

SEVEN YEAR WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Year Three
Lessons 40-52

Fourth Quarter
Zephaniah - Matthew 9

Summary of Year III, Quarter 4 -----	Page 1
Foreword -----	Page 2
40. Zephaniah: Coming Judgment and Blessing -----	Page 3
Memory verse: Zephaniah 3:17	
41. Haggai-The Final Victory -----	Page 9
Memory verse: Haggai 2:8	
42. Zechariah: The Messianic Kingdom -----	Page 15
Memory verse: Zechariah 4:6	
43. Malachi: The Message of Malachi -----	Page 21
Memory verses: Malachi 3:8-10	
44. The Genealogy of Jesus Christ (Matthew 1) -----	Page 27
Memory verse: Matthew 1:21	
45. The Birth of Jesus Christ (Matthew 2) -----	Page 34
Memory verses: Matthew 2:1, 2	
46. The Baptism of Jesus Christ (Matthew 3) -----	Page 40
Memory verse: Matthew 3:15	
47. The Temptation of Jesus Christ (Matthew 4) -----	Page 45
Memory verse: Hebrews 4:1a	
48. The Beatitudes of Jesus Christ (Matthew 5) -----	Page 51
Memory verse: Matthew 5:48	
49. The Model Prayer (Matthew 6) -----	Page 56
Memory verse: Matt. 12:40	
50. The Sayings of Jesus Christ (Matthew 7) -----	Page 60
Memory verse: Matthew 7:12	
51. The Miracle-Working Power of Jesus Christ (Matt. 8) ---	Page 65
Memory verse: Nahum 1:3	
52. The Capernaum Ministry (Matthew 9) -----	Page 70
Memory verses: Matthew 9:37,38	

FOREWORD

Jesus Christ and the Old Testament

Our Lord Jesus used and relied upon the Old Testament in His daily life. The four Gospels contain the recorded words He spoke:

Matthew contains 1181 verses. 603 verses are Jesus' words. This is 51%. 83 of these verses are Old Testament Quotations. This is 14%.

Mark contains 609 verses. 275 of these are quotations of Jesus. This is 45%. 34 of these, or 13%, are Old Testament quotations.

Luke contains 1251 verses, of which 570 are His words. This is 45%. 42 of these verses, or 7% of His quotations, are from the Old Testament.

John contains 879 verses. 417, or 49%, are quotations from Jesus. 417 of these quotations, or 49%, are from the Old Testament.

The four gospels contain 3920 verses. 1865 of these are His words recorded. This is 48%. Of His quoted conversation, 179 are literal Old Testament words. **TEN PER CENT OF THE DAILY CONVERSATION OF JESUS WAS OLD TESTAMENT VERSES LITERALLY QUOTED.** Disputed passages of the Old Testament seem to have been favorites with the Saviour. If He had lived in our day and had taken a full course in the popular subject known as "Errors and Contradictions in the Text of the Bible," He could not have more perfectly answered the critics.

The Old Testament voices prophesy concerning the coming Savior. It was comparatively simple for the prophets to say that some day a Savior would come. **HOWEVER, WHEN THEY ADDED 333 SPECIFIC DETAILS,** all of which were fulfilled in the life, death, and resurrection of the Saviour, they built up a sustaining framework of certainty that cannot be refuted.

"Last eve I passed beside a blacksmith's door
And heard the anvil ring the vesper chime;
When looking in, I saw up the floor,
Old hammers worn with beating years of time.

" `How many anvils have you had,' said I,
To wear and batter all these hammers so?'
'Just one,' said he; then said with twinkling eye,
'The anvil wears the hammers out, you know.'

"And so, I thought the anvil of God's word
For ages skeptic blows have beat upon;
Yet, though the noise of falling blows was heard,
The anvil unharmed -- the hammers gone!"

YEAR 3 - LESSON 40 - PAGE 1
WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Year III

Fourth Quarter

Lesson 40
Zephaniah

Page 1
Memory Verse: Zephaniah 3:17

Memory Verse:

"The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is might; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing" (Zephaniah 3:17).

Public Reading: Zephaniah 3:14-20

Zephaniah: Coming Judgment and Blessing

Zephaniah's name in Hebrew means "Jehovah hides, or protects." Did he have this in mind when he wrote Zephaniah 2:3 (see Psa. 27:5; 83:3)?

Very little is known of the prophet. In Zephaniah 1:1, we learn that he was probably a prince of the royal house of Judah, a descendent of Hezekiah -- a great, great grandson.

The prophets represented God as both severe and tender. God's nature expresses itself in contrasting ways. Zephaniah represents the terror and the tenderness of divine love (Zephaniah 1:2 vs. 3:17).

The Background

Zephaniah prophesied in the days of Josiah, king of Judah (639-608 B. C.). Two corrupt and idolatrous kings, Manasseh (697-642 B. C.) and Amon (641-640 B. C.) preceded him on the throne.

Jerusalem had become a hotbed of evil. The book of Zephaniah reflects as in a mirror the character of the times. The prophet was a preacher of righteousness and denounced the evils of his age in unsparing terms. By this preaching, it is believed that both people and king were moved to better things. When the "BOOK of the law of the Lord was found in the temple" (II Kings 22:8) matters were ready for the GREAT REFORMATION WHICH FOLLOWED.

This return, under good king Josiah, to law, order, righteousness and spirituality stayed for a while the threatened judgment. The revival began in Josiah's twelfth year and was completed in the eighteenth year of his reign.

Key Words

Three such words occur in this book.

1. "The Day of the Lord." This expression or an allusion to "that day" or "the day" appears eleven times. See Zephaniah 1:7, 8, 9, 10, 14, 15, 16, 18; 2:2, 3; 3:8).

2. "In the midst" (Zephaniah 3:5; 1:7, 18; 3:8).

3. THE key word is "jealousy."

There is a jealousy that must never be associated with God. God knows nothing of a jealousy that is always suspicious of faithfulness and constantly on the lookout for evidences of the same. Milton calls such a jealousy a "lover's hell." What a hell on earth is that home where such jealousy exists!

There is another kind of jealousy that is the natural outcome of love. That is the nature of God's jealousy. "He so loved His people that HE CANNOT BEAR A RIVAL, AND must have their WHOLE-

HEARTED DEVOTION; and He will do everything He can to secure this even going to the length of awful judgments, as here."

I. The Declaration of Retribution (Zephaniah 1:1-18)

A. God's man (Zephaniah 1:1).

"The word of the Lord which came unto Zephaniah . . ." (Zephaniah 1:1): He was an aristocrat. He did not pose as a spokesman of the peasant. With justifiable pride, he traced his lineage back to Hezekiah, of whom he was the great, great grandson. This gave him standing with the princes and rulers as he stepped out to proclaim his stern denunciations. He was probably the same age as Josiah and Jeremiah.

B. God's declaration of coming judgment (Zephaniah 1:2-7).

"I will utterly consume . . . the land, (Zephaniah 1:2): God will sweep away, or scrape off utterly the land. God will remove or destroy the offenses, together with the sinners.

"The land refers to Judah, the Southern Kingdom. Israel, or the ten northern tribes, had been carried to Assyria in 721 B. C.

This judgment came first on Jerusalem in 606 B. C., and was fully carried out when the city, palaces and temple were burned to the ground in 586 B. C. man and beast alike suffered (verse 3).

"I will cut off . . . the Chemarims" (Zephaniah 1:4): "The Chemarims" were the priests appointed by the kings of Judah for the worship of the high places, and the idolatrous worship of Jehovah. Read II Kings 23:5; Hosea 10:5. They are not the priests of Baal.

"Them that worship the hosts of heaven . . ." (Zephaniah 1:5): This was the sun and star worship, copied from Assyrian idolatry. Two classes of worshippers are described: (1) the star-worshippers, and (2) those who tried to combine the worship of Jehovah and the worship of idols. To these is added a third class in verse 6. Star worship took place upon the roofs, on altars erected upon the flat roofs of the houses, chiefly by the burning of incense (Jer. 19:13), and by the offering of sacrifices (II Kings 23:12).

"Them . . . that swear by Malcham" (Zephaniah 1:5): Malcham means "their king." He was the national God of the Ammonites" sometimes equated with Molech or Moloch. Malcham (Milcom in the R. S. V.) was an "abomination" worshipped by Solomon (I Kings 11:5, 33). The Ammonites revered Molech as a protecting father. This detestable Semitic deity was honored by the sacrifice of children, in which they were caused to pass through or into the fire. Palestinian excavations have uncovered evidence of INFANT SKELETONS in burial places around heathen shrines.

"The day of the Lord is at hand . . ." (Zeph 1:7): "The day of the Lord" is a Day of TERROR, a dread day of retribution. The reason for the commanding HUSH, "Hold thy peace," is that the day of Jehovah is close. God has already appointed the executors of the judgment. The sacrifice that God had prepared is the Jewish nation. These invited to this sacrificial meal are not beasts and birds of prey, but the nations that he had consecrated to consume Judah. This definitely refers to the Babylonian invasion and Judah's captivity which began in 606 B. C. under Nebuchadnezzar. The city was finally burned in 586 B. C.

C. Those on whom the judgment will fall (Zephaniah 1:8-13).

"I will punish . . . princes" (Zephaniah 1:8): The enumeration of those whom God will punish begins with the "princes," the heads of the tribes and families, who naturally filled the higher offices of state. They should have set the example for others, but they were the ringleaders in evil.

YEAR 3 - LESSON 40 - PAGE 3

"The king's children": Not only the sons of Josiah who were still very young, but also the sons of deceased kings, the royal princes generally. All who were "clothed with strange apparel," foreign clothing which was forbidden of God (Deut. 22:5), and those who get gain by violence (verse 9).

"The fish gate . . ." (Zephaniah 1:10): This gate according to Neh. 3:3; 12:39): was in the eastern portion of the wall which bounded the lower city ON THE NORTH SIDE. This is the gate through WHICH FISH WERE BROUGHT FROM GALILEE. It was later known as the Damascus Gate.

"Howl, ye inhabitants of Maktesh" (Zephaniah 1:11): Literally, this is the Mortar, a depression in Jerusalem where the bazaars were. The depression probably ran down between Acra on the West and Bezetha and Moriah on the east, as far as the fountain of Siloah. Josephus called it "the cheese-maker's valley." The name "mortar" was probably coined by Zephaniah to point out the fate of the merchants and men of money who lived there. These Judean merchants had grown rich through trade and usury.

"Men . . . settled on their lees" (Zephaniah 1:12): God will, through the enemies who conquer Jerusalem, search the city with candles (see Luke 15:8) to get all the hiding-places of the despisers of God. These are described as men who sit drawn together upon their lees-literally, to draw one's self together, to coagulate. The figure is borrowed from old wine whose settlings left long undisturbed have become hardened or crusted. See Jer. 48:11. These hardened men say in their earthly prosperity, "The Lord will not do good, neither will he do evil," that is, there is NO GOD WHO RULES AND JUDGES THE WORLD! They really denied the EXISTENCE OF GOD by placing Him on a par with idols (Jer. 10:1-16; Isa. 41:23-24). The idle and indifferent wealthy shall be brought to judgment!

D. The nearness of the day of the Lord (Zephaniah 1:14-18).

"The great day of the Lord is near . . ." (Zephaniah 1:14): The day of retribution has come. "The mighty man" cries; he cannot save himself. Men walk as blind men, none being able to deliver them because Jehovah would make "an end . . . a terrible end, of all them that dwell in the land" (Zephaniah 1:18). This judgment was partially fulfilled in the invasion of Nebuchadnezzar which began in 606 B. C.; he burned the city in 586 B. C. Note the things said of this day (verses 15, 16). Spurned love will destroy everything before it (verses 19, 18).

II. An Exhortation to Repentance (Zephaniah 2:1-3:8)

A. A call to repentance (Zephaniah 2:1-3).

"Gather yourselves together..." (Zephaniah 2:1): The prophet lays upon his people the necessity of turning to God if they care to be saved from the threatened desolation. He urges them to "gather yourselves together" to a religious assembly where they might examine themselves and TURN TO THE LORD! "Nation not desired": Judah was not desirable; it was not worthy of God's grace and favor.

"The day pass at the chaff" (Zephaniah 2:2): The reason for the appeal is given in verse 2. Judgment is near! The day comes like chaff, that is, approaches with the greatest rapidity, like chaff driven by a strong wind.

"Seek ye the Lord ..." (Zephaniah 2:3): Because the judgment will come speedily, the "meek" or quiet are to "seek the Lord." They are diligently to do God's will (Deut. 26:20; Isa. 51:1, 7).

B. The Philistines to be destroyed (Zephaniah 2:4-7).

"Gaza shall be forsaken . . ." (Zephaniah 2:4): Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod, and Ekron were four cities of the Philistines. David had conquered Gath, the fifth city (I Chron. 18:1).

YEAR 3 - LESSON 40 - PAGE 4

"Cherethites . . ." (Zephaniah 2:5): Another name for the Philistines. Philistine means "an emigrant." These were the nations on the WEST. They would utterly be destroyed, and in their place, the remnant of the house of Judah would feed their flocks.

C. The judgment upon Moab and Ammon (Zephaniah 2:8-11).

"The reproach of Moab . . . revilings . . . of Ammon" (Zephaniah 2:8): The prophet turns to the nations of the East. He declares that they would become a perpetual desolation, and that the remnant would inhabit their lands.

"The Lord will be terrible . . ." (Zephaniah 2:11): Verse 11 is not the conclusion of the threat to Ammon and Moab, or the commencement of the following judgment on the South. It leads from one verse to the other. Jehovah is terrible when He reveals Himself in the majesty of Judge of the world. He will destroy all the false gods of the earth. This should lead all to worship the TRUE GOD.

D. The judgment on the South (Zephaniah 2:12).

"Ye Ethiopians . . . slain by my sword" (Zephaniah 2:12): This judgment on remote Ethiopia exemplifies the judgment upon the South. It commenced with the judgment upon Egypt through the Chaldeans (Ezek. 30:4, 9 compared with Josephus, Ant. 10:11) and continues until the conversion of that people to the Lord (see Acts 8:27-38).

Assyria

E. The judgment upon the North (Zephaniah 2:13-15).

"Destroy . . . make Nineveh a desolation" (Zephaniah 2:13): Nineveh was the proud capital of Assyria. While this kingdom was actually to the northeast, the Assyrian armies invaded Palestine from the north and it is regarded by the prophets as situated in the north. Those on the North would be destroyed, and their cities be made a desolation (verses 14-15). Babylon destroyed Nineveh in 612 B. C. so completely that Alexander the Great did not notice the site in 331 B. C. In 1842, Layard and Botta discovered the ruins of the city!

F. The sad moral state of Jerusalem (Zephaniah 3:1-8).

"Woe to . . . the oppressing city!" (Zephaniah 3:1): In this section, the prophet yet more clearly set forth the sin of the people (verses 2-4). From the human standpoint, the case was hopeless.

"The just Lord is in the midst . . ." (Zephaniah 3:5): God will have the victory despite the defeat of his people. He will accomplish the purpose of His love toward them (verses 6-7).

"Therefore wait ye upon me . . ." (Zeph 3:8): "Woe to her that is filthy . . . polluted. . . oppressing!" "Therefore wait ye upon me, saith the Lord, UNTIL. "!" This was the FIRST GLEAM OF HOPE. The very hopelessness and sin of the people made divine judgment necessary. The judgment would be but the prelude. No sooner had the prophet declared it inevitable than he proceeded to describe the ULTIMATE RESTORATION!

III. A Promise of Redemption (Zephaniah 3:9-20)

A. Israel's trip back to the Lord (Zephaniah 3:9-16).

YEAR 3 - LESSON 40 - PAGE 5

1. Israel's repentance (Zephaniah 3:9).

"I will turn to the people a pure language . . ." (Zephaniah 3:9): God does this by purifying their sinful lips, that is, God converts them. Then they are able to call upon Him with pure lips. From this point, the prophecy is clearly MESSIANIC. Zephaniah gave no picture of the SUFFERING SERVANT, not any HINT OF HIS METHOD. HE DEALT ONLY WITH THE ULTIMATE RESULT!

2. Israel's restoration (Zephaniah 3:10).

3. Israel's humility (Zephaniah 3:11, 12).

4. Israel's sanctification (Zephaniah 3:13).

5. Israel's rejoicing (Zephaniah 3:14).

6. Israel's deliverance (Zephaniah 3:15).

B. The singing of the Lord (Zephaniah 3:17-20).

"The Lord . . . is mighty . . . rejoice over thee" (Zephaniah 3:17): God has great joy in His rescued and blessed people. See Isa. 62:5; 65:19; Job 37:7; Psa. 105:43; Matt. 26:30. The last time He sang was no later than the last conversion (Luke 15:7). When Israel is restored, He will sing!

YEAR 3 - LESSON 40 - PAGE 6

QUESTIONS

1. Who were Zephaniah's father, grandfather, and great grandfather? What is the meaning of his name?
2. During the reign of what king did Zephaniah prophesy (Zeph. 1:1; II Chron. 34,35)?
3. Name three key words of the book, and how many times does "The day of the Lord" or "that day" or "the day" occur (Zeph. 1:7,8,9,10,14,15,16,18; 2:2,3; 3:8)?
4. What did God promise to do (Zeph. 1:2-7)?
5. What were some of the people's sins which Zephaniah exposed (Zeph. 1:4-7; II Kings 23:4-14; II Chron. 34:3-7)?
6. What coming day will bring God's final judgment upon idolatry (Zeph. 1:7; 2:11)?
7. What five things are stated of the "day of the Lord" in Zeph. 1:15?
8. What portion of the earth will be affected by the day of the Lord (Zeph. 1:18; 2:11; 3:8)?
9. Why will this awful day of distress come upon the earth (Zeph. 1:17)?
10. What only will deliver from the Lord's wrath (Zeph. 1:18; Prov. 11:4; I Cor. 1:30; John 3:36; Rom. 5:9; I Thess. 1:10)?
11. What call is made in Zeph. 2:1-30, and why?
12. How many Gentile nations will be judged in the "day of the Lord" (Zeph. 2:4-15)?
13. For what sins will Moab and Ammon be punished (Zeph. 2:8-10; Matt. 25:31-46)?
14. After the day of the Lord what will be the attitude of the nations toward Jehovah (Zeph. 2:11; 14:16, 17)?
15. What three things are said of Jerusalem in Zeph. 3:1, what four sins are charged against her in Zeph. 3:20, and what is said of her princes, judges, prophets, and priests (Zeph. 3:3, 4)?
16. What does the Lord command in Zeph. 3:8, and what will He give his repentant people (Zeph. 3:9)?
17. How is the remnant described (Zeph. 3:11-13)?
18. What is the four-fold reason for Zion's rejoicing (Zeph. 3:14,15; Isa.12)?
19. Will the present attitude of the Gentile nations toward Israel prevail during the kingdom (Zeph. 3:19,20)?
20. Who else will rejoice in that day (Zeph. 3:17; Deut. 30:9; Isa. 65:19; Jer. 32:41)? If heaven sings when a soul is won, have you helped bring JOY IN HEAVEN (and on earth) TODAY (Luke 15:7; Mark 16:15,16)?

YEAR 3 - LESSON 41 - PAGE 1
WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Year III

Fourth Quarter

Lesson 41
Haggai

Page 1
Memory Verse: Haggai 2:8

Memory Verse:

"The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of hosts" (Haggai 2:8).

Public Reading: Haggai 1:1-11.

Haggai: The Final Victory

The world sits up and listens when a man comes along who can challenge a nation to break away from sinful habits, and rise up to BUILD A GREAT TEMPLE FOR the WORSHIP OF THEIR GOD.

Three Prophets

Haggai (pronounced Hag'-a-i), Zechariah and Malachi belong to the period after the RETURN FROM BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY. This period is told about in the books of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther. Haggai and Zechariah aided in BUILDING THE TEMPLE (520-516 B. C.). Malachi is thought to have been associated with Nehemiah nearly 700 years later, in RE-BUILDING THE WALLS OF JERUSALEM.

Chronology of the Restoration

- 536 B. C. 49,898 Jews return from Babylon to Jerusalem. 7th month (Jewish calendar), our October, built altar; offer sacrifice.
- 535 B. C. 2nd month, work on Temple begins, and is stopped.
- 520 B. C. 6th month (September), 1st day, Haggai's call to BUILD.
6th month (September), 24th day. BUILDING BEGINS.
7th month (October), 21st day, Haggai's second appeal.
8th month (November), Zechariah's opening address.
9th month (December), 24th day, Haggai's 3rd and 4th appeal.
11th month (February), 24th day, Zechariah's visions.
- 518 B. C. 9th month (December), 4th day, Zechariah's visions.
- 516 B. C. 12th month (March), 3rd day, THE TEMPLE IS COMPLETED
- 515 B. C. 1st month (April), 14th-21st days, JOYFUL PASSOVER.
- 457 B. C. Ezra comes to Jerusalem, and makes certain reforms.
- 444 B. C. Nehemiah re-builds the Wall. Period of MALACHI.

The Times

Nebuchadnezzar began the carrying away to Babylon in 606 B. C. Judah was conquered, the temple demolished, the CITY BURNED, and the people carried away to Babylon in 586 B. C. Read II Kings 24-25.

In 536 B. C. (70 years after Daniel and the first captives were taken from Jerusalem in 606 B. C.), 49,897 Jews RETURNED TO JERUSALEM by the edict of Cyrus, Persian king who conquered Babylon

YEAR 3 - LESSON 41 - PAGE 2

536 B. C. (reigned 538-529 B. C.). He was good to the Jews. This story is told in Ezra 1 and 2. Cyrus supplied sufficient money to guarantee the work.

Under Zerubbabel the people returned to the old home and began to carry out the orders of Cyrus. The work started well. Opposition came from the Samaritans. Hard work in removing the rubbish and in building further chilled their ardor. The enemy stopped the work (Ezra 3:10-4:24). Nothing further was done for fifteen years! God raised up Haggai and Zechariah to lead the people in building the great temple in Jerusalem. It was completed in four years (520-516 B. C.; see Ezra 5, 6).

Haggai has a plain, simple, curt, business-like style. He was fond of asking questions (Hag. 1:4; 2:3, 12, 13); this compelled attention.

"Saith the Lord" and "Lord of hosts" occur twelve times each. "Consider," occurs four times. "The word of the Lord" occurs five times. The prophet's first message on Sept. 1, 520 B. C. was ...

I. A Stern Rebuke (Haggai 1:1-11)

A. Ancient excuse-makers (Hag. 1:1-5).

"In the second year of Darius . . ." (Hag. 1:1): This is Darius I or Hystaspes who ruled over Persia 521-485 B. C. He authorized completion of the Temple (Ezra 6). God gave Haggai "the word of the Lord" September 1, 520 B. C. It was addressed to Zerubbabel . . . governor of Judah," and "to Joshua . . . the high priest." These were men in authority.

"The time is NOT COME . . ." (Hag. 1:2): This excuse is very ancient; it is very modern. How many folks we all know are NEVER READY to undertake ANY WORK WHICH REQUIRES SACRIFICE for Christ and His Church. The people were excusing themselves from building the temple by saying, "The time is not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built." They admit the work is needful; that it OUGHT to be done. With the Jews they say mournfully because money is involved, "The time is not come"! Such caution is not observed in their business or in any of their personal affairs. God's people had come from Babylon "THAT THE Lord's house should be built." THEY WERE BUSY DOING EVERYTHING BUT THE THING for which God had restored them to Jerusalem!

"Then came the word of the Lord . . ." (Hag. 1:3): This occurs five times in this book. God's will was PLAIN to all the PEOPLE.

"Is it time for you . . .?" (Hag. 1:4): The men who from fear and selfishness had STOPPED BUILDING THE TEMPLE in 535 B. C. had built their own homes. They were LIVING IN LUXURY in "ceiled houses." "This house" referred to God's Temple. It was STILL IN RUINS.

"Consider your ways" (Hag. 1:5): The ONLY WAY TO PLEASE GOD is to DO GOD'S WILL. Read John 14:15; Matt. 7:21. If chasing wealth crowds out God's house and worship, it costs too much (Matt. 16:24-27).

B. The reason for depressions (Hag. 1:6-7, 9-11).

"Ye have sown much . . . bring in little" (Hag. 1:6): Those who seek everything first before God will have to learn that it does not pay. Read Matt. 6:33. When calamity comes to a country, it is BECAUSE THE PEOPLE OF THAT NATION HAVE FORSAKEN GOD, or persist in displeasing Him. Consider Psalm 1:1-6; II Chron. 7:12-14. Matthew 6:19-21 is still true! How silly to spend one's life in eating, drinking and earning wages and find at the close of life that it all is like putting everything "into a bag with holes!" "Consider your ways" (Hag. 1-7).

YEAR 3 - LESSON 41 - PAGE 3

"Ye looked for much . . . it came to little" (Hag. 1:9): When people lose interest in God, in God's Word, and in God's house, God will lose interest in THAT PEOPLE! Haggai informs them that this was the reason for their poor crops. One of the most insistent Old Testament teachings is that NATIONAL ADVERSITY IS DUE TO NATIONAL DISOBEDIENCE TO GOD. Consider verses 10 and 11 from this standpoint.

C. The people are urged to build God's house (Hag. 1:8).

"Build the house . . . I will take pleasure in it" (Hag. 1:8): God had sent them back from Babylon to build the temple. Let them be ABOUT GOD'S BUSINESS.

II. A Comforting Message of Commendation (Haggai 1:12-15)

A. The rebuke has the desired effect (Hag. 1:12).

"Then . . . all . . . obeyed the voice of the Lord their God" (Hag. 1:12): Zerubbabel, the governor, and Josedech the high priest and ALL the people turned to obey God (Psa. 19:9; I Sam. 15:22). Oh, that this WHOLE CHURCH would turn to God and His Word! When a faithful man of God faithfully delivers God's Word, and when FAITHFUL HEARERS faithfully hear the word God's WORK WILL GROW ANYWHERE, ANYTIME!

B. A comforting message (Haggai 1:13).

"I am with you, saith the Lord" (Hag. 1:13): This message was delivered September 24 (verse 15). God's man had God's message for the occasion. Read Matt. 28:18-20; Heb. 13:5. Today we can say: "If Jesus goes with me, I'LL GO . . . ANYWHERE."

