourth then the fourth would be the correct choice and not the third.

However they also put it over the head in the telephone pole type and that cannot be entirely ruled out.

So there is a five to ten percent chance it was the first type and a ninety to ninety five percent chance it was the last type.

The only difference it would make in the rest of the discussion is that the hands would be crisscrossed and not stretched out.

### *Nails*

The cross was laid on the ground and the person was laid on top of the cross. Two nails were used in the first type of cross, and three nails were used in the last type.

One of the misconceptions we have from the crucifixion paintings is that the nails were going through the palm of the hand. But the bone structure in the hand would not be strong enough to hold up the weight of a full grown human body. And the actual place where the nails were put is in the wrist because the bone structure there would hold up the weight of a full grown human body.

The feet were placed one on top of the other and angled in such a way that that the nail went through the feet and through the back of the heel and into the wood. And where the feet would touch the cross they would also put in a small ledge. And I will explain the reason for the ledge a bit later.

### *All my bones are out of joint*

Turn to Psalm 22 and read verses 11 – 18.

*<sup>11</sup> Be not far from me, for trouble is near; For there is none to help. <sup>12</sup> Many bulls have surrounded me; Strong bulls of Bashan have encircled me. <sup>13</sup> They open wide their mouth at me, As a ravening and a roaring lion. <sup>14</sup> I am poured out like water, And all my bones are out of joint; My heart is like wax; It is melted within me. <sup>15</sup> My strength is dried up like a potsherd, And my tongue cleaves to my jaws; And You lay me in the dust of death. <sup>16</sup> For dogs have surrounded me; A band of evildoers has encompassed me; They pierced my hands and my feet. <sup>17</sup> I can count all my bones. They look, they stare at me; <sup>18</sup> They divide my garments among them, And for my clothing they cast lots.*

Once all the nails were inserted the cross was picked up and then dropped into a hole dug for it. And because of the way the body was stretched out, in the drop the bones would be pulled out of joint, fulfilling a statement in Psalm 22:14.

*... And all my bones are out of joint ...*

It was then merely a matter of waiting, and while they were not given any food while they were on the cross they were given whatever liquid they wanted. And so it would sometimes take days before someone died this way.

#### 7) The first statement from the cross

Now we come to the first of seven statements from the cross.

Read Luke 23:34a.

*“Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.”*

He prays for the forgiveness of those who are crucifying Him, but notice that the prayer is limited to those who do it in ignorance.

Who would that exclude?

That would not include people like Annas, Caiaphas, Pontius Pilate, or Herod Antipas, and others who knew what they were doing.

And who would be included in His prayer for forgiveness?

It would include the other Jewish leaders that may have done it in ignorance and more specifically the Roman soldiers involved in crucifying Him.

#### 8) The dividing of the garments

Read John’s account of how they divided up His garments in John 19:23 – 24.

Part of the procedure in the Roman system is that the soldiers involved in the crucifixion would have the rights to the clothes of the victim as spoil.

Another misconception we have from crucifixion paintings is that we see Jesus wearing a loin cloth. Actually they were crucified naked. In the Jewish context that would add to the shame of it all.

The average Jewish male of first century Israel wore five pieces of clothing.

- 1) The upper garment, also called the outer garment.
- 2) The inner garment or under garment or tunic.
- 3) Some kind of a head covering.
- 4) Shoes or sandals.
- 5) The outer robe or the outer coat, which by itself was the largest single piece of cloth.

At each crucifixion site four soldiers would be involved, so each one walks away with a piece of clothing. One had the upper garment, one the under garment, one the head covering, and one the shoes.

#### *The outer garment*

Because the outer garment was the largest single piece of cloth they would normally tear it into four parts and every soldier walked away with a piece of cloth.

But the kind of coat He wore was the kind normally worn by the wealthy class. And because of its uniqueness they decided not to tear it apart, but to gamble for it and cast lots for it. And one soldier walked away with the whole robe, fulfilling prophecy also in Psalm 22:18.

*They divide my garments among them, And for my clothing they cast lots.*

We know from earlier in the gospels that Jesus lived on the poverty level. So how would He get this kind of a coat?

We do not know for certain, but we have one hint that we saw back in Luke 8:1-3. His ministry was financed by several wealthy women. It could be that one of these wealthy women gave Him this coat.

## 9) The erection of the superscription

### *Pilate's Inscription*

Now Pilate writes an inscription to put on the cross.

Read Matthew 27:36 – 37 and in John 19:19.

Notice that Matthew tells us that it was placed above His head. That's how we know that if we had to choose between the third and the fourth types of cross, then the fourth was the correct choice.

Matthew also gives us the purpose of the inscription. What was its purpose?

Normally it would state the charge or accusation against the one being crucified.

But does this inscription read like a charge or accusation?

No. The way Pilate chooses to word it, it seems like a simple declaration of fact or a title: *"JESUS THE NAZARENE, THE KING OF THE JEWS."* It's simply a declaration of who Jesus is.

### *Jewish response*

Now read John 19:20 – 22.

Where was Jesus crucified?

He the city where everyone who came into the city and everyone who went out of the city would see Him.

And Pilate even writes the inscription in three different languages: in Hebrew for the Jews; in Latin for the Romans; and in Greek for everybody else.

He's declaring to the world who Jesus is!

Why do the Jewish leaders complain about this to Pilate?

They understand the way it reads. It reads like a title and not an accusation. And so they ask Pilate to change the wording.

But he refused to do it. Why?

This was his small piece of revenge against those who pressured him to do something he did not want to do.

#### 10) The co-crucifixion of two other men

The tenth stage is the co-crucifixion of two other men with Jesus.

Read Matthew verse 38 and Mark verses 27 - 28.

*At that time two robbers were crucified with Him.*

The Greek word for *robber* here is the same one John used earlier to describe Barabbas. It is not used to describe the thief who uses stealth or cover of darkness to commit robbery. Rather, it describes a rebel or insurrectionist who uses violence to achieve his ends, which includes robbery.

So these are two men who participated in the rebellion of Barabbas. Barabbas was released in the Passover exchange. But these two were not so fortunate.

They were co-crucified with Him, one on His right side, one on His left side, fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah 53:12. He was numbered among the transgressors.

#### 11) The fifth mockery – by passers by

Read Mathew 27:39 – 40.

This is the fifth mockery.

There were four mockeries before this time.

- i. At the trial by Caiaphas. Section 155b.
- ii. By Herod and his soldiers. Section 160.
- iii. By the soldiers during the trial before Pilate. Section 161
- iv. Again by the soldiers at the end of the trial before Pilate. Section 162.

Now there are also four mockeries while He is on the cross.

Who is doing the mocking now?

This mockery is committed by those who simply happened to be passing by.

The sight of the crucifixion is right near one of the gates now open for Passover morning. Traffic goes in and out.

They can see who hangs there. They can read the title or accusation. And they turn it into mockery.

## 12) The sixth mockery – by Jewish leaders

Read Matthew 27:41 – 43.

This is the sixth mockery.

Who is mocking Him here?

Matthew mentions the chief priests, who were Sadducees, and the scribes, who were Pharisees, and the elders, also Pharisees.

So both Sadducees and Pharisees mock Him while He is on the cross.

Now read Psalm 22:7 – 8, and compare what it says there with the words these leaders used to mock Him.

<sup>7</sup> *All who see me sneer at me; they separate with the lip, they wag the head, saying,*  
<sup>8</sup> *“Commit yourself to the Lord; let Him deliver him; Let Him rescue him, because He delights in him.”*

Thus they fulfill the prophecy of this Psalm.

## 13) The seventh mockery – by Roman soldiers

Read Luke 23:36 – 37.

Now the Roman soldiers actively carrying out the crucifixion join in the mockery.

So both Jews and Gentiles become guilty of mocking Him while He is on the cross.

## 14) The eighth mockery – by the co-crucified robbers

In the fourteenth stage we see the robbers crucified with Him also mocking Him.

Read Matthew 27:44 and Luke 23:39.

This is the eighth mockery.

Notice that initially both of them participate in mocking Him.

And we’ll come back to the one who stopped mocking Him in a moment.

### *Common elements in all four mockeries*

So stages 11 to 14 were four mockeries by four different groups of people.

Now, did you notice the two common elements in all four of these mockeries?

- 1) In their mocking all four groups use specific messianic claims that Jesus made during His public ministry.

He made several different kinds of claims, all messianic.

And now each group takes one or more of those claims and reduces it to mockery.

Look back over these mockeries to notice the messianic claims they used to mock Him.

- i. What messianic claims did those who were passing by use?

*You who are going to destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself!*

*If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross.*

- ii. The Jewish leaders:

*He is the King of Israel; let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe in Him.*

*He trusts in God; let God rescue Him now, if He delights in Him.*

*He said, 'I am the Son of God'.*

- iii. The Roman soldiers:

*If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself.*

- iv. The two co-crucified:

*Are you not the Christ [the Messiah]? Save yourself and us!*

- 2) Secondly, all four groups challenge Him to prove His Messiahship by coming down from the cross – to prove His claims by coming down from the cross!

But, if Jesus had accepted their challenge it would have proved Him to be a false Messiah!

What do we have here?

This is Satan's last attempt to keep Jesus from dying on the cross at this point. So again, while he wants Him dead, he doesn't want Him to die at this time in this way.

And by means of these four mockeries, appealing to the pride of life, he wants to get Him to come down from the cross.

To use His messianic power to come down from the cross would have proved Him to be a false Messiah. This is the way the Messiah was supposed to die, in keeping with Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53.

His refusal to come down from the cross actually becomes evidence of His Messiahship, not a negation of it.

### 15) Conversion of the man co-crucified with Him

The fifteenth stage the conversion of one of the two robbers co-crucified with Him.

Read Luke 23:39 – 42.

Initially both men participated in mocking Him. But as one had time to think and to reflect, he came to the same conclusion that Simon of Cyrene did.

Look again at what he says to his fellow rebel and to Jesus.

He reached four conclusions. Can you see them?

One about himself and three about Jesus.

- 1) He realised that he was a sinner, an important conclusion because we never recognise your need for a saviour until we see ourselves as God sees us.
- 2) He concluded that Jesus Himself was sinless in spite of the accusations he is hearing and the mockeries he is hearing. He came to realise that Jesus Himself was sinless.
- 3) He concluded that Jesus could save him.

And that's rather amazing, because he could see that Jesus was dying the same kind of death that he himself was dying. He came to conclude, in spite of this, that Jesus could save him.

- 4) He recognised that this One will come again in His kingdom.

Again this is an amazing conclusion. He could see that Jesus was dying, but knew He would come again with His kingdom.

And therefore he requests to be remembered when He comes back with His kingdom.

### 16) The second statement from the cross

And that brings about the second statement Jesus makes from the cross.

Read Luke 23:43.

*"Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise."*

And what is the point Jesus is making with this statement?

The man won't have to wait until the kingdom to be remembered. He will be remembered this very same day.

On this day both will die.

And once both die and go into Abraham's bosom that will verify the truth of His claims which the other four groups are mocking.

### 17) The third statement from the cross

Jesus' third statement from the cross is the seventeenth stage in the events leading from His trial to His burial.

First read about who was there. Read Mark 15:40 – 41; Matthew 27:55 – 56; and John 19:25.

How many women are mentioned here?

At this point several women come to the foot of the cross, four women in particular.

- 1) There is Mary Magdalene who will play a significant role with the resurrection.
- 2) There is a second Mary; the mother of James and Joseph. In John 19:25 she is referred to as the wife of Clopas. Cleopas will play a role in the resurrection account.

This Mary was the wife of Clopas and the mother of James and Joseph. In Mark 15:40 and Matthew 27:56, she was the mother of two of Jesus' disciples.

There is a tradition that Clopas was the brother of Joseph, the step father of Jesus. And we have no facts on this. If that is that case then James and Joseph would have been cousins of Jesus. But only if that tradition is correct.

- 3) The third woman is Salome, mentioned in Mark 15:40.

Salome is the Hellenised form for the Hebrew Shulamit.

And in Matthew 27:56 she is the mother of the sons of Zebedee, John and James. And in John 19:25 she is the sister of Mary, the mother of Jesus.

That means she was the aunt of Jesus and her two sons were cousins of Jesus.

- 4) And the fourth woman who plays a role here is Mary, His mother.

In Hebrew these were all Miriam which was a very common name in the first century Israel.

Now read what Jesus said in John 19:26 – 27.

*He \*said to His mother, "Woman, behold, your son!" <sup>27</sup>Then He \*said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!"*

When He says *behold, your son*, He is not referring to Himself. He is referring to John, just as, when He says to John, *behold, your mother*, He is not referring to John's mother, but to the mother of Jesus.

He is still fulfilling the Mosaic Law perfectly. The first born son was to take care of the welfare of a widowed mother. He is going to be leaving the earth, so He won't be able to continue doing it from a physical perspective.

He does have four half-brothers who are not believers, and so He does not choose to deliver His mother's welfare into the hands of an unbeliever, but gives it over to John.

So He says to her, *woman, behold your son*, meaning John. She must look to John for her physical welfare. And when He tells John, *behold, your mother*, He gives John that responsibility, which he accepts. And verse 27 ends: *From that hour the disciple took her into his own household.*



And that marks the end of the first three hours on the cross in which He has suffered the wrath of man.

## 2. The Second Three Hours: The Wrath of God, § 165, Mark 15:33-37; Matthew 27:45-50; Luke 23:44-46; John 19:28-30

In section 165 we come to the second three hours on the cross where He will suffer the wrath of God.

The second three hours on the cross were from 12 noon until 3 in the afternoon.

### 18) Darkness covered the whole land

Read Luke 44 – 45a.

Luke's account in verse 44 & 45 mentions the fact that darkness envelopes the whole land, a thick darkness that lasts for 3 hours, the same three hours which normally are the brightest time of the day in the land of Israel. It also extends to the surrounding territories apparently.

#### *Other records*

If this darkness was as extensive as they claim you would expect there would be some other records of it. And archaeologists have discovered three other records of what happens here.

Two come from Egypt, south of Israel. And one comes from what is now Turkey north of Israel.

- i. The first one from Egypt is by a Greek scientist named Dionysius.

He reported seeing the darkness in the city of Heliopolis in Egypt. That's a touch of irony because Heliopolis in Greek means the city of the sun. But the sun has been blocked out in the brightest time of the day.

- ii. The second source also comes from a Greek scientist in Egypt. His name is Diogenes.

I'll quote what he wrote. Now keep in mind he was a pagan, and yet he had some measure of spiritual insight.

"There was a solar darkness of such like that either the deity himself suffered at that moment or sympathised with one who did."

He had no way of knowing this, but both statements are true. Deity, God the Son, suffered at that moment. Deity sympathised with one who did. God the Father, and God the Spirit sympathised with the One who did.

- iii. The third writer is a Roman writer named Phlegon.

He lived in Asia Minor. Asia Minor is now Turkey. And he writes this:

"There was a great and remarkable eclipse of the sun above any that ever happened before. At the sixth hour the day was turned into the darkness of the night so the stars were seen in heaven. There was a great earthquake at Bithynia which overthrew many of the houses in Nicaea."

He mentions not only a darkness, a very thick darkness, he also mentions an earthquake.

And as we shall see, at the moment death occurs an earthquake also occurs.

### *Significance*

Now more important for us is the theological significance of this darkness. (Matthew 26:39, 42; Leviticus 16 & 17; 17:11; Hebrews 4:14 – 16.)

As we covered earlier, in the Garden of Gethsemane experience, Jesus asked His Father:

*“My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will.”*

What was the cup He didn’t want to drink?

It represents His spiritual death.

And that cup which He did not want to drink, but which He would drink if it was the Father’s will, He was now drinking.

The darkness marks the point of His spiritual death. For three hours He is separated from the Father. And for three hours He suffers the wrath of God.

### *19) The fourth statement from the cross - Eli, Eli, Lama Sabachthani*

Read Matthew 27:46.

Is this a cry of despair? Or does Jesus not understand what is happening?

This is actually a quotation of Psalm 22:1.

And in Jewish practice when you quote the first verse of a segment you are referring to the whole segment.

The point is He is applying the whole Psalm to Himself.

Read Psalm 22:1-21.

Taken out of context Jesus’ statement might seem like a cry of despair.

But in the context of Psalm 22 (and especially Psalm 22:1-21), it is a cry for help.

The first 18 verses describe His situation. Then in verses 19 – 21 is His request for help.

It is a cry for help that comes at the end of three hours of suffering the wrath of God for our sins.

