

SEVEN YEAR WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Year Four
Lessons 1-13

First Quarter
Matthew 10 - 22

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FOREWORD

Characteristics of the Gospel of Matthew

Matthew Levi, the son of Alpheus was the writer of the Gospel of Matthew (Luke 5:27-29; Matt. 9:9; Mark 2:13, 14). McGarvey holds that the Gospel was not written before 60 A. D., and was probably written about 67 A. D.

The Gospel of Matthew has been called the

1. Aramaic Gospel.

Origen, Eusebius, Jerome and others say that Matthew's Gospel was written in Hebrew, that is, Aramaic, is the vernacular language of Palestine. It was afterwards translated into Greek. Irenaeus says: "Matthew among the Hebrews brought out a writing of the Gospel in their own tongue."

Eusebius (260? - 340 A. D.) says Matthew wrote the gospel when he was about to leave the Jews and preach also to other nations in order to "fill up the void about to be made in his absence." If Matthew wrote his gospel in Aramaic, it very soon also appeared in Greek. Whether Matthew wrote the Gospel over again in Greek, or whether some other person translated it, is a question we can not answer.

2. Analytic Gospel.

The Gospel of Matthew naturally divides itself into three divisions:

- 1) Genealogy of Christ (Matt. 1:1-4:16).
- 2) Christ's Active Ministry (Matt. 4:17-16:20).
- 3) The Closing Events of Christ's Life (Matt. 16:21-28:20).

3. Messianic Gospel.

Matthew introduces Jesus as the Messiah, or the Christ. Note how the book opens (Matt. 1:1). His main purpose is to set forth the Messiahship of Jesus rather than his divinity. He designates Christ as the promised seed of David, who was to sit on David's throne and reign forever. He also keeps in mind the promise to Abraham of a seed in whom all the nations of the world were to be blessed.

4. Old Testament Gospel.

In Matthew's Gospel there are no less than sixty (60) quotations of the Old Testament prophecy referred to as being fulfilled in Christ.

5. Pedagogical Gospel.

"The best book on pedagogy that has been written is the Gospel of Matthew. . . . There is scarcely a principle in teaching but what is used in some striking way in the Gospel of Matthew."

See how the six principles of teaching are illustrated by the Scripture cited:

- 1) Put the new in an old setting (Matt. 1:1-23).
- 2) Use words that are understood by the teacher and the scholar in the same sense (Matt. 5:12, 40, 41).
- 3) Adapt the teaching to the needs of the scholars (Matt. 13:3-9, 18:30).
- 4) Secure co-operation (Matt. 16:13-19).
- 5) The development of the subject must constantly present new points of interest (Matt. 5, 6, 7).
- 6) Ideas must be repeated to be retained (Matt. 16:21; 17:23; 20:17-19; 26:2).

6. Word Gospel.

FOREWORD

Characteristics of the Gospel of Matthew (Continued)

Matthew emphasizes the words of Jesus, while Mark emphasizes his WORKS. Mark lays emphasis upon the miracles, while Matthew stresses the parables. More than half the book is taken up with our Lord's formal speeches. Remember the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5, 6, 7)?

7. Judgment Gospel.

Matthew emphasizes the judgment.

There is an element of "sternness and severity" in Matthew's Gospel that does not appear elsewhere in the recorded teachings of Christ. Matthew alone records the parables of judgment, that is, the tares, the dragnet, the ten virgins, the talents and the rejection of the goats. Matthew gives the denunciation of the scribes and Pharisees (Matt. 23).

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WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Year IV

First Quarter

Lesson 1
Matthew 10

Page 1
Memory Verse: Matthew 10:5,6

Memory Verse:

"These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matthew 10:5, 6).

Public Reading: Matthew 10:34,2.

In the first circuit of Galilee, some of the twelve accompanied Jesus as his disciples (Matt. 4:23-25). In the second journey, the twelve were with him as apostles. In the third tour of Galilee, the apostles are sent forth as evangelists to supplement his work (Matt. 10). This section is briefly supplemented in Mark 6:7-13 and Luke 9:1-6. It must have been shortly before Passover, for they returned at Passover time, just before the feeding of the 5,000 (Luke 9:10-17; John 6:4).