C. A message with a stirring effect (Haggai 1:14, 15).

"And the Lord stirred up . . . they . . . did work" (Hag. 1:14): The work got underway in 24 days. It had been stopped for 15 years. The governor, high priest, and people alike "did fear before the Lord." As one man, they united their efforts "and they came and did work in the house of the Lord of hosts, their God." Are you doing God's work today? Read Matthew 7:21-23.

III. A Cheering Message of Encouragement (Haggai 2:1-9)

"In the seventh month . . ." (Hag. 2:1): This second message or oracle came from God through Haggai to his people October 21. This was addressed to Zerubbabel, the governor, Joshua the priest, and all the people (verse 2).

"Who . . . saw this house in her first glory?" (Hag. 2:3): Within another 27 days the old foundations had been cleared and reared sufficiently to REVEAL THE OUTLINE OF THE BUILDING. Zerubbabel's temple compared to Solomon's was insignificant. It made the older men who had seen Solomon's temple heartsick (Ezra 3:10-13).

"Yet now be strong . . . for I am with you" (Hag. 2:4): Since the memory of Solomon's temple tended to dishearten the people, the prophet appealed to them to be strong and to work, promising in His name Jehovah's immediate presence and help. God is with them! God had delivered them from Egypt (verse 5), and His "spirit remaineth among you: fear ye not."

YEAR 3 - LESSON 41 - PAGE 4

"I will shake the heavens . . . earth . . . nations" (Hag. 2:6, 9): This doubtless refers immediately to political convulsions of heathen rulers of that day, but Hebrews 12:26 applies this to the FADING OF EARTHLY THINGS in the dawn of Heaven's Eternal Kingdom.

The historical account of God's shaking Sinai and the earth is found in Ex. 19:16-18, with poetical descriptions in Judges 5:4, 5; Psa. 68:8, 9; Hab. 3:6.

The approaching of the world will be much more violent; it will affect the heaven and the earth in all their parts, the sea, the solid ground, and the nations. The present world will finally be reduced to ruins (Isa. 18-20), and OUT OF THE WORLD THUS PERISHING THERE IS TO BE CREATED A NEW HEAVEN AND A NEW EARTH (Isa. 65:17, 66:22; II Pet. 3:10-13).

"The desire of all nations shall come . . ." (Hag. 2:7): The central phrase of this larger promise is difficult of interpretation. "The desire" (singular) . . . "shall come" (plural). Perhaps the simplest explanation is in the use made of the connected words in the letter to the Hebrews (Heb. 12:25-29). It is evident that in this promise there is a revelation of an order of divine procedure which is manifested in the method of both the First and Second Advents of the Messiah. THAT ORDER MAY BE THUS BRIEFLY SUMMARIZED: "I will shake," "the desire shall come," "peace" (verses 7, 9).

"Silver . . . gold is mine" (Hag. 2:8): God owns all these things. God could make this present temple richer than Solomon's (Psa. 24:1; I Cor. 10:26). The presence of His Son in God's House makes it INFINITELY SUPERIOR TO SOLOMON'S TEMPLE (Mal. 3:1). Outward splendor may not be true glory. The Living God will be in the midst of this New Temple and from it, He will GLORIFY HIMSELF AMONG THE NATIONS (verse 9)! The eternal covenant still stood. They could depend on God to pour out His rich blessings upon them.

IV. An Assuring Message of Cleansing and Blessing (Haggai 2:10-19)

"The four and twentieth day . . . ninth month" (Hag. 2:10): The third message of God through Haggai was delivered December 24. His last message was on October 21. In this message, the people are addressed through a colloquy with the priests. After three months of hard building there were STILL NO SIGNS OF MATERIAL REWARDS. The people were again DISHEARTENED IN CONSEQUENCE thereof.

"Ask . . . touch . . . be holy . . . No" (Hag. 2:11-12): The unclean do defile by their contract. See Lev. 15:19. A woman in white may touch you, but that does not, make you clean. Let a coal miner rub against you and he will leave a black mark on you. A man of health walks by; it does not make the sick well. One germ of a diseased body will contaminate you (I Cor. 15:33). As a result of his questioning of the priests and their answers (verses 12-19), Haggai taught the people that because of their past sin their present obedience could not immediately result in material prosperity.

"From this day will I bless you" (Hag. 2:19): Although it was mid-winter, and the earth had not yet had time to bear fruit, yet God promises to bless them IF THEY BUILD THE TEMPLE. The third oracle is an appeal to conscience, and a call to patience. Fifteen years of selfishness, neglect, and sin had made them unclean in God's sight. If they would persevere in the work and be faithful to their God THEY COULD BE CERTAIN OF VICTORY. Fruitful seasons, good crops and rich blessings were to be theirs (verses 14-19).

V. A Steadying Message of Safety (Haggai 2:20-23)

"And again the word of the Lord came . . ." (Hag. 2:20): The last message of Haggai was delivered on the same day as the third, and was an enforcement and explanation of the final promise, "I will bless you."

YEAR 3 - LESSON 41 - PAGE 5

"I will shake the heavens . . ." (Hag. 2:21): This is a repetition of Jehovah's determination to "shake the heavens and the earth." It is carried out in detail in order to show that He would destroy all false authority and power (verse 22).

"I take . . . make thee as a signet" (Hag. 2:23): This is the promise of the establishment of TRUE AUTHORITY. The Lord had chosen Zerubbabel as his servant. A signet ring is inseparable from its possessor. God had made Zerubbabel "as a signet." With these words, the MESSIANIC PROMISE MADE TO DAVID was transferred to Zerubbabel and his family among David's descendants. The fulfillment culminates in Jesus Christ, the Son of David and descendent of Zerubbabel (Matt. 1:12; Luke 3:27), in whom Zerubbabel was made the signet ring of Jehovah. Jesus Christ raised up the kingdom of His father David again, and of HIS KINGDOM THERE WILL BE NO END (Luke 1:32, 33). Even though it may appear oppressed and deeply humiliated for the time but the power of the kingdoms of the heathen, it will never be crushed and destroyed, but will break in pieces all these kingdoms and destroy them. IN ADDITION, IT WILL ITSELF ENDURE FOREVER (Dan. 2:44; Heb. 12:28; I Cor. 15:24)!

YEAR 3 - LESSON 41 - PAGE 6

QUESTIONS

1. To what group of people did Haggai prophesy (Hag. 1:1; Ezra. 5:1)?
2. What great king of Persia had given them permission to return to Jerusalem?
3. Can you give the names of the governor and the high priest in Palestine (Hag.1:1)?
4. What other prophet was associated closely with Haggai during his ministry (Ezra 5:1; Compare Hag. 1:1 with Zech. 1:1)?
5. For what purpose had the remnant returned to Jerusalem (Ezra 1:2-5)?
6. Why had the remnant abandoned their rebuilding of the temple (Ezra 4:4,5,23,24)?
7. What old excuse had the Jews given for not building the Lord's house (Hag.1: 2)? Does this sound familiar to you?
8. To what selfish, substitute work had the Jews devoted themselves (Hag. 1:2-6)?
9. Had the people prospered in their worldly pursuit (Hag. 1:6; Isa. 55:2)?
10. Who was responsible for their failure to prosper (Hag. 1:5-11; Matt. 6:25-33)?
11. Why did the people believe and obey Haggai (Hag. 1:12-13; Jonah 3:5)?
12. Is it possible to be the Lord's messenger and yet not speak the Lord's message (Hag. 1:13; Jonah 1:2, 3)?
13. What was the Lord's message (Hag. 1:13) which stirred the people to united building (Hag. 1:13; Matt. 28:18-20)?
14. Though their building was less glorious than Solomon's, what comforting likeness was found between the two (Hag. 2:4,5; II Chron. 6:1,2)?
15. To what period of time does Haggai 2:6 refer (Ex. 19:16-18; Judges 5:4, 5; Psa. 68:8,9; Hag. 3:6; Isa. 24:18-20; 65:17; 66:22; II Pet. 3:10-13; Heb. 12:25-29)?
16. How is Christ referred to in Haggai 2:7? Which occurs first the shaking of the nations or the coming of the desire of all nations?
17. Who owns the silver and the gold (Hag. 2:8; Psa. 24:1; I Cor. 10:26)?
18. At what future time will the glory of the Lord's house, the temple, exceed all its past beauty (Hag. 2:9; Mal. 3:1)?
19. Can you show how the third oracle is an appeal to the conscience and a call to patience of the people (Hag. 2:10-19)? Did God conditionally promise to bless them (Hag. 2:19)?
20. What did God reveal to Zerubbabel concerning the Gentile nations (Hag. 2:21-22), what did he make Zerubbabel (Hag. 2:23), and in whom does the fulfillment culminate (Matt. 1:12; Luke 3:27,1:32,33; Dan. 2:44; Heb. 12:28; I Cor. 15:24)?

YEAR 3 - LESSON 42 - PAGE 1
WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Year III

Fourth Quarter

Lesson 42
Zechariah

Page 1
Memory Verse: Zechariah 4:6

Memory Verse:

"Then He answered and spake unto me saying, This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts" (Zechariah 4:6).

Public Reading: Zechariah 1:1-6; 2:8-12; 14:1-9.

Zechariah: The Messianic Kingdom

Zechariah means "One whom Jehovah remembers." He was the prophet of the Restoration (the return of the remnant from Babylon in 536 B. C.). He was probably born in Babylon. The difference between Ezra 5:1; 5:14 and Zechariah 1:1 is easily explained. Probably his father died in his infancy. His grandfather (Neh. 12:4, 16) reared him.

Zechariah was a priest, as well as a prophet. The three names are very suggestive when put together. Zechariah: "Jehovah remembers." Berechiah: "Jehovah blesses." Iddo: "The appointed time (Zeph. 1:1). These three names form a key to the meaning of the book.

The key word of the book is "jealous," or "jealousy."

Mission of Zechariah

1. He was a contemporary of Haggai, being the younger of the two (Zeph. 2:4). His mission was to ENCOURAGE THE DESPONDENT in Judah.

2. He encouraged the disheartened by prophesying, in glowing terms, of the glory to come to Israel in far off ages.

3. This is the DIVINE METHOD OF ENCOURAGEMENT: TAKING OUR EYES OFF THE SAD PRESENT to the GLORIES OF THE FUTURE. Zechariah's ministry lasted about two years, but he was doubtless on hand from 520-516 B. C. during the entire rebuilding to exhort and help.

Style of Zechariah

Zechariah was one of the greatest of ancient seers. His fourteen chapters are full of the most striking visions recorded in the Old Testament. He was a great poet.

Zechariah Outlined

I. The Call to Repentance (Zechariah 1:1-6)

II. Foreshadows of the Future Messianic Kingdom (Zechariah 1:7-8:23)

A. A series of eight night visions (Zech. 1:7-6:8).

1. The man among the myrtle trees (Zech. 1:7-17).

2. The four horns and carpenters (Zech. 1:18-21).

3. The man with the measuring rod (Zech. 2:1-13).

YEAR 3 - LESSON 42 - PAGE 2

4. The cleansing of the high priest (Zech. 3:1-10).
5. The candlestick and the two olive trees (Zech. 4:1-14).
6. The flying roll (Zech. 5:1-4).
7. The woman and the ephah (Zech. 5:5-11).
8. The four chariots (Zech. 6:1-8).

B. The symbolical crowning of the high priest (Zech. 6:9-15).

C. The answer to the question of the feasts (Zech. 7:1-8:23).

1. The question and the divine reply (Zech. 7:1-14).
2. Future restoration of Jerusalem (Zech. 8:1-5).
3. Future return to Palestine (Zech. 8:6-8).
4. Kingdom prosperity of land and people (Zech. 8:9-23).

III. Two Prophetic Burdens: Israel's Great Messianic Future (Zechariah 9:1-14:21)

A. The first burden: The first advent and rejection of the Messiah-King (Zech. 9:1-11:17).

1. The advent (Zech. 9:1-10:12).
2. The rejection (Zech. 11:11-17).

B. The second burden: Second Advent and acceptance of Messiah-King (Zech. 12:1-14:21).

1. Future deliverance and national conversion (Zeph. 12:1-13:9).
2. Messiah-King's return in glory (Zech. 14:1-21).

The first division is apocalyptic (Zech. 1-8). The second division is prophetic (Zech. 9:1-14:21).

I. The Call to Repentance (Zechariah 1:1-6)

"In the eighth month . . . second year of Darius" (Zech. 1:1): Darius the Great came to the throne of Persia at the death of Cambyses in 521 B. C. The "eighth month" was our November.

"The word of the Lord unto Zechariah": God gave this communication to the prophet. It was about a month after Haggai's second message in which he had encouraged the people who were in danger of being disheartened by the memory of the past (Hag. 2:1-9).

"Turn ye unto me . . . I will turn unto you" (Zech. 1:3): This earnest call to repentance came between Haggai's second and third message, between verses 9 and 10 of Haggai 2. God had been displeased with their sinful fathers (verse 2). Zechariah warns them to "turn" unto God and to "Turn now from your EVIL WAYS, and from your evil doings" (verse 4). Haggai had encouraged by looking on to the NEW SPIRITUAL GLORY; Zechariah EXHORTED them BY LOOKING BACK TO THE PAST OF DISOBEDIENCE (verses 5-6).

"But my words . . . did they not take hold of your fathers?" (Zech. 1:6): "Take hold" in the King James Version is "Overtake" in the American Revised Version. While both their fathers and the prophets who said that God would punish their sinning fathers were dead, YET God HAD CARRIED OUT THE THREATENED PUNISHMENT. God's Word is sure. It never fails. Judgment against evil, as well as blessings for doing God's will, will follow and overtake us.

II. Foreshadows of the Future Messianic Kingdom (Zechariah 1:7-8:23)

A. A series of eight night visions (Zech. 1:7-6:8).

1. The man among the myrtle trees (Zech. 1:7-17).

"24th of the eleventh month . . . the word of the Lord" (Zech. 1:7): The only time notice of the visions from here to the end of chapter 6. Work on the Temple was about 5 months along. We assume the visions came, one following another, and written down at the time. The month Sebat is our February. The visions were given by an angel (Zech. 1:9).

"I saw by night . . . man riding upon a red horse" (Zech. 1:8): This was a night vision. Under the figure of the myrtle trees Israel is described as "in the bottom," or "in the shady place." It is the day of her overshadowing; but she is still watched. The whole earth is sitting still and is at rest under Darius the Great who was favorably disposed toward the Jews. He decreed that the Temple be rebuilt (verse 9-11).

"I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies . . ." (Zech. 1:16): Jerusalem shall once again be a great and prosperous city (verses 12-17).

2. The four horns and the carpenters (Zech. 1:18-21).

"I . . . beheld four horns" (Zech. 1:18): The horn is a symbol of power. The four horns stand for the powers that have scattered the chosen people (verse 19).

"Four carpenters . . ." (Zech. 1:20): The smiths are the symbol of that which destroys power, and stand for those who are to break the power of the horns (verse 21). This is a figurative way of saying that

prevailing World Powers would BE BROKEN. Judah again will be exalted. GOD IS ON THE THRONE, even when His people are oppressed. He will DELIVER THEM.

3. The man with the measuring rod (Zech. 2:1-13).

"I . . . looked . . . a man with a measuring line" (Zech. 2:1): This grand chapter is a forecast of a populous and prosperous Jerusalem. The young man with the measuring line is prevented from measuring the city by an angel messenger (verses 3-6) who tells him, in figurative language, that Jerusalem will be such that it will be impossible to measure!

"I . . . will be unto her a WALL . . ." (Zech. 2:5): This indicates the nature of Jerusalem's prosperity. God's presence makes a wall unnecessary. Nehemiah rebuilt the wall in 444 B. C. God will dwell with His rejoicing people (verses 6-13) as He re-gathers them.

4. The cleansing of the high priest (Zech. 3:1-10).

"Joshua the high priest . . . filthy garments" (Zech. 3:1, 4): This symbolizes the sinfulness of the people. Joshua's filthy garments are removed, meaning that the sins of the people are forgiven and they accepted of God (verses 4-7). The nation failed through sin. It would be restored by moral cleansing to the priestly function of access to God. "Satan" (verse 1) stood "at his right hand to resist him." Satan pleads against the cause that Joshua represented.

YEAR 3 - LESSON 42 - PAGE 4

"I will bring forth my servant the BRANCH . ." (Zech. 3:8): This is a picture of the time when the sins of mankind would be removed "IN ONE DAY" (verse 9) AS the COMING "BRANCH" in DAVID'S HOUSE (the Messiah) is "PIERCED" (Zech. 12:10) and "a FOUNTAIN FOR SIN BE OPENED" (Zech. 13:1).

5. The candlestick and the two olive trees (Zech. 4:1-14).

"Candlestick of gold . . . two olive trees" (Zech. 4:2, 3): The Candlestick was a symbolic representation of God's House, or the Light-Bearing qualities of God's House. It was in the Tabernacle, and in the Temple. In Rev. 1:20, it represents the Church. The "two olive trees" seem to have represented Joshua, the high priest (Zech. 3:1) and Joshua; here it is for Zerubbabel. The imagery here is carried over into the vision of the TWO WITNESSES in Rev. 11:3, 4; Zech. 4:11-14).

"Not by might . . . power . . . but by MY SPIRIT" (Zech. 4:6): Here, as always in Scripture, the golden oil symbolized the Spirit of Service. The Spirit would be communicated to Israel THROUGH THE KING AND PRIEST, and thus her light would shine in the darkness.

"The hands of Zerubbabel . . . foundation . . . finish it" (Zech. 4:9): What is here said is meant directly for Zerubbabel and the House he was building. There is unmistakable reference to a LATER MORE GLORIOUS HOUSE, to be built by a DESCENDENT of Zerubbabel, CALLED THE BRANCH. It is an exhortation to take courage in the day of small beginnings (verse 10); KEEP YOUR EYES ON THE GRANDEUR IN THE END!

6. The flying roll (Zech. 5:1-4).

"A flying roll . . ." (Zech. 5:1): This sheet like an unrolled wall map was 30 feet long and 15 feet wide (verse 2). It was inscribed with curses against stealing and swearing (verse 3), and soared over the land, removing sin by destroying the sinners (verse 4).

7. The woman and ephah (Zech. 5:5-11).

"An ephah that goeth forth . . ." (Zech. 5:6): A large basket, having the appearance of an ephah, containing a woman. It was borne away by two women out of the land to Shinar, or Babylon. The ephah is the symbol of commerce; the woman in the midst of the ephah is the personification of wickedness; thus the wicked commerce of Babylon is dominated by evil (verses 7-11) being compelled to occupy its own house in its own land on its own basis.

8. The four chariots (Zech. 6:1-8).

"Four chariots . . ." (Zech. 6:1): These were messengers of God's judgments, patrolling the earth, executing the decrees of God on Israel's enemies. This is an expansion of the thought in the vision of Horns and Smiths (Zech. 1:18-21).

B. The symbolical crowning of the high priest (Zech. 6:9-15).

"The BRANCH . . . grow up . . . build the temple of the Lord" (Zech. 6:12): This is a prophetic symbolical act, amplifying the vision of the "BRANCH" (Zech. 3:8-9), and the vision about Zerubbabel

YEAR 3 - LESSON 42 - PAGE 5

(Zech. 4:6-9). "THE BRANCH" WAS THE NAME OF THE COMING MESSIAH in 33:15-17; Rev. 5:5; 22:16).

Zerubbabel, the governor, was a grandson of King Jehoiachin who had been carried to Babylon. He was heir to David's throne. What is said of Zerubbabel refers in part to himself personally and in part to his family, that is, DAVID'S FAMILY, more particularly to the ONE GREAT REPRESENTATIVE OF DAVID'S FAMILY, the COMING MESSIAH.

God assigned to David's Family the task of building God's house. God gave David the specifications and plans of the Temple (I Chron. 28:11, 19). Solomon, David's son, actually built the first temple according to those God-given plans (II Chron.2-7). Zerubbabel, a descendent of David, was now (520-516 B. C.) engaged in RE-BUILDING THE TEMPLE.

God assured him he would bring it to completion BY HIS SPIRIT (Zech. 4:6-9), and gave him mystic hints of YET ANOTHER TEMPLE TO BE BUILT BY THE BRANCH WITH THE HELP OF "MANY FROM AFAR" (Zech. 6:12-15).

Thus, the "BRANCH" was to be of Zerubbabel's or David's family, the kingly line. HOWEVER, HERE Joshua the priest is CROWNED and is represented as the "BRANCH" sitting on the throne of David (Zech. 6:12-13). This is the symbolic merging of the TWO OFFICES OF KING and PRIEST in the COMING MESSIAH.

The question about fasting (Zech. 7, 8), God's judgments on neighbor nations (Zech. 9-11), and the VISION OF ISRAEL'S FUTURE (Zech. 12-14) find their center and fulfillment in GOD'S FINAL VICTORY AND UNIVERSAL REIGN!

Some think Zech. 14:4-8 means that Jesus when he returns will literally set up His throne on Mt. Olive, that the mountain will literally be cleft, that waters literally will flow eastward and westward from Jerusalem, and that Jerusalem literally will be the center of pilgrimages from nations outlined in verses 9-21.

Others take the language to be a figurative representation of the New Heavens and New Earth under the imagery of a benign, prosperous and all-powerful earthly kingdom, as Rev. 21 describes Heaven under the imagery of a magnificent earthly city!

My Lord shall be king over all the earth! There shall be one Lord, and his name one. Hallelujah!

Summary of Zechariah's Foreshadows of Christ

His atoning death for the removal of sin (Zech. 3:8-9; 13:1).

The builder of the house of God (Zech. 6:12).

His universal reign as King and Priest (Zech. 6:13; 9:10).

The triumphal entry (Zech. 9:9), quoted in Matt. 21:5; John 12:15.

Betrayal for 30 pieces of silver (Zech. 11:12), quoted in Matt. 27:9, 10.

His deity (Zech. 12:8).

His hands pierced (Zech. 12:10; 13:6), quoted in John 19:37.

A smitten Shepherd (Zech. 13:7), quoted in Matt. 26:31; Mark 14:27.

These plain statements forecast, in specific language, not only the great doctrines of the coming Messiah's ATONING DEATH FOR HUMAN SIN, his Deity, and His UNIVERSAL KINGDOM, but also mention detailed incidents in his life. These include His ENTRY into Jerusalem riding upon a colt, his betrayal for 30 pieces of silver, the purchase of a Potter's field, and the piercing of His Hands!

YEAR 3 - LESSON 42 - PAGE 6

QUESTIONS

1. Who prophesied first, Haggai or Zechariah (Hag. 1:1; Zech. 1:1)?
2. What is the meaning of Zechariah, and when did the word of the Lord come to him (Zech. 1:1)?
3. Who were used as a warning example to the Jews of Zechariah's time (Zech. 1:2-6), and does God always keep His word?
4. How many night visions did Zechariah have (Zech. 1:7-6:8), and can you name them?
5. Who is the man that stood among the myrtle trees (Zech. 1:8-11), and was there peace upon the earth (verse 11)?
6. What message did the Lord's angel give Zechariah concerning the Gentile nations and the Jews (Zech. 1:14-17)?
7. What four Gentile powers, used in scattering and punishing Israel, are represented by the four horns and carpenters or smiths (Zech. 1:18-21; Dan. 2:37-40)?
8. Who will be the WALL of Jerusalem, and who is called "the apple of his eye" (Zech. 2:6,8)? Why should His people rejoice (Zech. 2:10-13)?
9. If the changing of garments of Joshua symbolized the cleansing from sin (Zech. 3:1-7), who will remove "in one day" (verse 9) as He opens "a fountain for sin" (Zech. 13:1; John 3:16; I Pet. 1:18,19; John 1:29)?
10. By what means would Zerubbabel finish the house of God (Zech. 4:6, 9), and should we despise the "day of small things?" (Zech. 4:10)? What did the Candlestick and olive trees represent (Zech. 4:1-5, 11-14; Rev. 11:3,4)?
11. Upon what two sins did the flying roll pronounce judgment (Zech. 5:1-4)?
12. If the ephah symbolizes commercialism, what is to be its condition in the last days (Zech. 5:8-11; Rev.18)?
13. What was the mission of the four chariots (Zech. 6:1-8)?
14. Who is the BRANCH that will "rule upon his throne" as King-Priest (Zech. 6:13-15)?
15. What fault did the Lord reveal in the observance of the Jews' fasts (Zech. 7:4-6), and how do these differ from those in the coming kingdom (Zech. 7:3,5; 8:18)?
16. To what city will the Lord and Israel return (Zech. 8:1-8), and how is the city pictured?
17. Where did the inhabitants of the earth worship during the kingdom (Zech. 8:20-22), and why will the Gentiles be willing to follow the Jews then (Zech. 8:23)?
18. How is Christ's first coming pictured by Zechariah (Zech. 9:9; Matt. 21:1-10)? What touching prophecy is made in Zech. 11:12; 13; Matt. 26:15; 27:9,10)?
19. Against what city and people will the Gentile nations gather in the last days (Zech. 12:2, 3; 14:2)? How will God deal with them (Zech. 12:4-9; 14:2,3; Rev. 16:14-16; 19:17-21)? Over what bitter sin will the Jews mourn (Zech. 12:10-14; John 19:37; Rev. 1:7)? What does God open to all (Zech. 13:1; Isa. 33:24; Rom. 11:26,27; John 3:16; 6:37)?
20. Do you think Jesus will literally set up His throne in Jerusalem (Zech. 14:9-21)? If so, why? If not, why not?

YEAR 3 - LESSON 43 - PAGE 1
WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Year III

Fourth Quarter

Lesson 43

Page 1

Malachi

Memory Verses: Malachi 3:8-10

Memory Verses:

"Will a man rob God? Yet, ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it" (Malachi 3:8-10).

Public Reading: Malachi 4:1-6.

The Message of Malachi

Malachi means "My Messenger" in Hebrew. Nothing is known of Malachi, "the unknown prophet with the angelic name." Malachi's exact date is not known, but he is placed approximately at 450-400 B. C. He lived in the times of Ezra and Nehemiah. About 100 years earlier (536 B. C.) a remnant of the Jews had returned from Babylonian Captivity to re-establish their national life in Jerusalem.