### *Eli, Eli – My God, My God*

Now this is the only time Jesus addresses God as *Eli, Eli - My God, My God*.

One hundred and seventy (170) times in the gospels He calls Him *Father*. And twenty one (21) times He calls Him *My Father*.

The only time He addresses Him as *My God*, *My God* is right here.

Why does He not address Him as Father?

Because at this moment He does not have a paternal relationship to God. It is now a judicial relationship. So it is not *Abbi Abbi*, *My Father My Father*, but *Eli Eli*, *My God My God*.

And it is a cry which is answered. He both dies spiritually, and is resurrected spiritually before He even dies physically.

## 20) The response of those standing by

Read about the response of those standing by in Matthew 27:47 – 49.

Why did they think He was calling for Elijah?

They misinterpret what He says because in Hebrew *Eli* does mean *My God*, but it is also the short form for the name *Elijah*. And to the Hebrew ear *Eli* could mean ‘My God’ or it could mean Elijah.

And they are assuming He is calling for Elijah to come and rescue Him.

Some in the crowd, assuming He might be becoming delirious, bring Him some vinegar.

But the others *said*, “*Let us see whether Elijah will come to save Him.*”

## 21) Fifth statement from the cross – I thirst

Read John 19:28.

This is the fifth statement from the cross: “*I am thirsty.*”

In Luke 16:22-24, when He told the story of the rich man and Lazarus, when the rich man suffered the pangs of the wrath of God in hell his response was, ‘I thirst’. Now Jesus has suffered the wrath of God and He responds in a very similar way, ‘*I thirst*’.

What is the clause, *to fulfill the scripture*, referring to?

It is possible to take the clause *to fulfill the scripture* as referring to either:

- i. What precedes (“everything had been completed in order to make the scripture come true”);
- ii. Or what follows (*in order to make the scripture come true, he said*).

Most translations see Jesus’ words (*I am thirsty*) as the fulfillment of scripture. If John is thinking of a specific Old Testament text, the most likely reference is to Psalm 69:21: *when I was thirsty, they offered me vinegar.*<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Newman, B. M., & Nida, E. A. (1993). *A handbook on the Gospel of John* (p. 591). New York: United Bible Societies.

## 22) *He partakes of the vinegar*

Read John 19:29.

Was giving Him sour wine and act of cruelty or an act of kindness?

The Greek word refers to a diluted, vinegary wine. Since it was cheaper than regular wine, it was a favorite drink of laborers, soldiers, and other persons in moderate circumstances.

The translations “sour wine,” “bitter wine,” and “vinegar” suggest that offering this drink to Jesus was an act of cruelty, whereas in fact it had the humanitarian purpose of relieving his thirst.<sup>3</sup>

Why did Jesus accept this drink when He refused the drink that was offered to Him earlier?

This was not the mixed drink that He was offered earlier and refused. This would help moisten His lips, His tongue, and His mouth so the last two statements from the cross can be said clearly and distinctly.

## 23) *The sixth statement from the cross – It is finished*

Read John 19:30a.

This is the sixth statement from the cross, “*it is finished*”.

What was finished?

Those three words come from one Greek word, *tetelestai*. It does mean ‘it is finished’, but in a unique way.

A few years ago archaeologists were digging and uncovered the office of an ancient CPA (chartered accountant). What they found was a stack of bills. And across each bill was one word, *tetelestai*. It means ‘it is finished’ in the sense of being ‘paid in full’.

What is now *paid in full*?

All of the blood of the animal sacrifices was now paid in full. The animal sacrifices were nothing but instalment payments.

Now the shedding of His own blood makes the full and final payment for what sin required.

The account of our sin has been *paid in full*.

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<sup>3</sup> Newman, B. M., & Nida, E. A. (1993). *A handbook on the Gospel of John* (p. 591). New York: United Bible Societies.

## 24) The seventh statement from the cross - *Father, INTO YOUR HANDS I COMMIT MY SPIRIT*

Read Luke 23:46a.

Here is the seventh statement from the cross.

*And Jesus, crying out with a loud voice, said, "Father, INTO YOUR HANDS I COMMIT MY SPIRIT." (Psalm 31:5)*

Notice two very significant things here.

- i. First, how does He address God now?

Once again He addresses God as 'Father', indicating the restoration of the paternal relationship with God. And this shows us that He has been resurrected spiritually.

The significance of this is that He both dies spiritually, and He is resurrected spiritually before He dies physically.

- ii. Secondly, what does it mean to commit something into another's hands?

And the word translated *commit* here means to dismiss, to deliver and to entrust.

He dismisses His spirit from His body and entrusts it into the hands of His Father.

What is the significance of this?

It means that He chooses the moment of His death, and hands over His human spirit to the safe keeping of God the Father.

So we notice here the voluntary nature of His death.

## 25) His physical death

Now read John 19:30b.

What happened here?

Here He does what He has just said He was doing. This is His actual physical death.

And what was the cause of His physical death?

John says that *He bowed His head and gave up His spirit*.

Normally when someone dies, they die and then their head falls. But He puts his head down and He dismisses His spirit from His body.

And the cause of His physical death was that He voluntarily dismissed His human spirit and entrusted it into the hands of His Father.

Paul reminds the Corinthians of the essential content of the gospel in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4.

What are the three things we must believe in order to have salvation?

*<sup>3</sup> For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, <sup>4</sup> and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,*

And the first thing is that He died for our sins. The death of Christ has made the atonement for our sins.

The New Testament develops in great detail the theological implications resulting from His death, and it is obviously beyond the scope of the present study to consider that topic in detail.

But here is a survey of them.

1. His death is a satisfaction.

Satisfaction means a full, legal equivalent of wrong done.

The point is that the Law has been satisfied for what it demanded concerning the wrong done.

His death answered all the demands of God's Law and justice against the sinner (Romans 3:3-4; Galatians 1:4; Ephesians 5:2).

2. His death resulted in redemption.

It means that His death paid the price of the penalty of sin.

There are seven Greek words that all come out as redemption in English. Redemption emphasizes that believers have been purchased out of the slave market of sin and set free.

The redemption of the believer occurs in five different areas:

i. First, we have been redeemed from the penalty of the Law, this applies to Jewish Believers as Gentiles were not under the Law (Galatians 3:13).

ii. Second, we have been redeemed from the keeping of the Law itself.

Jewish believers are now free from having to obey the Mosaic Law. We are now under a new law, the law of the Messiah. (Romans 6:14, 7:4; Galatians 4:4-5).

iii. We are redeemed from the power of sin. That includes both Jews and Gentiles.

We are not obligated to obey the sin nature any more. (Romans 5:18-19, 6:6, 14; Galatians 1:3-4; Titus 2:14; 1 Peter 1:18).

iv. We have been redeemed from the power of Satan. Satan no longer has any legal authority over us. A believer is no longer obligated to obey Satan (Hebrews 2:14-15).

v. Believers are guaranteed future, final redemption from all evil, which will occur with the resurrection of the body (Spoken of by Jesus in Luke 21:28);

Future redemption includes the body in Romans 8:23;

Future redemption is for God's glory in Ephesians 1:14;

It is sealed in Ephesians 4:30.

And our redemption is eternal in Hebrews 9:12.

3. His death resulted in propitiation.

It means that God is satisfied with what the death of Messiah accomplished: it appeased the wrath of God against sin. (1 John 2:2).

In it's very basic meaning, to propitiate means "to appease the wrath of God against sin."

It does not mean that His death merely satisfied a vengeful God, but it satisfied a God who is just, and righteous, and holy. And the wrath of God against sin was put out.

4. His death was a reconciliation.

By way of definition, it means to change the relationship of one person to another, to change from enmity to friendship.

The point is this: The position of the world was changed by His death so that all men are now able to be saved. His death rendered the whole world saveable, yet salvation is applied to those who believe (Romans 5:10; Colossians 1:20; 2 Corinthians 5:19).

5. It was a ransom.

It means that the blood of Messiah was the price that had to be paid for the penalty of sin.

The blood and death of the Messiah is a ransom paid to the holy Law of God (Matthew 20:28; 1 Timothy 2:6).

6. It was the proof of god's love for sinners.

The evidence for this is that He died for the world in its sinful state, not in it's redeemed state (John 3:16; 4:9; Romans 5:1, 8). He did not die for us when we were His friends. He died for us while we were still His enemies.

7. It was the judgment of our sin nature.

It rendered inoperative the reigning power of the sin nature's authority and power to reign over the believer. So when we sin today we merely submit to the sin nature, though we don't have to. We all end up doing it, but we don't have to.

The sin nature is not removed when one believes. We still have it, but it is judged and condemned (Romans 6:1-10).

8. It marks the end of the Law of Moses and a rule of life.

His death marked the end of the Law of Moses. Believers are no longer under the Law of Moses, but under a new law, the Law of Messiah (Romans 7:5-6; 10:4, Colossians 2:14; Hebrews 7:11-19; 8:13, Ephesians 2:11-3:6; Galatians 3:17-19).

9. It is the basis for the continuing cleansing of our sins.

We still sin and we are continuously being cleansed on the basis of Christ's death. It is the basis for the removal of all of our sins following salvation. It provides a family forgiveness based upon His blood. (1 John 1:7-9).

10. It is the basis for the removal of pre-cross sins.

He not only died for the sins to be committed after His death, but also for all the sins of the world committed before His death. And so He died for the sins of the Old Testament saints.

Animal blood was not sufficient to take away sins, animal blood was able to cover sin but not remove the sin (Hebrews 10:1-4).

Only His death could accomplish the removal of pre-cross sins (Acts 17:30, Romans 3:25, Hebrews 9:15; 10:4).

11. The judgment of Satan and his hosts.

It is the basis for the judgment of Satan and every fallen angel or demon, at the Great White Throne Judgment after the Messianic Kingdom. The basis is the blood of Christ. (John 12:31; 16:11; Colossians 2:14-15).

12. It is the basis for deferring righteous divine judgment.

God has deferred judgement until the end of time based upon the death of the Messiah

God has every right to judge man immediately, but judgment is being delayed and deferred because of His death (Romans 2:4-5; 9:22; 1 Peter 3:20; 2 Peter 3:9, 15).

13. His blood resulted in the purification of things in the heaven.

The blood of Jesus was used to cleanse the heavenly sanctuary, which has been defiled by Satan's fall (Romans 8:21-23; Hebrews 9:11-12, 21-24)



14. It is the ground for peace:

It is the ground for peace between God and man (Romans 5:1).

It is the ground for peace between Jews and Gentiles (Ephesians 2:11-16; Colossians 3:11).

It is the ground for peace in the universe (Colossians 1:20).

15. The basis for the national salvation of Israel in the future.

Some day all Israel will believe on Him (Deuteronomy 30:3; Jeremiah 31:31-34; Romans 11:25-29).

16. It is the basis for the establishment of the Messianic Kingdom.

Revelation 5:8-14 makes the point that the Millennial Kingdom could not be established apart from the death of Messiah.

### 3. The Accompanying Signs, § 166, Mark 15:38-39; Matthew 27:51-54; Luke 23:45, 47-49

#### 26) The Accompanying Signs

The moment He dies several things happen in rather quick succession.

Read Matthew 27:51 – 53.

##### 1. The rending of the veil.

A tear that began at the top and worked its way to the bottom.

If a man came in to try to do this he would take the bottom and try to tear it from bottom to top. But Mark and Matthew both point out that the tear began at the top and worked its way down to the bottom.

Keep in mind what the veil was. It was 60 (or 18.3 metres) feet long, 20 feet (or 6 metres) wide. It is about 4 inches (or 10 cm) thick.

#### *Significance*

What was the significance of the torn veil?

The significance of this is given to us in the Book of Hebrews.

It means that now access to God is made available to all.

As long as the Mosaic Law was in operation only one man could enter into God's presence. And that was the Jewish high priest. And even for him, only one day in the whole year.

Only one man out of one family out of one clan out of one tribe out of one nation out of one race could have access to God's presence – and that was the Jewish high priest. And even for him, only one day a year did he have atonement.

But now that the veil has been torn, signifying the ending of the Mosaic Law, access is made available to all who believe.

#### *Other records*

Now the question arises: Are there other records of this event?

Outside the gospels in Jewish writings there is no mention of this particular event. Because only a few men had the authority to go inside the temple, only a few would ever notice that it was torn.

And it could be kept fairly quiet.

#### *Jewish legends*

But, in Jewish writings shortly after this period there are a number of legends. And all those legends have two common elements.

First, they all concern the temple in some respect.

Secondly, they are all dated in the same way: This or that happened forty years before the temple was destroyed. And again, since the temple was destroyed in the year AD 70, 40 years before that is the year AD 30, the year of His death.

There are many such legends, but I will just give you a sample of four.

- i. The first is mentioned by Josephus.

The seven branched lampstand stood in the first room of the temple. Its middle lamp kept going out inexplicably. For some reason it just kept going out after the year AD 30.

- ii. The second legend is mentioned by both Josephus and the Talmud.

The heavy temple doors that took several men to swing open flung open of their own accord in the year AD 30.

According to the Talmud the key rabbi of that day said this was a sign that the temple was destined to be destroyed.

- iii. A third legend is that the lintel of the doorway cracked and fell that year.

- iv. Arnold's favourite legend is called the legend of Azazel.

Azazel is a word that means removal, but became the technical name for the scapegoat.

On the Day of Atonement two goats were presented before the high priest. One goat was chosen to live and one goat was chosen to die.

The goat chosen to die would be killed by the altar, and the blood taken to the Holy of Holies and sprinkled on the mercy seat, which was the lid of the Ark of the Covenant.

When the priest came out from this duty, he laid his hands on the head of the live goat. The laying on of hands was the Old Testament symbol of identification. And now the goat was identified with the people of Israel, and the high priest confessed the sins of Israel. The goat was driven out of the camp, out into the wilderness.

This ceremony conveys a picture, and the picture is this: by the shedding of the blood of the first goat the second goat can bear the sins outside the camp.

That's as far as the Law of Moses went in Leviticus 16.

Because of what Isaiah wrote in Isaiah 1:18, *though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool*, the Jewish legend says that before the live goat, the scapegoat, was chased out, they would tie a red ribbon around its horn or neck.

And miraculously, year after year without fail, by a miracle, the red ribbon always turned white, signifying that God had forgiven Israel for their sins for that year.

But the Jewish writings go on to state: a day came when the red ribbon no longer turned white. And that was in the year AD 30.

They continued the same ceremony for forty more years from AD 30 to AD 70, but the red ribbon never turned white again - showing that God was no longer forgiving their sins by means of the two goats.

What those who are Jewish believers find sad is this: The rabbis who record these legends failed to conclude why the red ribbon stopped turning white – because of *tetelestai, it is finished!*

As Hebrews 10:18 teaches, once you have remission of sins there is no more sacrifice for sins.

So again, while the Jewish writings do not record the rending of the veil, they do record that something significant happened in connection with the temple beginning in the year AD 30.

2. In Matthew verse 51, the second thing to happen was a great earthquake.
3. In verses 52-53 the tombs were opened, referring to cave tombs, not graves below the ground.

And many believers who were dead were now resurrected.

When are they resurrected?

Notice the wording. They are resurrected the moment He dies. But they do not come out of the tombs until His own resurrection. They stay in the tombs until He is resurrected. But they are resurrected the moment He dies.

What is the significance of this?

It provides the picture that by His death He provides life.

What kind of resurrection was this?

This is not the resurrection of the Old Testament saints into immortality, because that won't happen until the second coming in Daniel 12:2. This was merely a restoration back to natural life of saints that had not been dead all that long.

Because no one could be raised into immortality before Jesus' own resurrection these all died again later.

When do they leave the tombs and go into the city?

They stay in the tombs until His resurrection, and then they go into the city, in verse 53, Jerusalem, and appear to many.

We have no other record of their activities after this verse.

There are two major results of these accompanying signs.

Read Matthew verse 54 and Luke verses 48 – 49.

1. How did the centurion respond?

In Matthew verse 54, is belief on the part of the Roman centurion.

2. How did the crowds respond?

Luke 48 – 49. In in Luke verse 48 is fear in all the crowds, even among the Jewish leaders as they observed these things happening.

## F. The Burial of the Messiah, § 167, Mark 15:42-46; Matthew 27:57-60; Luke 23:50-54; John 19:31-42

The events of His burial are stages 27-30 of the things that happened between His death and the sealing of the tomb.

### 27) The piercing of Jesus

Read John 19:31 -37.

Now what day is it when these things occur?