I. The Occasion of This Commission (Matthew 9:35-10:1)

"Jesus. . . was moved with compassion" (Matt. 9:35, 36): When Jesus saw the bewildered, distressed, scattered people he was moved by a "feeling with, akin with, comradeship in sorrow, fellowship in agony." He wanted to shepherd them. A true mother who sees neglected children in the slums yearns to mother them all! In the figure of the SHEEP and the SHEPHERD, you see man's need met by God. In the harvest and the laborers you see God's need met by man (Matt. 9:37, 38).

"Christ has no hands, but our hands,
To do His work today;
He has no feet but our feet,
To lead man in His way;
He has no tongue but our tongues,
To tell men how He died;
He has no help but our help,
To bring them to His side."
-Annie Johnson Flint

"Pray ye. . . send forth" (Matt. 9:38): The Lord of the harvest is Christ. If we pray for laborers, we must be willing to become laborers ourselves, or to send and sustain other laborers. Out of the Master's compassion came His commission to the apostles. "Pray ye" is followed by "Go ye." Compassion, prayer, service is the perpetual order for messengers and missionaries of our King!

"He . . . called. . . his twelve disciples" (Matt. 10:1): The twelve were to assist Him as under-shepherds in gathering these "distressed" and "scattered" sheep, or as reapers to help garner the harvest. The number twelve was not adopted carelessly. It doubtless had reference to the twelve tribes of Israel (Luke 22:30; Rev. 21:12-14; Gal. 2:7-9; James 1:1; I Pet. 1:1). The church would be God's new Israel (Gal. 6:16). The twelve were now commissioned and sent out as apostles.

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He gave them power to do the same kind of works of mercy that He had done; thus, they would carry out His mission. Works of mercy and love are inseparable from preaching the gospel.

II. The Names of the Twelve (Matthew 10:2-4)

"Now the names of the twelve apostles. . ." (Matt. 10:2): Apostle means "one sent" This is the official name (missionaries) used by Matthew for the first time. It is kindred in meaning to "ambassador" (II Cor. 5:20). Christ Himself was an apostle (Heb. 3:1), and so sent the twelve (John 20:21). To be one of the twelve apostles, one had to accompany Jesus from His baptism to His resurrection (Acts 1:8, 21, 22; I Cor. 9:1; Acts 22:14, 15). Therefore, the APOSTLES COULD HAVE NO SUCCESSORS. All the apostles were from Galilee except Judas Iscariot. Iscariot is usually explained as "man of Kerioth" down near Edom (Josh. 15:25).

Jesus sent them out two by two (Mark 6:7) because:

1. The law required two witnesses to establish the truth (Deut. 17:6).
2. They could supplement each other's work. Different men reach different minds, and where one fails another may succeed.
3. They would encourage one another. They would "provoke" one another to love and good works.

"The first, Simon, who is called Peter. . ." (Matt. 10:2): Simon was first in activity. His natural gifts gave him a personal but not an ecclesiastical prominence over his fellows. He preached the first gospel sermon to the Jews, and to the Gentiles (Acts 2, 10). That he had supremacy or authority over his brethren is nowhere stated by Christ, claimed by Peter, or owned by the other apostles. Christ put them on a level (Matt. 23:8-11; 18:18; 19:27, 28; 20:25-27; John 20:21; Acts 1:8; Gal. 2:11-14, 9; I Pet. 5:1, 4; Acts 12:17; 21:18),

"Andrew his brother": A manly man, always bringing someone to Jesus John 1:40:42; 6:8-9; 12:22).

"James. . . John": They were called "sons of thunder" probably because of their stormy and destructive temper (Luke 9:51-56; Mark 9:38). The vigor of the two brothers is apparent, for it marked James as a fit object for Herod's spleen (Acts 12:2), and it sustained John to extreme old age. Epiphanius says John died at Ephesus at the age of ninety-four, but Jerome places his age at one hundred. No character change is noted in James in the brief period he survived his Lord. John became the apostle of love, showing the transforming power of the Holy Spirit. Even to the last, he could denounce Diotrophes (III John 9, 10), and forcefully preach against sins and sinners whom he called "liar," "anti-Christ," "deceiver," "children of the devil" (I John 1:6; 2:4, 22; 3:15; II John 3:11).