After sixteen (16) idle years (Hag. 1:2, 4) the Temple had been rebuilt (520-516 B. C.) by Zerubbabel the governor and Joshua the priest. Haggai and Zechariah encouraged the leaders and the people to complete God's Temple. Sixty (60) years later in 457 B. C. Ezra came to Jerusalem and started certain reforms (Ezra 7:8-10; 10:11-14). Thirteen (13) years later in 444 B. C. Nehemiah had come and rebuilt the wall (Neh. 4:6).

Malachi deals with the same evils that troubled Ezra: Neglect of God's house, idolatrous marriages, and God-robbing. A fearless reformer, Malachi spoke without hesitation or embarrassment, probably during Nehemiah's absence (Neh. 13:6, or 433 B. C.).

Farrar describes Malachi as "the last flush in the sunset of Hebrew prophecy. He is like a late evening which brings a long day to a close, but he is also like a morning dawn which brings with it the promise of a new and more glorious day."

I. A Message of Love (Malachi 1:1-5)

A. God's love for Israel (Mal. 1:1, 2).

"The burden of the world . . ." (Mal. 1:1): The introductory word really constitutes the title page of the prophecy. The "burden" is the heavy sentence or judgment which God's Word brings to those who reject His love.

"I have loved you . . ." (Mal. 1:2a): The message or "burden" begins almost abruptly with the word of Jehovah to His people. Everything is to be viewed in the light of His love. God has loved Israel above other men, or the other descendants of Abraham and Isaac (Deut. 7:8).

Malachi differs greatly from the other prophetic books. He does not present independent sermons or addresses but launches into an argument with his contemporaries. We can see and hear the audience respond to his open-air preaching with comments, questions, objections, and excuses. Malachi the master debater takes each objection and answers it before going forward with another.

YEAR 3 - LESSON 43 - PAGE 2

B. Israel blindly questions God's love (Mal. 1:2b).

"Yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us?" (Mal. 1:2b): This book is notable for its dialogue style. One evidence of a backslidden state is the critical spirit. God's people were in a sad spiritual condition. They questioned God's own statements. The Lord NOTED their criticisms. "Ye say" occurs eleven times (Mal. 1:2, 6, 7, 12, 13; 2:14, 17; 3:7, 8, 13, 14). God keeps an account of the statements of His people; he combats them.

The only possible explanation of "Wherein hast thou loved us?" is that the people, conscious of the difference between their national position and their past greatness, and of the apparent failure of fulfillment of the prophetic promises, questioned the love of Jehovah.

"Esau . . . yet I loved Jacob": The skeptical question of the people is answered by Malachi who reminds them of Jehovah's love for Jacob and His hatred of Esau; of his destruction of Edom, and His deliverance of Israel (verses 3, 4).

Rank of birth would naturally give Esau the FIRST PLACE. HOWEVER, God in His sovereign eternal purpose CHOSE JACOB, NOT ESAU. Paul quotes Mal. 1:2, 3 in Rom. 9:10-13 as applying to God's choice of Jacob instead of Esau (see Gen. 25:22-34). Malachi used the language as referring to the two nations that SPRANG FROM JACOB and ESAU, Israelites and Edomites. Both had been destroyed by the Babylonians. Israel had been restored, but Edom was still a desolation.

C. The Lord gives one of many proofs of His love for Israel (Mal. 1:3-5).

"I hated Esau. . . ." (Mal. 1:3): God "hated" Esau in that God did NOT CHOOSE ESAU to be the object of His favor. This is not "positive" but "relative" hatred. Terms which define the emotions are comparative. Natural affection is to be, AS COMPARED TO THE BELIEVER'S LOVE AND DEVOTION TO CHRIST, as IF IT WERE HATE (see Matt. 10:37; 12:47-50; Luke 14:26).

"Edom. . . We are impoverished" (Mal. 1:4): Both Israel and Edom (descendants of Jacob and Esau) had been destroyed by the Babylonians. Israel had been restored; the Edomites had not. THIS WAS PROOF OF GOD'S LOVE FOR ISRAEL. In the Old Testament, we have God's declaration of love for Israel. In the New Testament God announces His love FOR THE WORLD (John 3:16). Edom will NEVER BE REBUILT. Lonely Petra is the fulfillment of this prophecy.

A Message of Rebuke (Malachi 1:6-2:17)

A. Against the priest (Mal. 1:6-2:9).

1. They did not honor and reverence God (Mal. 1:6).

"O priests that despise my name" (Mal. 1:6): Malachi declared the corruption of the priests, and indicated the line of their punishment. He charged them with profanity, in that they had despised the name of Jehovah. The master debater Malachi accuses the priests; they say, "Wherein have we despised thy name?" The priests did not give God reverence and honor DUE TO HIM.

2. They offered to God what they would not dare offer the Governor (Mal. 1:7-9).

"Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar . . . blind for sacrifice" (Mal. 1:7, 8): They offered as sacrifice to God what they would NOT DARE OFFER TO THE PERSIAN governor. God would not accept blemished sacrifices (Mal. 1:8,13,14; Deut. 15:21). "The table" is the altar (Ezek. 41:22), not the table of shewbread.

YEAR 3 - LESSON 43 - PAGE 3

Men then and today offer God what they would not dare offer the governor, or state. Such gifts would insult the state, or tax collector! They think they can get by with God. "Be not deceived: God is NOT MOCKED" (Gal. 6:7) - in Malachi's day, or ours! God would not "regard" or ACCEPT THEM (verse 9).

3. They refused to work except for gain (Mal. 1:10).

"Who . . . would shut the doors for naught?" (Mal. 1:10): The priests would not even shut the doors or build a fire on the altar unless they were paid. It is right to be paid for sacred service, as God's Word declares (I Cor. 9:13). NEVERTHELESS, WHEN MONEY BECOMES the SOLE OBJECT OF SERVICE GOD DESPISES IT. It is better to offer no sacrifices than to offer vain ones (Isa. 1:11-15). It is BEST to OFFER GOD'S OFFERINGS IN GOD'S WAY in any age-patriarchal, Mosaic, or Christian!

4. God's will that in spite of Israel's failure His name should be great (Mal. 1:11-14).

"Ye said also, Behold, what a weariness" (Mal. 1:13): The priests regarded God's service as irksome and offered the most worthless offerings to get it over with as soon as possible. When a leader of the temple, or the church today, thinks the work of our Lord is wearisome, THAT LEADER SHOULD AT ONCE BE REPLACED. He hinders and hurts the true work of God! The prophet was protesting against a formalism that was devoid of reality.

"Ye have snuffed at it . . ." (Mal. 1:13): That is, they despised the worship. Verse 12 is a repetition of the rebuke in verse 7. God will be worshipped over all the earth from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same" (verse 11). Is this not an allusion to the day when true worship will be paid to God by all nations who seek God? Moreover, that the kingdom of God will be taken from the Jews who despise the Lord?

"But cursed be the deceiver . . ." (Mal. 1:14): When a person offered a faulty sacrifice to God (Lev. 22:19-25), such a corrupt animal in sacrifice was an offense against God's majesty and greatness!

5. Their utter failure (Mal. 2:1-9).

"O ye priests . . . if ye will not hear . . . I will curse your blessings" (Mal. 2:1, 2): The priests had led the people astray. They followed a sterile formalism without heart, or meaning. Priests had been ordained of God to lead the people (verses 4-7) in righteousness. They were responsible for the deplorable situation. They had become so debased, mercenary, and corrupt that the name "PRIEST" had become a word of contempt among the people. It is even so until this day. Read I Sam. 2:17; Jer. 18:15; Matt. 18:6; James 3:1; Luke 12:47, 48; Mal. 2:7-9

B. Against the people (Mal. 2:10-17).

1. They were guilty of sin against one another (Mal. 2:10).

"Why do we deal treacherously . . . against his brother . . .?" (Mal. 2:10): The prophet specifically charged the people with TWO SINS, and in each case pronounced judgment on them. He introduced this charge by enunciating the PRINCIPAL OF THE COMMON BROTHERHOOD OF ALL TO GOD AS FATHER, and announcing the consequent sin of dealing treacherously with each other. Jehovah is the FATHER of the nation in Mal. 1:6. He made Israel the people of His possession. All the Israelites are children of God; as such, they are spiritual brothers and sisters. Every violation of brotherhood was an offense against God, a desecration of His covenant.

YEAR 3 - LESSON 43 - PAGE 4

2. They were guilty of mixed marriages and divorce (Mal. 2:11-16).

"Judah . . . married the daughter of a strange God" (Mal. 2:11): They married a woman who worshipped an idol (Jer. 2:27). The law forbade marriage with Canaanites (Ex. 34:16; Deut. 7:1-3). All marriages with heathen women who did not give up their idolatry were denounced (1 Kings 11:1, 2). Such sin God punishes (verse 12); God will not accept their offerings if they marry such heathen women.

"The Lord . . . witness between thee and thy wife of thy youth" (Mal. 2:14): Jews were divorcing their wives to marry heathen women. This was a double sin; it was disastrous to the proper rearing of children. Men cast off their wives. The heart-broken women covered the altar of God with their tears (13). Marriage is a covenant with two persons BEFORE GOD. Let the men remember the wife of his youth, the love of his youth with which the marriage had been entered, and the faithless treatment of the wife in putting her away!

"Yet ye say, Wherefore?" (Mal. 2:14): The persons addressed will not recognize this sin either. They want to know why God will not accept their sacrifices. The prophet plainly discloses their sins (verses 14, 15).

God hates "putting away" (verse 16), or divorce, except for adultery (Matt. 19:9).

3. The sin of insincere religious profession (Mal. 2:17).

II. A Message of Hope (Malachi 3:1-4:6)

A. John the Baptist's coming and work (Mal. 3:1a).

"Behold, I will send my messenger . . ." (Mal. 3:1a): Skepticism was then, and is now, at the root of religious indifference and low morals. Noting those wicked nations were more prosperous, the people were commonly saying: WHAT IS THE USE OF SERVING GOD? "Where is the God of judgment?" (Mal. 2:17).

Malachi answers that there is a coming day of judgment! Before His coming, the Lord will send a messenger to prepare the way for Him. God sent a messenger to the nation immediately before the coming of the Lord (Matt. 11:10-14; 17:11-13).

B. The coming and work of the Lord yet in the future (Mal. 3:1b-6).

"The Lord . . . shall suddenly come" (Mal. 3:1b): When the way has been prepared the Lord will suddenly come. "This suddenness is repeated in all the acts and judgments of the Lord. The Lord of glory always comes as a thief in the night to those who sleep in their sins."

"The Lord" is God. He comes to the Temple of Jehovah. "Where is the God of judgment" (Mal. 2:17). He will come as the God-king of Israel. He comes as the angel of the covenant, for whom the people are longing.

"But who may abide the day of His coming?" (Mal. 3:2): No one endures it. The prophet is speaking to the ungodly. The Lord will come like a smelter's fire, to burn out all the corrupt ingredients which are mixed with the gold and the silver (Zech. 13:9); like lye by which clothes are cleansed from dirt (see Isa. 4:4). He will "purify the sons of Levi" (Mal. 3:3) that they may become those who offer to the Lord in righteousness. Then the sacrifice of the nation will be "pleasant unto the Lord" (Mal. 3:4).

"I will be a swift witness against . . . I change not" (Mal. 3:5, 6): The Lord will bring judgment upon all sinners; he will rise up as a swift witness against all the wicked who do not fear Him! He is the Unchangeable God!

YEAR 3 - LESSON 43 - PAGE 5

C. The sad state of His people before His coming (Mal. 3:7-13).

Return unto me, and I will return unto you" (Mal. 3:7): The reason why Israel waits in vain for the judgment and the SALVATION DAWNING WITH IT, is not to be found in God, BUT IN THE PEOPLE WHO INSIST ON BREAKING GOD'S COMMANDMENTS. Yet, they regarded themselves as righteous! "Wherein shall we return?"

"Will a man rob God? . . . YOU HAVE ROBBED ME!" (Mal. 3:8): They try to defraud God in the tithe and heave offering. They did not pay them at all, or they did not pay them, as they should into the house of God. They were smitten with a curse for trying to defraud God (verses 19-12). The people were guilty of blasphemy and robbery. ARE YOU ROBBING GOD (I Cor. 10:26; 16:2). Men who LOVE GOD and tithe have God's promise of prosperity; God challenges us to "PROVE ME NOW"! How can you FAIL WITH GOD AS YOUR SENIOR PARTNER?

"It is vain to serve God" (Mal. 3:14): The nation unjustly murmured against God (verse 13). The Day of Judgment will bring to light the difference between the wicked and those who truly fear God from the heart out of love (verse 15).

D. God's faithful remnant (Mal. 3:16-18).

"Then they that feared the Lord . . ." (Mal. 3:16): In the midst of widespread apostasy, a remnant remained loyal to Jehovah. God knows those whom He calls "my jewels" (verses 17, 18) and he has a purpose toward them.

E. The Day of the Lord (Mal. 4:1-4).

"The day cometh . . ." (Mal. 4:1): Four times Malachi sweeps forward to "The Day of the Lord" (Mal. 1:11; 3:1-6; 16:18; 4:1-6). He calls it "The Day" (Mal. 3:2, 17; 4:1, 3, 5). It seems to mean the whole Christian era, with special application to the time of the end. The day will have a two-fold effect: Toward the wicked, it would be a day of burning and of destruction. Toward the righteous it would be a day of healing and of salvation (verses 1-3). "Remember ye the law of Moses . . ." (Mal. 4:4): This is the CLOSING OLD TESTAMENT ADMONITION.

F. Elijah is to come again before the day of the Lord (Mal. 4:5, 6).

"Behold, I will send you Elijah . . ." (Mal. 4:5): Jehovah promised that a herald would come before the day of the Lord. This is THE CLOSING PREDICTION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT. Elijah will usher in the "Day of the Lord." He did, 400 years later, in the person of JOHN THE BAPTIST (Matt. 3:1-12; 11:14).

"And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children . . ." (Mal. 4:6): This is quoted in Luke 1:16, 17. Elijah's job will be to lead back the heart of the fathers to their sons, and the heart of the sons to their fathers. "The hearts of the godly fathers and the ungodly sons are estranged from one another. The bond of union, namely common love to God, is wanting. The fathers are ashamed of their children, the children of their fathers."

"Least I come . . . curse" (Mal. 4:6): THE LAST WORD of the Old Testament is "CURSE," meaning that the plight of mankind would be HOPELESS SHOULD THE LORD FAIL TO COME.

Thus the Old Testament closes; 400 years elapsed. THEN CAME THE MESSIAH, whom the Hebrew nation had been born to bring forth. As through the centuries they had rejected the prophets of God, so when the Messiah came, they rejected Him. "His own received him not" (John 1:11).

Because the Jews rejected their Messiah they have been homeless wanderers over the earth, being at the same time the tragedy and miracle of the ages.

YEAR 3 - LESSON 43 - PAGE 6

QUESTIONS

1. What were the Lord's first 4 words to Israel through Malachi (Mal. 1:2; Jer. 31:3; I John 4:10; 11, 19)?
2. Did the Jews deserve such love (Mal. 1:6,7; 2:17; 3:7-9,13,14)?
3. What is the meaning of Malachi (Mal. 1:1)?
4. What are the seven questions that reveal the people's proud, self-righteous spirit (Mal. 1:6,7; 2:17; 3:7,8,13,14)?
5. What class of people was first rebuked (Mal. 1:6; 2:1)?
6. What sins are charged against the priests (Mal. 1:6-14)?
7. What covenant had these restoration priests received and corrupted (Mal. 2:4-9; Num. 25:10-13)?
8. Why should the priests have kept knowledge and sought the law at his mouth (Mal. 2:7; Ex. 28:1-3; I Pet. 2:9-12)?
9. What far-reaching tragedies resulted from the priests sins (Mal. 2:8; II Tim. 2:17, 18; Titus 1:10-14; I Tim. 4:16)?
10. What sins are charged against the people (Mal. 2:11-17; 3:7,8,13,14)?
11. Who is the messenger of Malachi 3:1 (Matt. 3:1-6; 11:10, 11; Mark 1:2; Luke 7:27)?
12. How are both the first and second comings of Christ referred to in Mal. 3:1-5?
13. When will the Jews' offerings be pleasant as in the days of old (Mal. 3:3,4; Isa. 1:11-17)?
14. What two-fold pre-requisite for blessing is revealed in Mal. 3:7-10? If you claim to love God with all your heart, how can you withhold the tithe and love-offerings to His work here (Matt. 23:36-40; II Cor. 8:1-5,8,9,24; 9:6-9).
15. What three things are recorded of those that "feared the Lord" (Mal. 3:16)?
16. What will be their final reward (Mal. 3:17)?
17. What awaits the wicked and these that "fear my name" in the Day of the Lord (Mal. 4:1-3)?
18. To whom will the Lord appear as the Sun of righteousness (Mal. 4:2; II Thess. 1:5-12; II Pet. 1:19; Rev. 22:16)?
19. What is the last promise recorded in the Old Testament (Mal.4:5, 6), and what is the last word with which the Old Testament closes?
20. Has God's purpose for the Old Testament been realized in YOUR LIFE, and if not, who must accept the blame (Psa. 119:9, 130, 165; Rom. 15:4; I Cor. 9:9,10; II Tim. 3:16,17)? Will you HELP SPREAD the WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE THAT "EVERY CREATURE" (Mark 16:15,16) may obey God's word and be saved?

YEAR 3 - LESSON 44 - PAGE 1
WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Year III

Fourth Quarter

Lesson 44
Matthew 1

Page 1
Memory Verse: Matthew 1:22

Memory Verse:

"And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21).

The Genealogy of Jesus Christ

Renan, the French skeptic (1823-1892), described Matthew as "the most important book of Christendom -- the most important book that has ever been written."

The Writer

This gospel was written by Matthew the converted publican or despised tax collector for Rome (Mat. 9:9). He is called Levi in Mark 2:14. Our Lord evidently re-named him Matthew, a contraction of Mattathias, which means "Gift of God." He seems to have been a man of means. Modestly he does not refer to the "great feast" he made on his call to the ministry (Luke 5:29), or his great sacrifice in following Christ.

Papias, a pupil of the Apostle John, says Matthew wrote the gospel that bears his name. Matthew is "the most widely read book in all the world," affirms one writer.

Purpose of Matthew

The book was originally written in Hebrew, tradition says, and that some years later, about 60 A. D., Matthew issued a more complete edition in Greek. What a service to mankind to produce such a book! One characteristic word in this book is "Fulfilled."

No less than sixty (60) references to the Old Testament writings are referred to as being fulfilled in Christ. Matthew gives a portrait of Jesus as King. The word "Kingdom" occurs fifty-five (55) times in this gospel; "Kingdom of heaven" thirty-two (32) times; "Son of David" seven (7) times.

Matthew reveals Jesus as realizing in His Person, and enunciating in His teaching the great principles that had been the peculiar deposit and glory of God's ancient people. They were created a nation for the revelation of the beauty and beneficence of the Kingdom of Heaven established on earth, and in this Gospel the King is seen and heard, enunciating its laws, distributing its benefits, and laying its foundations in His life and death.

Why Four Gospels

The four gospels are a most important part of the Bible. They are more important than all the rest of the books in the world put together. We could better afford to be without the knowledge of everything else than to be without the knowledge of Jesus Christ!

Bible books that precede Matthew are ANTICIPATORY. Bible books that follow Matthew are EXPLANATORY of Jesus, the Hero of the four gospels. There are many more than FOUR GOSPELS to start with (see Luke 1:1). Within a generation, the story of Jesus had spread over the whole known world,

YEAR 3 - LESSON 44 - PAGE 2

and many thousands of devoted followers had been won to Christ. Naturally, a great demand arose for WRITTEN NARRATIVES of HIS LIFE.

Matthew was a publican or tax collector, Luke was a physician, John a fisherman. We do not know what Mark was. Matthew and John were companions of Jesus. Mark was a companion of Peter. Luke was a companion of Paul. They all told the SAME STORY. They traveled far and wide, and may often have gone together.

God himself took a hand in the PREPARATION and PRESERVATION of the FOUR GOSPELS. They contained that which God wanted to be KNOWN ABOUT CHRIST. The Old Testament has some double narratives, but only here are FOUR BIBLE BOOKS ABOUT THE SAME PERSON!

In our study we shall use Matthew chapter by chapter as our outline and supplement it with the other two Synoptic Gospels, Mark and Luke.

Today we shall study The Genealogy and Birth of Jesus. Luke 1:1-80; 3:23-38, and John 1:1-14 should be read in connection with Matthew 1:1-25.

I. The Title of the Gospel (Matthew 1:1)

"The book of the generation of Jesus Christ . . ." (Matt. 1:1): The book or genealogy is "The birthroll of Jesus Christ" (Moffatt). This is also given in Luke 3:23-38. The "coming of Christ had been anticipated, not only from eternity in heaven, but also from the beginning of earthly history."

In the early days of human history remember that God had chosen ONE FAMILY LINE, that of Abraham. Later God chose the FAMILY OF DAVID within the Abrahamic Family to be the family through which God's son would make entrance into this world.

"The son of David . . ." (Matt. 1:1): The Messiah was promised to David (II Sam. 7:12, 16; John 7:42). Matthew shows that Jesus Christ is ON THE HUMAN SIDE THE SON OF DAVID, as the Messiah was to be, and hence the son of Abraham (Gen. 22:18; Gal. 3:16). Jesus was not merely a real Jew and the heir of the promises, but THE PROMISE made to Abraham.

"The son of Abraham . . ." (Matt. 1:1): The first verse gives the title of the genealogy of Jesus rather than of the Gospel of Matthew. This genealogy is remarkable. It is Jewish in its outlook, tracing to Abraham, and is Jesus' legal genealogy resulting from His adoption by Joseph. Verse 1 is the description of the list in verses 2-17.

II. The First Division of the Genealogy (Matthew 1:2-6; see verse 17)

"Abraham begat Isaac . . ." (Matt. 1:2): The Lord had promised Abraham (Gen. 12:3; 22:18) that in his seed all the world should be blessed. David and Abraham were the two greatest ancestors of Jesus, and are named because it had been predicted that he would be their descendent. Matthew begins with Abraham to trace the LINE DOWN. This is the idea of DESCENT. "Begot" itself does not always mean immediate parentage, but merely direct descent, as Matt. 1:16 clearly shows.

Luke 3:23-38 was written for Gentiles goes BACK TO ADAM. Abraham is writing for Jews, and Jewish history begins with Abraham.

"Judah begat Phares and Zara. . ." (Matt. 1:3): These were the twins of Tamar, the incestuous daughter-in-law of Judah (Gen. 38:24-30). Three women are named in this list, Tamar, Rahab and Ruth. These were all Gentile women, and are named for this reason, and for their remarkable history. There were stains upon the character of Tamar (Gen. 38:11-30) and of Rahab (Josh. 2:1), but Ruth is one of the sweetest

and purest women of the Bible.

"Jesse begat David the King . . ." (Matt. 1:6): David was the greatest of the line from David to Christ, so exalted that one of the titles of the Messiah was "the Son of David."

"Of Urias": The mother of Solomon is referred to, not by name, but as the wife of Uriah. Uriah was a Hittite, a Gentile, and his wife may have been also. She was certainly a partner of David in the greatest guilt of his life (II Sam. 11:3-5).

We may count David TWICE, first as a patriarch, second as one of the kings. This will make up the full number of the second fourteen generations. The genealogy as given in Matthew is abridged. Some names are omitted. Nevertheless, that does not invalidate the line descent.

The forty-two (42) generations are in three (3) groups of fourteen (14) each. They cover 2000 years: the first group 1000 years; the second group 400 years; the third group 600 years.

III. The Second Division of the Genealogy (Matthew 1:7-17)

"Solomon begat Rehoboam" (Matt. 1:7): A wise but sinful king begat a foolish king, from whose kingdom of twelve tribes God cut off ten tribes (I Kings 11:4, 42; 12:16-19).

"Abia begat Asa" (Matt. 1:7): Rehoboam begat Abijah, a sinful king. It is "like father, like son." Abia or Abijah begat Asa, a godly king who reformed the kingdom of Judah.

"Joram begat Ozias . . . : Joram begat Ahaziah who begat Joash, who begat Amaziah. These three kings are found in I Chron. 3:11, 12. They were probably omitted to equalize the three-fold division of generations from Abraham to Joseph. In addition, they were wicked descendants of Ahab.

"Ozias": This is Uzziah (II Kings 15:13). He is called Azariah (II Chron. 22:6). He was a good king, but smitten with leprosy for presumptuously entering the temple (II Kings 15:13; II Chron. 26:16).

"Jechonias and his brethren . . ." (Matt. 1:11): As far as we know, Jechoniah had no literal brothers. "Brethren" means his royal kindred, namely, his father Jehoiakim, and his uncle Jehoahaz and Zedekiah, the three sons of Josiah.

"About the time . . . Babylon" (Matt. 1:11): 597 B. C. The captivity of Judah took place in four installments: 606, 597, 586 and 581 B. C. See II Chron. 36:6, 7; II Kings 24:14-16; 25:8-12; Jer. 52:30. The seventy years captivity is counted as beginning in 606 B. C., as Nebuchadnezzar carried the first captives to Babylon.

"Jechonias begat Salathiel . . ." (Matt. 1:12): Jechoniah may have been the natural, Neri the legal father of Shealtiel (Deut. 25:5-10; Matt. 22:24).

"Salathiel begat Zorobabel": Zerubbabel was the governor of Jerusalem who rebuilt the temple as told by Ezra, Haggai and Zechariah (see Ezra 3:2).

"And Jacob begat Joseph . . ." (Matt. 1:16). Matthew gives Joseph's line, showing Jesus to be LEGAL HEIR to the promises given Abraham and David. Luke gives Mary's line showing Jesus' BLOOD DESCENT, "Son of David according to the flesh" (Rom. 1:3).

Mary's genealogy, in accord with Jewish usage, was in her husband's name. Joseph was the "son of Heli" (Luke 3:23), actually the son-in-law of Heli. Jacob was Joseph's father (Matt. 1:16).

These genealogies are given more fully in I Chronicles 1-9 and form the backbone of Old Testament annals. Carefully guarded through long centuries, they contain a "family line through which a promise was transmitted 4000 years, a fact unexampled in history."

"Mary, of whom was born Jesus . . . Christ" (Matt. 1:16): The changed expression is important. It is no longer, "who begat," but, "Mary, of whom was born Jesus." Jesus was not "begotten" of natural

YEAR 3 - LESSON 44 - PAGE 4

generation. The name Jesus means "Savior." His Virgin Birth is taught here. "Christ" is a title. It means the "anointed one." Prophets, priests, and kings were anointed. Jesus was Prophet, Priest, and King!