Although there is a debate in Christendom about which day of the week Jesus was crucified, we see here several evidences that the crucifixion did occur on the Friday.

#### *The day of preparation*

First of all, John says that *it was the day of preparation*.

The words *the day of preparation* are all taken from a single word in the Greek. It is the word *paraskeue*, which is a technical Jewish term used of Friday.

It means a day on which preparations were made for a sacred or feast day — ‘day of preparation, Friday.’ And the identification of the fifth day of the week as *paraskeue*, the day of preparation, was so common that it eventually became the present-day Greek term for Friday.<sup>xix</sup>

#### *High Sabbath*

Now John tells us that this *was the day of preparation*. And he also tells us what the preparation was for.

What was that day preparing for?

It was preparing for the Sabbath, and John also points out that that particular Sabbath was a high Sabbath.

What would make a Sabbath day a high day?

What would render a Sabbath into a high Sabbath was that the Sabbath fell on a Jewish feast day.

Now the Passover on this year went from sundown Thursday until sundown Friday.

Immediately following Passover is the feast of unleavened bread. And the first day in the seven days of unleavened bread is a holy day.

And, in that year, the first day of unleavened bread was from sundown of Friday until sundown of Saturday. Therefore it is also a Sabbath.

And because the first day of unleavened bread is also a Sabbath, it will make the Sabbath a high Sabbath.

If it was unacceptable to have Jewish bodies exposed over a normal Sabbath, it was especially so on a high Sabbath. Therefore they asked Pilate to hasten the death sentence so the bodies could be removed before the Sabbath.

### *Breaking the legs*

Why do they break the victim's legs to hasten his death?

The way a person normally dies in crucifixions is by suffocation because the way they hang there they cannot breathe.

And the reason they put the wooden ledge by the foot is so that the victim could lift himself up, take a breath, and come down again. As long as he kept doing so, going up and down he could survive for a few days.

But keep in mind that the cross was not smooth, so after a while of going up and down it would make your back rather sore. And in the case of Jesus the pain was immediate because of the scourge he suffered.

And one way to hasten the death process is simply to break the legs of the victim so he could no longer lift himself up and he would suffocate shortly thereafter.

Why did the soldiers not break Jesus' legs?

They proceeded to break the legs of the other two, but Jesus had already dismissed His spirit from His body. And they do not break His legs, fulfilling the Passover motif of Exodus 12:46. No bones of His were broken.

<sup>46</sup> *"It is to be eaten in a single house; you are not to bring forth any of the flesh outside of the house, nor are you to break any bone of it."*

### *Jesus pierced*

But to make sure He is dead a soldier pierces His side.

And when he pierced His side out came blood and water, fulfilling another prophecy in Zechariah 12:10, they will look unto Him whom they once pierced.

<sup>10</sup> *"I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn."*

### *Significance*

There has been some discussion about what this meant medically. Some doctors have written that this is a sign of a ruptured heart and they give a nice devotional, he died of a broken heart. Other doctors have written disputing that conclusion. So what this means medically I have no idea.

A far more important question is: what does this mean theologically?

Notice that only John reports this event, and he also mentions he was an eye-witness to that event.

Later on in the book of first John in 1 John 5:5-12, he makes a reference to the water and the blood. And for him it is the evidence that God did provide eternal life because it did mark the Messiah's death, and by death He provided eternal life. And that is the significance spiritually of the outpouring of the blood and the water.

<sup>5</sup> *Who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?* <sup>6</sup> *This is the One who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood. It is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth.* <sup>7</sup> *For there are three that testify:* <sup>8</sup> *the Spirit and the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement.* <sup>9</sup> *If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater; for the testimony of God is this, that He has testified concerning His Son.* <sup>10</sup> *The one who believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself; the one who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that God has given concerning His Son.* <sup>11</sup> *And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.* <sup>12</sup> *He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.*

## 28) The request for the body of Jesus

Read Mark 15:42 – 43.

### *Day of preparation*

Notice that Mark, writing to the Romans who may not know what the term meant, explains to them what *the preparation day* means. What does he tell them?

He explains it: *that is, the day before the Sabbath*. This is typical Jewish terminology. The day of preparation was Friday, and on Friday at sundown the Sabbath begins.

### *Joseph of Arimathea*

And now we meet a new individual we have not heard of before: Joseph of Arimathea. We learn several things about him from the gospels.

Read the other accounts also – Matthew 27:57 – 58; Luke 23:50 – 52; and John 19:38.

What do we learn about Joseph?

- i. He lived in Arimathea.
- ii. In Mark's account, where he says Joseph was *a prominent member of the Council*, the ASV says he was *a councilor of honorable estate*. It means he came from a line of well-known people.
- iii. Matthew notes that he was wealthy. And because he was wealthy he could afford his own tomb near Jerusalem, though that's not where he lived. He lived in Arimathea.
- iv. According to Luke he was a good man. That emphasises his external actions. Luke 23:50
- v. He was righteous. That was his internal state. Luke 23:50.
- vi. He was waiting for the Kingdom of God. He was a member of the remnant of that day. Luke 23:51 Mark 15:43.
- vii. He was a counsellor, meaning he was a member of the Sanhedrin. Luke 23:50 Mark 15:43.
- viii. But he was not there to vote. Luke 23:51.
- ix. He was a secret disciple up until now. Up until now he was a believer but he kept quiet about it. (John 19:38; Matt. 27:57)

As John points out in verse 38 they were quiet because of fear of the Jewish community.



But now, in contrast to his previous fearfulness, at the end of Mark verse 43, he gathered up his courage and boldly went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus.

Read about Pilate's response in verse 44 of Mark.

Pilate sends out someone to make sure He is dead. When that is verified, he then permits the body to be released.

### 29) The removal of the body from the cross

Now read about the removal of the body from the cross in John 19:38b – 40.

Here we meet Nicodemus again, and he is openly identifying himself with believers.

What did they do with His body?

They bound Him in strips of cloth.

Notice the plural. This is not a shroud over His body as a whole, but strips of cloth wrapped around Him just the way people buried bodies in the first century. This shows that whatever the shroud of Turin might be, it is not the shroud of Jesus.

Also remember from the account of His birth that when He was born He was wrapped in the strips of linen cloth used for burial.

### 30) His actual burial

Now the 30<sup>th</sup> stage is His actual burial.

Read John 19:41-42.

He is buried in the new, unused tomb of Joseph of Arimathea.

Read Luke 23:53b – 54.

And Luke says, <sup>54</sup>*It was the preparation day, and the Sabbath was about to begin.*

When does the Sabbath begin?

As soon as sundown occurs and three stars are visible the Sabbath will begin.

Now going back to 1 Corinthians 15:1-4: the first point of the gospel is that He died for our sins. The second point of the gospel is: *and He was buried.*

Let me mention two theological significances of the burial of Jesus.

i. It marks the last stage of His humiliation in two ways:

a. It meant the death of the God-man.

Being sinless He should not have died, yet He died the death a sinner dies, because He died in substitution for us.

b. None of those who were close to Him participated in the burial.

Notice that. None of those who were close to Him in His life and ministry participated in the burial. He is buried by two men who are both Pharisees, who until now had been secret believers.

- ii. It marks the beginning of His exultation.

Now theologians speak about the humiliation of the Son going from His incarnation in the likeness of sinful flesh until His burial.

They also speak of the exultation of the Messiah.

They normally begin the exultation with the resurrection and conclude with His enthronement at the right hand of God the Father forty days later.

Arnold would begin the exultation with the burial for two reasons.

- a. He is buried in a new, unused rich man's tomb, the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea.
- b. Furthermore, instead of being buried in a common cemetery, He is buried in a privately owned garden.

Centuries earlier the first Adam in the Garden of Eden brought judgement and death.

And now in this garden the last Adam will bring blessing and new life to come.

Why is the burial of Jesus an essential part of the gospel?

It is a necessary part of the gospel because it is the evidence of His real death.

So the first point of the gospel is: *He died for our sins*.

The second point is: *and He was buried*, which is the evidence of His real death.

The third point is, as we will see later on: *He rose on the third day according to the Scripture*.

## **G. The Sealing of the Tomb, § 168, Mark 15:47; Matthew 27:61-66; Luke 23:55-56**

The last two stages are found in this section.

### **31) The preparation for embalming**

Read all three accounts - Mark 15:47; Matthew 27:61; and Luke 23:55-56.

The women who came up with Him from the Galilee take careful note as to the exact tomb where they laid Him. And Matthew points out that two of the Mary's sit next to the sepulchre for a while. They didn't just get a look from the distance where they might be confused, two of them actually sat next to the sepulchre for a while.

And they also began preparing ointments with the intent of finishing the embalming procedure and the burial customs once the Sabbath comes to an end.

### **32) The sealing of the tomb**

Read Matthew 27:62 – 66.

The 32<sup>nd</sup> stage is the sealing of the tomb.

Now notice that the elders of Israel do remember His statement about being raised from the dead. That is interesting because the disciples never got that point. But the enemies did get that point.

What they are afraid of is that now someone will come and steal the body and then preach the resurrection.

And they point out from their perspective, at the end of verse 64, *the last deception will be even worse than the first.*

So Pilate does two things for them.

- i. He puts a Roman guard on the tomb to guard it for three days.

Keep in mind that under Roman law, if they fail to guard the tomb, or they fail to guard the body they will be facing the death penalty.

- ii. He has the tomb sealed with the Roman seal.

Let's see how that was done. The caves were dug out of the hill country around Jerusalem and Judah. The hill country is made mostly of limestone. And they would simply carve out a cave.

In front of the cave there would be a groove. The purpose of the groove was for the stone to be rolled back and forth. These were family tombs. So the stone could be rolled back and forth as necessary as different family members die.

Now to seal a tomb they would tie ropes, and criss-cross the ropes on hooks against the wall of the tomb and the ground.

In at least two different places, sometimes more, they would put on a small clay-wax seal where the ropes crossed and also on where the stone touched the tomb. It was done in such a way as to make it impossible to roll the stone away without breaking the Roman seal.

And to break the Roman seal was punishable by death.

So they tried to make it very secure so the body could not be removed, stolen, or whatever.

### *The day He died*

Let me say a few more things about the day that Jesus died.

People are confused about the day of His death because they have ignored the Jewish background and the Jewish reckoning of time.

They try to get Him in the tomb for three full 24 hour periods by moving his death from Friday - sometimes to a Thursday, more often to a Wednesday, and a in a few cases even to a Tuesday.

Now keep in mind that if He was in the tomb for three full 24 hour periods, and rose only one second later, it was already the fourth day and not the third day.

### *Jesus statements*

Now Jesus actually made three different statements about the timing of His death and resurrection.

- i. He said He would rise on the third day.

One example of several is Matthew 16:21.

*From that time Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day.*

- ii. A second way He said it is *after three days*, not on the third day, but after three days, implying the fourth day.

One example of several is Matthew 27:63,

*“Sir, we remember that when He was still alive that deceiver said, ‘After three days I am to rise again.’ “*

- iii. The third statement He made is *in three days and three nights*, in Matthew 12:39-40.

<sup>39</sup>*But He answered and said to them, “An evil and adulterous generation craves for a sign; and yet no sign will be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet; <sup>40</sup>for just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.*

Notice I gave you all three statements from the same gospel because the variation is not a variation between the gospel writers. The same gospel writer uses all three different expressions.

#### *Jewish reckoning of time – a year*

Now, in Jewish reckoning of time, part of the year counts for the whole year.

If a king takes the throne in the twelfth month of the year he is viewed as having ruled the whole year. And the very next month will read, the second year of his reign.

How could it be the second year when he only reigned for one month? Because part of the year counts for the whole year.

#### *Jewish reckoning of time – a day*

The same applies to a day. A part of the day counts for the whole day, all 24 hours of it, both the day and the night of it.

#### *Three days*

So He was in the grave:

For part of Friday, which counts for all of Friday;

And then Saturday;

And then part of Sunday, which counts for all of Sunday.

So He did rise on the third day. Friday was the first day, Saturday was the second day, and Sunday was the third day.

And because part of Sunday counts for all of Sunday, it is also true He rose after three days.

#### *Jewish idiom*

The significance of three days and three nights is that it was a Jewish idiom of speech meaning any period of time that touches three days.

Part of a day counts for the whole day, which includes the night and the day of it.

### Old Testament examples

In fact it is used that way in several passages of the Old Testament, where in context it cannot mean three full 24 hour days.

Let me give you some examples.

- i. Genesis 42:17, 18.

<sup>17</sup> *So he put them all together in prison for three days.* <sup>18</sup> *Now Joseph said to them on the third day, "Do this and live, for I fear God:*

- ii. 1 Samuel 30:12-13.

<sup>12</sup> *They gave him a piece of fig cake and two clusters of raisins, and he ate; then his spirit revived. For he had not eaten bread or drunk water for three days and three nights.* <sup>13</sup> *David said to him, "To whom do you belong? And where are you from?" And he said, "I am a young man of Egypt, a servant of an Amalekite; and my master left me behind when I fell sick three days ago.*

- iii. 1 Kings 20:29.

<sup>29</sup> *So they camped one over against the other seven days. And on the seventh day the battle was joined, and the sons of Israel killed of the Arameans 100,000 foot soldiers in one day.*

- iv. 2 Chronicles 10:5, 12.

<sup>5</sup> *He said to them, "Return to me again in three days." So the people departed. ...*

<sup>12</sup> *So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam on the third day as the king had directed, saying, "Return to me on the third day."*

- v. Esther 4:16, 5:1.

<sup>16</sup> *"Go, assemble all the Jews who are found in Susa, and fast for me; do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my maidens also will fast in the same way. And thus I will go in to the king, which is not according to the law; and if I perish, I perish." ...*

<sup>5:1</sup> *Now it came about on the third day that Esther put on her royal robes and stood in the inner court of the king's palace in front of the king's rooms, and the king was sitting on his royal throne in the throne room, opposite the entrance to the palace.*

In 4:16 she says fast for me three days and three nights and I will then go see the King. So if you just take that by itself, they are to fast for three days and three nights, and when that is over, on the fourth day she will go to see the king.

But in chapter 5:1 it says, *on the third day* she went to see the king.

There are not three 24 hour periods in it. And in Jewish reckoning of time it is not necessary.

One more point comes from the Jewish Talmud which actually does mention the death of Jesus and specifies twice what day of the week He died. Arnold quotes it as it reads:

There is a tradition, on the eve of the Sabbath, and on Passover, they hung Jesus. The heralds went out crying, "Jesus goes forth to be executed because he practiced sorcery and seduced Israel into estrangement from their God. Let anyone who can bring forward a justifying plea for him come and give information concerning him." But no justifying plea could be found for him so they hung Jesus on the eve of the Sabbath and on the Passover.

Twice it says, "On the eve of the Sabbath", that makes it Friday, "And on the Passover day."

They had to justify it by saying he was seducing Israel because the execution on a festival day went contrary to Jewish law as we saw.

We will see some other evidence when we look at the resurrection scene.

## X THE RESURRECTION AND THE ASCENSION OF THE KING, § 169-184

Now we come to the tenth and final segment of His life, the resurrection and the ascension of the King.

Let's begin with the theological significance of His resurrection in different categories.

### 1. The significance to the Messiah.

- a. It proved Him to be the Son of God, Romans 1:4.

It is the evidence that He is the Son of God.

- b. It confirmed the truth of all that He said, Matthew 28:6.
- c. It means that He is the first fruits of the first resurrection.

Keep in mind that the Bible describes two different kinds of resurrections.

- i. The first kind is a restoration back to natural life.

That means you die again later. And there were people raised in the Old Testament, and there were people raised even by Jesus before His own death and resurrection. But they were restored back to natural life.

- ii. The second type of resurrection leads to resurrection life where mortality puts on immortality, corruption puts on incorruption. And being now immortal, anyone resurrected in this way cannot die.

Jesus was the first one to be raised in that kind of a body. He is the first fruit of the first resurrection. 1 Corinthians 15:20-23.

*<sup>20</sup> But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep. <sup>21</sup> For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. <sup>22</sup> For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive. <sup>23</sup> But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming,*

- d. It was the declaration of the Father that the Messiah met all the requirements of the Law of Moses, Philippians 2:9.

*<sup>9</sup> For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name,*

### 2. The significance to people in general.

- a. It makes certain the resurrection of all men.

Both believers and unbelievers will be resurrected, though not with the same destiny, 1 Corinthians 15:20-23.

- b. It also guarantees the judgement of all unbelievers, and all unbelievers will be judged by the resurrected Son, Acts 10:40-42, 17:30-31.