"Bartholomew. . ." (Matt. 10:3): He is identified with the man whom John called Nathanael (John 1:45-51). His full name would be Nathanael Bar Tolmai. Philip is fifth, and James the son of Alphaeus the ninth. Thaddaeus is Judas the brother of James. Simon Zelotes is also called Simon the Canaanean (Zealous, Hebrew word).

"Judas Iscariot. . ." (Matt. 10:4): Judas is named last in Matthew, Mark and Luke. "Who also betrayed him" is attached to his name in each case. He was dead when the list in Acts was made. He was treasurer of the apostolic group, chosen probably because of his executive ability. Kerioth, which pertained to Judah, was his native city (Josh. 15:25).

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Table of the Twelve Apostles

Matthew 10:2-4	Mark 3:16-19	Luke 6:14-16	Acts 1:13
1. Simon, called Peter,	Simon, surnamed Peter	Simon, named Peter	Peter
2. And Andrew his brother	and James the Son of Zebedee	Andrew his brother	and John
3. James the Son of Zebedee	and John the brother of James	and James	and James
4. and John his brother	and Andrew,	and John	and Andrew
5. Philip	and Philip	and Philip	Philip
6. and Bartholomew	and Bartholomew	and Bartholomew	and Thomas
7. Thomas,	and Matthew	and Matthew	Bartholomew
8. and Matthew the publican	and Thomas (Didymus)	and Thomas	and Matthew,
9. James the son of	and James the son of	and James the son of	James the son of
Alphaeus	Alphaeus	Alphaeus	Alphaeus
10. and Thaddeus	and Thaddeus	and Simon Called	and Simon
(Judas)		the Zealot	the Zealot
11. Simon the Cananaean	and Simon the Cananaean,	and Judas the son	and Judas the son
12. And Judas Iscariot	And Judas Iscariot	And Judas Iscariot	
who also betrayed him	who also betrayed him	who became a traitor	

1. We have followed the order in which Matthew gives the names of the twelve.
2. The names of the apostles are recorded four times.
3. Some think Matthew divides them into groups of two; so that he may show us who went together when Jesus sent them out in pairs (Mark 6:7).
4. The twelve are divided into groups of four; each group has a fixed leader. It is idle to speculate as to the differences in arrangement.

III. Their Commission (Matthew 10:5-15)

"Go. . . lost sheep. . . of Israel" (Matt. 10:6): The first commission RESTRICTED THE MESSENGERS to the Jewish people and the parts of Palestine where they lived. The Great Commission commanded them to GO INTO ALL THE WORLD, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15,16; Matt. 28:18-20). Jesus uses "lost sheep" not in blame, but in pity (Bruce). Bengel notes that Jesus says "lost" more frequently than "led astray."

They are forbidden to go to the Gentiles, or to the Samaritans (verse 5).

Some of the things that he said to the apostles on this mission have NO APPLICATION to us. They were for the men who were with him, hence only of temporary application. For instance, He told them to take no money. Their healing would bring them lodging, food and all needs (verses 9-14). Afterwards they were told to take money (Luke 22:35-38).

"This special and temporary commission was, therefore, never intended as a rule under which we are to act in preaching the gospel in other ages and in other lands" (McGarvey)."

"Freely. . . received. . . give" (Matt. 10:8): They had not bought the blessings from Jesus. He had given it to them. They were to give it to others. The MEASURE of their SERVICE is to be the MEASURE

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of their RECEIVING -- "freely." Faivre said that it is a strange way "which institutes a religion of money with everything to be paid for, from birth to death, masses for the dead, for the rest of souls, for GETTING OUT OF A SUPPOSED PURGATORY (no mention of which is found in the New Testament) not forgetting the shameful traffic in indulgences". Great opportunity means great responsibility before God (verse 15).