"So all the generations . . ." (Matt. 1:17): There are exactly fourteen generations from Abraham to David, and two other series are made to correspond. "From David": David's name is counted again to make the number fourteen. The third series begins with Jeconiah and ends with Christ.

IV. The Birth of Jesus by a Virgin Mother (Matthew 1:18-25)

"Now the birth of Jesus Christ . . ." (Matt. 1:18): The word rendered here "birth" is the same in Greek that is translated "generation" in verse 1. Let us handle the birth of Jesus with reverential awe. We must not be wise above that which is written. The birth of any child is wonderful (Eccl. 11:5; Psa. 139:13-16). His birth was a miracle.

Comparative View of the Four Gospels

The four gospels tell largely the same things, but with some differences. Only Matthew and Luke tell of the birth and childhood of Jesus. Matthew and Mark dwell on the Galilean Ministry, Luke the Perea ministry, and John the Judean ministry. John omits most of the Galilean ministry and records visits to Jerusalem that the others omit. The others omit the Judean ministry, except the last week, which all four give rather fully.

The last week of our Lord's ministry occupies one-half of Matthew, about one-third of Mark, one-fourth of Luke and one-half of John. John devotes seven (7) chapters, about one-third of his book, to crucifixion day, from sunset to sunset.

Matthew has 28 chapters, Mark 16, Luke 24, John 21. Luke has the most pages, and is the longest. Mark is the shortest of the gospels.

	MATTHEW	MARK	LUKE	JOHN
Pre-Incarnation Existence of Jesus				1:1-3
Jesus' Birth and Childhood	1,2		1,2	
John the Baptist	3:1-12	1:1-8	3:1-20	1:6-42
Jesus' Baptism	3:13-17	1:9-11	3:21-22	
The Temptation	4:1-11	1:12-13	4:1-13	
Preliminary Miracle				2:1-11
Early Judean Ministry (about 8 months)				2:13 to 4:3
Visit to Samaria				4:4-42
Galilean Ministry (about 2 years)	4:12 to 19:1	1:14 to 10:1	4:14 to 9:51	4:43-54; 6:1-7:1
Visit to Jerusalem				5:1-47
Perea and Later Judean Ministry (about 4 months)	19,20	10	9:51 to 19:28	7:2 to 11:57
The Last Week	21 to 27	11 to 15	19:29 to 24:1	12 to 19
Post-Resurrection Ministry	28	16	24	20 to 21

YEAR 3 - LESSON 44 - PAGE 5

"Mary was espoused to Joseph . . . found with child" (Matt. 1:18): Jews were engaged ten to twelve months prior to marriage. So sacred was the engagement that it could only be broken by divorce. Mary and Joseph were engaged, not married. Betrothal was, from patriarchal times, a formal ceremony (Gen. 24:25). It was regarded a binding obligation.

Unfaithfulness in engagement was punishable by death (Deut. 22:23-28; Lev. 20:10; Ezek. 16:38; John 8:5). The world needs such reverence for engagement today. Hasty marriages, hasty repentance -- and divorce.

"Before they came together" means before they were married. "She was found with child." Both Matthew and Luke were careful to mention his miraculous conception (Luke 1:26, 34). Christ's physical nature was "begotten" by the Holy Spirit. Christ is the only example of such a birth in all history. His birth, like his life and his resurrection, was a miracle. Mary for the first three months following her visit by the heavenly messenger was away at Elizabeth's (Luke 1:36). It was when she returned to Nazareth that Joseph learned of her condition. It must have filled him with "strange and agonized perplexity."

"Joseph her husband . . ." (Matt. 1:19): Betrothal according to the law (Deut. 22:24) made Joseph her husband before marriage. He was a "just" or righteous man. To put her away publicly was to expose Mary to the penalty of death. Probably she had made her defense to him. Her story was so wonderful that he was in doubt. "Privily" or secretly he was minded to give her a bill of divorcement (Deut. 24:1).

"Angel of the Lord appeared . . . in a dream" (Matt. 1:20): The angel Gabriel appeared to Mary (Luke 1:26). The name of the angel is not here given. Angels are messengers. An angel of the Lord is the Lord's messenger. This mode of communication is often used of God (Gen. 20:3; 31:11, 24; I Kings 3:5; Dan. 7:1). Divine dreams came with a vividness that gave assurance of their supernatural nature. Matthew mentions four such dreams (Matt. 1:20; 2:12, 13; 27:19).

"Joseph, thou son of David" (Matt. 1:20): It was fitting that he be now reminded that he belonged to the family from whence the Messiah was to come. The angel called him by name (see Acts 10:3, 13). "Fear not": Joseph was not to fear as to Mary's virtue and purity. We know very little of Joseph. He went with Mary to Bethlehem, and was with her when Jesus was born (Luke 2:4, 16). He was with Mary when Jesus was presented in the Temple (Luke 2:33). He conducted their flight to Egypt, and the return to Nazareth (Matt. 2:13, 19-23). He took Jesus up to Jerusalem at the age of twelve (Luke 2:43, 51). He was a carpenter, and the head of a family of at least SEVEN CHILDREN (Matt. 13:55, 56). He must have been a good man to be chosen of God to be the foster-father of God's OWN SON. Joseph probably died before Jesus began his public ministry, though the language of Matt. 13:55 and John 6:42 may imply that he was still alive. He must have died before Jesus' crucifixion, else why did Jesus commit the care of his mother to John (John 19:26-27)?

"And she shall bring forth a son. . . Jesus" (Matt. 1:21): Note Mary shall NOT "BEAR THEE A SON" as the angel said to Zachariah (Luke 1:13). Joseph was to take the position of legal father to the child and name it. The Hebrew form of Jesus is Joshua; the full meaning is "Jehovah's salvation." Jesus saves us from the guilt, power, and punishment of sin through the gospel.

YEAR 3 - LESSON 44 - PAGE 6

"That it might be fulfilled . . ." (Matt. 1:22): The prophecy is found in Isaiah 7:14 and was given in 740 B. C.

"Behold, a virgin shall be with child . . ." (Matt. 1:23): It is "The virgin" as in the Revised Version and J. B. Phillips. Isaiah had in view a particular virgin, the mother of the true Immanuel. Like many prophecies, it had a double, a typical and a true, fulfillment. The first was in the reign of Ahaz, a sign concerning a temporal deliverance. The higher reference is to the SPIRITUAL DELIVERER of the world. The first is the type, the second is the great event that inspired the message. "Immanuel" means "God with us," an appropriate title for Jesus among men! Joseph obeyed at once the Lord's will (verse 24).

"And knew her not till . . ." (Matt. 1:25): A Hebrew form for conjugal intercourse. The statement that Joseph "knew her not TILL she had brought forth a son" implies without doubt that HE DID "KNOW HER AFTER JESUS WAS BORN, that Joseph did cohabit with Mary as man and wife! In addition, does not "before they came together" (Matt. 1:18) imply that they did afterward "come together"?

Is it likely that Joseph and Mary merely pretended to be husband and wife when in reality their appearance of marriage was only a public sham? Do you think that God would have been a party to such DECEPTION AND HYPOCRISY IS VIRGINITY ANY HOLIER THAN MOTHERHOOD?

The doctrine of Mary's "perpetual virginity", that is, that she remained a virgin, and had no other children, first appeared in the second century among the silly and imaginary fables of the Apocryphal writings which sought to show the superior sanctity of celibacy. The invention of the story of the translation of "her spotless and precious body" to heaven then followed. The cult of the worship of the "blessed virgin" grew and grew till in 1854, Pope Pius IX, "exercising the assumed Papal prerogative of MANUFACTURING HISTORICAL FACTS, DECREED THE 'immaculate conception' of Mary, that is, that she was sinless, born and preserved 'free from all stain of original sin.' "

Matthew 1:25 destroys the theory of the "perpetual virginity" of Mary. No one can prove by Scripture that Mary was either divine or sinless. She had at least SIX OTHER CHILDREN (Mark 3:31; Matt. 13:55, 56)!

QUESTIONS

1. How does the first verse in our New Testament suggest the value of Old Testament study (Matt. 1:1; Gen. 17:19; II Sam. 7:8-13; Rom. 15:4; II Tim. 3:16,17)?
2. How does Renan, the French skeptic, describe Matthew?
3. Who is the writer of the gospel, what was his job, what is Mark's name for him, and what is the meaning of the writer's name?
4. Why are there FOUR GOSPELS, and who took a hand in the preparing and preserving them?
5. Of what is verse one the title? Why is it called "The book" (See Gen. 5:1; 11:10,27)? How does Moffat translate Matt. 1:1? Of whom is Christ descended (II Sam. 7:12,16; John 7:42; Gen. 22:18; Gal. 3:16)?
6. Where did the compiler of the list find these names (Gen.21:1-3; 24:21-26; 29:35; 38:29; Ruth 4:18-21; I Chron.1:34-2:12)? What class of men were these (see Acts 2:29)?
7. Where were the names found for the second division of fourteen generations (I Chron. 3:10-19; and throughout II Chronicles)? Of what class of men were these? Why were some names omitted (Matt.1:8; I Chron.3:11,12)?
8. When was the time "they were carried away to Babylon" (Matt. 1:11; II Chron. 36:6,7; II Kings 24:14-16; 25:8-13; Jer. 52:30)?
9. Where were the names for the third division found (I Chron. 3:17-19; see Josephus, Life, I, 1; Against Apion, Book I, 7)? Of what class of men were these? What was the effect of the Mosaic Law on inheritance on the keeping of genealogies (Lev. 25:28; Ezra 2:61-63)?
10. Whose line of descent does Matthew give (Matt. 1:16)? Whose line does Luke give (Luke 3:23), and was Joseph the "son of Heli"?
11. What was done in the case of a betrothed woman found with child (Deut. 22:29,24; 24:1)?
12. How did Mary explain to Joseph her condition (Matt. 1:18; Luke 1:26-40)?
13. What was Joseph minded to do to Mary (Matt. 1:19) and why? What do we know about Joseph? What kind of man do you think he must have been?
14. How is Joseph addressed by the angel (Matt. 1:20), and how many dreams are given by Matthew (Matt. 1:20; 2:12,13; 27:19)? Whose son is Joseph called here?
15. Why was Joseph told not to fear to take Mary as his wife (Matt. 1:20)?
16. What was Joseph told to name the child, and what is the meaning of Jesus (Matt. 1:21)?
17. Was the prediction (Matt. 1:23) fulfilled in a child of Isaiah (Isa. 7:14)?
18. What bearing does Matt. 1:25 have on the perpetual virginity of Mary? What is implied in Matt. 1:18 and 25?
19. Who invented the doctrines of the "perpetual virginity" and the "immaculate conception" of Mary? How many other children did she bear (Mark 3:31; Matt.13:55,56)?
20. Do you think virginity is any holier than motherhood? Or that celibacy is preferable to fatherhood?

YEAR 3 - LESSON 45 - PAGE 1
WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Year III

Fourth Quarter

Lesson 45
Matthew 2

Page 1
Memory Verses: Matthew 2:1, 2

Memory Verses:

"Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship Him" (Matthew 2:1, 2).

Public Reading: Matthew 2:1-6.

The Birth of Jesus Christ

The Kingdom was not ready for the King, so a reception for Him was not arranged, and organized by those who should have been waiting for Him. They were in rebellion against Him! The King's advent was heralded by a star, and a few subject souls of a nation other than the chosen were guided by it to the King.

As you read the second chapter of Matthew, you are impressed with phrases: "For thus it is written (or spoken) by the prophet" and "that it MIGHT BE FULFILLED," which latter phrase "Chimes upon the ear like the sound of a persistent bell" (W. J. Dawson).

Luke 2 should be studied in connection with Matthew 2. It gives several details not given by Matthew, and the one recorded incident in Jesus' life between his birth (Luke 2:4-52) and his baptism as he "began to be about thirty years of age" (Luke 3:23)-the visit to Jerusalem of the boy Jesus in his twelfth year!

I. The Place of His Birth (Matthew 2:1-6)

"Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem. . ." (Matt. 2:1): The place of His birth was definitely named and described. Micah 5:2 definitely names the place of the birth of "the fruitful." It was the home of Boaz and Ruth, of Jesse and David. It is five miles south by west of Jerusalem. Though the home of Joseph and Mary was at Nazareth, prophecy had declared that Christ should be born at Bethlehem. This was accomplished by the agency of the Roman Emperor (Luke 2:1). Mary traveled with her husband the length of the land, from Nazareth to Bethlehem, "to be taxed, every one into his own city" (Luke 2:3).

"Bethlehem of Judea . . ." : Bethlehem was one of the oldest places in the land of Judea. It had been in existence at least 1500 years before the Saviour was born. It was the birthplace of David. "Of Judea" was added to distinguish it from Bethlehem of Zebulun (Josh. 19:15). "Bethlehem" means, "house of bread."

"In the days of Herod the king . . .": It is difficult to determine the exact year of Christ's birth. When Jesus was born, time was reckoned in the Roman Empire from the founding of the city of Rome (Ab Urbe Condita, A. U. C.). When Christianity conquered the Roman Empire, an abbot named Dionysium Exiguus (the Small) made a calendar in 526 A. D. at the request of the Emperor Justinian in which he fixed the birth of Christ in the year 754 of the city of Rome (A. U. C.). It should have been 749 A. U. C., or a year or two earlier as Herod died in the year 750 A. U. C., just before the Passover, shortly after an eclipse of the moon on the night between the twelfth and thirteenth of March. "Jesus was born several months previous to the death of Herod, either toward the end of the year 749 A. U. C. (B. C. 5), or at the beginning of the year 750 A. U. C. -- B. C. 4)" (McGarvey, "The Fourfold Gospel," pages 40-41).

YEAR 3 - LESSON 45 - PAGE 2

"Herod the king . . .": Herod was born at Ashkelon, one of the five principle cities of the Philistines. He died at Jericho B. C. 4. His father was an Edomite, his mother was an Ishmaelite. He had fine executive ability, and is called Herod the Great. He got his throne and kept it from 37-33 B. C. by crimes of unspeakable brutality. Cruel, courageous, and cunning, he murdered his favorite wife and two sons. He was subject to the Roman Empire.

Seven Herods are named in the New Testament:

1. "Herod the king" (Matt. 2:1), called by Josephus Herod the Great, the first of the Herodian kings. The Romans appointed him.

2. Herod Archelaus, his son and successor in Judea (Matt. 2:22). The Romans deposed him and appointed a Roman governor in his stead.

3. Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee, who slew John the Baptist (Matt. 14:1). He also was a son of Herod the Great. See Mark 6:14-29. He mocked Christ (Luke 23:7-12).

4. Herod Philip, a third son, the lawful husband of Herodias (Matt. 14:3).

5. Another son also named Herod Philip. He is only referred to in the New Testament in Luke 3:1.

6. Herod Agrippa I, the grandson of Herod the Great, named in Acts 12:1-3, 23).

7. Herod Agrippa II, the son of the last, the King Agrippa before whom Paul made his famous defense (Acts 25:13, 23; 26:27).

"There came wise men from the east to Jerusalem": The word rendered "Wise men" is more correctly Magi, a term which designates an order of priests and philosophers. They belonged originally to Persia and Media. They were distributed over the entire region of the Euphrates. They were advisers of the kings. They knew doubtless the Hebrew Scriptures of the coming of the Messianic King from Daniel's prophecy (Daniel 9:25), and Balaam's prophecy about "A Star out of Jacob" (Num. 24:17). They were men of high standing. They had access to King Herod.

Commonly spoken of as the 'Three Wise-Men'; it is well to remember that the Bible says "men," two or more. The number and quality of the gifts has become the foundation for a tradition that they were three kings from Arabia, and during the Middle Ages it was professed that their bodies were found and removed to the cathedral at Cologne. Their shrine is still shown to credulous tourists, and their names are given as Caspar, Melchior and Balthazar. Their entourage may have included scores or hundreds. Their arrival in Jerusalem was important enough to stir the whole city.

"To Jerusalem . . .": Naturally, the wise men came to Jerusalem, the state's capital to seek the King. Jesus had been presented in the temple before they came (Luke 2:21-24) and taken back to Bethlehem. At this time, Jesus was more than forty (40) days old. These men came at least forty days before the death of Herod, for he spent the last forty days of his life in Jericho. The wise men found Herod at Jerusalem. Jesus was therefore, **AT LEAST EIGHTY (80) DAYS OLD WHEN HEROD DIED!**

"Where is . . . King of the Jews?" (Matt. 2:2): Herod was startled by the question of the wise men. He was by birth neither King, nor Jew. Pilate gave Jesus this title (Luke 23:38). No one has borne the title since Jesus. There was general expectation that a Ruler, divinely appointed, would appear in the East.

"We have seen his star in the east . . .": It is not enough to say with Kepler (1571-1630) this was a conjunction of the planets Jupiter and Saturn and Mars in 747 and 748 A. U. C. It was a supernatural announcement of a supernatural birth. These men were stargazers. God used their own line of thinking to guide them to His Son.

YEAR 3 - LESSON 45 - PAGE 3

"Herod . . . was troubled" (Matt. 2:3): The trouble of Herod is easily accounted for. A contender for the throne was born. Herod was a usurper. This news was of a legitimate king, and hence Herod's rival. This jealous king would have no rivals. Jerusalem knew he would do something drastic.

"He . . . gathered . . . priests . . . scribes . . . WHERE" (Matt. 2:4): the scribes made copies of the Scriptures, classified and taught them. They knew prophecy, and told Herod the city where Jesus was born (verses 5, 6; John 7:42). The body of men that officially announced the birthplace of Jesus later condemned Him to death as an impostor. Herod gathered the high priest and "scribes," successors of Ezra. They were the proper ones to answer his questions. He demanded that they tell him "where Christ should be born." The demand concedes that, 1) The Jews expected a Messiah, 2) The Scriptures had foretold the coming, and 3) The very place of his birth had been pointed out.

"In Bethlehem of Judea . . . thus it is written" (Matt. 2:5): The prophet here referred to is Micah, who lived about 700 years before Christ (Micah 5:1, 2). The quotation which follows in verse 6 is taken from Micah 5:2-4, but is freely translated. The scribes made use of Micah's prophecy to show that the Jews originally regarded this passage as **FIXING THE BIRTHPLACE OF MESSIAH**, and condemns as a fruit of bigotry and prejudice the modern effort of certain rabbis to explain away this natural interpretation.

II. The Peril of His Infancy (Matthew 2:7-12)

"Then Herod . . . privily called the wise men. . . ." (Matt. 2:7): The crafty and cruel king had gained one point—he now knew **WHERE THE CHRIST WAS TO BE BORN**. He now asks the wise men another question, by which he hopes to determine the age of the royal child. Herod sought Christ from wrong motives. He used the best methods, however, to find him. "He asked aid of those versed in the Scriptures . . . of those proficient in science." He wanted to know, if possible, exactly on what night Christ had been born.

"Go and search diligently for the young child. . ." (Matt. 2:8): Herod "sent them to Bethlehem." This was the king's answer to the question of verse 2. Herod wanted to come and kill the baby King, not worship Him! He had Aristobulus, the high priest, drowned by his companions while bathing, though they seemed to be only ducking him in sport. Religion is one of the favorite masks of the devil (II Cor. 11:13-15).

"The star . . . stood over where the young child was" (Matt. 2:9): For a star or planet to stand over any place or person, it must be in the zenith and have an altitude of ninety degrees. This star was not a conjunction of planets. The altitude at Bethlehem is fifty-seven degrees. This was a special revelation as to the Babe and the star. Guided by a star, they entered Bethlehem by night "with exceeding great joy" (verse 10). Their coming was private.

"And when they were come into the house. . ." (Matt. 2:11): The humble home of the carpenter might have shaken their faith in the **ROYALTY OF THE BABE**, but the miraculous honors accorded him in the star and the Scriptures raised him in their estimation above the mere external circumstances. Mary and Joseph had moved from the manger (Luke 2:7) "to the house."

"They say the young child with Mary his mother . . . : Mary was the only attendant of King Jesus who was rich but for our sakes became poor (II Cor. 8:9; Phil. 2:5-11).

"Worshipped him . . . presented unto him gifts": The wise men "fell down," the Oriental method of showing either reverence or worship. They "worshipped him." Observe that **NO ADORATION IS OFFERED HIS MOTHER!** They worshipped Jesus **AS DIVINE**. Oriental custom requires that an inferior approach his superior with a gift.

"Gold": The Providence of God is seen in the gifts. Gold would provide the means necessary for the flight to Egypt that was to follow; it would sustain the holy family in a foreign land.

YEAR 3 - LESSON 45 - PAGE 4

"Frankincense": A white resin or gum. It was fragrant when burned. This costly and fragrant gum was distilled from a tree in India and Arabia.

"Myrrh": This is an aromatic gum produced by slitting the bark of a thorn-bush that grew in Arabia, Ethiopia, and the Holy Land. It means bitterness. The gum chiefly used in embalming bodies, for ointments, perfume and sedative in wine.

"And being warned of God in a dream . . ." (Matt. 2:12): The wise men were suspicious of Herod, and knowing his character, they asked God to guide them. God did so by a dream. Hence, the wise men avoided Jerusalem on their return. They came and left by night that their coming might not betray where Baby Jesus was. They took the road from Bethlehem to Jericho, passed eastward, and did not return to Jerusalem.

III. The Pathos of His Escape (Matthew 2:13-18)

"Dream . . . Arise . . . flee into Egypt" (Matt. 2:13): God commands Joseph to depart for Egypt immediately. The arrival and departure of the magi or wise men, and the departure of Joseph, Mary, and Baby Jesus occurred on the same night (verse 14). Even this incident did not escape God's unfailing eye in the long list of prophecies that anticipated the Messiah (verse 15; Hosea 11:1). One hundred miles in a direct line from Bethlehem would carry Joseph well over the border of Egypt. 200 miles would bring him to the Nile River. There the family would find friends, probably relatives, as there were about one million Jews in the Nile valley. Tradition says they resided at On or Heliopolis.

"Out of Egypt have I called my son" (Matt. 2:15): Israel, nationally, was a "son" (Ex. 4:22), but Christ was the greater "Son." The servant-nation and the Servant-Son are both in view.

"Then Herod . . . slew all the children" (Matt. 2:16): Herod had expected the wise men to report to him after their visit to Bethlehem. When they returned to their own country without complying to his wishes, Herod's rage knew no bounds. He "sent forth and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof." He killed the male children only, thus destroying all rivals to his throne.

It has been estimated that from twelve to fifty baby boys were slain. Those slain were from "two years old and under", for according to Jewish reckoning this would mean all children from birth up to between twelve and thirteen months old, all past one year old being counted as two years old. Not knowing whether the child was born before or after the appearing of the star, Herod included all the children of that full year in which the star came.

"Then was fulfilled . . ." (Matt. 2:17): This saying is found in Jer. 31:15. It was first spoken with reference to Nebuchadnezzar's desolation of Israel. The survivors of the Israelites were gathered by their conquerors as captives at Ramah. There (verse 18) the voice of lamentation was heard from the mothers bereft of their offspring. The prophet describes Rachel, the mother of two great tribes, as weeping, refusing to be comforted. It was still more appropriate to the bereaved mothers of Bethlehem.

When we visited Rachel's Tomb, we realized the pathetic language of the prophet is again applied to the inconsolable mothers of Bethlehem, as though the Rachel that slept in the tomb ere a mourner over her slain offspring. Matthew does not mean that Jeremiah predicted the slaughter at Bethlehem; his words, though spoken as to another occasion, were so chosen of the Holy Spirit that they might be fittingly applied to the latter occasion. For the burial of Rachel, see Gen. 35:19.

IV. Prophecy Fulfilled By the Return from Egypt (Matthew 2:19-23; Luke 2:39)

"But when Herod was dead . . ." (Matt. 2:19): Herod the Great died in the thirty-seventh year of his reign, and in the seventieth year of his life. He died in the spring of the year 750 A. U. C., just before the Passover. See discussion of Matt. 2:1. This event was the signal for the return to Judea. "The angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt" and commanded him to "go into the land of Israel" (verse 20). Word did not come by the infant Jesus. He was "made like unto his brethren" (Heb. 2:17); being a child, "he spake as a child" (I Cor. 13:11), and not as an oracle! God orders the path of those who obey Him (Prov. 3:6).

"They are dead which sought the young child's life": "They" is doubtless the plural of majesty. It may include others unknown to us, who were employed by him or advised by him. Christ's enemies die. He lives on! Persecutors, oppressors, infidels, critics, literature, organizations shall DIE! Christ lives on! Pharaohs, Neros, Diocletians, many a Charles, Torquemada and Bloody Mary have come up and gone down. King Jesus lives on!

"And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth . ." (Matt. 2:23): It seems from verse 22 that Joseph was planning to return to Bethlehem and made the ancestral city of David their permanent residence. God planned differently and sent them back to their Galilean home. Matthew makes no mention of the previous residence of Nazareth" and he now names it first when it becomes the home of Christ. Then an obscure village, nestling on the hills about 500 feet above the Plain of Esdraelon, it was a bustling city of about 50,000 when we visited it June 22.

"He shall be called a Nazarene": No prophet had declared in express terms that He should be called a Nazarene. They did apply the term NETZER which means "branch" or "sprout" to Him.

McGarvey says: "Now, Nazareth, if derived from Netzer, answered to its name, and was a despised place (John 1:45, 46), and Jesus, though in truth a Bethlehemite, bore the name Nazarene because it fittingly expressed the contempt of those who despised and rejected Him."