<sup>40</sup> *"God raised Him up on the third day and granted that He become visible, <sup>41</sup> not to all the people, but to witnesses who were chosen beforehand by God, that is, to us who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead. <sup>42</sup> And He ordered us to preach to the people, and solemnly to testify that this is the One who has been appointed by God as Judge of the living and the dead.*

<sup>30</sup> *"Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent, <sup>31</sup> because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead."*

3. The significance to Old Testament saints.

- a. It was the fulfilment of the Old Testament promise of their salvation.

It meant the removal of their sins and the guarantee of their future resurrection, Acts 13:32-33.

<sup>32</sup> *"And we preach to you the good news of the promise made to the fathers, <sup>33</sup> that God has fulfilled this promise to our children in that He raised up Jesus, as it is also written in the second Psalm, 'YOU ARE MY SON; TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN YOU.'*

4. The significance for believers specifically.

- a. It proves our justification. We are justified by His death. But His resurrection proves our justification, Romans 4:23-25.

<sup>23</sup> *Now not for his sake only was it written that it was credited to him, <sup>24</sup> but for our sake also, to whom it will be credited, as those who believe in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, <sup>25</sup> He who was delivered over because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification.*

- b. It guarantees power for believers' service. Whatever He asks us to do He will give us resurrection power to accomplish, Ephesians 1:15-20.

<sup>15</sup> *For this reason I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which exists among you and your love for all the saints, <sup>16</sup> do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention of you in my prayers; <sup>17</sup> that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him. <sup>18</sup> I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, <sup>19</sup> what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might <sup>20</sup> which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places,*

- c. It guarantees the individuals resurrection to immortality.

Romans 8:11

<sup>11</sup> *But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.*



1 Corinthians 6:14

<sup>14</sup> *Now God has not only raised the Lord, but will also raise us up through His power.*

2 Corinthians 4:14

<sup>14</sup> *knowing that He who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and will present us with you.*

- d. It means the forgiveness of the believer's sins, 1 Corinthians 15:17.

We are forgiven because of His death, but this is the evidence of it.

<sup>17</sup> *and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins.*

- e. It designates the Messiah as the head of the church, Ephesians 1:19–22

<sup>19b</sup> These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might <sup>20</sup> which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, <sup>21</sup> far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. <sup>22</sup> And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church,

- f. It means the Messiah now has the keys of death as far as the believer is concerned. So when a believer dies it is Jesus who puts him to death, puts us to sleep. The one exception to the rule is when a believer has been excommunicated from the local assembly. When that happens then Satan can put that believer to death, only in the physical sense, not in the spiritual sense. But the normal case is that Jesus puts us to death, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-15.

1 Thessalonians 4:13–15 (NASB95)

<sup>13</sup> *But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope. <sup>14</sup> For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in [Greek dia, literally 'through'] Jesus. <sup>15</sup> For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep.*

- g. It means that there is now a sympathetic High Priest in heaven, as a result of the resurrection, Hebrews 2:16–18, 4:14-16.

Hebrews 2:16–18

<sup>16</sup> *For assuredly He does not give help to angels, but He gives help to the descendant of Abraham. <sup>17</sup> Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. <sup>18</sup> For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted.*

Hebrews 4:14-16

<sup>14</sup> *Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. <sup>15</sup> For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet*

without sin.<sup>16</sup> Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

## A. The Dawning of Resurrection Day, § 169, Mark 16:1; Matthew 28:1

In section 169 we have the visit of the women to the tomb.

Read both accounts, Mark 16:1 and Matthew 28:1.

There were three women here: Mary Magdalene, Mary (the wife of Cleopas and mother of James and Joses), and Salome (sister of Mary the mother of Jesus).

What were these women doing?

They went to visit the tomb. And they also went to purchase spices for the purpose of anointing Him.

*As it began to dawn*

On which day of the week did they do these things?

Matthew says <sup>1</sup>*Now after the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week.*

In English we use the word ‘dawn’ to mean the wee hours of the morning as light begins to appear on the horizon before the sun appears.

But in Greek and Hebrew it simply means the beginning of the new day without telling us what time of day it was.

In Jewish reckoning, when did the *first day of the week* begin?

In Jewish reckoning, which Matthew would be very conscious of, the first day of the week begins not with the wee hours of Sunday morning, but it begins at sundown Saturday and will continue until sundown on Sunday.

And so, late on the Sabbath, late afternoon towards the early evening, they went to visit the tomb.

Then, according to Mark, they also went to purchase spices for the purpose of anointing Him.

## B. The Opening of the Tomb, § 170, Matthew 28:2-4

*Date – 17<sup>th</sup> of Nisan – 9 April, AD 30 – Sunday*

It is now Sunday the 17<sup>th</sup> of Nisan, April 9<sup>th</sup>, AD 30.

And just as there was an earthquake which marked the moment of Jesus’ death, now there is another earthquake which marked the moment of His resurrection.

Read Matthew 28:2 – 4.

What did the angel of the Lord do?

He descended from heaven and rolled the stone away, breaking the Roman seals on the tomb.

How should the Roman soldiers have responded to this?

Because he broke the Roman seal the soldiers should have proceeded to have this angel arrested.

But you don't go around arresting angels, especially in view of his appearance:

*And his appearance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow.*

So instead of arresting him, *the guards shook for fear of him and became like dead men.*

As we say in English, they were scared stiff. They were so afraid they couldn't move, either forward or backward.

### **C. The Visit of the Women, § 171, Mark 16:2-8; Matthew 28:5-8; Luke 24:1-8; John 20:1**

Read

It is now in the wee hours of Sunday morning. (The word translated dawn here in Luke 24:1 is *orthros*, but in Matthew 28:1 it is *epiphosko*.) The women come to the tomb for the purpose of finishing the burial procedures. The very fact that they are performing all these burial procedures shows that they are not anticipating the resurrection to occur.

The first to arrive, in John verse 1, is Mary Magdalene. She came *while it was still* dark. What she sees is the stone rolled away and the tomb is empty. She does not see any angels. And she leaves the tomb area making the assumption that someone had moved the body.

After she is gone then the other women come in. We see in Mark verse 2 that they came *when the sun had risen*. And they do see the angels and they do get the message of the resurrection.

The angelic message is two points:

1. In Luke 24:5-6, Jesus Himself has risen from the dead, so there is no need to seek Him among the dead.
2. In Mark's account in verses 6-7, they are to go back to the disciples and tell them to leave for the Galilee. Remember, during the last Passover He told them that when He was arrested they were to proceed to Galilee and He will meet with them when He rises from the dead in Galilee. Although, at least four times that we have recorded, He taught them the whole program of death and resurrection, we are always told that they didn't comprehend what He was saying. So it caught them by surprise and they still have not left for the Galilee as they should have done as of Friday.

Now they receive a second command: leave for Galilee, He will meet with them up in the Galilee.

At that point three things happen.

1. In Luke, verse 8: They finally remember about His prophecy about being raised from the dead.
2. In Mark verse 8: They told no one outside the apostolic group.
3. In Matthew verse 8: They did run to tell the apostles.

## D. The Report to the Apostles, § 172, Luke 24:9-12; John 20:2-10

Now Mary runs to two apostles, Peter and John, telling them only about the empty tomb, And the other women tell the other 9 apostles the message that they received. But Luke points out in verse 11: *But these words appeared to them as nonsense, and they would not believe them.* The disbelieved the report they got from the other women.

Now Peter and John, who get the message a bit differently, only hearing about the empty tomb, decide in verses 3-10 of John's account to run over and find out what the facts are.

And John outruns Peter. We are told he stooped down and he didn't go inside. He looked inside and he saw two things.

1. He saw the linen cloth still rolled up, which means the resurrection took place right through the grave cloths. It wasn't necessary to unwrap Him as it was in the case of Lazarus when Jesus said, "unwrap him." But these cloths were still wrapped up which meant was resurrected right through the grave clothes.
2. The head piece was over in a different part of the tomb, which again shows that whatever the shroud of Turin could be, it is not the shroud of Jesus.

And then Peter, who is a bit more impetuous, catches up and runs right into the tomb. And both see the same evidence, but they leave the tomb with two different conclusions.

1. John leaves the tomb area believing a resurrection has taken place. But
2. Peter leaves the tomb area in a state of perplexity, not certain what he should do with what he just saw.

## E. The First Appearance: Mary Magdalene, § 173, Mark 16:9-11; John 20:11-18

Now Mary follows Peter and John back to the tomb. And they are still working on the impression that somebody merely moved the body.

...

When they ask her, in verse 13 of John's account, *"why are you weeping?"* she spells out what she believes at this stage: *Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him.*

At that point Jesus appears to her, although she does not recognise Him straight away. And in verse 15 He asks her the same question, *"Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?"* And, assuming He might be the gardener, she asks Him if He moved the body and if He would show her where the body is she will take care of it from there.

Then He called her by name which was familiar to her in verse 16. At that point she does recognise Him and approaches Him *and said to Him in Hebrew, "Rabboni!" (which means, Teacher).*

And this will be typical of the resurrection appearances in that people who knew Him, even knew Him well, do not always recognise Him right away. But they do recognise Him to be the same person they

knew. Because in the resurrection body enough changes occur so that recognition is not immediate. But enough things remain the same so they get to know that this is the same person.

She recognised Him by the way He called her name. We know from records that the Galilean accent was a very distinctive accent, quite distinct from the Judean accent.

Notice that the first appearance of the resurrected Messiah is to a woman and not to a man, which makes it highly significant in the Jewish context. By Jewish law women were not viewed as being valid witnesses. So when you have the two or three witnesses you have to have, a woman cannot be among those witnesses. A woman's testimony was considered invalid.

Now those who reject the resurrection claim that these reports are fabrications by those who followed Him. But keep in mind if these are fabrications these would be Jewish fabrications. These were Jewish writers. Now if Jews wanted to fabricate the resurrection story like this they would make sure that the first witnesses were men, not women. This is not the way a Jewish person would choose to fabricate the story. The very fact that the first appearance is to a woman argues for its authenticity and argues against it being a fabrication.

Now when she approaches Him in verse 17, He tells her, *"touch Me not,"* (ASV) which raises the question: why is she forbidden to touch Him when a week later Thomas is allowed to touch Him. There are two ways to answer this.

1. There are two different Greek words used for touch. The first Greek word used here means to cling or hang on to. She wants to cling to Him, to hang on to Him so He does not go away, but go away He must. And the word used for Thomas means to feel, to touch lightly, not to hang on to. That is a valid answer because there are really two different Greek words which are used.
2. But Arnold prefers the second option. Notice the reason Jesus gives her why she cannot touch Him: because I have not yet ascended to the Father. Now going back to the Day of Atonement motif: On that day when the procedure would begin the high priest would take off his multi-coloured garments, undergo ritual immersion, and put on the garments he wore only one day of the year, the day of atonement garments which were all white. When he finished the whole procedure, then he took off the white garments, underwent the second immersion, and went back to his multi-coloured garments which were his daily wear.

Now, once he underwent the first immersion the priest was untouchable. If anyone touched him, it rendered that priest unclean, and he would not be able to sprinkle the blood in the Holy of Holies. So until he finished the whole procedure and sprinkled the blood he was untouchable.

In Hebrews 9:11,12,24; 10:12 it points out that at some point Jesus entered into heaven to sprinkle His blood in the heavenly sanctuary.

Hebrews 9:11 (NASB95)

<sup>11</sup> *But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation;*

Hebrews 9:12 (NASB95)

<sup>12</sup> *and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.*

Hebrews 9:24 (NASB95)

<sup>24</sup> *For Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands, a mere copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us;*

Hebrews 10:12 (NASB95)

<sup>12</sup> *but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God,*

And the contrast the writer to the Hebrews makes is that the animal blood could be used to cleanse the earthly tabernacle. But the heavenly tabernacle needed the cleansing of better blood, innocent human blood.

So at some point He took His blood into heaven to cleanse the heavenly sanctuary. Only after cleansing it could He be touchable. And based upon the Hebrews passage I would say she could not touch Him because He had not ascended for the purpose of sprinkling His blood. He would have done that between His first and second appearances as we will see in a moment. And once He did that He was again touchable.

And in Hebrews 12:22-24 he mentions six things in the heavenly Jerusalem, and that includes the blood which speaks better than the blood of Abel. The blood is now still present to this day. It will serve as an everlasting witness of the price of our redemption.

Now in John's account in verse 17, He sends Mary Magdalene to instruct the disciples about the resurrection, that she has seen Him raised from the dead. But Mark points out in verse 11 that when she reported what she saw, the first report of the resurrected Son is disbelieved.

## **F. The Second Appearance: The Women, § 174, Matthew 28:9-10**

Now we have the second appearance to the other women. As they are on their way from the tomb to report to the disciples, Jesus appears to them.

Notice what it says in verse 9: *And they came up and took hold of His feet and worshiped Him.* They do more of the clinging type of holding. What Mary was not allowed to do they are allowed to do. That is why I would take the events of Hebrew 9 & 10 to occur in between the first and second appearance.

Then He instructs them to go back to the disciples and tell them, "get out of town already!" Head for the Galilee, He will meet with them there. This is the third time they receive a message to get to the Galilee. He will appear to them then.

But again, when they report what they saw, it is also disbelieved. They never leave the city.

## **G. The Report of the Guard: The Rejection of the Second Sign of Jonah, § 175, Matthew 28:11-15**

The Roman guard finally got their act together and ran away. Now remember they were facing the death penalty because they failed to make sure the body did not get moved. And knowing their endangerment they decided to go directly to the chief priests who instigated the whole procedure. And the chief priests, who are the Sadducees, meet with the elders who are the Pharisees. We have a combined Sanhedrin meeting again.

And what they decide to do is that they will give these soldiers a large sum of money and they are to go around spreading the news that while they were sleeping the disciples came and stole the body.

And verse 14 says, *if this should come to the governor's ears, we will win him over and keep you out of trouble*. So if the message is reported to the governor they will intervene to make sure the soldiers do not die. After the Passover the governor would go back to Caesarea, a two day trip anyway, and he would never hear of this failure to begin with.

That's what they do. They went onto the streets of Jerusalem saying that while they were sleeping the disciples came and stole the body. Here we have the oldest theory for the empty tomb: the stolen body theory.

Any Jewish person who was a thinking person would recognise that there was an inconsistency in their so-called testimony. What they are testifying is that while they were sleeping disciples came and stole the body. But if they were sleeping how could they tell who stole the body? How would they know?

And who would steal the body anyway? Now taking the body in this situation would carry the death penalty. Only two groups would have a vested interest to steal the body: either His friends, or His enemies.

If His enemies stole the body, these are the same men who tried to silence the apostolic preaching in the book of Acts. And to silence the apostles and prove they were wrong, all they would have to do is produce the body. And while they try all kinds of tactics to silence the apostolic preaching of the cross, the one thing they don't do is produce the body. That shows they didn't have the body to produce.

The second group that would have a vested interest in stealing the body would be His friends, the apostles. Now if they stole the body their later life doesn't make much sense because they suffered a great deal of physical suffering because of what they were preaching. We know that one apostle was beheaded in Acts 12. And beyond the witness of the book of Acts, if our church records are correct, the apostles all died some horrendous deaths. Peter was crucified upside down. One apostle was boiled alive in oil. Another one was flayed alive. That meant your body was naked and you were stretched out and they peeled the skin off your body while you were still living. And in most cases they were given the option to recant and be released, more often to recant and have a more humane death. In every one of these cases they simply refuse to take an easy way out. It is difficult to believe they were willing to suffer all they suffered if they knew it was a lie. The only way their actions make sense, both within Acts and beyond Acts, is that they really did believe that the resurrection had taken place.

So again, while the theory of the stolen body is the oldest theory of the empty tomb, it doesn't make a whole lot of sense.

## **H. The Third Appearance: To the Two on the Emmaus Road, § 176, Mark 16:12-13; Luke 24:13-32**

These are two disciples outside the apostolic group. Only one person is named, Cleopas, probably because of his role in the history of the church of Jerusalem. He will be the one to lead the believers out of Jerusalem in the year AD 66 during the Roman war. He took them out of the city before the city was re-besieged and destroyed. The other apostle is not named.

They are heading back home after Passover, heading to the town of Emmaus. As they are walking they are discussing the recent events that have transpired. And as they are walking a third figure attaches himself to them, but they don't recognise him for who he is.

When He asks them what they are talking about, they point out four things they had believed up until now, in verses 19-21.