IV. Persecutions Predicted (Matthew 10:16-23)

"I send you forth as sheep. . . wolves" (Matt. 10:16): The King forewarns them of persecution. They would be defenseless by human means, among the fierce and cruel, bitter enemies. They were to be "wise as serpents, and harmless as doves," prudent and discreet as serpents are in avoiding danger. "Harmless as doves," guileless and innocent as doves. The dove is peaceful, never preys on other birds, and has always been a symbol of innocence.

"Beware of men. . ." (Matt. 10:17): Evil wolf-like men. Jesus promises them that before governors and, kings the Spirit shall give them the word to speak (verses 18-20).

"Your Father. . ." (Matt. 10:20): The Saviour never says, "Our Saviour," except when He teaches the disciples to pray, but "My Father" and "Your Father." God was His father in a different sense from that in which God is our Father.

"Brother shall deliver up the brother. . ." (Matt. 10:21): The rest of the family shall turn upon their own kindred who accept Christ, and become their bitter enemies. How often this is illustrated in every age. "And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake" (verse 22) as evil is assailed and destroyed by the man of God. All evil would unite against them. Jews and pagans then united against Christianity; wicked men hate the gospel and those who would spread it.

"He that endureth to the end. . . saved" (Matt. 10:22): The one who holds out faithful shall be saved. Persevere; it gives proof of genuine faith your reward is sure.

"The Son of man be come" (Matt. 10:23): A reference primarily, no doubt, to the Lord coming in His kingdom (Matt. 16:28). He was thus to come in the lifetime of some of the apostles. He did come in the establishment of His kingdom in power on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2). He came in judgment on the Jews at the destruction of the Jewish nation that was destroyed by Titus the Roman Emperor in 70 A. D. There is to be a final coming to judge the world, but the meaning here does not include that coming.

V. Motives for Endurance Presented (Matthew 10:24-33)

"The disciple is not above his master. . ." (Matt. 10:24): If the master is persecuted, the servant must not be surprised when he is persecuted (verse 25). We are his bond-slaves, bound to obey Him! The Master was misunderstood, we shall be, too, but we are not to be afraid as we "speak . . . preach upon the housetops" (verses 26, 27). The disciple's "as his Master" and "the servant as his Lord" are comradeship with Christ in suffering. It is the SURE CURE FOR ITS PAIN. The flat roofs of eastern house would give the fervent servant a conspicuous pulpit. This summer we often heard announcements made from the house tops in the Bible lands.

"And fear not them which kill the body. . ." (Matt. 10:28): Men can only destroy the body; they cannot destroy the soul. We are to fear God only who is "able to destroy both body and soul in hell," Gehenna, not Hades.

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"Two sparrows . . ." (Matt. 10:29): Sparrows are sold today in Jerusalem for a small sum. "A farthing" was a diminutive form of the Roman "as," slightly more than half an English penny. Our Father who knows about the sparrows knows and cares about us for we "are of more value than many sparrows" (verse 31).

"Whosoever therefore shall confess me. . ." (Matt. 10:32): Christ wants us publicly to confess Him, and to LIVE BEFORE MEN AS HIS SERVANT. Peter (Matt. 16:16) and the queen's treasurer (Acts 8:37) made this confession with the lips. Paul describes this confession (Rom. 10:9, 10). Lip and life must AGREE in our confession of Christ! Christ on the throne of judgment will confess us, IF WE HAVE CONFESSED HIM HERE! To DENY Him here "before men" (verse 33) means He will deny us "before my Father which is in heaven."

VI. The Design of Persecution (Matthew 10:34-39)

"I came not to send peace, but a sword" (Matt. 10:34): Those who accept Christ find in Him PEACE (John 14:27; Rom. 5:1; Phil. 4:9; Luke 2:14). Those who reject Christ find their conscience will "cut" them as a sword cuts a man's body! The Bible is the SWORD OF THE SPIRIT (Eph. 6:17). We are to love Christ more than any other person or thing in the world (verses 35-39). In "losing" our life in His service we really "FI VD" life! "All self-seeking is self-losing." God's way is to GIVE IN ORDER TO RECEIVE.

VII. Kindness to Disciples to Be Rewarded (Matthew 10:40-42)

"He that receiveth you, receiveth me. . ." (Matt. 10:40): As the apostles went forth in Christ's name, they carried His message. To receive that message and the messengers was virtually receiving him.