QUESTIONS

1. What two companies visited Jesus (Matt. 2:1-12; Luke 2:8-20)?
2. How is the attitude of each an example for us (Matt. 2:2, 4, 5; Heb. 4:2)?
3. What important detail does Luke alone record between Jesus' birth and baptism (Luke 2:41-52; 3:23)?
4. How is the birth of Jesus dated (Matt. 2:1)?
5. Where was Jesus born (Matt. 2:1; Micah 5:2) and why add "of Judea" (Josh. 19:15)?
6. Who were the "wise men," and where were they from (Matt. 2:1)? Where and to whom did they naturally go for help in finding the new King (verse 2) and what disturbing question did they ask Herod?
7. Why was Herod troubled over the birth of King Jesus (Matt. 2:3-6; Luke 1:32, 33)?
8. What do we know of this Herod, and how many Herods are named in the New Testament?
9. What did Herod demand of the scribes (Matt. 2:4), and what was their answer (verses 5, 6)? Why didn't these men who knew the Scripture so well form a welcoming committee for the new King (John 1:11)?
10. What did Herod demand of the wise men in verse 7?
11. Since the star "stood over where the young child was", could it have been a "conjunction of planets" (Matt. 2:9)? Why?
12. When the wise men saw the star again, what was their attitude (Matt. 2:10)?
13. Where did they find the Baby Jesus (Matt. 2:11; Luke 2:7), and what did they do? Did they adore or worship Mary? Why not (Luke 1:47; Rom.3:23)? Who is mentioned first, mother or child, and what is the significance (Matt 2:11,13,14,20,21; Phil.2:9; Luke 11:27, 28)?
14. What did the wise men bring the new King (Matt. 2:11)? What did God warn them about (verse 12), and did they obey?
15. Why was Herod's vicious plan for the destruction of Jesus (Matt. 2:16) defeated (Matt.16:21; John 7:30; 12:27; 19:11)?
16. How does it help you to know that God restrains Satan and his helpers (I Cor. 10:13; I Pet. 3:12)?
17. Why did the Holy Family flee by night, and what night (Matt.2:14, 12)? In what sense was the Scripture fulfilled (Matt. 2:15; Hosea 11:1)?
18. Why make two years the limit (Matt. 2:16), and what was the original connection of the passage quoted and its application here (Matt. 2:17,18; Jer. 31:15; Gen. 35:19)?
19. Where did Joseph think of settling (Matt. 2:22)? Why his fear, when the Herods thought that the child was dead? Who ruled now in Galilee (Luke 3:1)? Why not equally afraid of him?
20. Is it singular that Jesus should be called a Nazarene when he was not (Matt. 2:23)? In what sense had this been predicted?

YEAR 3 - LESSON 46 - PAGE 1
WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Year III

Fourth Quarter

Lesson 46
Matthew 3

Page 1
Memory Verse: Matthew 3:15

Memory Verse:

"And Jesus answering said unto him, 'Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he suffered him" (Matthew 3:15).

Public Reading: Matthew 3:13-17

The Baptism of Jesus Christ

Matthew goes directly from the return of Jesus from Egypt as a baby (Matt. 2:19-23) to the preaching of John the Baptist. The writer passes over a period of nearly thirty years in silence; only Luke has the visit of the boy Jesus to Jerusalem at age twelve (Luke 2:42ff). Then comes the baptism of our Lord as "he began to be about thirty years of age" (Luke 3:23). You should read Mark 1:1-11 and Luke 3:1-22 to better understand this lesson.

I. John and His Preaching (Matthew 3:1-6)

"In those days. . ." (Matt. 3:1): This is a Hebrew expression equivalent to "that age" or "that era." In the day when Matthew wrote his gospel, he referred to the time when the Baptist lived. Nearly thirty years had passed since the incidents of Matthew 2.

"John the Baptist. . .": He was a cousin to Jesus (Luke 1:36). The mothers of John and Jesus were together just preceding their births (Luke 1:39, 56) for three months. It seems certain that the boys must have been told by their mothers of the heavenly announcements concerning their respective missions. Nevertheless, from the time that John withdrew to become a hermit of the desert (Luke 1:18), he may not again have seen Jesus until the day of our Lord's baptism. Naturally, he would not recognize the man whom he had not seen since boyhood days, until God pointed him out.

"John . . . preaching": The ministry of preaching and baptizing of John the Baptist, the forerunner of Jesus, was "in the wilderness of Judea, and on the banks of the Jordan, occupying several months, probably A. D. 25 or 26" (McGarvey). The preaching of John is told by all four gospels (Matt. 3:1-12; Mark 1:1-8; Luke 3:1-22; John 1:6-8, 15-40). John's childhood and youth are passed over in silence. He shunned the habitations of men, and lived in the solitude of the wild, bleak region west of the Dead Sea (Luke 1:80).

Called the "Baptist" because God gave through him the ordinance of baptism, John did not borrow this ordinance from the Jewish practice of proselyte baptism. John baptized his converts. Jewish proselytes baptized themselves (Lev. 14:9). John the Baptist, the immerser, "was a link between the Old and New Testament. Belonging to the Old, he announced the New."

The preaching of John was not a dry presenting of facts, but CRYING OUT A MESSAGE as a king's herald, as a person would cry "Fire" to arouse a sleeping neighbor! In a brief, plain way he announced the fulfillment of 2,000 years of Jewish longing-"the kingdom of heaven is at hand," an expression used by Matthew thirty-one times (See Dan. 2:44; Matt. 16:18).

"Repent ye . . ." (Matt. 3:2): To repent is to change the will regarding sin, a resolve to sin no more (see John 8:11). The coming kingdom was the motive for repentance. Only those who repented would be

ready for the kingdom; only the repentant could enter the kingdom.

"The voice of one crying in the wilderness . ." (Matt. 3:3): John was called a "voice," because the whole man was a sermon. He would call no attention to himself as a person, but only to the Saviour whose way he came to prepare. This was foretold by Isaiah 40:3 who prophesied from about 759 to 699 B. C. God gave the words. John furnished the voice (see I Thess. 2:1-13; Luke 1:13). John was the second Elijah (Luke 1:17).

"Prepare ye the way of the Lord . . . paths straight": The messengers sent before the eastern kings prepared the way for the chariots and armies of their monarchs. A "king's highway" had to be carried through the open land of the wilderness, valleys filled up, and hills leveled. Read Isaiah 35:8-10. As a band of engineers and workmen prepared the road for their king's coming, so the preaching of repentance was to prepare the people to receive Jesus and his apostles, to listen to and obey their preaching (Isa. 2:12-17) of Great King Jesus. When God cried, "Make his paths straight," he means: "STOP YOUR CROOKED WAYS."

"John had his raiment of camel's hair . . ." (Matt. 3:4): Not the camel's skin with the hair on, but a garment made of the "camel's hair," made into a rough cloth (Zech. 13:4; Mal. 4:5; II Kings 1:8). As a herald John was suited to the King whose appearing he was to announce, for Jesus was meek and lowly (Zech. 9:9), and had no form nor comeliness that he should be desired (Isa. 53:2).

"A leather girdle about his loins": The loose skirts worn in the East required a girdle to bind them to the body. The "leather girdle" may be seen around the body of the common laborer. It was undressed, plain leather.

"His meat": His food was "locusts." The law permitted the people to eat them (Lev. 11:22). Arabs still eat them. Locusts were regarded as fit only for the poor. Our missionaries in the Philippines and in the Congo tell us that locust meat is edible. John also ate "wild honey," Honey deposited by wild swarms of bees in the rocks. So abundant was it that Palestine was described as "flowing with milk and honey" (Ex. 2:8-17; 13:15; I Sam. 14:26). Bees could fill a place they selected as a hive very quickly (Judges 14:5-9). The diet of the Baptist was light, and Jesus so speaks of it (Matt. 11:18). His dress, his habit, and his food befitted him as the second Elijah. Plummer holds that "John consciously took Elijah as a model."

"Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea . . ." (Matt. 3:5): These expressions must be taken, not as meaning EVERY INDIVIDUAL, but as showing the wonderful impression produced by John's preaching. We use a hyperbole in common with Hebrew writers such as "The whole town turned out", or "everybody was there." McGarvey thinks that possibly a million people heard John preach.

"And were baptized of him in Jordan . . ." (Matt. 3:6): Note that the baptism took place not at, but IN, the Jordan River. They came "confessing their sins," probably each one confessing just before he was baptized or immersed. John's baptism was instituted of God (John 1:33), just as Christian baptism was instituted by Christ (Matt. 28:19). Since John's baptism was for the remission of sins, it was proper that a confession of them should be made publicly as the context indicates (verses 7-12). There is no hint of auricular confession as practiced by Roman Catholics (See Acts 19:18; I John 1:9; Acts 2:38).

II. The Pharisees and Sadducees Rebuked (Matthew 3:7-12)

"But when he saw . . . Pharisees . . . come" (Matt. 3:9): The Pharisees was a sect of the Jews founded in the days of Jonathan the high priest (159-144 B. C.). Pharisee means "the separate." Originally, they were real patriots and reformers. They believed in the resurrection of the dead, the future state with rewards and punishments, angels and spirits. They numbered about 6,000 in the days of Herod. In our Lord's time they had degenerated into a set of formalists, who paid more attention to outward forms than to inner life. They

YEAR 3 - LESSON 46 - PAGE 3

scrupulously observed ceremonies, were very orthodox, but were filled with spiritual pride.

"Sadducees": The name likely comes from their founder, Zadok, being a corruption of the word Zadokite. They desired free intercourse with the pagans around them. They denied the resurrection rewards or punishments in the future life and the reality of angels and spirits (Matt. 22:23f). They were wealthy, held the high priesthood, and had the favor of Rome.

Alford speaks of "The Pharisees representing hypocritical superstition; the Sadducees carnal unbelief."

"Generation of vipers": A metaphor for their likeness to vipers a serpent from two to five feet in length, about an inch thick, and poisonous (Acts 28:6; Isa. 59:5-8). The Jewish rulers were full of evil; they were cunning and poisonous (Gen. 3:1; Rev. 12:9, 14, 15; John 8:44). They deserved this name; they brought about the crucifixion of Jesus, the Son of God. "Who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" John's baptism, like that of Moses at the Red Sea (I Cor. 10:2) was a way of escape from destruction, if rightly used. Christian baptism is also such a way if done from the heart. It is not an easy bit of ritual to charm away evil. The "wrath to come" in Messiah's time (Mal. 3:2; 4:5; Isa. 63:3-6) included JEWS and Gentiles. To the obedient, there is forgiveness; to the disobedient, there is God's wrath (I Thess. 1:10). No doubt, the Pharisees and Sadducees winced under the sting of this powerful indictment.

"Bring forth . . . fruits meet for repentance" (Matt. 3:8): The life must show a real repentance -- a GENUINE CHANGE. The change of life is the proof of the change of heart. They were not to steal, use force for evil ends, and to share with others (Luke 3:8-15). It was not enough to be a descendent of Abraham (verse 9). Useless lives, like useless trees, would be cut down and burned (verses 10-12). If the repentance was real, John then baptized the ones thus confessing his sins.

"I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance . . ." (Matt. 3:11): Repentance had to begin before the baptism was administered. After the sinner repented, baptism consummated his repentance, being the symbolic washing away of that from which he had repented and the bringing of the candidate into the blessings granted to the repentant (Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3).

"He shall baptize with the Holy Ghost . . . fire": That which is referred to was foretold by the prophets (Joel 2:28). It began to be fulfilled on the day of Pentecost (Acts 1:5; 2:4). Christ "shed forth" the baptism of the Holy Ghost on Pentecost. The term "fire" used in verse 10 means a destroying agency, as well as in verses 12 and 11. It cannot mean a curse in verses 10 and 12, and a blessing in verse 11, without a word of explanation. The "wheat" characters would be gathered "into the garner" blessings; the chaff will be burned "with unquenchable fire."

III. Jesus Is Immersed By John the Baptist (Matthew 3:13-17)

"Then cometh Jesus . . . to be baptized" (Matt. 3:13): Jesus has not been named by Matthew since he was taken to Nazareth in child hood. From Luke we learn he was subject to his parents, at twelve years of age astonished the doctors by his wisdom, and now at thirty came to be baptized (Luke 2:41-52; 3:21-23). He had worked in the carpenter shop with Joseph in Nazareth. He had walked "seventy or eighty miles from Nazareth to the Jordan to be baptized of John. He had not heard John preach, and was not therefore persuaded by the Baptist to do it.

"But John forbad him . . ." (Matt. 3:14): "It seemed to John too great an honor for him to baptize Jesus, and too great a humiliation for Jesus to be baptized." John "tried to prevent" (Moffatt) the baptism implies that John knew the character of Jesus was Divine, and that he needed rather to be baptized of Jesus.

"Suffer it to be so now" (Matt. 3:15): The term "now" implies that the relation of Jesus to his work

YEAR 3 - LESSON 46 - PAGE 4

made it proper that now he should be baptized. It is true that baptism is for sinners. Jesus was SINLESS, but he had humbled himself, accepted the burden of human duties, and must set a perfect example to men. He obeyed the Jewish law, and it was needful that he obey the Divine rite that John preached. God gave John the message of baptism (John 1:33). It was the divinely appointed method by which the Messiahship of Jesus was to be revealed to the witness John (John 1:33, 34).

Those who fail to be baptized fail to follow the example of Jesus in fulfilling the divine will, and disobey one of the positive commands of God spoken by His son (Mark 16:15, 16; Matt. 28:18-20).

"And Jesus, when he was baptized . . ." (Matt. 3:16): The baptism took place in the River Jordan. Dr. Philip Schaff, the great Pede-baptist scholar, says: "The Greek word 'baptize' is derived from a root that means 'to dip, to immerse.'" Jesus was buried or immersed in the Jordan. He set us a pattern of obedience. The Holy Spirit lighted upon Jesus as a dove (symbol of purity, gentleness and peace) as he arose, praying (Luke 3:21) from the waters of the Jordan. Jesus prayed at his baptism as he began his ministry, at the last moment of it (Luke 23:46), in his highest exaltation (Luke 9:29), in Gethsemane (Luke 22:41), for his apostles (Luke 6:12), for his murderers (Luke 23:34), before Peter confessed him (Luke 9:18), and before Peter denied him (Luke 22:32).

"This is my beloved Son. . ." (Matt. 3:17): Three times God spoke from heaven in connection with the ministry of Christ-at his baptism, his transfiguration (Matt. 17:5), and in the temple before his suffering (John 12:28). The very words addressed to the Messiah in Psalm 2:7 were applied to the SON OF GOD. God formally acknowledges Jesus as his Son after the Son has humbled himself in an act of obedience, in baptism.

This example and the New Testament harmonize in teaching that: (1) We must be baptized if we would follow Christ, (2) It is when we repent and are baptized that we receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38), and (3) When we have obeyed the Lord he will recognize us as His children.

YEAR 3 - LESSON 46 - PAGE 5

QUESTIONS

1. How many years of Jesus' life following his first Passover feast are passed over in silence, as far as the Bible record is concerned (Luke 2:42ff; 3:23)?
2. Should the appearance of John the Baptist have been a surprise to the Jews (Isa.40:3; Matt.3:3; Mark 1:2,3; Luke 3:4)?
3. How "in those days" (Matt. 3:1; 2:23; Luke 3:24)?
4. Why was John called the Baptist (Matt. 3:1)? Was John related to Jesus (Luke 1:36)?
5. Why "in the wilderness" and what wilderness (Matt. 3:1,3)?
6. What was the chief theme of John (Matt. 3:2,3)?
7. How did he dress, and what did John eat (Matt. 3:4)?
8. Who came to hear John preach (Matt.3:5)?
9. How large is the Jordan at this place (see (McGarvey's "Lands of the Bible," page 469)?
10. Who were the Pharisees and Sadducees, and what do you know of them (Matt. 3:9)?
11. Why were they styled "generation of vipers" (Matt. 3:7)?
12. What is the meaning of "fruit worthy of repentance" (Matt.3:8)?
13. Why the reference to Abraham (Matt.3:9)?
14. What is meant by the figure of the axe and the trees (Matt. 3:10)?
15. What was the purpose of John's baptism (Matt.3:11)? Of Jesus' baptism in "the Holy Spirit and in fire" (Matt. 3:11,10,12)?
16. What was the purpose of Jesus' journey (Matt.3:13)?
17. What was the meaning of John's remark (Matt.3:14)?
18. Can you give the meaning of "for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matt.3:15)?
19. How was the Trinity (Father, Son, Holy Spirit) represented at the baptism of Jesus (Matt.3:16,17; Mark 1:10, 11; Luke 3:22)?
20. Since Jesus is the unique Son of God, what should our attitude be toward him (Jn,0.5:23)? Is it possible to be saved without believing that Jesus is the unique Son of God (I John 2:22-25; 3:23; 4:1-3, 14, 15; 5:1, 10-13, 20)?

YEAR 3 - LESSON 47 - PAGE 1
WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Year III

Fourth Quarter

Lesson 47
Matthew 4

Page 1
Memory Verse: Hebrews 4:15

Memory Verse:

"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15).

Public Reading: Matthew 4:1-11.

The Temptation of Jesus Christ

If there is ever a time when the devil will attack you, it is the day you turn obedience to Jesus Christ. We are not to think it strange or unusual "concerning the fiery trial" or temptation or testing which comes to us all (I Pet. 4:12, 13).

The story is told of a employee who often complained of trials and temptations to his unbelieving boss, who laughed and asked: "How does it happen, Sam, that you, a Christian, have so many more temptations than I, an unbeliever."

One day they went duck hunting. The boss brought down two ducks with a double shot. One fell dead, the other with a broken wing. "Sam, hurry into the weeds and get that crippled duck. He is about to get away." Sam finally captured the duck, brought it with a smile to his boss, and said: "I can answer that question of yours now! You sure were scared that the live duck would get away. However, I noticed you didn't trouble any about the DEAD ONE. That's the way it is with us. The devil knows you are a dead duck, and he DOESN'T BOTHER YOU. HE'S GOT YOU FOR SURE; and he knows I'm a live one and likely to get away, and that's WHY HE'S AFTER ME SO HARD." Sound philosophy, and sane truth! Note

I. Satan Tempts JESUS (Matthew 4:1-11)

"Then. . ." (Matt. 4:1): After the heavens opened (Matt. 3:16, 17), hell is opened. Just after his baptism, Jesus is rushed into the suffering of temptation. We must expect sharp contrasts in life. Paul had a messenger of Satan to buffer him after being in the "third heaven" (II Cor. 12:7).

"Then was Jesus led up of the spirit . . ." He was "drawn to the wilderness by an irresistible impulse, and did not go thither of his own volition" says J. W. McGarvey in "The Fourfold Gospel," page 87. Jesus was brought into temptation, but He did not seek temptation. God never tempts us, but He may lead us into temptation (Matt. 6:13; Job 1:12; I Cor. 10:13; James 1:2, 12, 13). God may make temptation a blessing unto us, tempering it to our strength, and making us stronger by the victory over temptation.

"Led . . . into the wilderness": The wilderness sets behind Jericho and extends thence along the whole western shore of the Dead Sea. Tradition has placed Christ's temptation in that part of the wilderness of Judea which lies between Jerusalem and the Dead Sea, particularly in the mountain called Quarantania, from this forty days' fast. It is idle to speculate as to the exact spat of the temptation in any particular spot; Jesus may have wandered about over nearly the entire wilderness.

"Led . . . to be tempted of the devil": The temptation is also told in Mark 1:12, 13; Luke 4:1-13. The devil is a real, fallen angel (Jude 6; II Pet. 2:4). He was the first sinner (I John 3:8), the starter of sin (John 8:44), the tempter of mankind who shall be conquered by the Redeemer of mankind (Rev. 12:9; John 12:31).

YEAR 3 - LESSON 47 - PAGE 2

Dr. A. T. Robinson in "Word Pictures in the New Testament," Vol. 1, page 30, says: "There are those today who do not believe that a personal devil exists, but they do not offer an adequate explanation of the existence and presence of sin in the world. Certainly Jesus did not discount or deny the reality of the devil's presence."

We, too, may conquer the devil by the grace of God (I Pet. 5:8, 9; James 4:7). We are to pray for deliverance from the devil (Matt. 6:13). Jesus will one day destroy the works of Satan (I John 3:8; Rev. 20:10). "Devil" is Greek. "Satan" is Hebrew, and means Adversary (Job 2:1). The devil is called Beelzebub (Matt. 12:23); "serpent" (Rev. 12:9); "prince of the powers of the air" (Eph. 2:2); Abaddon is Hebrew, and Apollyon is Greek, and means destroyer (Rev. 9:11). Belial means good for nothing (II Cor. 6:15). He is called a murderer and a liar (John 8:44), and Prince of this world (John 12:31), god of this world (II Cor. 4:4), the dragon (Rev. 12:7). The devil appeared in bodily form, I think. His personality is essential for the temptation to lye real.

Jesus must be in perfect harmony with the order and beauty of the heavens, and he must face all the disorder and ugliness of the abyss. Goodness at its highest Jesus knows, and is; evil at its lowest He must face, and overcome! In the wilderness, he stands as humanity's representative between good and evil. He gloriously won the battle and bruised the head of the serpent.

"And when he had fasted forty days . . ." (Matt. 4:2): Moses (Ex. 34:28; Deut. 9:18) and Elijah (I Kings 19:8) each fasted the same length of time. Both Moses and Elijah appeared later to Jesus to share his glorification (Matt. 17:3; Rom. 8:17; II Tim. 2:11, 12). The coming of the Holy Spirit at his baptism made plain to Jesus that the CROSS WAS THE WAY to accomplish God's will in this world. "It stunned him; took from him the desire of food; drove him from the haunts of man; ". . . for forty days he wondered about it." Temptation results from the excitement of desire (James 1:14), and as a rule the greater the desire the greater the temptation. Jesus "was afterward an hungered" At the close of the forty day period nature began to assert her demands; hunger was keenly felt by Jesus.

"And when the tempter came . . ." (Matt. 4:3): Jesus knew his mission was to save the world. How would he do it? By using miraculous power, by force? This was Satan's way. God's way was to change the hearts of men!

"IF thou be the Son of God . . . stones be made bread": God had said Jesus was His Son (Matt. 3:17). The devil's "IF" STRIKES AT THE FAITH OF CHRIST. The main sin of this temptation is DISTRUST. It appealed to the present appetite, and is still a favorite argument of the devil. "If" suggests a doubt; it is perhaps a taunt. It is a cunning appeal to Christ to work a miracle to satisfy his hunger and to display his power. He afterward made bread and fed 5000 men. Why not make bread for himself? Because if Jesus had availed himself of his Divine power to escape the discomforts and suffering of humanity HE WOULD HAVE FAILED TO SUFFER AS WE DO, TO SET US AN EXAMPLE IN ALL THINGS, TO BE TEMPTED IN ALL POINTS AS WE ARE (Heb. 4:15). He "came to minister," never to use his Divine power for his own benefit. Christ came to save others, not himself. Paul did not heal himself (II Cor. 12:7-9; Gal. 4:13; Col. 4:14), nor his helpers (Phil. 2:25-27; II Tim. 4:20).

YEAR 3 - LESSON 47 - PAGE 3

"It is written . . ." (Matt. 4:4): Jesus knew the Old Testament Scriptures; he had them hidden in his heart, and used them to resist the devil (Psa. 119:11).

"Man shall not live by bread alone . . ." Jesus quotes Deut. 8:3. Called out of Egypt as God's Son (Matt. 2:15), Jesus knew God would send Him manna if necessary (Psa. 78:19). "The stomach is a useful agent, but it is not the source of life, nor even the life sustainer." We shall live, if God wills it-bread or no bread. We shall die at His word (Matt. 6:25; John 6:47-58; Acts 17:28; II Tim. 2:22). Jesus was in the hands of Satan as was Job (Job 2:5, 6). In Jesus' case, Satan had the power of life and death. Eventually he took Jesus to the cross and slew him there.

"Into the holy city . . . pinnacle of the temple" (Matt. 4:5): Jerusalem is "the holy city." We do not know exactly what spot is indicated by "pinnacle." Three places have been suggested: 1) The apex of the temple itself; 2) The top of Solomon's porch; 3) The top of Herod's royal portico. This portico was at the southeast corner of the temple enclosure and overlooked the valley of Kidron. It was then, and still is the greatest height about the temple, and therefore the most suitable place for Satan's proposal.

"If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down" (Matt. 4:6): The second temptation was "OVER-TRUST" or PRESUMPTION. Notice that the devil can QUOTE or TWIST SCRIPTURE. It is dangerous to OMIT PART OF GOD'S WORD as the devil did (read Psalm 91:11, 12). By jumping from the pinnacle of the temple, Jesus would attract the crowd and short cut himself to fame, so said Satan! It was a false garbling of the Scriptures!

Eve was vainly curious to see IF SHE MIGHT BE LIKE GOD (Gen. 3:5), but Christ resisted such curiosity. Jesus refused to use his power to secure popular applause. Did the devil whisper to Jesus that such a display would enable him to reach the throne without treading the WAY OF THE CROSS. To do so would have robbed the world of its Saviour. It behooved him to die, and to rise again the third day (Luke 24:46).

"It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God" (Matt. 4:7): This is a quotation from Deut. 6:16. It is evil to put one's self in a dangerous position, hoping thereby to DRAW FORTH GOD'S DELIVERANCE. "All who jeopardize themselves without any command of God or call of duty, make trial of His love." There is no argument. Jesus gives a simple reply that shows what is asked is forbidden of God.

"The devil taketh him . . . exceeding high mountain" (Matt. 4:8): From some lofty center, the devil spreads before Jesus a panorama of the kingdoms of this world with their glory. The text does not compel us to suppose that ALL KINGDOMS WERE LITERALLY VISIBLE, but they were portrayed in such a way as to be present to the mental eyes.

"All . . . give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me" (Matt. 4:9): Satan and his followers have usurped an apparent possession of the world. Satan offered the fleeting honors of the world to Jesus – IF JESUS WOULD WORSHIP HIM, the devil (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; Eph. 2:2). Satan seeks our worship for vanity's sake. God seeks our worship that we may become like God-perfect and holy.

This is the only temptation wherein Satan showed any show of generosity. He is slow to give anything, and most of us sell out to him for nothing (Isa. 52:3).

YEAR 3 - LESSON 47 - PAGE 4

"Get thee hence, Satan: written . . . worship . . . God" (Matt. 4:10): "Begone" Christ says to Satan. "Satan" means the adversary and Christ so terms the devil here. The third time Jesus quotes Deuteronomy, now Deut. 6:13, and repels the infamous suggestion by Scripture quotation. The words "him alone thou shalt serve" needs to be recalled today. Jesus warned men against trying to serve God and mammon (Matt. 6:24).

"Then the devil leaveth him . . ." (Matt. 4:11): Luke adds "for a season" (Luke 4:13; James 4:7; Luke 22:28). Satan left; he would return many times. The devil had attacked every vulnerable point: hunger, trust, and responsibility. When these are held, no other avenue remains through which the foe can assault the citadel of the human will. The need of material sustenance, the spirit's confidence in God, and the carrying out of a divine commission in the divine way-every gate our Captain held! The foe, defeated, left HIM!