1. They believed Him to be a prophet of God, one who receives direct revelation from God the Father.
2. They believed He authenticated Himself by both His words and His works. His works authenticated His words, His claims.
3. He was arrested, tried, and crucified by the leaders.
4. Up until now they had believed Him to be the redeemer of Israel, though the recent events seem to militate against that belief.

These are four things they had believed up until now. Notice they mention His arrest and trial and death. They also mention the one fact they had disbelieved in verses 22 - 24. The one fact they disbelieved is the recent reports by the women of His resurrection, but no one of the apostolic group has seen Him.

It is Sunday afternoon right now. And notice what He says near the end of verse 21: *besides all this, it is the third day since these things happened*. Sunday afternoon is still only the third day. The only way Sunday afternoon can still be only the third day is if the crucifixion occurred on the Friday. If the crucifixion is moved to Thursday, Wednesday, or Tuesday, there is no way Sunday afternoon could still be only the third day.

Now in verses 25-26 He scolds them for their unbelief. Then in verse 27 He gives them an exposition of what we call Messianic prophecy, prophecies about the first coming of the Messiah. He went through Moses and the prophets showing that the very elements that seem to militate against His Messiahship are actually evidences of His Messiahship. These were the things that were supposed to happen to the Messiah.

They come into town and He keeps walking. They invite Him to partake of the evening meal with them. It says in verse 30, *When He had reclined at the table with them, He took the bread and blessed it, and breaking it, He began giving it to them*. Normally, in Jewish practice the host does the blessing over the bread. A blessing that the Jewish host will pray today: Blessed are you Lord God, King of the universe that brings forth bread from the earth. Normally the host does it, but if your guest is a Bible scholar then he does the blessing over the bread. And because of His exposition of prophecy they recognise Him to be the Bible scholar, and therefore He is the one who ends up saying the blessing over the bread.

At that moment they recognise Him for who He is. But at that moment He instantaneously vanishes.

And they go back to Jerusalem to report to the apostolic group, as Mark's account, in verse 13, points out.

The third appearance is also disbelieved.

## **I. The Fourth Appearance: Peter, § 177, Luke 24:33-35; I Corinthians 15:5**

Peter is the first member of the apostolic group to see the resurrected Messiah, necessary to comfort Him probably, because of his three-fold denial, and to reconfirm him in the faith.



## J. The Fifth Appearance: The Ten, § 178, Mark 16:14; Luke 24:36-43; John 20:19-25

Luke points out that the fifth appearance occurred while Cleopas and his companion were relating their experiences.

John points out that *it was evening on that day, the first day of the week*. So it is now Sunday night. And because of so much unbelief they never left the city. So, in His mercy He doesn't wait for them to get to Galilee. At that rate they may never get there. But He appears to them in Jerusalem.

And John points out in verse 19 that the doors were locked. He comes to them at the end of verse 19 and gives them the typical Jewish greeting, "Shalom Aleichem", meaning "peace be unto you".

And Luke's verse 37 points out that even seeing Him at that point they were not ready to believe that He was resurrected. They thought that they were looking at His ghost.

He scolds them for their unbelief which has now been manifested in three different ways.

1. They failed to leave for Galilee as they had been told three times to do.
2. They failed to believe the previous witnesses, which by now had been both women and men. Now keep in mind that the first and second appearance was to women. Again, even the second appearance being to women argues against this being a Jewish fabrication because that is not the way the Jews would choose to fabricate the story. The first time men got to see Him was the third appearance. So by now they failed to believe though the witnesses were both women and men.
3. When they finally do see Him they think they are looking at a ghost although they are now looking at an individual who has been raised from the dead.

So to prove He is resurrected He does two things.

1. He tells them, in Luke verses 39 & 40, to feel His side, and what they will feel is flesh and bones. And a spirit does not have flesh and bone.
2. When they still have trouble believing, He then eats a piece of fish, in verse 41-43, to prove that He is a resurrected being because of a simple principle that ghosts don't eat. Resurrected beings do get to eat. That's a good thing for us because we are the bride of the Messiah and we get to attend our wedding feast. It would be a terrible disappointment to go to a wedding feast if you couldn't eat anything. Furthermore, we won't have to eat to stay alive, but we will be able to eat for the sheer enjoyment of eating. More good news is you will be able to eat all that you want and not gain an ounce of weight.

At this point they receive the first of three final commissions. This one has two points.

1. They are sent out with the authority of the Son. At the end of verse 21 of John's account, He says *as the Father has sent Me, I also send you*. The Son came with the Father's authority. Now they are being sent out with the Son's authority. They have Messianic authority to carry out the work that they will carry out.
2. He gives them a privilege that was previously only given to Peter. In verse 23 of John's account He says to them: *"If you forgive the sins of any, their sins have been forgiven them; if*

*you retain the sins of any, they have been retained*". Now again, this is not forgiving or retaining sin in the salvation sense. Only God has that authority. This is forgiving or retaining sin for discipline. And we find the apostles carrying out this kind of disciplinary authority, as in the case of Peter against Ananias and Sapphira.

In verse 22, *He breathed on them and \*said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit*. This is not the baptism of the Holy Spirit which won't happen until Acts 2. The Spirit has a number of ministries. Among these ministries is the ministry of illumination. And the way Paul defines it in 1 Corinthians chapters 2 and 3, illumination is to enlighten the mind of the believer to understand spiritual biblical truths.

And don't forget, four different times He spelled out the program of death and resurrection, adding more and more details. As often as He tells them, just as often the text says they understood none of these things.

And now He will be with them for a forty day period between His resurrection and ascension. They have many things they have to learn. And therefore now they receive the illuminating work of the Holy Spirit so now they can finally understand what they could not understand heretofore.

And now that 10 of the 11 have finally seen Him you would think that they are ready to go to Galilee. Except, for some reason, in verse 24, Thomas, or Didymus, was not present. When they tell him what they saw, he says in verse 25, *"Unless I see in His hands the imprint of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe."* Because of Thomas they again never leave town.

## **K. The Sixth Appearance: The Eleven, § 179, John 20:26-31; I Corinthians 15:5**

Notice how much time passes in John's account, verse 26: *After eight days*. It takes three days to go to Galilee. If they had gone to Galilee eight days ago, that would leave 5 days for teaching. But 8 days pass. Jesus in His mercy again appears to them. And focusing on Thomas He says in verse 27, *go ahead and feel, and be no more disbelieving*. And Thomas is convinced. In verse 28 he says, *"My Lord and my God!"*

We sometimes work on the impression that because they were able to see Him and feel Him they were recipients of the greater blessing. It's true that it is easier to believe if you if you can actually see and feel, but that does not mean we are recipients of greater blessing in that context. Look at what He says in verse 29: *"Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed."* The greater blessing goes to us who are willing to be convinced based upon the testimony of Scripture and not based upon experience. And trusting the word of the text is superior to anybody else's experience. And therefore having chosen to believe He rose from the dead based upon the testimony of Scripture makes us the recipients of even greater blessing.

But Thomas illustrates the point made in Romans 1:4. The resurrection of Jesus proved Him to be the Son of God.

Now in verses 30-31 John basically draws the conclusion to his gospel because the conclusion of Thomas, *"My Lord and my God!"* has been his theme throughout this gospel. He will add an appendix, chapter 21. But the gospel closes here.

He points out that there were many other signs than the ones he reports, and John reports only seven signs. But as far as he is concerned, what he reports should be enough to convince them that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and believing in that they have life in His name.

## L. The Seventh Appearance: The Seven, § 180, John 21:1-25

At long last, guess where they finally got to. They finally made it up to the Galilee. They still don't understand all of their mission. And seven of these men were fishermen by profession. As a result they decide to go back to the fishing business. Jesus is saying He'll be leaving them soon, and it must be time to go back to earning a living.

They have been away from this business for about three years and they have become a bit rusty. They caught nothing. At that point Jesus appears to them on the shore and He tells them to do something that makes no difference. He tells them, in verse 6, to take the net and throw it on the other side of the boat, from the left side to the right side.

This is very similar to when He first called them to full time discipleship in section 41. There He told them to do something that would make no difference, and it made a big difference, and that's why He said, *"follow Me and I will make you fishers of men."* And now once again we have a recall in a similar way. He tells them to do something that normally would make no difference, but it makes a big difference. They catch a multitude of fish.

And John recognises that it is Jesus who is on the shoreline and tells Peter, in verse 7, *"It is the Lord"*. And Peter jumps overboard and wades to shore while the others bring in the large catch of fish. And when they draw all these fish in and observe what Jesus is doing on the shoreline, what they see is that they don't need a single one of all the fish they caught! Jesus already has fish broiling, and bread baked. The lesson they have to learn from this is they have a mission to fulfil and He will supply for their needs as they go to fulfil this commission.

And John even points out how many fish they caught. They caught 153 fish. And the point he makes of this is that, although there were so many, the net did not tear apart. The kind of nets they had back then would normally have been torn apart by so many fish, but in this case it didn't tear apart, which was a minor miracle.

Verse 14 points out this was the third time He appeared to the apostolic group, although it is the seventh appearance altogether.

Now in verses 15 – 17 Jesus has a private conversation with Peter. And Peter's earlier three-fold denial is now cancelled by a three-fold affirmation of love. There are two different Greek words which are used, and we need to distinguish between them because of the point He makes.

The first word is *phileo*. *Phileo* is the love of the emotions in response to attraction, a love of friendship. When two people have a close friendship it's a *phileo* love.

The second word that is used is the word *agapao*, which is the verbal form and *agape* which is the noun form. That is the love of the will. It is viewed as being superior because we can will to love the unloving.

He wasn't speaking Greek. He was speaking Hebrew, but there are Hebrew equivalents. The Hebrew for *phileo* is the word *raham*. The Hebrew for the word *agapao* is the word *ahavah*.

Let's look at the parts of the conversation.

1. The first interchange is verse 15.

*So when they had finished breakfast, Jesus \*said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these?", using the word agapao. Do you agapao Me more than these? "These"*

refers to the apostles. Why would Jesus put it that way? Remember during the last Passover he claimed to have a superior love for Jesus. When Jesus said that on that day they will all desert Him, Peter responded, “Maybe these other guys will desert you, but I’m not going to desert you. I’m ready to die for you this very night.” So, in light of what you claimed at the Passover and your experience since, do you really love Me, do you really *agapao* Me more than these others do?

His answer is: “Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.” And he uses the word *phileo*. The point is, “No, I can no longer claim to *agapao* you more than the others. The best I can say is: I do *phileo* you. I am your friend.

He then receives his first commission: *Feed My lambs*. And lambs are the baby believers who need to be fed with the milk of the Word of God. He fulfils this commission when he writes the book of 1 Peter, written to new-born believers, as chapter 2:1-3 makes clear.

2. The second interchange comes in verse 16.

He *\*said to him again a second time, “Simon, son of John, do you love Me?”* This time He drops the phrase, “more than these.” The point is this: Alright Peter, you can no longer affirm that you *agapao* Me more than the others, can you at least affirm that you do *agapao* Me at least equally?

But Peter answers, “Yes, Lord; You know that I love You,” using the word *phileo*. The point is: I cannot affirm that I *agapao* you more than the others, nor can I affirm that I *agapao* you at all. The best I can do is to affirm that I do *phileo* you. I am your friend.

He then receives his second commission: *tend My sheep*. The word *tend* is to exercise authority, oversight. He fulfils the second commission in his activity in the book of Acts as the chief of the apostles.

3. Verse 17 provides the third interchange.

He *\*said to him the third time, “Simon, son of John, do you love Me?”* Now He uses Peter’s word, *phileo*. Do you really *phileo* Me? Alright, you cannot claim that you *agapao* Me more than the others. Nor can you claim that you claim that you *agapao* Me at all. Can you at least affirm that you really do *phileo* Me?

And then we read that *Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, “Do you love Me?” And he said to Him, “Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.”* Peter’s response is, well, I cannot affirm that I *agapao* you more than the others, or that I *agapao* you at all. This much I really can affirm: I do *phileo* you. I am your friend.

He then receives his third commission: *feed My sheep*. And the *sheep* are the older believers to be fed with the meat of the Word of God. He fulfils that by writing 2 Peter.

So Peter’s three-fold denial is cancelled by a three-fold affirmation of love.

But then Jesus tells Peter, in verses 18-19, that someday he will prove he has *agape* love for Jesus, not more than the others, but at least equally, because he will not die of old age. He will die as a martyr. And when he dies that way he will show he has *agape* love for Jesus.

So Peter has just been told he will not die of old age, but will die the death of a martyr. So he points to John and says, “Well there’s John. What about him?” And Jesus’ answer is basically, “Well that is none of

your business.” Verse 22, “*If I want him to remain until I come, what is that to you? You follow Me!*” In other words John is responsible for his own calling. And Peter is responsible for his calling. And so Peter should not be concerned about how God will lead John’s ministry. So, even if God wills that he lives until the second coming, that doesn’t concern Peter.

In verse 24 he then closes this appendix, pointing out he was an eye witness to much of what he wrote. He also notes in verse 25 that nobody could sit down and write everything that Jesus said and taught. The world could not contain the books that would need to be written. And based upon this verse Arnold went through the harmony, and he counted up all of the days that we have on record of the life of Jesus. Keep in mind that He lived about 36 or 37 years of His life. Only 75 to 80 days of His life are recorded. That is it! It shows the evidence of that statement.

## **M. The Eighth Appearance: The Five Hundred, § 181, Mark 16:15-18; Matthew 28:16-20; 1 Corinthians 15:6**

This section describes the eighth appearance, the appearance to the five hundred.

Here Jesus gives the second of the three final commissions that contains five specific points. Three are definite, but two are with a question mark.

1. His first point is that all authority has been given to the resurrected Son. Again, As the Father sent Him with the Father’s authority, He will now send them with the Son’s authority. All authority has been given to the resurrected Son.
2. The commission is: *make disciples*. If you look at Matthew verse 19, it begins with the word *go*, which sounds like an imperative in the English. Actually, in Greek that is not the commission. The only imperative in this verse is *to make disciples*. That’s the command: make disciples. It is followed by three participles introducing participial clauses, and participles are subordinate to the main verb. And the main verb is: *make disciples*. What does that involve:
  - a. *going* is the first participle, and going involves, as you see in Mark verse 15, going into all the world and preaching the gospel to all creation. So the first part of the mission is to go out and evangelise. That is where we make contact with the unbelieving world and share the gospel with them. If that’s all we are doing we are evangelising, but we are not yet discipling.
  - b. Secondly, *baptizing: baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit*. That will distinguish believer’s baptism from other baptisms. There was Judaistic baptism, and John’s baptism. And Christian or believer’s baptism is signified as baptised in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.
  - c. Thirdly, *teaching: teaching them to observe all that I commanded you*. The reason Ariel Ministries and Bible believing churches have so much focus on teaching is that it is part of the Great Commission. Until we are doing all three things we are not fulfilling this commission.
3. The third point is with a question mark as I will explain. The third point is that those who follow through will be saved and those who don’t follow through will be lost. That is based upon Mark’s account in verse 16: *He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned*. The reason this is with a question mark is that verse 16 is not part of some of the older manuscripts that we have. And some question that Mark would have penned these words. The reason we should make an issue of this is that there are groups that like to teach that baptism is essential for salvation. So they say if you believe only, no matter how

strongly you believe, if you are not baptised you still end up spending your eternity in hell. So for people who make baptism a necessity for salvation we respond in two ways.

- a. The first way is like I just mentioned. This verse is missing from the oldest manuscripts we have of the gospel of Mark. Since it is a questionable verse that he may or may not have written, it is dangerous to build a major salvation doctrine based on it.
- b. The second way we can answer is: Let's assume that this verse was penned by Mark, let's assume that it is part of the gospel. Is he saying the lack of baptism condemns you? What it does teach is that baptism is subordinate to believing, the outward sign of inward faith.

When he talks about what condemns a person, notice that he only says unbelief or disbelief condemns a person. He doesn't say, if you believe but are not baptized you are condemned. The only thing that condemns a person, notice, is unbelief, not a lack of baptism.

Now why would he couple baptism and believing? Because, as we see in the book of Acts, back then people were baptised the same day they believed. There was no period of time of any length between believing and baptism. Within the same hour those who believed were also baptised in water. And that was the right thing to do then because nobody was confused about what baptism entailed and what it meant in the Jewish context of that day. But with so much confusion in the church about baptism, today it is wise to wait and educate the person before he undergoes the ritual.