"A cup of cold water . . ." (Matt. 10:42): By the "little ones" Christ's disciples are probably meant. Alford thinks that children were present (see Matt. 18:2-6). God will reward the smallest act of kindness to His messengers. Note the six things spoken of as belonging to the soldier of the Saviour: (1) Confessing; (2) Fighting; (3) Bearing his standard-the cross; (4) Suffering; (5) Following; (6) Giving up life.

QUESTIONS

1. What is the connection of Matt. 9:35 (Matt. 10:1; 4:32)? Why the comparison to sheep (Matt. 9:36), and what had specially brought them into this condition (Matt. 4:12; 14:3-5)?
2. How long should the prayer for workers in the Lord's harvest field be continued (Matt. 9:37,38)? What motive prompted the commission (Matt. 9:36)?
3. Where had Jesus obtained twelve disciples (Matt. 1:1; 4:18-22; 9:9)? Why twelve (Luke 22:30; Rev. 21:12-14; Gal. 2:7-9; James 1:1; I Pet. 1:1)?
4. What is the meaning of apostle (Matt. 10:2)? Why give their names? In what way was Peter the "first"? Was he the first pope?
5. What qualified one to be an apostle (Acts 1:8,21,22; I Cor. 9:1; Acts 22:14, 15? Can an apostle have a successor?
6. Why did Matthew say "the publican," when he had ceased to be one (Matt. 10:3)? Meaning of the Canaanite (Matt. 10:4), and Iscariot?
7. Why did Jesus send the apostles out two by two (Mark 6:7; Deut. 17:6)?
8. What four things have we noted about the listings of the twelve apostles?
9. Why did Jesus send them only to Israel (Matt. 10:5,23)? Why say "lost sheep"?
10. What were they to preach (Matt. 10:7,8)? If the man who claims to be a successor to the apostles is unable to raise the dead, is he not an impostor? "Freely give" what?
11. Why get no money, food, nor clothing (Matt. 10:9-12)? What kind of staff? How would the peace return (Matt. 10:13)? Why shake off the dust (verse 14)? Why more tolerable (verse 15)?
12. What is the meaning of the comparison to sheep (Matt. 10:16)? In what respect are serpents wise, and doves harmless?
13. How were they to avoid anxiety "before governors and kings" (Matt. 10:18, 19)? Meaning of "not ye that speak, but the Spirit" (Matt. 10:20)? "To the end" of what (Matt. 10:22)?
14. What coming of the Son of Man (Matt. 10:23)?
15. What is the force of the motive for endurance from disciple and teacher (Matt. 10:24,25)? Of that from revealing what is "hidden" (Matt. 10:26,27)? Of that from power to destroy (Matt. 10:28)? Force of contrast with sparrows (Matt. 10:29-31)?
16. Is it necessary to confess Christ (Matt. 10:32,33; Rom. 10:9, 10; Acts 8:37)?
17. Meaning of "I came not to send peace, but a sword" (Matt. 10:34)? In what sense did Jesus send a sword (Eph. 6:17; John 14:27; Rom. 5:1; Phil. 4:7; Luke 2:14)? What's his design as here indicated (Matt. 10:35-37)?
18. What is the meaning of "finding" and "losing" one's life (Matt. 10:38-39)?
19. In what sense "receiveth me" (Matt. 10:40)? Meaning of "in the name" (Matt. 10:41,42)? What's the reward for receiving Christ's messengers? Will the giving of "a cup of cold water only" be overlooked?
20. Did the persecutions predicted occur under their first mission? What six things are spoken of as belonging to the soldier of the cross?

YEAR 4 - LESSON 2 - PAGE 1
WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Year IV

First Quarter

Lesson 2

Page 1

Matthew 11

Memory Verse: Matthew 11:28-30

Memory Verses:

"Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:28-30).

Public Reading: Matthew 11:2-19.