II. Jesus' Ministry in Galilee (Matthew 4:12-17; Mark 1:14, 15; Luke 4:14, 15; John 4:1-4)

"He departed into Galilee . . ." (Matt. 4:12): The reason for Christ's return to Galilee is given here to be that John had been delivered up to prison. The Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke) skip from the temptation of Jesus to the Galilean ministry, a whole year. But for John 1:19-3:36 we should know nothing of the "year of obscurity" (Stalker). John supplies items to help fill in the picture the Holy Spirit wanted us to have of Jesus. Christ's work began in Galilee after the close of the active ministry of the Baptist who lingered on in prison for a year or more.

"And leaving Nazareth . . ." (Matt. 4:13): Jesus ceased to make Nazareth his home. He came and dwelt in Capernaum, which means city of Nahum, or village of consolation. The word "dwelt" means that Jesus made Capernaum his headquarters. He may have dwelt with some of his disciples. See Matt. 8:14-16. Capernaum was in Naphtali, and the border of Zebulun was three or four miles south of it. It was densely populated. Jesus fulfilled prophecy in this move to Capernaum (Isa. 8:21, 22; 9:1, 2).

"The people . . . saw a great light" (Matt. 4:16): Matthew quotes Isaiah 9:1f and applies the words about the deliverer from Assyria to the Messiah. "The same district lay in spiritual darkness and death and the new era dawned when Christ went thither" (McNeile). Light sprang up from those who were sitting in the region and shadow of death. Death is personified.

"Jesus began to preach . . . Repent" (Matt. 4:17): He had been preaching for over a year already elsewhere. The King now commenced His preaching in Galilee and in the same words as the Baptist had used, "Repent ye, for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand." He went further than John, who could only announce and point to another. Jesus immediately followed the announcement with the word spoken to individuals, "Follow me" (verse 18f). That Kingly word includes repentance and the Kingdom.

III. Jesus Calls Four Fishermen (Matthew 4:18-22; Mark 1:16-20; Luke 5:1-11)

"And Jesus walking by the Sea of Galilee . . ." (Matt. 4:18): It is so named from the province of Galilee on its western side. It is also called "Sea of Chinnereth," harp-shaped, the shape of the sea (Num. 34:11; Josh. 12:3); the "Lake of Gennesaret" (Luke 5:1), the name of the extended plain adjoining the lake; the "Sea of Tiberias" (John 6:1; 21:1). The lake is about sixty miles from Jerusalem. It is about 165 feet deep. It is 685 feet below sea level.

YEAR 3 - LESSON 47 - PAGE 5

On and about this lake Jesus did many of his wonderful miracles. Eighteen of the thirty-three recorded miracles of Christ were probably done in the immediate neighborhood of the Sea of Galilee. In Capernaum alone Jesus performed ten miracles!

"Follow me . . . fishers of men" (Matt. 4:19): Jesus called Peter and Andrew (verse 5, 18-20); then he called "James . . . and John" and "they left the ship and their father, and followed him (21, 22). They had received a HIGHER CALL. No earthly preference can excuse a rejection of the call of Christ! If He calls YOU, FOLLOW HIM TODAY (Heb. 3:15).

IV. A General Statement of His Galilean Ministry (Matthew 4:23-24; Mark 1:35-39; Luke 4:42-43)

"Jesus went about all Galilee . . ." (Matt. 4:23): In the next three verses are condensed the labors and teaching of a long period, of which a detailed account is given in the following chapters.

"Teaching in their synagogues": The synagogue was the Jewish house of worship, where the Jews met every Sabbath. Such places furnished Jesus a congregation and a suitable place for teaching. It was customary to read the Old Testament in course. After the reading, a teacher, or rabbi, was usually called on to speak. This custom gave Jesus and the apostles after him, a fine opportunity to declare the New Covenant.

"Preaching the gospel of the kingdom": Gospel means "Good news." Jesus announced the speedy advent of the long expected kingdom of the Messiah. At this time, however, he did not PROCLAIM HIMSELF THE MESSIAH. He healed "all manner of sickness . . . disease," thus sympathizing with all human affliction and healing the body in order that he might heal the soul.

"His fame went throughout Syria . . ." (Matt. 4:24): This great Roman province was north and east of Palestine, and, at the time of our Saviour, included Palestine. The cities of Damascus and Antioch were in the province.

"Those . . . possessed with devils . . . healed": The word demon is the correct translation, and means an evil spirit. Persons were actually subject to the control of demons, of which there is the following proofs:

- 1) Supernatural strength (Mark 5:4);
- 2) Mind is not the source of blindness (Matt. 12:22);
- 3) Insanity cannot divine (Acts 16:17);
- 4) Demons knew Jesus (Mark 1:24);
- 5) Jesus addresses the demons (Matt. 8:20);
- 6) Demoniacs confess this control (Mark 5:9);
- 7) Apostles assert it (Luke 10:17);
- 8) Jesus admitted it (Matt. 12:28);
- 9) Peter assures us of it (Acts 10:38).

"Lunatics": This is translated "epileptics" in the Revision. In the early stages of his ministry, men were attracted by the material benefits of his kingly rule (verses 24, 25) rather than the spiritual principles he revealed. Had they sought ONLY THE SPIRITUAL, Jesus would have insured the material. Grasping only the lower, they lost both!

YEAR 3 - LESSON 47 - PAGE 6

QUESTIONS

1. Are Christians to think it strange or unusual when "fiery trials" come upon one (I Pet. 4:12,13)?
2. What is the meaning of "Then" (Matt. 4:1)?
3. Who led Jesus up into the wilderness, and where is the wilderness (Matt. 4:1)?
4. Does God ever solicit us to do evil (Matt. 6:13; Job 1:12; I Cor. 10:13; James 1:2,12,13)? Can any good thing ever come out of temptation?
5. Is the devil who tempted our Lord a real, fallen angel (Jude 6; II Pet. 2:4), the first sinner (I John 3:8), the starter of sin (John 8:44) and tempter of mankind who shall ultimately be conquered by our redeemer (Rev. 12:9; John 12:31)? What are some names, Hebrew and Greek, by which he is known?
6. What three tests were presented to Jesus in the wilderness (Matt. 4:3,5,6,8,9)?
7. With what weapon did Jesus defeat Satan (Matt. 4:4,7,10; Eph. 6:17; Psa. 119:11; Luke 24:27,44)? Is it vital to the Christian's welfare to know God's Word? Why?
8. Why did Satan leave Jesus and why did angels come and minister unto him (Matt. 4:11)? Is there any way to attack a man's will other than by hunger, trust, and responsibility?
9. Is it your custom to go to church regularly (Luke 4:16,21; Heb. 10:25; Acts 20:7)? If Jesus went to the synagogue regularly, should you as a Christian absent yourself from His body, the church?
10. How did Jesus' own countrymen receive him (Luke 4:22-30)?
11. Did Jesus fulfill Isaiah 9:1-7 (Matt. 4:14f)?
12. How many disciples did Jesus call in this lesson (Matt. 4:18, 21)? Who were they?
13. What is the meaning of "fishers of men" (Matt. 4:19)? What happens when you catch a literal fish? When you "catch" a man for Christ (II Cor. 5:17)?
14. Are you willing to obey Jesus promptly (Matt. 4:19; Heb. 5:9) as these men did?
15. What three kinds of work are mentioned in Matt. 4:23?
16. What were synagogues (Matt. 4:23)? How did they help Jesus and the apostles?
17. What Sea did Jesus love and how many of his miracles were wrought on or about this lake (Matt. 4:18)?
18. By what other names is this Sea called (Num. 34:11; Josh. 12:3; Luke 5:1; John 6:1; 21:1).
19. Is it a sin to be tempted (Heb. 3:15)?
20. Is demon possession real, and were persons really under the control of demons? Why?

YEAR 3 - LESSON 48 - PAGE 1
WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Year III

Fourth Quarter

Lesson 48

Page 1

Matthew 5

Memory Verse: Matthew 5:48

Memory Verse:

"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:48).

Public Reading: Matthew 5:1-12.

The Beatitudes of Jesus Christ

The Sermon on the Mount is so named because Jesus delivered it on a mountain plateau not far from Capernaum. Matthew places it in the forefront of his story of the Galilean ministry, but it doubtless comes some months later at the choosing of the Twelve (Luke 6:12-23). The Apostle regarded the sermon as an epitome or summary of Jesus' teaching on which his whole ministry was an illustration.

Delitzsch calls the Mount of Beatitudes the Sinai of the New Testament (Vincent).

In Matthew 5, 6, 7 we have the Magna Carta of the Kingdom. Supplement the Matthew account by reading Luke 6:17-49.

I. Blessedness and Worth of the Disciples (Matthew 5:1-16)

"He went up into a mountain . . ." (Matt. 5:1): Not "a" mountain as the King James has it. We do not know what mountain it was. Tradition says it was the "Horns of Hattin." A. T. Robertson says: "It was the one where Jesus and the crowds were."

Jesus went up into the mountains to pray (Luke 6:12), to call his apostles (Mark 3:13), and to get a closer contact with the disciples. The Horns of Hattin are about seven miles south of Capernaum, near the Sea of Galilee.

"When he was set . . . taught them" (Matt. 5:1, 2): "His disciples" included the apostles whom he had just chosen, and all who were anxious to learn and follow him. Disciple means a learner. In sitting Jesus followed the custom of the Jewish teachers. He employed no oratorical action. The truth in his words would get results. "Jesus spoke with the full-toned voice of power-with open mouth," loud enough for the apostles and a great number of people to hear him (Luke 6:17). This wonderful discourse of three chapters is to the New Dispensation what the law given from Sinai was to the Old. Sinai was the moral law of Judaism; the Sermon on the Mount is the moral law of Christianity. The first was given from "the Mount that could not be touched" (Heb. 12:18-21), the second from the Mount of Blessing.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit . . ." (Matt. 5:3): The sayings in verses 3-12 are called beatitudes from the word "beati," meaning blessed, with which they begin the Vulgate or Latin Bible. Matthew gives nine beatitudes, each of which pronounces a blessing upon those who have certain characteristics. Character is everything. The word "Blessed" is first applied to God, and means more than "happy," as it has sometimes been translated "Blessed" or "Happy" marks the divine will for man. Human happiness comes from earthly things, It is not bestowed arbitrarily; a reason follows each beatitude.

A seven-fold blessedness is named. Such a character is contradictory to the spirit of every age apart from the Kingship of God, and will result in "persecution." Therefore, the King adds an eighth beatitude, and that a DOUBLE ONE (verses 10-12), for those who because of their loyalty endure suffering.

YEAR 3 - LESSON 48 - PAGE 2

The first seven related to character; the last two concern persecution. Have you noted that the beatitudes are paradoxical, and the reverse of the world's view? They are true, as those who have tried them will testify.

"Poor in spirit": Those who realize their lack of spirituality, and long for a better spiritual state. "The kingdom of heaven" here means the reign of God in the heart and life.

"Blessed are they that mourn . . . comforted" (Matt. 5:4): Another paradox. Those who mourn in reference to sin in themselves and over the follies and perversities of others. They shall be comforted by the discovery that God's pardon is available! They receive it and are comforted. Worldly mourners will never be comforted, for there is "a sorrow of this world that worketh death." Godly sorrow is a genuine mourning over sinfulness (II Cor. 7:10) that leads to a God-pleasing life.

"Blessed are the meek . . . inherit the earth" (Matt. 5:5): Wycliff has it, "Blessed be mild men." "Meek and lowly in heart" (Matt. 11:29) does not refer to a Caspar Milquetoast, but to that fine blending; of poise and strength which comes from God. The meek inherit the earth in that they enjoy it more fully while in it. They shall some day fully possess and enjoy it (Dan. 7:27; Rev. 3:21; 5:10). The special reference is to the Messiah's kingdom, of which "the land" of Canaan was a type.

"Blessed . . . hunger and thirst after righteousness . . . filled" (Matt. 5:6): Those who intensely desire righteousness shall obtain it. A hungry man is one whose very appetite makes his food and his drink a delight. A man who does not want Christ will not get Christ, "the Bread of Heaven" (II Pet. 3:13; Rom. 8:3, 4; Heb. 7:11, 19, 25; Luke 15:17).

"Blessed are the merciful . . . obtain mercy" (Matt. 5:7): Mercy is an active virtue. Its primary reference is to the forgiveness of offenses. The FORGIVING ARE FORGIVEN (Matt. 6:14, 16). "A self-acting law of the moral world" (Bruce). The meek bear; the merciful forbear. Both in so doing obtain mercy from God and man. God rules the world in spite of its sin.

"Blessed are the pure in heart . . . see God" (Matt. 5:8): Without holiness no man will see the Lord in heaven (Heb. 12:14). "The pure in heart are those who are free from evil desires and purposes" (McGarvey). Sin befoes and beclouds the heart so one cannot see God. We see God by faith now, by the spiritual vision of a regenerate heart (Eph. 1:17, 18). We shall see Him face to face hereafter (I Cor. 13:12; I John 3:2, 3; John 14:23).

"Blessed are the peacemakers . . . children of God" (Matt. 5:9): Not merely "peaceable men" (Wycliff) but "Makers up o'strife" (Braid Scots). The term includes all who make peace between men as individuals or as communities. The perfect maker is the Son of God (Eph. 2:14f).

"Blessed . . . persecuted for righteousness' sake" (Matt. 5:10): "Posing as persecuted is a favorite stunt." Those who suffer for loyalty to the kingdom of heaven are blessed by being bound to it more closely. Active righteousness is offensive to evil doers, and will bring persecution as the life of Jesus illustrates (Matt. 10:37-39; John 16:2; James 2:7; I Pet. 4:4). Doubtless these words have sustained and cheered many a martyr.

"Blessed . . . when men shall revile . . . falsely" (Matt. 5:11): This was a heavy demand, but one the apostles met (Acts 5:41; 16:25), as did the prophets (I Kings 19:10; 22:27; Jer. 26:10). "Earnest contention for His truth is called bigotry; loyalty to his ordinances is dubbed narrowness; strict conformity to laws of purity is named Puritanism; liberality is looked upon as an effort to court praise; piety is scorned as hypocrisy, and faith is regarded as fanaticism" (McGarvey). "For my sake." In the preceding verse it is said "for righteousness' sake." The two expressions mean the same.

"Ye are the salt of the earth . . ." (Matt. 5:13): Salt saves from decay. Pure salt does not lose its savor, as did the salt of Palestine taken from the marshes when mixed with foreign substances or when

YEAR 3 - LESSON 48 - PAGE 3

exposed to sun and air or contact with the ground. God's people keep the world from moral decay and death if they are "salty saints!"

There was not enough salt in the antediluvian world to save it from the flood, in Sodom to save it from fire, nor in Canaan to preserve its people from destruction.

"Ye are the light of the world" (Matt. 5:14): Light dispels darkness, and enables a man to see his way. The Gospel does this (John 14:6; Acts 26:18).

"A city . . . set on a hill": Ancient cities for the sake of defense were placed on hills. Such cities could be seen from afar. Therefore, must the church give forth its light.

"Candle . . . candlestick (Matt. 5:15): Rather, lamp and lampstand. It would be foolish to light a lamp and put it under a bushel measure.

"Let your light so shine before men . . . (Matt. 5:16): As Christians we are to let our light shine naturally for our Father's glory. "Light shines to see others by, not to call attention to itself" (Robertson). If we do our work well, men shall be led to praise God. What a motive for service!

II. Some Modifications of the Moral Law (Matthew 5:17-48)

A. Purpose of Jesus concerning the law (Matt. 5:17-24).

"I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill" (Matt. 5:17): To destroy means to break and trample underfoot. To fulfill is to maintain sinless obedience to it. Jesus did this. Jesus did not say he had come to perpetuate the law. He came to complete its purpose. He was the end of the law. It was a "schoolmaster to bring us to Christ" (Gal. 3:24), but after faith is come we are no longer under the schoolmaster.

"One jot or one tittle . . ." (Matt. 5:18): An iota was the smallest letter of the Greek alphabet. Tittle was a stroke of the pen to distinguish different letters (compare our "c" and "e").

"Whosoever shall do and teach . . ." (Matt. 5:19): Jesus puts practice before preaching. The teacher must apply the doctrine to himself; then he is qualified to teach others. The scribes and Pharisees were men who "say and do not" (Matt. 23:3). They preach but do not perform. This is Christ's test of greatness. They must "exceed" or overflow (verse 20) like a river out of its banks. They had to be better than the rabbis, excel the scribes and Pharisees to "enter into the kingdom of heaven."

B. The law against killing (Matt. 5:21-26).

"But I say unto you . . ." (Matt. 5:22): The moral code follows. The Mosaic code was divine. The Revised Version has an important alteration. Instead of, "Ye have heard that it was said by them," it reads, "TO THEM" (verse 21). Moses was the mouthpiece, not the author of the law which he uttered. The old said, "Thou shalt not kill." The new declares anger deserves judgment. "Raca": a term of contempt, deserves the discipline of the highest court. "Fool": a term of insult, deserves Gehenna, "The hell of fire."

"First be reconciled . . ." (Matt. 5:24): One guilty of wrong to his fellow man cannot offer acceptable worship to God. Get reconciled; take the initiative. "Then come and offer thy gift." "Make up wi' yere enemy" (Braid Scots, verse 25). Compromise is better than going to jail where no principle is involved, but only personal interest.

C. The law against adultery (Matt. 5:27-30).

YEAR 3 - LESSON 48 - PAGE 4

"Whosoever looketh . . . to lust . . . hath committed adultery" (Matt. 5:28): The Jewish rabbis held that a man was guiltless if he did not commit the act (verse 27). Christ affirms that if the heart is impure, full of unholy desires, that one is guilty of the act. Jesus locates adultery in the eye and heart before the outward act. "Passions lodge only in him who sees." This is the peril of lewd pictures and plays to the pure in heart.

"Right eye . . . hand offend thee" (Matt. 5:29, 30): Or, "causeth thee to stumble." These vivid pictures are not to be taken literally; they powerfully plead for self-mastery. Christ does not enjoin bodily mutilation, but control of the body against sin. The tonsils, teeth, appendix, IF LEFT DISEASED, will destroy the whole body. It is better to suffer much by self-denial than to be judged worthy of hell.

D. The law of divorce (Matt. 5:31, 32).

"Saving for the cause of fornication . . ." (Matt. 5:32): A phrase that means "except for a matter of unchastity." The law of divorce will be found at Deut. 24:1-4. This law was given to prevent greater evils (Matt. 19:8). Jesus limits the right of divorce to cases of unchastity; neither the man nor the woman can marry again without committing adultery if the divorce be on any other ground (Matt. 19:9). It is implied that divorce for unchastity breaks the marriage bond, and that only the innocent party to such a divorce can marry again.

E. The law concerning oaths (Matt. 5:33-37).

"Let your communication be, Yea . . . Nay" (Matt. 5:37): The old safeguarded oaths. The new forbids. In the new kingdom character will make the oath unnecessary, and therefore simple affirmation or negation be sufficient.

F. The law of retaliation (Matt. 5:38-42).

"Compel to go a mile . . . twain" (Matt. 5:41): Of revenge, the old said, "Insist on your own right, love your neighbor, hate your enemy, and so secure your safety." The new says, "Suffer wrong, and lavish your love on all." The law of retaliation exists in Arabia today. Jesus denounced the Pharisees (Matt. 23), and fought the devil always. Jesus takes all personal revenge out of our hands. This does not condemn defensive war or defense against robbery and murder.

G. How to deal with enemies (Matt. 5:43-48).

"And hate thine enemy" (Matt. 5:43): This phrase is not in Lev. 19:18. It is a rabbinical inference that Jesus repudiates bluntly. Paul quotes Prov. 25:22 to prove we ought to treat our enemies kindly (Rom. 12:20). Jesus prayed for his enemies (Luke 23:34). Our word neighbor is "nigh-bor," one who is nigh or near. Nearness often means strife and not love. Jesus taught us how to live like neighbors (Luke 10:29ff) in the parable of the Good Samaritan.

YEAR 3 - LESSON 48 - PAGE 5

QUESTIONS

1. To whom was the Sermon on the Mount preached (Matt. 5:1, 2; Luke 6:20)? Where?
2. What has the Sermon on the Mount been called? Where is it found in Matthew's gospel?
3. Why did Jesus sit down to teach the multitudes (Matt. 5:1)?
4. Can you name the seven beatitudes (Matt. 5:3-11)?
5. Are the first seven traits of a single character, or of different characters? What are the traits and condition of the opposite character?
6. What do the last two beatitudes concern (Matt. 5:10-12)? Why is the seven-fold blessedness contradictory to the spirit of every age apart from the kingdom of God?
7. In what sense are believers of any are "the salt of the earth" and the light of the world" (II Thess. 2:7; Phil. 2:15, 16; Matt. 5:13, 14)?
8. How are they like a "city set on a hill," and "a lamp" "on the stand" (Matt. 5:15)? For what purpose are believers to shine (Matt. 5:16; I Cor. 10:31; Col. 3:17, 23, 24)?
9. What was Christ's attitude toward and His relation to the Old Testament law (Matt. 5:17, 18; (Gal. 4:4; John 8:46; Luke 10:25-27; Gal. 3:13, 14)?
10. Why the rule of greatness in Matt. 5:19, and why the allusion to the scribes and Pharisees (Matt. 5:20)?
11. What the judgment (Matt. 5:21; Deut. 16:18)? What is the meaning of Raca (verse 22),"the council," and "Thou fool?"
12. How be reconciled with one's brother, how does it apply to us, and how do you explain the illustration from the adversary (Matt. 5:25, 26)?
13. Did Jesus ever minimize the severe demands of the law (Matt. 5:21-30)?
14. Have the laws regarding marriage, established in the Garden of Eden, ever been abrogated (Gen. 2:23,24; Matt. 5:31,32; 19:8,9; Mark 10:2-12; Rom. 7:2,3; I Cor. 7:10,11,39)?
15. Can civil laws set aside God's law? Why or why not?
16. Are judicial oaths included in Matt. 5:33-37? If you are dealing with men in the kingdom, is simple affirmation or negation sufficient?
17. Where is it said "Love thy neighbor" (Lev. 19:18) and "hate thine enemy" (Psa. 139:21,22; Matt. 5:43)?
18. How are we to "love our enemies" (Luke 10:30-37; Luke 23:34; Acts 7:60)?
19. What two reasons does Jesus give for doing this (Matt. 5:45,47)?
20. What is the meaning of "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matt. 5:48)?

YEAR 3 - LESSON 49 - PAGE 1
WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Year III

Fourth Quarter

Lesson 49
Matthew 6

Page 1
Memory Verse: Matthew 6:33

Memory Verse:

"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness: and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33).

Public Reading: Matthew 6:8-15.

The Model Prayer

Jesus warns us in Matthew 6:1-34 against hypocrisy and worldly care. In the last lesson we considered (1) the Blessedness and Worth of the Disciple (Matt. 5:1-16), and (2) Some Modifications of the Moral Law (Matt. 5:17-48).

I. Hypocrisy in Almsgiving (Matthew 6:1-4)

"Take heed . . ." (Matt. 6:1): This means to "hold the mind on a matter," take pains. This is a flaming sword of warning. Jesus told his disciples "That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:20). Matthew 5:20 deals with the actions themselves; this chapter treats of the motives and manners of our actions.

"Alms": This translation is wrong, and the Revision is right, in using the word "righteousness" instead of alms. This is a statement of a NEW MOTIVE for conduct. Three specimens of Pharisaic "righteousness" are given: Alms, prayer, and fasting. Our Lord condemns piety for show. The Christian is not forbidden to practice righteousness before men, but to MAKE IT HIS OBJECT TO BE SEEN OF MEN! The externals of our faith "may be seen of men, but that must not be the motive." Our motives and manners back of our actions must be pleasing to God.

"Therefore, when thou doest thine alms . . ." (Matt. 6:2): The Pharisee intending to distribute gifts would come to a conspicuous place, blow a small silver trumpet, gather the maimed, halt and blind around him. Then with a great show of generosity, he would scatter gifts upon them. Such pious pretenders "have their receipt in full," all the reward they will get-public notoriety (See Amos 4:5). The wrong way of giving alms is branded by Jesus as hypocrisy. "The Greek word rendered hypocrite, means a theatrical actor, one who is not real, but acts a part."

"Alms . . . left hand . . . right hand" (Matt. 6:3): Almsgiving was a prominent feature of Jewish life and of the early church (Acts 9:36; 10:2; Gal. 2:10). Jesus cautions that we must give spontaneously. "The command does not forbid publicity, but that spirit which DESIRES PUBLICITY" (McGarvey). "The true Christian cares not how much men hear of his public charities, nor how little they hear of his private ones" (Toplady). A sane man who has any brain will "know" what his right and left hand do at all times.

We are to provoke one another to good deeds, to increased giving and service (Acts 4:36, 37; Heb. 10:24). It would be funny if it were not so tragic how some people like to twist this passage out of its context to justify their refusal to make a pledge for the Lord's work! Their stinginess in giving ought to be shown up, not covered up (Mark 12:41-44). It is not honest to seize this passage and overlook Acts 20:35; I Cor. 9:9-14; II Cor. 8:1-5, 7, 9; 9:6-8.

"Jesus does not promise a public reward for private piety" (verse 4), but God will "in the open place," in the last day, when every secret thing is made manifest reward the disciple who shared in love with the unfortunate!

II. Hypocrisy in Prayer (Matthew 6:5-15)

"And when thou prayest . . ." (Matt. 6:5): The second example of the right and wrong kind of righteousness is now given. Men ought to "pray without ceasing" (I Thess. 5:17). The wrong way is that of the hypocrites, the men who make a public show of their devotions that they may have the name of sanctity.

"Thou shalt not be as the hypocrite": Hypocrite is an old word for actor, interpreter, or one who impersonates another -- to pretend, to wear a mask. The Pharisee stood in a prayerful attitude to "Be seen of men!" He wanted public praise. He got it. That's all he got out of his prayer. This verse condemns "needless attitudes of private prayer in pulpit and pew!" Does it smack of hypocrisy to see a preacher come to the platform and kneel for HIS OWN PRIVATE PRAYER BEFORE THE AUDIENCE? Let him PRAY IN HIS STUDY BEFORE HE STANDS BEFORE THE PEOPLE.