As to what condemns a person, it is merely unbelief, not a lack of baptism. So the third point is that belief is what saves a person, and conversely, it is unbelief that condemns a person. This is also what He told Nicodemus in John 3:18.

4. The fourth point also has a question mark for a similar reason. Within the body of believers certain signs will follow. He mentions five signs.
  - a. They will cast out demons.
  - b. They will speak in new tongues or languages.
  - c. They will be healed of serpent bites.
  - d. They will lay on hands and heal people.
  - e. They will drink poison and not die.

Again this is questionable because this verse is missing from the oldest manuscripts of the gospel of Mark. And again, it is a dangerous thing to teach a major spiritual life issue based upon a questionable passage. In some circles they teach that if you don't do these things you are not even saved. Others will say that you are saved but you are not Spirit filled.

Here again there are two ways to answer this.

- a. Note that these verses are not found in the oldest manuscripts, so it is questionable that Mark penned it and it is dangerous to build such a doctrine on a questionable passage.
- b. Let's assume that these are the authentic words of Mark. Is it saying that all believers should or could do all these things? Go back to verse 16. Notice there he uses the singular form: he who has believed, because salvation is individual. But in verse 17 notice the switch from the

singular to the plural: These signs will accompany those who have believed. And by switching to the plural the issue is not that every believer should do these things or could do these things, but he is saying that within the body of believers you will find these five signs. Not that they will be true of every believer. Within the body of believers you will see all these five signs. In fact four of these five signs are found in the book of Acts. The one we don't have a record of is the drinking of poison. Furthermore, notice that people who teach that every believer should do all these things as a sign of a true believer invariably only mention three of the five things: they mention the casting out of demons, speaking in tongues and healing and laying on of hands, but they skip being bitten by snakes and drinking poison. And that's convenient, but not honest.

Again, as in verse 16, every individual must believe for salvation, but in the plural, in the body of believers, you will see these five things. So the fifth point is that these signs will be seen in the body of believers.

5. The fifth point is that He will be with them always, Matthew verse 20: *and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.*

## **N. The Ninth Appearance: James, § 182, 1 Corinthians 15:7**

The ninth appearance is to James. This is not James the apostle, but James the half-brother of Jesus. It leads to his conversion, and as Acts 1:14 points out, also to the conversion of the other three half-brothers. And this sets the stage, not only for his conversion, but also for him to become the head of the first church in Jerusalem.

He also became a member of the second apostolic group. (Galatians 1:19.) There are two different apostolic groups. The first one is more intensive in its requirements. The prerequisites for the first group were to have been with Jesus from the time He was baptized by John until His ascension. When it came time to replace Judas only two men met that qualification, and Matthias was chosen. The second apostolic group also had a prerequisite, but not as extensive. They only had to have seen the resurrected Christ. So when Paul defends his apostolic authority in 1 Corinthians 9:1 he says, *have I not seen the resurrected Son?* And because James saw the resurrected Son he is a member of the second apostolic group.

## **O. The Tenth Appearance: The Eleven, § 183, Luke 24:44-49; Acts 1:3-8**

Now both of these accounts are by the writer, Luke. And he tells us two things that Jesus focused on in His post-resurrection teaching:

1. First of all Messianic prophecy, prophecies about the first coming. That's in Luke 24:44. And notice he mentions all three divisions of the Scriptures because the Hebrew Bible has three parts: the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings. The book of Psalms is the first book of the Writings.

And verse 45 says: *Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures.* That's why earlier He breathed the Holy Spirit upon them. They finally could understand what they could not understand heretofore.

2. The second area of teaching, in Acts verses 3 & 4, has to do with the Kingdom of God program. This was essential because they would be faced with the same Jewish objection that Jewish people still raise in our day. If Jesus was the Messiah, what happened to the Messianic Kingdom? And He has to spell out the Messianic Kingdom program. It is this teaching about the Kingdom of God that raised the question in verse 6: *"Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?"*



And it is interesting how those who don't believe in the future Kingdom interpret the response of Jesus. They interpret His response to mean that there will never be such a Kingdom. But this is not His answer.

His answer in verse 7 is: *It is not for you to know times or epochs*. He didn't say there won't be one! It wasn't for them to know the timing of it.

But for now they have a commission to fulfill. They now receive the third final commission that has two main points.

1. First of all they are to remain in Jerusalem until the coming of the Holy Spirit. When the Spirit finally comes it will mean three things.
  - a. First of all it will fulfil the promise of the Father. In the Upper Room Discourse we saw the promise was that He will send them another comforter. And this is the other comforter that will be coming.
  - b. Secondly there will be a new ministry of the Spirit, the ministry of Spirit baptism. And the defining element is found in 1 Corinthians 12:13, <sup>13</sup> *For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit*. And he points out in Acts 1:5 the Spirit had not come yet, but He will come in the next few days. He will come in Acts 2:1-4. And that's how the church is going to begin. It begins with the baptism ministry of the Spirit.
  - c. Thirdly it will mean power to fulfil the commission He is giving to them. They will have divine inner power because of the indwelling of the Spirit to fulfil the commission they are given.
2. And the second part of the commission is to go out and preach the gospel in a geographically ordered manner. First of all, start in Jerusalem. Secondly, go unto Judea. Thirdly, move on to Samaria. And fourthly, move on to the outermost part of the earth. And that is the outline of the book of Acts: Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the outermost parts of the earth. Though He does not say, "the Gentile world"; the phrase "the outermost parts of the earth" was an idiom for the Gentile world used by Isaiah, for example, in Isaiah 49:5-6. It was a phrase used for the Gentile world.

## **P. The Ascension of the King, § 184, Mark 16:19-20; Luke 24:50-53; Acts 1:9-12**

Now Luke verse 50 tells us the ascension takes place and it was by the town of Bethany. And Bethany is on the lower eastern slopes of the Mount of Olives. If you go to Israel today and look at the summit of the Mount of Olives, you will see a Russian Orthodox church called the Church of the Ascension. They assume that that's where He went up from because that is the highest point of the Mount of Olives. There is even a slab of stone there with two footprints embedded into it, because when He blasted off He burned His footprints into the rock! Now they missed the location of the transfiguration by about 45 miles. This was only off by about a mile and a half.

Slowly He is lifted up. They are able to see Him go only so high and a cloud hides the rest of His ascension.

In Acts 1:10-11, they keep staring up into heaven hoping He will make a u-turn. And angels appeared to them saying: Don't keep staring into heaven. They have a commission to fulfil. And they are to wait in Jerusalem until the Spirit comes, and then begin their commission.



As for Jesus, He kept on going into heaven, and upon arrival He took His seat at the right hand of the Father, and His glory was unveiled forever.

And there are theological implications of the ascension.

1. It proved the truth of what He said, *I go to the Father*, in John 14:28.
2. It means that Jesus is preparing a place for us, and once it is prepared He will come for us at the rapture of the church. John 14:1-2.
3. It marks the culmination of His exultation, the last stage of His exultation that began with His entombment in the unused rich man's tomb, and now enthronement at the right hand of God the Father. Ephesians 1:20-23.
4. It marks His headship over the church. Colossians 1:18.
5. It means there is a man seated at the right hand of God the Father. He left heaven only in the form of God. He came back to heaven in the form of the God-Man. Acts 2:32-35.
6. It began the high priestly ministry of Yeshua. He began His ministry only as of His ascension, Hebrew 4:14-16.
7. It marks the coming of the Holy Spirit. Ephesians 4:8-10. That's when the spiritual gifts were given, following the ascension, and then later the Spirit came.
8. It makes Him the Son and forerunner according to Hebrews 6:20. The word forerunner means the first of more to come later, and we are the more to come later.
9. It marks the believer's new position as being seated in the heavenlies. Ephesians 1:20-21. In positional truth, there are certain things true of us, not because of what we are, but because of what we are in the Messiah.
10. By means of the ascension the gifts of the Spirit could be given. Ephesians 4:7-11.
11. It was the manner of His return, not the place, but the manner of His return. He left in the clouds of heaven. And He will some day come back in the clouds of heaven. Acts 1:9-11.
12. It means the Old Testament saints are now also in heaven. They were removed from Abraham's Bosom and they are now in heaven as well. Ephesians 4:8.

## Sequel to the Life of Christ

We will finish our course by looking at four points of sequel.

### A. The policy of no more signs for Israel continues, 1 Corinthians 1:21-24

As we noted in section 61, as of section 61 in Matthew 12, once the unpardonable sin was committed, He refused to provide any more signs publicly on behalf of the people, except one sign, the sign of Jonah, the sign of resurrection.

And the policy of no more signs for Israel has continued.

1 Corinthians 1:21–24 (NASB95)

*<sup>21</sup> For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. <sup>22</sup> For indeed Jews ask for signs and Greeks search for wisdom; <sup>23</sup> but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness, <sup>24</sup> but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.*

The point he makes is that the Gentiles can continue seeking after philosophical wisdom (true of the Greeks) and Jews can continue seeking after signs, but both will receive the same message: Christ crucified. And with the crucifixion came the message of the resurrection.

As we saw earlier in this course, the multiplicity of signs and wonders is not convincing, except to those who already wish to believe. Look at the great miracles that Jesus did, miracles no one else has done before or since. But they find reason not to believe.

And when the apostles did all the miracles in the book of Acts there was more rejection than acceptance.

When the rich man (Luke 16:31) asked Abraham that Lazarus be raised from the dead so that his brothers would believe, Abraham answered him that they have the Scriptures and that is all they need. If they don't believe Moses and the prophets they won't believe if one rises from the dead.

If the Scriptures are not believed, as they read, miracles will not be of any benefit. And all Biblical history points to that.

Without doing any signs Ariel ministries has won many Jews to the Lord and they continue to do so to this day.

The policy of no more signs for Israel has continued to this day.

## B. The Relationship of the Life of Christ to the Book of Acts, Acts 6 – 8; 1 Peter 3:21-2

The book of Acts is Luke's sequel to his gospel account.

### *Peter's sermons & repentance*

In chapters 2-6 we read of the presentation of the gospel to the Jews in Jerusalem. Peter's sermons recorded in these chapters must be understood in the light of the judgment which was hanging over that particular generation. In the Book of Acts there is a constant plea for Jews to repent, and that means to change their minds about Yeshua, before the judgment comes.

### *The second sign of Jonah rejected*

The first sign of Jonah was the resurrection of Lazarus, which was rejected by the Sanhedrin in John 11. The second sign of Jonah was the resurrection of Jesus, which is rejected in the first seven chapters of the book of Acts. The stoning of Stephen in Acts 7 marks the official rejection of the second sign of Jonah. That is why it is only in chapter 8 that the gospel goes out for the first time to non-Jews. It stays within the Jewish frame of reference in the first seven chapters. But once the second sign of Jonah is rejected by the Sanhedrin it then goes out to the Samaritans in Acts 8 and the Gentiles in Acts chapter 10.

### *Salvation by baptism*

Now there are two passages in Acts are used to teach that you have to be baptized to be saved. Those are Acts 2:38, and 22:16.

Acts 2:38 (NASB95)

<sup>38</sup> Peter said to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 22:16 (NASB95)

<sup>16</sup> 'Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name.'

Now the first thing to observe is that both these passages are written to a specific Jewish audience. Secondly, it is written to the same Jewish generation that is guilty of the unpardonable sin and faces the judgement of AD 70. That generation was in need of salvation from two distinct events: the judgement to come in AD 70, and the eternal judgement in the Lake of Fire.

So in Acts 2:38 notice Peter tells them to do two things. First of all in verse 38 he says *repent*. And again, in the context repent means they need to change their mind about Jesus. He's not demon possessed. He is the Messiah. And that act of repentance, or changing of mind is going to save them spiritually. But it won't necessarily save them physically. Believing will save them spiritually, but it won't save them physically from the AD 70 judgement.

The second thing they have to do is to be baptized. And in the Jewish context what baptism does is: it will separate them from the Judaism of that day. And baptism will be the means of separation from this Judaism that rejected Jesus and from the generation that is guilty of the unpardonable sin.

And you only need to read two more verses to see what he is getting at. Look at verse 40.

Acts 2:39-40 (NASB95)

<sup>39</sup> *“For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself.”* <sup>40</sup> *And with many other words he solemnly testified and kept on exhorting them, saying, “Be saved from this perverse generation!”*

*It says: be saved, (save yourselves – ASV).* Does he mean save yourselves spiritually? No one can save themselves spiritually. So save yourselves from what? *From this perverse generation.* So what baptism will do for them is separate them from the perverse generation guilty of the unpardonable sin.

Both Acts 2:38 and 22:16 are addressed to a Jewish audience, not a Gentile one, focussing on physical deliverance. Only belief will save them spiritually.

There is one more passage that people use and that’s 1 Peter 3:21

1 Peter 3:21–22 (NASB95)

<sup>21</sup> *Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you—not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience—through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, <sup>22</sup> who is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, after angels and authorities and powers had been subjected to Him.*

1 Peter 1:1-3 shows he was writing specifically to Jewish believers of the dispersion. And the word dispersion refers to Jewish people outside the land. These are not just Jewish people, but Jewish believers outside the land.

Chapter 2:1-3 clarify that he is writing to new believers still needing the milk of the word of God to be raised from their level of immaturity to maturity. And one thing that kept them immature, and this often still happens to Jewish believers today, is a reluctance to be baptized, because they know it is a final break from Judaism.

So in chapter 3 he encourages them to undergo water baptism, which will save them, but save them from what? Now he makes a comparison with Noah’s Ark. The ark saved Noah. Did the Ark save Noah spiritually? No. He was already a saved man spiritually before he built the Ark. But the Ark did save Noah and his family physically. By the same token baptism will save them physically from the coming judgement. He already treats them as spiritually saved. They already have salvation in chapters 1 & 2. But baptism will save them physically from the coming judgement for the unpardonable sin.

## **C. The Relationship of the Life of Christ to the Book of Hebrews, Luke 21:20-24; Hebrews 13:11-14**

The book of Hebrews is written to a body of second generation Jewish believers undergoing some tremendous persecution. And because of this persecution they were seriously considering going back into Judaism to escape the persecution. They would then wait for the persecution to pass, and start their Christian life all over again later. The writer writes to warn them against doing so because if they go back into Judaism now they will re-identify themselves with the generation guilty of the unpardonable sin and will die a terrible physical death.

There are five warning passages in the book of Hebrews often used to teach individual salvation. All five passages are dealing with physical discipline, physical death, not loss of spiritual salvation. And if they go back into Judaism it will be an irrevocable decision and they will face judgement. And so what they should do is firstly, to make their break complete, which for Jewish believers then and now comes with water baptism. And secondly: press on to spiritual maturity so as not to lose their reward. And then thirdly, when the time comes, they must abandon the city and go outside the camp, Hebrews 13:13-14.

We do not know from the book of Hebrews how they respond. But we have three ancient writings that tell us what happened. One is a man called Josephus, a first century Jewish historian, not a believer, he is a Pharisee and an eye witness to many of the events of AD 70. Secondly there was a man named Heggi Sophius, a Jewish believer of the second century. He wrote a seven volume set about the early history of the church. Although it is all lost much of it is quoted by the third writer, Eusebius, a fourth century Gentile believer.

Pulling all three sources together this is what we discover. When the recipients of Hebrews received the letter they accepted it, made their break from Judaism, and when the war against Rome broke out they left the city under Cleopas, and went to a city called Pela. Pela is just south of the sea of Galilee and east of the river outside the war zone. A total of 1,100,000 Jews died in that Roman war. But not one single Jewish believer was dead because of his obedience to the letter to the Hebrews. The letter to Hebrews had a happier ending!

## D. The Third Sign of Jonah, Zechariah 4:1-14; Revelation 11:3-13

Look now at Zechariah chapter 4.

In Zechariah 4:1-10 Zechariah is given a vision, much of which he understands, but there is one key point he does not understand. What he sees in his vision is first of all a seven branched lampstand, called a menorah, which was the main symbol of Israel throughout Scripture. Above and beside the lampstand are two olive trees. Between the olive trees there is a bowl. And the olive trees empty olive oil into the bowl. Then from the bowl to each of the lamps there are seven smaller ducts or pipes, seven of them to each one for a total of 49. They feed oil to the seven lamps. The one common symbol used throughout the vision is the symbol of olive oil which is a common symbol of the Holy Spirit.

So what he sees is Israel filled with the Holy Spirit, finally fulfilling its calling of Exodus 19 to be the light to the Gentiles. But the source of the oil, the source of the Spirit, is the two olive trees on each side of the lampstand. Zechariah understands most of the vision because of previous revelation. What he does not understand is what these two olive trees represent. But somehow they are the oil of the spirit to Israel.