"Enter into thy closet . . ." (Matt. 6:6): "A store-house, a separate apartment, one's private chamber, closet, or 'den' where he can withdraw from the world and shut the world out and commune with God" (Robertson). It means any place of privacy. Jesus found a prayer-chamber upon the top of the mountain and in the garden. Prayer is the soul dealing with God, and when one prays in order to attract the attention of men it is blasphemy.

"Use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do" (Matt. 6:7): The Syriac Sinaitic has it: "Do not be saying idle things." It is used of stammerers who repeat the words, then mere babbling or chattering, empty repetition. The worshippers of Baal on Mount Carmel (I Kings 8:26) and of Diana in the amphitheater at Ephesus who yelled for two hours (Acts 19:34) are examples. The Mohammedans may be cited, for they seem to think that they "will be heard for their much speaking." Vincent adds "and the Romanists with their paternoster and aves.

Jesus does not condemn all repetition in prayer. He himself prayed three times in Gethsemane "saying the same words again" (Matt. 26:44). "As the heathen (Gentiles) do": "The pagans thought that by endless repetitions and many words they would inform their gods as to their needs and weary them" (Bruce).

"Your Father knoweth . . ." (Matt. 6:8): God knows our needs. He does not need elaborate explanation or information from us. In prayer we put ourselves in communion with Him as to make us fit to receive His blessings. "Prayer is a matter of asking and receiving, and not a meritorious service, as Mohammedans and Catholics still hold, and as the Pharisees held. With them, as public prayers were to gain credit with men, so long and repeated prayers were to obtain merit before God" (McGarvey). Of course, Christ teaches contrary to this.

"After this manner therefore pray" (Matt. 6:9): "You is in contrast with "the heathen" or Gentiles. Rightly, this should be called "The Model Prayer" rather than "The Lord's Prayer." "Thus" pray as he gives them a model. Jesus himself did not use it as a liturgy (see John 17), and there is no evidence that Jesus meant it for liturgical use by others. When Jesus was asked by the apostles to teach them how to pray, he gave Luke 11:2-4 to them. It is practically the same prayer as Matthew, though shorter. It is a model and reveals the true pattern of prayer. It deals first with God's Kingdom, and then with the need of Kingdom men --our daily needs.

"Our Father which art in heaven . . . : This is a new invocation. The Jewish fathers had said: "O Lord God of our fathers." We are to go directly to God, through our Mediator, the Lord Jesus Christ (I Tim.

YEAR 3 - LESSON 49 - PAGE 3

2:5). Mary, angels, and the saints are not invoked for aid in reaching God II John 2:1; Rev. 19:10; Acts 10:25, 26) in heaven.

"Hallowed be thy name": Of the seven petitions of "The Model Prayer" the first three are in behalf of the cause of God; the glory of his name, the extension of his kingdom, and the prevalence of his will. The last four, which properly are placed last, as least important, pertain to our individual needs. "Hallowed" means holy, sacred, or revered.

"Thy kingdom come . . ." (Matt. 6:10): The Messiah's kingdom had not yet come. The Lord proclaimed it as "at hand." It did come speedily, but in its fullness and in its FINAL TRIUMPH OVER EVIL IT HAS NOT YET COME!

"Thy will be done in earth . . . heaven": Only those whose wills have been merged into the divine will can pray this prayer. It is mockery for disobedient lips to utter the prayer. Does this remind you of the prayer in Gethsemane (Matt. 26:39ff)?

"Give us this day our daily bread" (Matt. 6:11): Jesus bids us ask for our bread for "this day," not for future years. So long as it is "this day," we do not need tomorrow's bread, do we?

Note the pronouns of the prayer: "Our . . . us . . . our . . . us . . . our . . . we . . . our . . . us . . . us." There is not a single first person singular pronoun. They are all plural. We can not pray the prayer alone – it has no room for selfishness. I can be alone, with God, and pray the prayer, but I must have the whole world on my heart!

"Forgive us . . . AS WE forgive" (Matt. 6:12): God forgives those who forgive. "Debt" is a mild word for our sin-broader than trespass. "Trespass indicates a misstep. a wrong-doing, but debt means an unfulfilled obligation of any kind." God is asked to forgive US AS WE FORGIVE OTHERS (verses 14, 15)!

"And lead us not into temptation . . ." (Matt. 6:13): God does not solicit or tempt us to do evil (James 1:13). He can permit us to be led into temptation, or He can shield us from it to give us the victory over it (I Cor. 10:13; II Pet. 2:9; James 1:12; 5:11). The doxology with which the prayer closes was probably inserted from some early liturgy. It is absent from the oldest manuscripts" (McGarvey).

III. Hypocrisy in Fasting (Matthew 6:16-18)

"Moreover when ye fast . . ." (Matt. 6:16): These actors or hypocrites "put on a gloomy look" (Goodspeed) and, if necessary even "disfigure their faces," that they may look like they are fasting. Jesus sharply ridicules this pretended piety!

The true reason for fasting is in the opportunity it affords for a clearer vision of God; such a vision should manifest itself in new gladness of face! When the Pharisees fasted, they did not wash their faces and neglected to dress their beards. They did it to "be seen of men." They sought man's praise. They got it. That was their reward! Fasting may aid meditation, but fasting for show is condemned.

IV. Against Care About Riches (Matthew 6:19.24)

"Lay not up . . . lay up" (Matt. 6:19, 20): Men have a passion for possession. The supreme passion of men must not be to accumulate earthly treasures (James 5:2; Josh. 7:21; Luke 16:19). This command does not discourage the possession of property, but does forbid selfish hoarding. Why? Moths, rust, and thieves! We are to hold possessions as a good steward of God (I Cor. 4:2).

"Lay up" (verse 20) heavenly treasures-a fortune for time and eternity, a treasure which dominates us for good and does not destroy us. With a singular eye, a clear purpose, we see God's way and walk in

YEAR 3 - LESSON 49 - PAGE 4

it (I Cor. 2:14; John 3:19-21; James 1:6-8). We choose to serve God, not mammon, or mere riches. God must be the object of our supreme trust in life (verses 21-24), not money.

V. Don't Worry About the Necessities of Life (Matthew 6:25-34)

"Therefore . . . Take no thought for your life" (Matt. 6:25): "Take thought" meant to be anxious. The revision properly renders it: "Be not anxious." The word means, "to have the mind distracted." Our Lord does not forbid common sense and prudent forethought. God cares for the birds (verse 26), the lilies (verses 28, 29), and He'll "supply all (y)our need" (Phil. 4:19). God knows we need food, clothes, and shelter. A Christian who SEEKS GOD'S KINGDOM FIRST will have his needs met, too (Psa. 37:25). God promises "all these things shall be ADDED (the necessary luggage of life) unto you." Verse 34 would have us not to be anxious or in doubt about tomorrow. "The ghost of tomorrow stalks out with all its hobgoblins of doubt and distrust." This is a warning against WORRY, NOT AGAINST WORK!

"Lord, for tomorrow and its needs I do not pray, Keep me, O Lord, from stain of sin just for today."

QUESTIONS

1. Against what five things does Jesus warn us in Matthew 6 (Matt. 6:2, 5, 16, 19, 25)?
2. What word should be used instead of "alms" in Matt. 6:1?
3. Does Jesus condemn "righteousness" if that righteousness is done just to be seen of men? Why?
4. When men gave alms just to be seen of men what was their reward (Matt. 6:2)?
5. How did the hypocrites "sound a trumpet before" them? Explain the remark about the hands (Matt. 6:3), and show how stingy men misuse the passage.
6. What was wrong in the practice of the hypocrites when they prayed (Matt. 6:5)?
7. Do you think a minister should kneel before an audience to offer his private prayers? Should anybody?
8. Why seek privacy for these prayers (Matt. 6:6)? What is the meaning of "closet"?
9. What are vain repetitions (Matt. 6:7)? If our Father knows what we need, why ask Him (Matt. 6:8; 7)?
10. What is the new invocation Jesus taught in "The Model Prayer" (Matt. 6:9)? Was it new?
11. What are the first three petitions, and the meaning of each (Matt. 6:10, 11)? What and for whom are the next four petitions (Matt. 6:12, 13)? What do they comprehend?
12. How is "debts" here used? Why (Matt. 6:12; see 14)? Will God "forgive us" if we "forgive not...?"
13. Why ask, "lead us not into temptation" (Matt. 6:13; James 1:13)? Does God ever solicit us to do evil, and can God give us victory in testing (I Cor. 10:13; II Pet. 2:9; James 1:12; 5:11)?
14. How shall we pray "After this manner" (Matt. 6:9)? What changes in this prayer for present use (Matt. 6:10; John 16:24; Col. 3:17)?
15. What is the purpose of fasting (Matt. 6:16ff), and what was the hypocrisy which Jesus condemned? How are the fasts of Lent and Ramadan conducted?
16. What laying up is meant (Matt. 6:19)? What is it to "lay up treasures in heaven" (Matt. 6:20), and what reason is given? Does Jesus condemn the accumulation of property?
17. What truth does Jesus state in Matt. 6:21, and can you show how the illustration applies (Matt. 6:22, 23)?
18. What is "mammon," and why can we not serve "two masters" (Matt. 6:24)?
19. About what things are we not to be anxious (Matt. 6:25, 31, 32, 34)?
20. What is the true way to live each day of our lives (Matt. 6:33)? Why will this keep us free from anxiety (Matt. 6:34)?

YEAR 3 - LESSON 50 - PAGE 1
WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Year III

Fourth Quarter

Lesson 50
Matthew 7

Page 1
Memory Verse: Matthew 7:12

Memory Verse:

"Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets (Matthew 7:12).

Public Reading: Matthew 7:1-8

The Sayings of Jesus Christ

Many people who talk about the "Sermon on the Mount" mean simply the Beatitudes. These who study the Bible know, however, that the Beatitudes make up only a fraction of Jesus' longest reported sermon. Matthew 7 contains a summary of principles of action for the subject of the King of Kings (I Tim. 6:15).

I. Miscellaneous Precepts of Our Lord (Matthew 7:1-12)

A. Against Judgment (Matt. 7:1-5).

"Judge not, that ye be not judged" (Matt. 7:1): Here Jesus "lays down a general principle in the form of a universal prohibition." Other Scripture laws concerning judgment limit the principle. This verse does not prohibit:

1. Judgment by civil courts (I Pet. 2:13-15; Rev. 13:17; Titus 3:1).
2. Judgment of the church on those who walk disorderly, as Christ and His apostles ordered this kind of judgment (Matt. 7:15, 16; Rom. 16:17; I John 4:1; I Cor. 5:1).

"Judge" means to distinguish, to decide. We must not condemn, or come to no final decision; we must not usurp the throne of judgment, pass a sentence, or find a final verdict. It forbids rash, censorious, uncharitable judgment. It condemns the faultfinding spirit, or disposition that condemns without knowing the facts, forgetful that all of us shall stand in the judgment and shall need mercy (Rom. 14:10, 4; James 2:13; John 7:24; I Cor. 13:5, 6; 4:3; II Cor. 5:10).

"Ye judge . . . be judged" (Matt. 7:2): The King's purpose is to teach us "that we must expect to receive judgment on the same basis as that on which we give it" (Morgan). One of God's great moral principles is that as WE SOW WE REAP (Gal. 6:7). This applies to censorious faultfinding as well as to sowing rye! If the echo is not good, we spoke the wrong word (Luke 6:37-42; Ruth 3:15). We must not speak the word of final sentence, because we cannot know all the motives that lie behind the actions of another.

"Mote . . . beam" (Matt. 7:3): A dry twig off a branch, a chip from the beam itself is the mote. The branch of a tree or a massive piece of timber is the beam. The beam of which Jesus is speaking is not what the world calls a vulgar sin, but the sin of rash faultfinding, of unfair criticism. He who would lead others, must first himself be right (Gal. 6:1), or he will lead those who follow him and himself into the ditch (Luke

YEAR 3 - LESSON 50 - PAGE 2

6:39). This reminds us of the Arabic proverb: "How seest thou the splinter in thy brother's eye, and seest not the cross-beam in thine eye?" (Verse 4).

"First cast out the beam out of thine own eye . . ." (Matt. 7:5): Jesus pictures a man with a log, or rafter in his eye trying to take a chip or splinter out of his neighbor's eye. One's own need is so great that any time spent in censorious criticism is so much taken from the all-important work of attending to his own "beam!"

B. A caution concerning holy things (Matt. 7:6).

"Give not . . . holy unto the dogs . . ." (Matt. 7:6): "We are not to be critically censorious, but we must exercise discrimination and discretion." We are the "dogs?" Read II Pet. 2:22. The one who comes into holy places to traffic with holy things with unholy purposes are "dogs." Watch them, they'll turn to their vomit again. Like swine, they'll go back to the mire! To press the gospel upon those who despise it is to give pearls to swine! Avoid such men, as Jesus did in refusing to answer the Pharisees. Remember the apostles who turned from hard-hearted Jews to receptive Gentiles (See Matt. 15:2, 3; 21:23-27; Acts 13:45; 19:9). "Dogs" and "swine" have no understanding of "holy" things.

C. Prayer encouraged (Matt. 7:7-11).

"Ask . . . seek . . . knock" (Matt. 7:7): "Ask" or beg, in the sense of dependence; this is a simple use of the voice. One who comes with empty hands, saying: "I have nothing with which to buy." Let us recognize our dependence upon God.

"Seek": A motion of the body; a suggestion of care. It marks the true anxiety, the urgency of a great desire.

"Knock": An effort to open and pass through obstacles; the mingling of dependence and effort. The things enjoined are indeed too hard for us in our strength, so keep on "asking, seeking, knocking." In each case the promise is simple and sublime: "It shall be given," "Ye shall find," "It shall be opened" (verse 8). Note that Jesus used the universal "every one," but he means every one who is recognized by God as a son. "All God's children who pray rightly are heard" (Matt. 6:14, 15; James 1:6, 7; 4:3; I John 5:14).

"If ye . . . your Father" (Matt. 7:11): Jesus uses an argument from analogy (verses 9, 10). Our paternal feelings cause us to give our children good things. How much more will God our heavenly Father give His children good things?" Without intermediaries, your Father will give to those who ask Him directly. That is plain" (Faivre). We do not need Mary or the saints to go to God to get anything for us! Ask Him your self aright. He'll give it to YOU.

D. A summary of the moral law (Matt. 7:12).

"Therefore . . . do ye even so to them" (Matt. 9:12): Jesus connects the Golden Rule with the preceding teaching regarding wrong judging or faultfinding. Hillel the great Hebrew master said: "Do not do to thy neighbor what is hateful to thyself."

Socrates: "What stirs your anger when done to you by others, that do not to others."

Aristotle: "We should bear ourselves toward others as we would desire they should bear themselves toward us."

YEAR 3 - LESSON 50 - PAGE 3

Confucius: "What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others."

All these sayings are negative and passive. Christ's command is positive and active. We are not merely to refrain from harming another. We **MUST DO HIM GOOD!** This requires constant communion with our heavenly Father. "The Golden Rule is the distilled essence of that 'fulfillment' (Matt. 5:17) which is taught in the sermon" (McNeile).

II. The Way of Life (Matthew 7:13-29)

A. The way a narrow one (Matt. 7:13, 14).

"Enter ye in at the strait gate . . ." (Matt. 7:13): Get into the **TRUE WAY** (John 14:6). There are two entrances and two ways. If you enter the Kingdom, you must enter the strait (narrow) gate, and walk the narrow way "which forever grows broader, until at last it becomes broad in the fullness of eternal life. If you enter through the other gate, it is wide, it is easy to get through. Moreover, you walk along a broad way, which is forever more straitening, until at last it becomes destruction. The "broad way" narrows, "until the soul is in the prison-house" of death (Rom. 6:23). On which road are you now, friend? Read Deut. 30:19; Jer. 21:8; Psalm 1.

The broad way is in every town, city, and village, with the glaring white lights that lure to destruction.

B. How to avoid being guiding (Matt. 7:15-20).

"Beware of false prophets . . . sheep's clothing" (Matt. 7:15): Watch out for men who claim falsely to teach men the life which God would have us live (Matt. 24:5, 24; Acts 20:39; II John 10, 11). They speak the right message, but live the false and wrong life. They look like "sheep"; their energy and influence are "wolfish."

There were false prophets in the time of the Old Testament prophets. Jesus predicted "false Messiahs and false prophets" (Matt. 24:24) who will lead many astray. They came in due time posing as angels of light like Satan, Judaizers (II Cor. 11:13ff) and Gnostics (I John 4:1; I Tim. 4:1). It is a tragedy that men and women reappear through the ages and always find victims. Wolves are more dangerous than dogs and hogs!

"Ye shall know them by their fruits" (Matt. 7:16): "The test of the prophet is the prophet's life." Teachers are to be judged by their conduct as men, and by the effect of their teaching. The verb "know" means "fully know." The illustrations from the trees and vines have many parallels in ancient writers (verses 17-20j). If conduct or teaching is preeminently bad, avoid the man! However, we should not judge hastily, or by slight or trivial actions, "for some specimens of bad fruit have grown on good trees."

C. The way not by prayer and miracles alone (Matt. 7:21-23).

"Not every one that saith . . . but he that doeth" (Matt. 7:21): The Pharisees were long on prayer, but short on doing God's will. It is blasphemy to pray "The Kingdom come," and refuse to let it come in you or in others! This is the sharp contrast between the mere talker and the **DOER OF GOD'S WILL**.

"Did we not prophesy in thy name?" (Matt. 7:22): These false prophets claim to have prophesied (preached) in Christ's name and to have done many miracles. Nevertheless, Jesus will tear off the sheepskin and lay bare the ravaging wolf. "I never knew you" means "I was never acquainted with you," experimental knowledge. High place in the visible kingdom is no proof of one's acceptance with God. Judas was an apostle

YEAR 3 - LESSON 50 - PAGE 4

and miracle-worker, and Balaam was a prophet, yet they lacked that condition of the heart that truly allies one to God (I Cor. 13:1-3). Jesus says there are "many" false prophets.

D. The way pointed out (Matt. 7:24-27).

"Therefore whosoever heareth . . . doeth . . . wise man" (Matt. 7:24): Every man is building. The materials, the men, and the methods are different. The foundation on which men build is everything (I Cor. 3:11). To build on Christ the Rock is to erect an eternal house; to do otherwise is to build on sand. That is the point in the parable of the wise builder "who digged and went deep, and laid a foundation upon the rock" (Luke 6:48). See Matt. 16:16, 18; I Cor. 10:4; I Pet. 2:6-8.

"Foolish man . . . sand" (Matt. 7:26): The foolish builder puts his house on the sands that could not hold in the storm (verse 27).

"My hope is built on nothing less,
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness;
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
But wholly lean on Jesus Name
On Christ the SOLID ROCK I STAND,
All other ground is sinking sand."

E. The effect of the sermon (Matt. 7:28, 29).

"His doctrine . . . taught them as one having authority" (Matt. 7:28, 29): The matter and MANNER of the teaching of Jesus' differed from the teaching of the scribes. They taught by the authority of Moses, or the elders. Jesus taught by his own authority. See Matt. 5:18, 20, 22, 26, 28, 34.

The scribes quoted the rabbis before them and were afraid to express an idea without bolstering it up by some predecessor. Jesus spoke with the authority of truth, the reality and freshness of the morning light, and the power of God's Spirit. This sermon made such a profound impression with its tragedy of the fall of the house on the sand that it was like the crack of a giant oak in the forest. There was no smoothing over the outcome. It was final.

YEAR 3 - LESSON 50 - PAGE 5

QUESTIONS

1. Why do men discover and condemn faults in others before they do their own (Matt. 7:1; John 7:24; II Cor. 10:7)?
2. Does Jesus give a limitation to his "judge not" (Matt. 7:1, 16-20)?
3. Is judgment in the civil courts wrong (I Pet. 2:13-15; Rev. 13:17; Titus 3:1)? Why?
4. Is it wrong for the church to pass judgment upon those who walk disorderly (Matt. 7:15, 16; Rom. 16:17; I John 4:1; I Cor. 5:1)?
5. What judging then is forbidden by Jesus, and why (Matt. 7:1, 2)?
6. What illustration does Jesus give (Matt. 7:3-4) to show the absurdity of wrong judging?
7. Why did Jesus say, "Thou hypocrite" (Matt. 7:5)?
8. Must we be free from all faults before correcting other persons?
9. What is the meaning of Matthew 7:6 (II Pet. 2:22), and did Jesus and the apostles ever turn from "dogs" and "hogs" (Matt. 15:2, 3; 21:23-27; Acts 13:45; 19:9)?
10. Why do many believers never experience the joy of answered prayer (Matt. 7:7-11; James 4:2, 3)?
11. What if we ask for the wrong thing, or in the wrong way, or for a wrong motive (Matt. 6:14, 15; James 1:6, 7; 4:3; I John 5:14)?
12. Is the nature and force of the argument in Matt. 7:11 a good one?
13. By what name is this rule of Jesus known? Why? What is its connection with the other parts of this sermon (Matt. 7:12; 5:17)?
14. Can you explain the imagery Jesus employs here (Matt. 7:13,14)? Did others use the idea (Deut. 30:19; Jer. 21:8; Psalm 1)?
15. Why is the one way narrow and the other broad? May the relative numbers on the roads be changed (II Pet. 3:9; John 3:16; 6:37)?
16. Who is meant by "false prophets" (Matt. 7:15)? Into which way would they lead us (Matt. 24:4,5,24; Acts 20:39; II John 10,11)?
17. What are the fruits of "false prophets" (Matt. 7:16)? Is it not true that men's fruits "judge" them?
18. What wrong opinion does Jesus here correct (Matt. 7:21-23)? What is the value of prayer without obedience? What do miracles prove?
19. Who is a wise man, and a fool, according to Jesus (Matt. 7:24-27), By "these sayings" does Jesus mean the words of this sermon alone (Matt. 7:28)?
20. What was the chief effect of the sermon (Matt. 7:28,29)? What kind of "authority" was it? What is to be inferred from his assuming such authority? What is most striking in the Sermon to you?

YEAR 3 - LESSON 51 - PAGE 1
WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Year III

Fourth Quarter

Lesson 51
Matthew 8

Page 1
Memory Verse: Luke 8:39

Memory Verse:

"Return to thine own house, and shew how great things God hath done unto thee. And he went his way, and published throughout the whole city how great things Jesus had done unto him" (Luke 8:39).

Public Reading: Luke 7:1-10.

The Miracle-Working Power of Jesus Christ

The King passed down from the mountain and from teaching in order that he might bring the Kingdom nearer his people, and give them examples of its benefits. This is the King acting in power in every realm of life. The Sermon on the Mount pictures a VISION, a DREAM OF LIFE.

In Matthew 8 and 9, we see the King as a DOER, as One of Vigor who manifested his power nine times. There was nothing theatrical in his manifestations of power; they were natural, necessary, and beautiful. "Wonderful Words of Life" are followed by wondrous works. Leprosy, palsy, fevers all fly before him. How universal is his giving: a leper, a Roman, a woman, all the despised in the Jewish mind.

I. A Leper Cleansed (Matthew 8:1.4; Mark 1:40-45; Luke 5:12-16)

"When he was come down from the mountain . . ." (Matt. 8:1): Jesus came down from the mountain on which the Sermon on the Mount had been delivered. Jesus was now popular. The multitudes are mentioned the third time.

"There came a leper . . ." (Matt. 8:2): "Leprosy" comes from "lepo" which means to peel off in scales. Leviticus 13 gave the law for determining leprosy. Numbers 12:10 and II Kings 5:27 describe lepers. In one form of leprosy, the body of the "victim disintegrates joint by joint, until the whole frame crumbles to pieces." A leper was an outcast from home and friends, loathsome and hopeless. Leprosy is a type of sin that will destroy the soul as the disease destroys the body.

"Lord, IF THOU WILT . . .": A great cry of need, and of recognition of the power of Jesus. The leper knew that Jesus had the power to heal him. His doubt was about his willingness. "Men more easily believe in miraculous power than in miraculous love" (Bruce).

"I will . . . tell no man" (Matt. 8:3): Jesus accepted his challenge by "I will." The command to "tell no man" was to suppress excitement and prevent hostility.

Jesus "touched him" as he responded to the leper's need. Jesus was not made legally unclean by touching the man (Lev. 13:46; 11:40). Instead of Jesus "being defiled by our uncleanness, we are purified by His righteousness." He is our High Priest, and thus possessed the priestly right to touch the leper without defilement (Heb. 5:6; 4: 15).

"Shew thyself . . . offer the gift" (Matt. 8:4): The cleansed leper was told to follow the law which was not yet nailed to the cross (Col. 2:13-15). The man was not legally clean until declared so by the priest (read Lev. 14:4-32; Deut. 24:8; from. 3:21 with Matt. 5:17). If found to be clean or cured, he was purified by the use of two birds, cedar wood, scarlet and hyssop, razor and bath; if a second inspection after seven days

YEAR 3 - LESSON 51 - PAGE 2

showed the leper to be still cured, the priest would offer the gift for his cleansing—three lambs, with flour and oil; or, for a poor man, two doves and pigeons, with flour and oil. Our Lord respected the law (Matt. 5:17) which Moses wrote as God "spake in time past" (Heb. 1:1) to him.

II. Healing a Servant of a Centurion (Matthew 8:5-13; Luke 7:1-10)

"Capernaum . . . a centurion" (Matt. 8:5): A centurion is a commander of 100 men, corresponding to our captain. He was a reverent man, a Roman (a Gentile), and outside of the covenant of the Jews. His servant, a boy, was a bedridden paralytic (Luke 7:2). Therefore, the need is stated (verse 6). He had probably heard how Jesus had healed the son of his fellow-townsmen (John 4:46-54). He had built the Jews a beautiful white limestone synagogue. We saw the ruins of this synagogue a few months ago. Its architectural features show that it was built in the time of the Herods. There is little doubt that it is the one this pious Gentile erected, and in which Jesus taught and healed.

"I will come and heal him" (Matt. 8:7): Jesus had perfect confidence in Himself.

"Lord, I am not worthy . . . speak the word only" (Matt. 8:8): The centurion knew it was unlawful for Jews to go into the houses of Gentiles. He wished to spare Jesus any embarrassment. He showed GREAT FAITH, especially coming from a Gentile (verse 9), by BELIEVING THAT JESUS COULD HEAL BY A WORD.