So in verses 11, 12, & 13 he raises the question: *“What are these two olive trees on the right of the lampstand and on its left?”* And in verse 14 he gets a very cryptic answer: *“These are the two anointed ones who are standing by the Lord of the whole earth.”* All he is told is that these are the two anointed ones that stand before the Lord of the whole earth. That’s all he is told. How much he understood we are not sure.

If that was all we had to go on, I couldn’t tell you more than what I’ve told you now.

Now turn to Revelation 11.

Revelation 11:3-13 describe the events that will occur at the mid-point of the tribulation. For the first half of the tribulation there are two prophets, two witnesses, whose witness is limited to Jerusalem. And while the 144,000 of Revelation chapter 7 are world-wide, the two witnesses of Revelation 11 are limited to Jerusalem. And the exact length of their ministry is 1,260 days, three and a half years. Any attempt to kill them prematurely fails. All those who try to kill them are killed themselves. He identifies them in verses 3-4. Notice what he says: *These are the two olive trees*. What two olive trees? No olive trees were mentioned in the first ten chapters of Revelation, yet he refers specifically to the two olive trees. The only previous mention of two olive trees is the prophecy of Zechariah chapter 4.

Now we learn that the two olive trees of Zechariah chapter 4 represent the two witnesses of Revelation 11. But again, how are they the source of the oil, the source of the Spirit?

Now at the mid-point of the Tribulation, what nobody else was able to do the anti-christ is able to accomplish. He is able to kill the two witnesses. And the whole world is really happy that they are dead. We are told they even have a world-wide Christmas celebration. They exchange gifts with each other, we are told. As for the bodies of the two men killed, they will remain unburied on the streets of Jerusalem for three and a half days. And for three and a half days everybody is having a party. Then, after three and a half days, in the sight of all, the bodies are resurrected from the dead and they ascend into heaven. And the resurrection and the ascension of the two witnesses lead to four results, all in verse 13.

1. A great earthquake will hit the city.
2. One tenth of the city will be destroyed.
3. Seven thousand will die.
4. *And the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven.*

The resurrection and ascension of the two witnesses will lead to the salvation of the Jews of Jerusalem at the midpoint of the Tribulation, just before they have to flee outside the land. That begins a process that is completed three and a half years later. And more specifically, in the last three days before the second coming, the whole nation will come to faith. You will find this in Hosea 5:15 – 6:3. In Isaiah 66:8 the nation will be born *in one day*. In Zechariah 3:9 He will remove the iniquity of the land *in one day*. In Romans 11:25 - 27 the whole nation will be saved.

And Israel's national salvation is the prerequisite to the second coming. So with Israel's national salvation will come the second coming and the Kingdom.

They did reject the first sign of Jonah. And they did reject the second sign of Jonah. But they will accept the third sign of Jonah and that will lead to Israel's national salvation and the establishment of the Messianic Kingdom.

The life of Jesus is yet to have a happier ending. Selah.

## APPENDIX 1

### Interpretation Rules for Understanding Prophecy and Scripture

#### *1. The Golden Rule of Interpretation*

When the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense; therefore, take every word at its primary, ordinary, usual, literal meaning, unless the facts of the immediate context, studied in the light of related passages and axiomatic and fundamental truths, indicate clearly otherwise.

#### *2. The Law of Double Reference*

The Law of Double Reference is the principle of associating similar or related ideas, which are usually separated from one another by a long period of time, and which are blended into a single picture like the blending of pictures by a stereopticon.

A clear cut example of this law may be found in Isaiah 11:1-5. Verses 1 and 2 refer to the first coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, and verses 3 to 5 tell of the second time He comes to earth.

#### *3. The Law of Recurrence*

The Law of Recurrence involves the recording of an event and the repetition of the account which gives added details. This principle may be illustrated by the artist who “blocks out the portrait” of a person at the first sitting and adds details at subsequent sittings.

Example: Ezekiel 38:1-39:16

Chapter 38 gives a complete account of the coming invasion of Israel by Russia and the subsequent destruction of the Russian army in Israel. Chapter 39 then repeats the account from the beginning giving additional details.

#### *4. The Law of the Context*

A Text apart from its Context is a Pretext. A verse can only mean what it means in its context and must not be taken out of its context.

Example: Zechariah 13:6

This verse is often used to prophecy of the Messiah. Pulled out of its context, it does indeed sound like it refers to Jesus. But the context of vs2-6 is speaking of false prophets. Verse 6 cannot refer to Jesus unless Jesus is a false prophet. This is the danger of studying a verse by itself rather than in context. The common saying, “You can prove anything by the Bible,” is only true when this law is violated.

(These four rules were formulated by Dr David L Cooper, the late founder and director of the Biblical Research Society.)

## APPENDIX 2

### John's Seven's and the Three Messianic Miracles

#### *Seven Signs*

|                                  |      |
|----------------------------------|------|
| 1. Changes water into wine       | §29  |
| 2. Healing the nobleman's son    | §38  |
| 3. Healing the paralytic         | §49  |
| 4. Feeding of the 5,000          | §72  |
| 5. Calming the storm             | §74  |
| 6. Healing of the man born blind | §100 |
| 7. Resurrection of Lazarus       | §118 |

#### *Seven Discourses*

|                             |          |
|-----------------------------|----------|
| 1. The New Birth            | §32      |
| 2. The Works of God         | §49      |
| 3. The Bread of Life        | §76      |
| 4. The Water of Life        | §96      |
| 5. The Light of the World   | §98-99   |
| 6. The Good Shepherd        | §101     |
| 7. The Upper Room Discourse | §149-150 |

#### *Seven I am's*

|                                    |      |
|------------------------------------|------|
| 1. The Bread of Life               | §76  |
| 2. The Light of the World          | §98  |
| 3. The Door of the Sheep           | §101 |
| 4. The Good Shepherd               | §101 |
| 5. The Resurrection and the Life   | §118 |
| 6. The Way, The Truth and the Life | §149 |
| 7. The True Vine                   | §150 |

#### *Three Messianic Miracles*

|                                      |      |
|--------------------------------------|------|
| 1. The healing of the Jewish leper   | §45  |
| 2. Casting out the dumb demon        | §61  |
| 3. The healing of someone born blind | §100 |



## APPENDIX 3

### Personification of the WORD (Hebrew Davar, Aramaic Memra)

Davar, the WORD, is personified in the Old Testament and is often found carrying out a commission.

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><a href="#">Genesis 15: 1</a></p> <p><sup>1</sup><i>After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not fear, Abram, I am a shield to you; Your reward shall be very great."</i></p>  | <p>The WORD is personified as revealer</p>  |
| <p><a href="#">Psalm 33:4-6</a></p> <p><sup>4</sup><i>For the word of the Lord is upright, And all His work is done in faithfulness. <sup>5</sup>He loves righteousness and justice; The earth is full of the lovingkindness of the Lord. <sup>6</sup>By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, And by the breath of His mouth all their host.</i></p>   | <p>It is the agent of creation. God spoke the WORD, and what He spoke came into existence.</p>              |
| <p><a href="#">Psalm 147:15</a></p> <p><sup>15</sup><i>He sends forth His command to the earth; His word runs very swiftly.</i></p>   | <p>The WORD moves swiftly to carry out God's purpose.</p>   |
| <p><a href="#">Isaiah 9:8</a></p> <p><sup>8</sup><i>The Lord sends a message [Davar] against Jacob, And it falls on Israel.</i></p>   | <p>The Lord sent the WORD against Jacob to accomplish a specific mission and <i>it falls on Israel</i>.</p> |
| <p><a href="#">Isaiah 55:10-11</a></p> <p><sup>10</sup> <i>"For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, And do not return there without watering the earth And making it bear and sprout, And furnishing seed to the sower and bread to the eater; <sup>11</sup>So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; It will not return to Me empty, Without accomplishing what I desire, And without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it.</i></p> | <p>The WORD goes and returns. It accomplishes Gods desire. It succeeds. It is sent.</p>                     |
| <p><a href="#">Isaiah 45:23</a></p> <p><sup>23</sup> <i>"I have sworn by Myself, The word has gone forth from My mouth in righteousness And will not turn back, That to Me every knee will bow, every tongue will swear allegiance.</i></p>   | <p>The WORD goes out. It is able to turn back, but will not.</p>  |
| <p><a href="#">Ezekiel 1:3</a></p> <p><sup>3</sup> <i>the word of the Lord came expressly to Ezekiel the priest, son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the river Chebar; and there the hand of the Lord came upon him.</i></p>   | <p>The WORD of the Lord came expressly to the prophet.</p>  |

## APPENDIX 4

### When was Jesus Born?

| Known Historical Events   | Year BC | Implications of events  |
|---|---------|---|
| <p>Quirinius Issues the census decree</p> <p>Herod is away fighting a war</p>   | 8       | <p>Mary and Joseph travel to Bethlehem sometime after this in response to the decree. Mary is with child at this stage.</p> <p>The wise men could not have met Herod in Jerusalem during this year.</p> |
|   | 7       | Most probable year of Jesus' birth  |
|   | 6       |   |
| Herod leaves Jerusalem and goes to spend the last months of his life in Jericho | 5       | The wise men must have met with Herod in Jerusalem before this event. Jesus was two years or less when the wise men arrived in Jerusalem.   |
| Herod dies  | 4       |   |

In Conclusion, Jesus must have been born sometime between late 8 BC and early 6 BC. The most probable time for his birth would be early 7 BC or late 8 BC, this would allow time for Jesus to grow to nearly two years of age by the time the magi visited with Herod (most probably in late 6 BC).

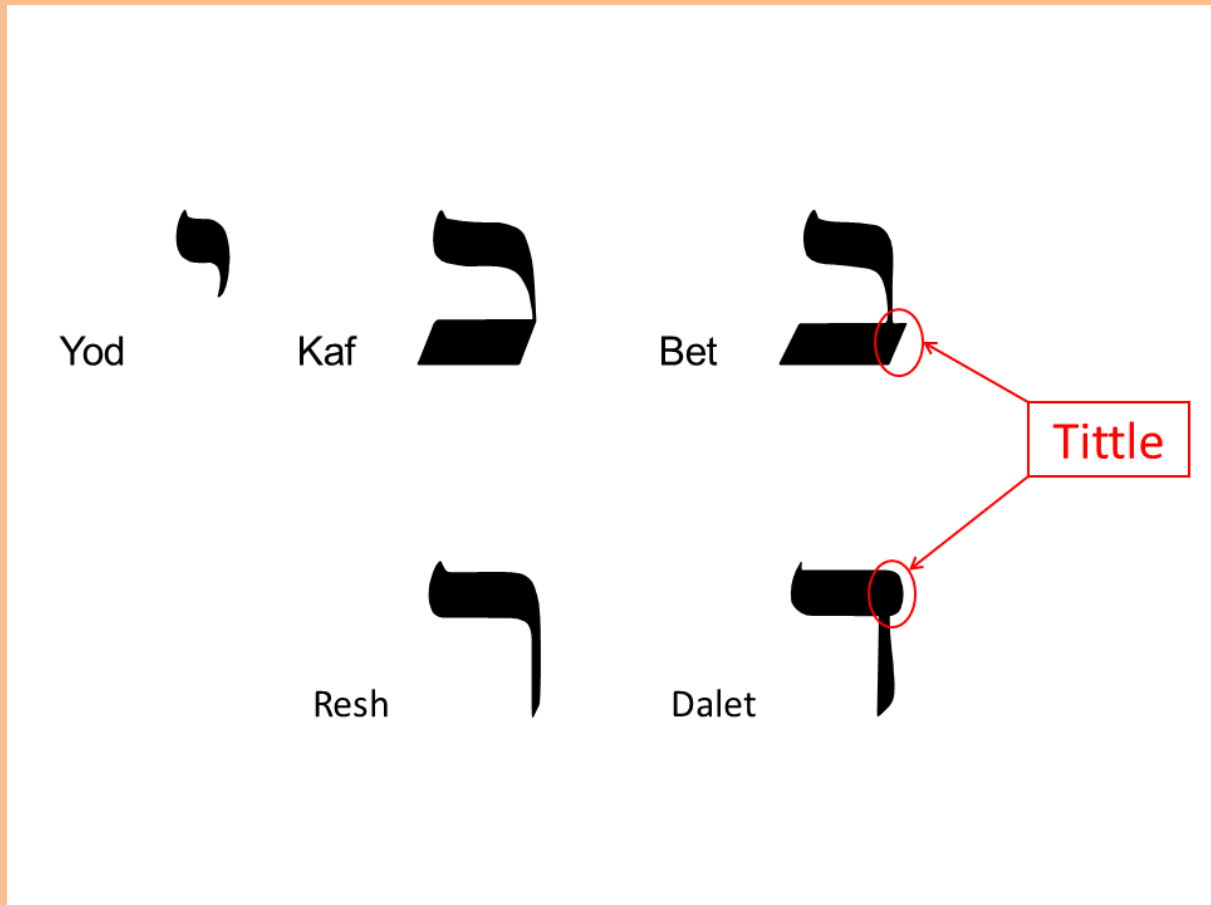
## APPENDIX 5

### The Four Lists of the Apostles

| Mark 3:16-19              | Matthew 10:2-4            | Luke 6:14-16               | Acts 1:13                  |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Simon Peter               | Simon Peter               | Simon Peter                | Simon Peter                |
| James                     | Andrew                    | Andrew                     | John                       |
| John                      | James                     | James                      | James                      |
| Andrew                    | John                      | John                       | Andrew                     |
| Philip                    | Philip                    | Philip                     | Philip                     |
| Bartholomew               | Bartholomew               | Bartholomew                | Thomas                     |
| Matthew                   | Thomas                    | Matthew                    | Bartholomew                |
| Thomas                    | Matthew                   | Thomas                     | Matthew                    |
| James the son of Alphaeus | James the son of Alphaeus | James the son of Alphaeus  | James the son of Alphaeus  |
| Thaddeus                  | Thaddeus                  | Simon the Zealot           | Simon the Zealot           |
| Simon the Zealot          | Simon the Zealot          | Judas the brother of James | Judas the brother of James |
| Judas Iscariot            | Judas Iscariot            | Judas Iscariot             |                            |

## APPENDIX 6

### Yod and Tittle



Matthew 5:18 *"For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished."*

Jesus will be the one who will fulfil every jot and tittle. What does that refer to?

The word jot actually refers to the tenth letter of the Hebrew alphabet, the letter yod. Yod is the smallest letter of the alphabet. It is about a quarter of the size of the other letters. The point of saying not one yod is that He will fulfil the Law down to the smallest letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

Now what is the tittle? Some Hebrew letters look very much the same, like the letter beth and the letter kaf. The only difference is a small thing protruding at one corner. That is the tittle. Another example is dalet and resh.

Tittle is the smallest part of a single Hebrew letter. And the point is: not only will He fulfil the Law down to the smallest letter of the Hebrew alphabet, He will also fulfil the Law down to the smallest part of a single Hebrew letter.

By using the letters in this way He points out that the Law He intends to fulfil is the written Law, the one Moses gave. He does not intend to fulfil the Mishnaic Law. And He will fulfil the Law of Moses perfectly down to every yod and tittle.

## APPENDIX 7

### Old Testament Prophecies about the Outpouring of the Holy Spirit

Excerpt from MBS066 - "The Ministries of the Holy Spirit."

A second major future work of the Holy Spirit will be Israel's national regeneration. The national regeneration of Israel is consistently connected with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. This is seen in a number of passages in the Old Testament.

#### 1. Isaiah 32:9-20.

The first passage can be divided into three segments. First, verses 9-14 describe the period of the Great Tribulation. The second segment, in verse 15, describes the outpouring of the Holy Spirit: *until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness become a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be esteemed as a forest.* In this verse, Isaiah speaks of an outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon Israel following the Great Tribulation (vv. 9-14). In the third segment (vv. 16-20), he describes the Messianic Kingdom, which follows the national regeneration of Israel.

#### 2. Isaiah 44:1-5.

In the second passage, verses 1-2 emphasize that Israel is the chosen people of God. In verses 3-5, he describes the outpouring of the Spirit upon the whole nation of Israel: *For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and streams upon the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit upon your seed, and my blessing upon your offspring: and they shall spring up among the grass, as willows by the watercourses. One shall say, I am Jehovah's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto Jehovah, and surname himself by the name of Israel.*

#### 3. Ezekiel 39:25-29.

In the third passage, verses 25-28 describe a world-wide regathering of the Jewish people for the Messianic Kingdom. The basis for Israel's world-wide regathering is given in verse 29: *neither will I hide my face any more from them; for I have poured out my Spirit upon the house of Israel, says the Lord Jehovah. This verse speaks of an outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the whole nation of Israel. This outpouring will result in Israel's regeneration, which, in turn, will be the basis for Israel's final restoration and regathering.*

#### 4. Joel 2:28-29.

In the fourth passage, Joel is speaking about the last days of the Great Tribulation, when the Holy Spirit will be poured out upon the whole nation of Israel. *And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my Spirit.*

Peter quoted this passage in Acts 2:16-21 only as an application to their experience, for there was a pouring out of the Spirit in a limited way, but only upon the Twelve Apostles or on the one hundred twenty at the most, not on the whole nation of Israel. The fulfilment of Joel 2:28-29 did not occur in Acts 2 nor is it occurring at the present time. It will occur only when the whole nation of Israel will be saved.

#### 5. Zechariah 4:1-14.

The fifth passage also pictures Israel as a saved nation. The universal outpouring of the Holy Spirit will be on the nation of Israel only, and it is connected with the Holy Spirit in verse 6: *Then he answered and spoke unto me, saying, "This is the word of Jehovah unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, said Jehovah of hosts."*

6. Zechariah 12:10, 13:1.

The sixth passage is Zechariah 12:10, 13:1. Verse 10 reads: *And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplication; and they shall look unto me whom they have pierced; and they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born.* In this passage, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit results in Israel's national regeneration, which, in turn, leads to the Second Coming of Jesus the Messiah.

In this second major work and ministry of the Holy Spirit in the future, the Holy Spirit will work in such a way that the whole nation of Israel will be saved by the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit. This will, in turn, bring about the Second Coming of the Messiah.

## APPENDIX 8

### The Place of the Dead

From MBS107, “The Place of the Dead”, we learn that there are 13 terms used to describe the unseen world.

1. Sheol - 64 times in the Old Testament. Psalm 86:13, Deuteronomy 32:22.
2. Hades - 10 times in the New Testament. Matthew 11:23, Revelation 1:18.
3. Abbadon - 6 times in the Old Testament, 1 time in the New. Prov. 15:11, Revelation 9:11.
4. The Pit - 23 times in the Old Testament. Job 33:18, Psalm 30:3.
5. The Abyss - 9 times in the New Testament. Luke 8:31, Revelation 20:3.
6. Tartarus - 1 time in the New Testament. 2 Peter 2:4.
7. Hell - the English translation of the Hebrew and Greek for the bad side of Sheol. The concept of Hell in common English usage is different in some ways from the biblical picture.
8. Gehenna - 12 times in the New Testament. Matthew 5:22, Luke 12:5.
9. Lake of Fire - 4 times in the New Testament. Revelation 20:10, 21:8.
10. Abraham’s Bosom - 1 time in the New Testament. Luke 16:22-23.
11. Paradise - 3 times in the New Testament. Luke 23:43, Revelation 2:7.
12. Heaven - 39 times in both the Old and New Testaments. 2 Corinthians 12:1-4, Philippians 3:20.

There are three aspects of heaven, two are temporal (atmosphere & outer space), and the third is where God is.

13. New Jerusalem - 3 times in the New Testament. Galatians 4:26, Hebrews 12:22-24.

## The Place of the Dead

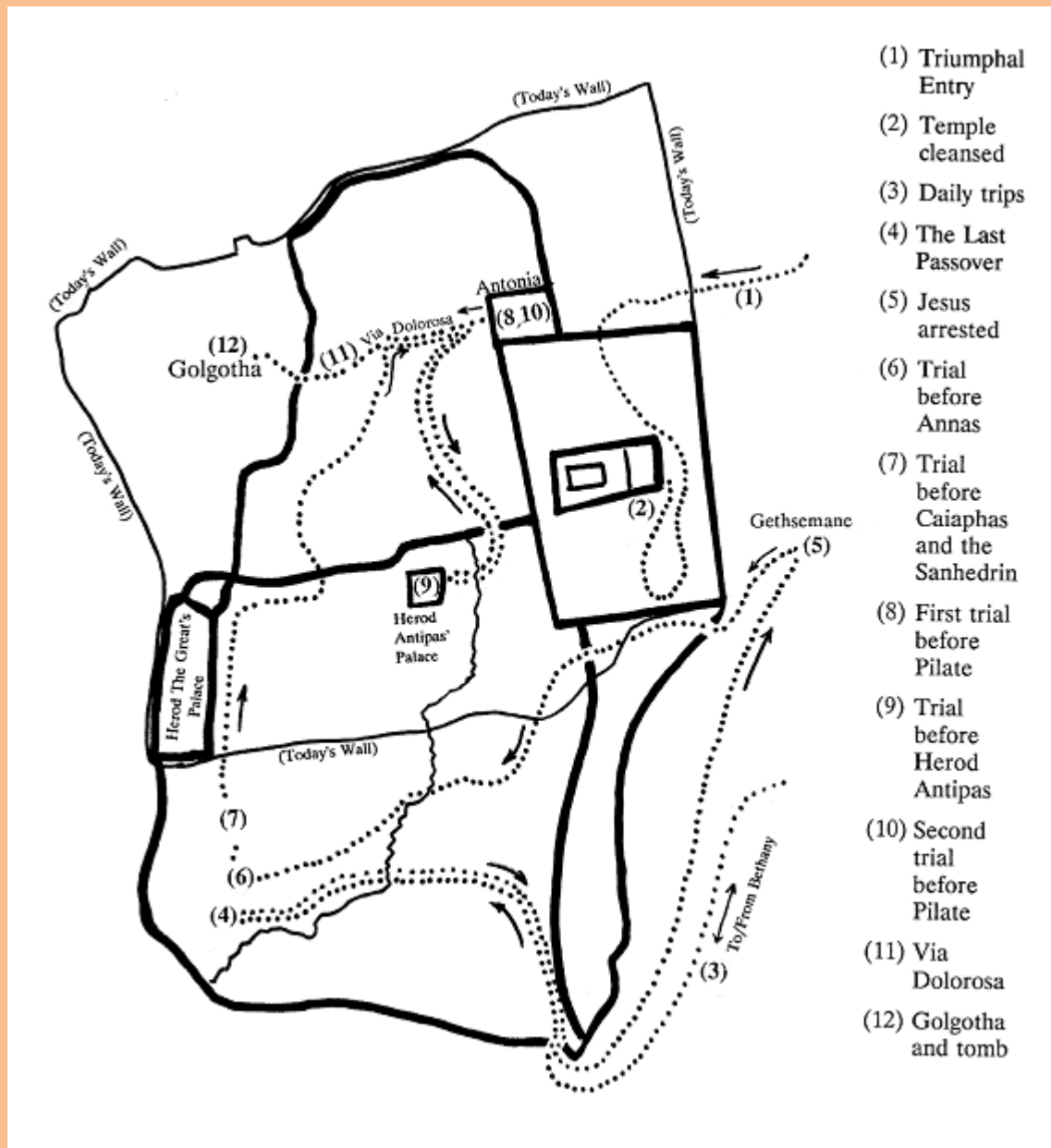
as it was at the time of Christ





## APPENDIX 9

### Map – Messiah's Last Week – A.D. 30



## APPENDIX 10

### 22 Laws of the Sanhedrin Regarding Trials

1. There was to be no arrest by religious authorities that was effected by a bribe, Exodus 23:8.
2. There were to be no steps of criminal proceedings after sunset.
3. Judges or Sanhedrin members were not allowed to participate in the arrest.
4. There were to be no trials before the morning sacrifice.
5. There were to be no secret trials, only public.
6. Sanhedrin trials could only be conducted in the Hall of Judgment of the Temple Compound.
7. The procedure was to be first the defence and then the accusation.
8. All may argue in favour of acquittal, but all may not argue in favour of conviction.
9. There were to be two or three witnesses and their testimony had to agree in every detail, Deuteronomy 19:15.
10. There was to be no allowance for the accused to testify against himself.
11. The High Priest was forbidden to tear his garments, Leviticus 21:10.
12. Charges could not originate with the judges; they could only investigate charges brought to them.
13. The accusation of blasphemy was only valid if the name of God itself was pronounced.
14. A person could not be condemned on the basis of his own words alone.
15. The verdict could not be announced at night, only in the daytime.
16. In cases of capital punishment, the trial and guilty verdict could not occur at the same time but must be separated by at least 24 hours.
17. Voting for the death penalty had to be done by individual count beginning with the youngest so the young would not be influenced by the elders.
18. A unanimous decision for guilt shows innocence since it is impossible for 23-71 men to agree without plotting.
19. The sentence could only be pronounced three days after the guilty verdict.
20. Judges were to be humane and kind.
21. A person condemned to death was not to be scourged or beaten beforehand.
22. No trials are allowed on the eve of the Sabbath or on a feast day.

## APPENDIX 11

### Chronology of Jesus' last week

| AD 30  | Nisan | Section                                     |  |
|--|-------|---|--|
| Friday   | 8     | 128a  | <p>Jesus arrives at Bethany six days before Passover.</p> <p>Multitudes come to Jerusalem to prepare for the Passover.</p> <p>Large crowds went to Bethany to see Jesus and Lazarus.</p> <p>They are instructed to report Jesus' whereabouts so that He can be arrested.</p> |
| Saturday   | 9     |   | Sabbath at Bethany and supper at Martha's house?   |
| Sunday   | 10    | 128b  | Triumphal Entry  |
| Monday   | 11    | 129<br>130                                  | <p>Fig Tree Cursed, Possession of Temple</p> <p>Request of the Greeks</p>  |
| Tuesday  | 12    | 131<br>132-135<br>136<br>137<br>138<br>139  | <p>Fig Tree withered, teaching in the temple and preaching the gospel</p> <p>Testing</p> <p>The challenge by the King</p> <p>Judgement</p> <p>Instruction</p> <p>Prophecies</p>  |
| Wednesday  | 13    |   |  |
| Thursday   | 14    | 140-142<br>143                              | <p>Preparation for Messiah's death</p> <p>Preparation for the Passover seder</p>   |
| Between sunset on Thursday and sunrise on Friday |       | 144-148<br>149-151<br>152<br>153<br>154-156 | <p>Passover seder</p> <p>Upper Room Discourse, High Priestly Prayer</p> <p>Agony in Gethsemane</p> <p>Arrest</p> <p>Trials before Annas &amp; Caiaphas. Peter's denial.</p>  |
| Friday   | 15    | 157<br>159-162<br>163-166<br>167-168<br>169 | <p>Condemnation by the Sanhedrin</p> <p>Roman trial</p> <p>Crucifixion</p> <p>Burial and sealing of the tomb</p> <p>Preparations for anointing the body (just before &amp; after sunset)</p>   |
| Saturday   | 16    |   | Sabbath  |
| Sunday   | 17    | 170   | Opening of the tomb  |

## APPENDIX 12

### The Resurrection Appearances of the King

|                       |  |   |
|-----------------------|--|---|
| Friday                | §168   | Women from Galilee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Saw the tomb and how He was laid</li> <li>• Returned and prepared spices and perfumes</li> </ul>  |
| Sunset Friday         | §168   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rested</li> </ul>  |
| Sabbath               |  | Saturday  |
| Before Sunset         | §169   | After the Sabbath, as it began to dawn (epiphosko) towards the first day of the week <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mary Magdalene &amp; the other Mary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Came to look at the grave</li> </ul> </li> </ul>   |
| After Sunset Saturday | §169   | When the Sabbath was over <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, &amp; Salome <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Bought spices</li> </ul> </li> </ul>   |
| During the night      | §170   | Earthquake <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An angel rolled the stone away &amp; sat on it</li> <li>• The guards were scared stiff</li> </ul>   |
| Before Sunrise Sunday | §171<br><br>§172<br><br><br><br><br><br><br>§173 | While it was still dark <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mary Magdalene <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Came to the tomb</li> <li>○ Saw the stone rolled away</li> <li>○ Ran to report it to Peter &amp; John</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Peter &amp; John ran to the tomb <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ See the linen wrappings</li> <li>○ John believes</li> <li>○ Peter marvels</li> <li>○ They return home</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Mary follows Peter &amp; John back to the tomb <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Stays outside the tomb, weeping</li> <li>○ 2 angels appeared to her, sitting where the body had been lying</li> <li>○ Jesus appeared<sup>1</sup> to her <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ “Don’t touch Me for I have not yet ascended to the Father”</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
| After Sunrise Sunday  | §171<br><br><br><br><br><br>§174<br><br>§172     | At early dawn (orthros) when the sun had risen <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women came to the tomb with spices they had prepared <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Saw the stone rolled away</li> <li>○ Saw a young man sitting at the right</li> <li>○ Saw the body was not there</li> <li>○ Saw 2 angels standing there <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Tell His disciples <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ He is risen</li> <li>◇ Go to Galilee</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>○ They ran to report to the disciples <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Jesus appeared<sup>2</sup> to them on the way <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ They touch Him</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>• But the disciples didn’t believe them</li> </ul>  |

|  |      |   |
|--|------|---|
| Sunday   | §176 | He appears <sup>3</sup> to Cleopas & another on road to Emmaus  |
|  | §177 | Jesus appears <sup>4</sup> to Peter   |
| Sunday evening                                   | §178 | <p>Jesus appears<sup>5</sup> to the ten</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proves He is resurrected</li> <li>• 1<sup>st</sup> commission <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ With authority</li> <li>○ Authority to discipline</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Breathed on them &amp; gave them the Holy Spirit for illumination</li> </ul>   |
| After 8 days                                     | §179 | He appears <sup>6</sup> to the eleven (including Thomas)  |
| At the sea of Tiberias, so at least 3 days later | §180 | <p>Jesus appears<sup>7</sup> to the seven who are fishing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lesson – He will provide</li> <li>• Peter’s commission <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Feed My lambs - Feed new believers – 1<sup>st</sup> letter</li> <li>○ Tend My sheep - Exercise authority - Acts</li> <li>○ Feed My Sheep - Feed older believers – 2<sup>nd</sup> letter</li> </ul> </li> </ul>   |
|  | §181 | <p>He appears<sup>8</sup> to 500 &amp; the eleven</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The 2<sup>nd</sup> commission <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Authority</li> <li>○ Make disciples <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Going</li> <li>▪ Baptising</li> <li>▪ Teaching</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Belief is what saves, unbelief condemns</li> <li>○ Signs will follow them</li> <li>○ He will be with them</li> </ul> </li> </ul>   |
|  | §182 | He appears <sup>9</sup> to James  |
|  | §183 | <p>He appears<sup>10</sup> to the eleven</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus of post-resurrection teaching <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Messianic prophecy</li> <li>○ The Kingdom of God</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The 3<sup>rd</sup> commission <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Remain in Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit comes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Father’s promise</li> <li>▪ New ministry of Spirit baptism</li> <li>▪ Power to fulfil commission</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Preach the gospel <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Jerusalem</li> <li>▪ Judea</li> <li>▪ Samaria</li> <li>▪ The outermost parts of the earth – Gentiles</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
| 40 days after the resurrection                   | §184 | Jesus ascends into heaven   |

## End Notes

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<sup>i</sup> Buzan, Tony, *The Ultimate Book of Mind Maps*, Thorsons, 2005, p 133.

<sup>ii</sup> *ibid*, p 132.

<sup>iii</sup> Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament*. Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

<sup>iv</sup> *ibid*.

<sup>v</sup> Zodhiates, opt. cit.

<sup>vi</sup> Borchert, G. L. (1996). *John 1–11* (Vol. 25A, p. 330). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

<sup>vii</sup> Wuest, K. S. (1961). *The New Testament: an expanded translation*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

Kenneth Wuest's translation uses as many English words as are necessary to bring out the richness, force, and clarity of the Greek text. He follows the Greek word order and reflects the emphases and contrasts found in the original text.

<sup>viii</sup> Zodhiates, opt. cit.

<sup>ix</sup> *ibid*.

<sup>x</sup> *ibid*.

<sup>xi</sup> *ibid*.

<sup>xii</sup> *ibid*.

<sup>xiii</sup> *ibid*.

<sup>xiv</sup> *ibid*.

<sup>xv</sup> *ibid*.

<sup>xvi</sup> *ibid*.

<sup>xvii</sup> *ibid*.

<sup>xviii</sup> *ibid*.

<sup>xix</sup> Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (653). New York: United Bible Societies.