"When Jesus heard it, he marveled . . . great faith" (Matt. 8:10): Jesus is said to have marveled twice. Here because of a Gentile's belief; in Mark 6:6 because of the UNBELIEF OF THE JEWS AT NAZARETH. "Faith is NO MIRACULOUS GIFT. Faith means neither more nor less than belief; and a man believes the Scripture facts in the same manner and by the same processes that he believes any other facts" (Rom. 10:17; I Cor. 15:1-5). "Many shall come from the east and west . . ." (Matt. 8:11): Jesus here predicts the conversion of the Gentiles, since that fact is suggested to him by the faith of this centurion. To "sit down" is to recline at table on couches as Jews and Romans did. Leonardo da Vinci's famous picture of the Last Supper is an anachronism with all seated at the table in modern style.

"The children of the kingdom . . ." (Matt. 8:12): Jews to whom the Kingdom belonged by hereditary descent (Rom. 9:4). "He came unto his own, and his own received him not" (John 1:11). Their unbelief would cause them to be cast away. Mere natural birth did not bring spiritual sonship as the Baptist had taught before Jesus did (see Matt. 3:9).

"As thou hast believed . . ." (Matt. 8:13): The servant was healed, not relieved.

III. Cures at Peter's House (Matt. 8:14-17; Mark 1:29-34; Luke 4:38-41)

"Peter's . . . wife's mother . . . sick of a fever" (Matt. 8:14): Peter had lived at Bethsaida, "house of fishing" or "fishery" (John 1:44). He now resided in Capernaum. Our Roman Catholic friends must confess that Peter whom they claim is the first pope was MARRIED. He continued to be married for years afterwards (I Cor. 9:5). Celibacy or the state of being unmarried is not authorized by the Bible (Heb. 13:4). God says, "It is not good that the man should be alone" (Gen. 2:18). Pope Hildebrand, Boniface VII, decreed the Celibacy of the priesthood, in the year 1079.

"And he touched her hand . . . fever left her" (Matt. 8:15): According to Jewish ideas a woman did not count. But to Jesus a woman is important. He touched and healed her. He did this in loving sympathy as the Great Physician, and like any good doctor today. She arose and ministered unto him. Jesus had done so much for her; she wants to serve him!

YEAR 3 - LESSON 51 - PAGE 3

"Fulfilled . . . bare our sicknesses" (Matt. 8:17): This is a quotation from Isa. 53:4. Moffatt translates it: "He took away our sicknesses, and bore the burden of our diseases." Goodspeed puts it: "He took our sickness and carried away our diseases." Jesus healed "our sickness," as here. At the last, freedom from disease and triumph over death are ours through the cross. Jesus healed "All that were sick" (verse 16) at Capernaum, that is, all who were brought to him. Christ's sympathy with the sufferers was so intense that he really felt their weaknesses and pains. In our burdens Jesus steps under the load with us and helps us to carry on. Read Gal. 6:2, 5; I Peter 5:7.

IV. A Conversation About Following Jesus (Matt. 8:18-22; Luke 9:57-62)

"And a certain scribe came . . . I will follow thee" (Matt. 8:19): Wearied with a day of strenuous toil, Jesus sought rest from the multitude by passing to the thinly settled district on the east side of Galilee (verse 18). Literally, one scribe came; as far as the records show, Jesus had none of this class among his disciples. After seeing Jesus perform miracles, this man expressed a desire to follow Jesus. The words and works of Jesus attracted men. He calls Jesus "Master" or "Teacher." He seems to be a presumptuous brother, full of self-confidence and self-complacency. Jesus deals gently with him.

"The foxes have holes . . . not where to lay his head" (Matt. 8:20): Heaven's richest became earth's poorest (II Cor. 8:9; 9:15). The scribe like all other Jews expected an earthly kingdom and wanted a place in it. "Jesus so replied as to correct his false expectations."

Jesus applies "Son of man" to himself. It appears here for the worse off than the foxes and the birds. The Gospels never call Jesus "the Son of man." They always credit it to him as his own words. The phrase is used about eighty times, thirty-three in Matthew. Jesus in his early ministry (except at the very start in John 4:25, 26), abstains from calling himself the Messiah. "Son of man" suited his purpose exactly to get the people used to his special claim as Messiah when he is ready to make it openly.

"Another . . . bury my father" (Matt. 8:21): This is a natural, normal thing under ordinary circumstances. George Adam Smith tells how one day he tried hard to persuade a strong young Arab to act as his guide over a long, hard trail. Sitting in the doorway was the youth's father, old, but healthy. The journey would take months. The youth replied, "Sir, suffer me first to bury my father." There was no immediate prospect of the father's death. If we say, "I cannot leave my father to follow Jesus," we show ourselves unworthy of our Lord! There will always be plenty of spiritually dead folk around to bury the physically dead (verse 22). Jesus wanted first things first. Nevertheless, even if his father was not actually dead, service to Christ COMES FIRST. Chrysostom says that, while it is a good deed to bury the dead, it is a better one to preach Christ.

V. Jesus Stills a Great Tempest (Matt. 8:23-27; Mark 4:35-41; Luke 8:22-25)

"Entered into a ship . . . he was asleep" (Matt. 8:23, 24): It was a small open row boat. Jesus was sleeping as his disciples were rowing. The Sea of Galilee is 680 feet below the Mediterranean Sea. These sudden squalls come down from the summit of Hermon with terrific force like an earthquake. Mark 4:37 and Luke 8:23 term it a whirlwind in furious gusts. The ship was rapidly filling with waves. The alarmed disciples awoke Jesus, praying: "Lord, save us; we perish" (verse 25). Jesus rebuked their lack of faith. After seeing him perform miracles, HOW COULD THEY THINK THE SEA COULD DESTROY JESUS and them? Jesus literally said to the waves, "Be MUZZLED" (verse 26). We still marvel at his power (verse 27). This is NEW PROOF of his control, not only over demons and diseases, but also over winds and waves.

VI. Two Fierce Demoniacs Healed (Matt. 8:28-34; Mk-. 5:1-21; Luke 8:26-40)

"Gergesenes . . . two possessed with devils" (Matt. 8:28): Midway between the north and south ends of the lake, and directly east across the lake from Magdala, was the little city of Gergesa. In front and somewhat to the south of this city Jesus landed. Some sixteen miles away and to the southeast, and seven miles back from the lake, was the well-known city of Gadara. Dr. Thompson discovered by the lake the ruins of Khersa (Gerasa). This village is in the district of the city of Gadara some miles southeastward so that it can be called after Gerasa or Gadara.

Matthew speaks of "two demoniacs," while Mark and Luke mention only one, the leading one. "The tombs" were chambers cut into the mountainside common enough in Palestine then and now. On the eastern side of the lake the precipitous cliffs are of limestone formation are full of caves. People shunned the region as dangerous because of the madmen.

"Jesus, thou Son of God . . ." (Matt. 8:29): The demons who possessed the two men were probably fallen angels under the devil's control. The demons acknowledge the authority of Jesus, ask, and receive permission to enter the swine, and perish in the sea (30-32). Here we have the mastery of the mind of the Master on the mind of the maniacs, the power of Christ over the demons, and over the herd of hogs. "Difficulties in plenty exist for those who see only folk-lore and legend, but plain enough if we take Jesus to be really Lord and Saviour. The incidental destruction of the hogs need not trouble us when we are so familiar with nature's tragedies which we cannot comprehend" (Robertson).

"They besought him that he would depart . . ." (Matt. 8:34): The whole city was excited over the destruction of the hogs and begged Jesus to leave, forgetful of the healing of the demoniacs in their concern over the loss of property. They cared more for hogs than for human souls!

Mark tells us that the healed demoniac became a preacher of Christ in his own country.

YEAR 3 - LESSON 51 - PAGE 5

QUESTIONS

1. Why did the multitudes follow Jesus (Matt. 7:28,29; 8:1)?
2. Meaning of "worshipped" (Matt. 8:2)? Why think Jesus could make him clean?
3. Why did Jesus touch him (Matt. 8:3), and why the term "cleansed" (Lev. 13:46; 11:40; Heb. 5:6; 4:15)?
4. Why show himself to the priest? What was the gift (Matt. 8:4; Lev. 14:1-10)? Did Jesus believe that Moses wrote Leviticus?
5. Will Jesus receive all who come to Him sincerely (John 6:37)?
6. What was the testimony of the Jewish elders concerning the centurion (Luke 7:3-5)? What was the centurion's estimate of himself (Luke 7:6, 7)?
7. What was a centurion (Matt. 8:5)? Why was one in Capernaum?
8. How did he show so great faith (Matt. 8:8-10)?
9. How could Jesus marvel (Matt. 8:10; Mark 6:6), and what caused it in two instances?
10. Who will come from the east and the west (Matt. 8:11)? What kingdom? Who are the sons of the kingdom? What about the outer darkness (Matt. 8:12; John 1:11)?
11. Was Peter a married man (Matt. 8:14)? What does this verse do to the Roman Catholic claim for celibacy (Gen. 2:18; I Tim. 3:2-6; Heb. 13:4)?
12. Why say the "spirits" (verse 16)? How did he take "our infirmities and bear our diseases" (Matt. 8:17; Isa. 53:4; Gal. 6:2, 5; I Pet. 5:7)?
13. The other side of what (Matt. 8:18, 5, 23, 24)?
14. Why the answer to the scribe (Matt. 8:20)? Why that to the disciple (Matt. 8:22)? Was the father really "dead?" Meaning of "Let the dead bury their dead?"
15. What does Chrysostom say is better than burying the dead?
16. If the boat was "covered" with the waves, how could he be asleep (Matt. 8:24; Mark 4:38)? What caused him to sleep (Matt. 8:16)? How did their fear prove their little faith (Matt. 8:26), and why did they marvel (verse 27)?
17. Have you let Jesus still the tempest in your soul (Matt. 8:23-27; John 14:27)? Why not let Him in today (Matt. 11:28-30; Heb. 3:15)?
18. In the light of what Jesus has done for this church in the past, how can we ever doubt his willingness to meet every need in the future (Phil. 4:19)?
19. Meaning of Gadarenes (McGarvey, LAND OF THE BIBLE, page 357)? How many demoniacs were there, and where did they dwell (Matt. 8:28)? Why wish to go into the swine (Matt. 8:31) and why did the swine rush into the sea?
20. Why the flight of the swineherds (Matt. 8:3)? Why the request of the people (Matt. 8:34)? Why did Jesus allow the destruction of the swine? Do some still care more for "hogs" than the souls of men?

YEAR 3 - LESSON 52 - PAGE 1
WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Year III

Fourth Quarter

Lesson 52
Matthew 9

Page 1
Memory Verse: Luke 9:37, 38

Memory Verse:

"Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest (Matthew 9:37, 38).

Public Reading: Matthew 9:1-8.

The Capernaum Ministry

Fanny J. Crosby caught the spirit of our Master in his work in Matthew 9 in this song, "To the work! To the work! We are servants of God, Let us follow the path that our Master has trod; With the balm of His counsel our strength to renew Let us do with our might what our hands find to do."

Peter in Acts 10:38 described our Lord's ministry by saying He "went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him." Charles Reynolds Brown calls this "The world's shortest biography." See the King as a WORKER in the following passages.

I. Healing a Paralytic (Matthew 9:1-8; Mark 11:1-12; Luke 5:17-26)

"And he . . . came into his own city" (Matt. 9:1): Capernaum (read Matt. 4:13). The last chapter left the Saviour in the country of the Gadarenes on the eastern side of the lake. After leaving Nazareth, Jesus made Capernaum his Galilean home.

"They brought to him a man sick of the palsy . . ." (Matt. 9:2): Palsy is an abbreviation of the word "paralysis." It results from a cessation of the nervous activities. The palsy in Matt. 8:6 was attended "by muscular spasms . . . symptoms indicative of great distress" (Sir R. Bennet, M. D.). The man was "lying on a bed" or couch (Luke 5:19), "a pallet" (Mark 2:4, 9, 11). Bedsteads in the East were practically unknown. It was a thin mattress, or pallet; it was large enough for a man to lie upon. It is used by the poor today, and is made of sheepskin with the wool in it.

"Jesus seeing their faith . . .": Four men each carrying his corner of the bed, tore up the flat roof, and "let down through the tiles with his couch into the midst before Jesus" (Luke 5:19). This was DARING FAITH in all five men! The sick man and his four friends show their faith by OVERCOMING GREAT OBSTACLES IN ORDER TO COME TO CHRIST FOR HELP! Mark tells us the great crowds prevented the man from being carried into Jesus' presence the usual way.

"Son . . . thy sins be forgiven thee": Our Lord saw in the man's heart a desire for something deeper than mere physical healing. The man was conscious that his "physical disability was the result of his own sin." Jesus went to the root of the matter when he pronounced forgiveness. The scribes charged Jesus with blasphemy (verse 3). They had scented heresy from afar, and came from Jerusalem to pry into the teachings of the Prophet of Galilee (Luke 5:17). The scribes were the learned class, the official expounders of the Scriptures, the seminary professors, the jurists, the legislators, the politicians and the soul of Israel. When Jesus professed to forgive sins, he was assuming a right that belongs to God; hence, "This man blasphemeth." If Christ were but a man, as the scribes imagined, they were right. This was the beginning of the opposition

that ended with the cross. On the same accusation of blasphemy, now made for the first time, the Sanhedrin condemned him to death (Matt. 26:65).

"Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?" (Matt. 9:4): They said nothing, but Jesus read their hearts.

"Son . . . power . . . to forgive sins" (Matt. 9:6): Who can forgive sins, but God alone? Christ here declares his deity: otherwise, He would have been blaspheming, if he had been a mere man. As a PROOF OF HIS POWER TO REMIT SINS, he heals this sick of the palsy. "Can the priest give the same proof that he is not blaspheming when he says that lie has received the power to give absolution for sins?" (F. Faivre, p. 27).

"The Son of man" cannot mean simply a man, or a mere man, since the powers in question do not belong to men as such. It means the Messiah, as a partaker of our nature (Dan. 7:13). God gave Jesus "authority" or power to forgive sins. Sins are against God, therefore only God can forgive them. Jesus was "God manifest in the flesh" (I Tim. 3:16). Only on three recorded occasions did Jesus thus forgive sins (Matt.

9:6; Luke 7:48; 23:43).

"Arise . . . go": Jesus sends the man home. The man may be regarded as an enacted parable of sin and redemption. The paralytic typifies the sinner, in his helplessness (Isa. 40:30; John 6:44; 15:5). He demonstrates faith by his earnestness to come to Christ despite obstacles (Psa. 25:15; 86:2, 7). The power of divine grace is shown as Christ speaks forgiveness and healing which the man receives as he obeys (verse 7);

Phil. 4:13).

"The multitude . . . marveled" (Matt. 9:8): Why not? They had seen a threefold miracle: sins forgiven, thoughts read, and palsy healed! "His name shall be called Wonderful" (Isa. 9:6).

II. The Call of Matthew and a Feast in His House (Matthew 9:9-13; Mark 2:13-15; Luke 5:27-29)

"Matthew . . . receipt of custom" (Matt. 9:9): In his book, Matthew does not make himself prominent. Mark and Luke give us the name "Levi." Many in that day had two names, as John Mark, Simon Peter, Joseph Barnabas, and Saul who became Paul. Matthew was a tax-gatherer. His own people considered him a traitor to the Jews. "The revenues which Rome derived from conquered nations consisted of tolls, tithes, harbor duties, taxes for use of public pasture lands, and duties for the use of mines and salt works" (McGarvey, page 190 in "The Fourfold Gospel").

"Follow me": The King exercises his authority in human will, an authority that man (of all God's creatures) can limit. "I will" of man is needed to complete the picture. "And he arose, and followed him." Thus, promptly the call of Jesus ought always to be obeyed.

"And Levi made him a great feast . . ." (Luke 5:29): Matthew omits the story of the feast he gave Jesus. Matthew invited all his friends, publicans and sinners. No others would come. He wanted them to meet Jesus! When you take a stand for Jesus let all your old friends know it. They'll respect you for it; you may even win them to Christ! We are not to keep company with evil people for any other purpose than to win them to him!

"When the Pharisees saw it . . . Why . . ." (Matt. 9:10, 11): It was a strange group at Levi's feast. Jesus was there with the four fishermen disciples, Peter, Andrew, James, and John. There was Nathanael and Philip. Of course, Matthew Levi, and his former companions, publicans and sinners were there. Add to that the Pharisees with their scribes or students as observers, the disciples of John the Baptist, fasting at the very time Jesus was feasting, and what a group! The Pharisees criticize sharply "your teacher" for such a social breach of "reclining" together with publicans at Levi's feast!

YEAR 3 - LESSON 52 - PAGE 3

"They that be whole need not a physician . . ." (Matt. 9:12): Probably a current proverb about the physician. Jesus reminded these men that "If these people are as sinful as you allege, they are the very ones who need a Saviour."

"I will have mercy, and not sacrifice . . ." (Matt. 9:13): This is a quotation from Hosea 6:6 where the prophet deals with the spiritual adultery of God's people. God didn't want the sacrifices of willfully sinning people. He wanted them so to live that he could SHOW MERCY TOWARD THEM! "God is love" (I John 4:8, 16) and justice (II Pet. 3:9; Acts 17:31). Vain practices, external observances, good works, offerings, everything that constitutes WORKING FOR SALVATION AVAIL NOTHING FOR SALVATION. "Man is saved neither by his honesty nor his merits" (Faivre; read Matt. 19:26; Titus 3:4, 5). "Christ alone can save perfectly through grace, love, mercy, those who come to him, humbled conscious of their sins and their helplessness to save themselves." Come, then, in faith and love to obey and receive LIFE FROM HIM (Acts 4:12; I Cor. 3:11; Mark 16:15, 16; Heb. 5:9). He would show you mercy (John 3:16,17). The mission of Jesus into the world is to save sinners (Luke 19:10).

III. A Question About Fasting (Matthew 9:14-17; Mark 2:15-20; Luke 5:30-39)

"Why do . . . thy disciples fast not?" (Matt. 9:14): These sincere followers of John asked and received the right answer from Jesus regarding fasting. There is no merit in fasting, or in not fasting. Circumstances must determine whether one fasts or eats. John the Baptist observed one almost continual fast, his diet being locusts and wild honey. Jesus and his disciples did not fast. Why? Men do not fast while the bridegroom is with them (verse 15). Fasting was usually a sign of sorrow. Jesus is the bridegroom. He is with us always (Matt. 28:20). He makes room for mirth, joy, and gladness.

"New cloth . . . new bottles" (Matt. 9:16, 17): Jesus gives two illustrations to show the folly of patching up, or reforming, an old, worn out religion like Judaism. "New cloth" has not been shrunk. In shrinking it would tear the old cloth around it, and make a worse rent than before. New or unfermented wine is never placed in old wineskins. It would burst the old skins during the fermentation process. Therefore, King Jesus told the Jews not to try to put the new teaching of His Kingdom in the old forms of Judaism. New motives, new forces, new impulses cannot be put in the narrow limits of the old forms. A Ford V-Eight engine would wreck the chassis of an old Model T!

IV. Raising a Ruler's Daughter and Healing an Issue of Blood (Matthew 9:18-26; Mark 5:22-43; Luke 8:41-56)

"While he spake these things . . ." (Matt. 9:18): About fasting at Matthew's table. A "certain ruler" came and "worshipped him, saying, my daughter is even now dead," or "just now died," "just dead" (Moffatt). Mark 5:23 has it "at the point of death," and Luke 8:42 "lay a dying." Jesus said pointedly in Matt. 9:24: "The maid is not dead, but sleepeth," meaning that she did not die to stay dead!

"Woman . . . issue of blood" (Matt. 9:20): The nature of the woman's disease, a bloody discharge, made her unclean (Lev. 15:26). She was directed from her husband, put out of the temple and synagogue worship ostracized from society. The medicine men similar to those of the North American Indians had, like leeches, taken "all her living." Her faith in and touch of the Master's garment made her whole (verses 21, 22).

The "garment" or border of it which the woman touched was the hem or fringe of Jesus' garment, a tassel or tuft hanging from the edge of the outer garment according to Numbers 15:38ff. Jesus wore the dress

YEAR 3 - LESSON 52 - PAGE 4

of other people with these fringes at the four corners of the outer garment. The woman had an element of superstition in her faith as many people have, but Jesus honors her faith and cures her.

"The maid is not dead . . . the maid arose" (Matt. 9:24, 25): The girl had just died. Already a crowd was "making a tumult" with wild wailing and screaming as it had gathered in the outer court "brought together by various motives, sympathy, money, desire to share in the meat and drink going at such a time" (Bruce).

Jesus does not deny the reality of death, but assumes that death will be followed by a resurrection, as sleep is by an awakening. The professional mourners did not understand the language or the power of Jesus; they laughed in derision, a loud and repeated guffaw of scorn.

"The maid arose" (verse 25): Luke 8:51 says that Peter, James and John, and the father and mother of the maiden were permitted to remain. Jesus "took her by the hand and said: "Talitha cumi." This is Aramaic, the language generally spoken by the common people in Palestine at the time of Christ. The words mean: "Rise, my child." She arose, and walked, in immediate obedience to Christ's command. Jesus is the Lord of Life and Death.

V. Two Blind Men and a Dumb Demoniac (Matthew 9:27-34)

"Two blind men . . . have mercy on us" (Matt. 9:27): Only Matthew gives this account. Blindness is still very common under the burning sun and the blinding sands of the East. Blind beggars are common. The title, "son of David," applied to Jesus by these blind men, as well as by those healed at Jericho, implied His Messiahship, as it was understood that the Christ was to be the son of David. They seek him in the house (verse 28) and Jesus demands as a condition of the blessing that there should be a confession of faith.

"According to your faith . . ." (Matt. 9:29): Faith is the hand that takes what God offers. "Their eyes were opened" (verse 3b). "Jesus straitly charged them" not to babble the story. They disobeyed (verse 31). Learn three great lessons about our Lord:

1. He is the LIFE. He breaks the bonds of mortal death; he endows the soul with spiritual life.
2. He is the great PHYSICIAN. Diseases of the body, sorrows of the heart, and sins of the soul that no man can heal, disappear at his touch.
3. He is the LIGHT OF THE WORLD (John 8:12). At his word, sightless eyes see, and darkened souls are flooded with light.

"Dumb man possessed with a devil" (Matt. 9:32): Literally, he was blunted in tongue as here and so dumb, in ear as in Matt. 11:5 and so deaf. He had a complication of physical and spiritual maladies. Jesus made the man whole. The multitudes marveled: "It was never so seen in Israel" (verse 33). The Pharisees are becoming desperate and, unable to deny the reality of the miracles, they seek to discredit them by trying to connect Jesus with the devil himself, the prince of the demons (Matt. 9:34). They will renew this charge later (Matt. 12:24) when Jesus refutes it with biting sarcasm.

VI. Jesus Teaches, Preaches and Heals in Galilee (Matthew 9:35-38; Mark 6:5, 6)

"And Jesus went about all the cities . . . teaching" (Matt. 9:35): He began to widen the area of his ministry. In the first circuit of Galilee some of the twelve accompanied Jesus (Matt. 4:23), in the second the twelve went with him as apostles, and in the third they are sent forth as evangelists to supplement his work.

YEAR 3 - LESSON 52 - PAGE 5

"But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion" (Matt. 9:36): The Lord looked upon a crowd of the poor, lost, human beings and was moved with tender compassion "because they fainted, and were . . . as sheep having no shepherd." The crowd was rent or mangled as if by wild beasts. "They were harassed, importuned, bewildered by those who should have taught them; hindered from entering into the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 23:13), laden with the burdens which the Pharisees laid upon them (Matt. 23:3). No wonder the masses were in a state of mental dejection. No wonder Jesus was moved with compassion.

"Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest . . ." (Matt. 9:38): The Lord of the harvest is Christ. When we pray the Lord for anything, we must work to fulfill our own prayers. If we pray for laborers, we must be willing to labor ourselves, or to send and sustain other laborers. Multitudes then and now are like sheep, scattered and needing a shepherd's care; as a ripe and abandoned harvest, ready to be lost unless reapers are sent to gather it (verse 37). Did you pray today for more workers in our Lord's harvest fields?

QUESTIONS

1. Which was "his own city" (Matt. 9:1; 4:13)?
2. How was the faith of the men seen (Matt. 9:2)? On what grounds were the sins forgiven? Was the message "be of good cheer" needed then, and now?
3. Why the charge of blasphemy (Matt. 9:3)? What was the force of the reply of Jesus (Matt. 9:5-7)?
4. What three-fold miracle caused the multitudes to marvel (Matt. 9:8; Isa. 9:6)?
5. What was the "receipt of custom" (Matt. 9:9)? Did Matthew obey Christ?
6. What did Matthew do to show his appreciation of Jesus (Luke 5:29)? Who attended the feast in "the house," rather than in his house?
7. Who made the objection (Matt. 9:11), and what points of defense did Jesus make (Matt. 9:12,13; Hosea 6:6)?
8. Who raised the question about fasting (Matt. 9:14)? How often did they fast (Luke 18:12)? Explain the three reasons given (Matt. 9:15-17). How were wineskins prepared? How used?
9. Ruler of what (Matt. 9:18)? What faith in Jesus had he and the woman (Matt. 9:18,21)? What had brought them to this faith?
10. How did the woman's faith make her whole (Matt. 9:22)?
11. Why the flute players and the tumult (Matt. 9:23; Jer. 9:17,18; Amos 5:16)?
12. Why say "the maid is not dead" (Matt. 8:24)?
13. Why say, "Thou son of David" (Matt. 9:27)? Why ask if they believed (verse 28) he was able? Why forbid them to tell of the cure, and why their disobedience (Matt. 9:28-31)?
14. What had made the man dumb (Matt. 9:32)? What did the multitudes say (verse 33)? Why the charge of the Pharisees (Matt. 9:34)?
15. What three great lessons may we learn from our Lord?
16. What is the connection of Matt. 9:35; 4:23)?
17. Why the comparison to sheep (Matt. 9:36)? What had specially brought them to this condition (Matt. 4:12; 14:3-5)?
18. Can you explain the figure of the harvest (Matt. 8:37)?
19. How long should the prayers for laborers be continued (Matt. 9:36)?
20. What motive prompted this commission (Matt. 8:36)?