The Testimony of Christ Concerning John

After having charged and commissioned his apostles, Jesus "departed thence to teach and preach in their cities" (Matt. 11:1). Note both "teach and preach" as in Matt. 4:23. If Jesus went on a tour of the chief cities of Galilee, he naturally would touch many of the same cities in which the apostles were working. Jesus would naturally be behind at some distance, At the end of the tour the apostles came together to tell Jesus all that they had done and taught (Mark 6:30).

I. The Occasion of the Discourse (Matthew 11:1-6; Mark 6:14-29; Luke 7:19-28)

"Now when John had heard in the prison. . ." (Matt. 11:2): John had been cast into prison about December 27 A. D. It was now after the Passover, possibly May or June 28 A. D. Herod Antipas had put John in prison because he rebuked his sin of adultery (Matt. 14:1-12). This prison was the castle of Machaerus about ten miles east of the Dead Sea (Josephus ANT. XVIII. v. 2); this was not far from the Jordan where John was preaching.

"He sent two of his disciples": John's disciples had access to him in jail. Jesus was at the height of his popularity.

"Art thou he. . . or do we look for another?" (Matt. 11:3): This was a question of perplexity, not of disloyalty. Bruce thinks John had been in jail "long enough to develop a prison mood." Jesus had done nothing, so John reasoned, to set evil conditions right, bring judgment on sin and sinners, or set him free from prison. Jesus was not doing things the way John thought he should. He doubted Jesus' method of action. Read again the preaching of John in Matthew 3:1-12. John was evidently looking for a political Messiah (Luke 3:1-20), and could not understand why Jesus was not taking proper action toward that end. John longed for reassurance.

The Bible does not picture the saints as free from imperfections, nor does it "say that inspiration is omniscience, or that visions and miracles remove doubts" (McGarvey). It took two miracles to persuade Gideon (Judges 6:36). Moses distrusted (Exodus 3, 4), and disobey God (Num. 20:7-12). Elijah despaired of God's power (I Kings 19:4-10). Peter saw the transfiguration and yet denied knowing Christ (Matt. 17:1-6; 26:69-75).

"Jesus. . . Go and show John" (Matt. 11:4): Jesus did not work miracles to gratify idle curiosity, but he did use them to strengthen wavering faith (Mark 9:24-29; John 11:15, 43, 44; 14:11). Luke states that at

that same hour Jesus cured many of their infirmities. After permitting John's messengers to see his work, he pointed to it as his answer. To John's question, Jesus gives no direct reply.

"The dead are raised up. . ." (Matt 11:5): Jesus answered John not by verbal assurance but by the DEEDS OF THE KINGDOM. Jesus raised the widow's son at Nain (Luke 7:11-17), the daughter of Jairus (Matt. 9:18-25; Mark 5:22-43; Luke 41-56), and Lazarus (John 11:14, 35, 43, 44). Jesus' answer indicated that he considered his miracles as sufficient evidence of his Messiahship. However, "Preaching the gospel to the poor stands superior to the raising of the dead . . . To care for the poor is above miracles." The poor have always been overlooked by Pharisees and the Jewish doctors. "Wonders and miracles might be counterfeited, but a sympathy with the suffering and helpless, so tender, so laborious, so long continued, was not likely to be simulated" (Beecher). Jesus' mission was one of tender love and service; his next coming will be in judgment (Isaiah 61:1, 2).

"Blessed is he. . . not be offended in me" (Matt. 11:6): This beatitude is a rebuke to John for his doubt even though in prison. Doubt is not a proof of superior intellect, scholarship, or piety. John was in the fog; this is not the time to make serious decisions.

The scribes had been offended or stumbled; they did not believe in Jesus because he did not fulfill their ideal. Jesus tells John: "If you cannot perfectly understand my method, TRUST ME!" Plummer points out that "In some way even the Baptist had found some occasion of stumbling in Jesus."

II. Comments on the Career of John (Matthew 11:7.15)

"Jesus. . . concerning John" (Matt. 11:7): The eulogy of Jesus was spoken as the two disciples of John were going away. Robertson asks: "Is it a matter of regret that they did not hear this wondrous praise of

John that they might cheer him with it?" "It may almost be called the funeral oration of the Baptist, for not long afterwards Herodias compassed his death" (Plummer).

"What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind?" This is an allusion to John's ministry in the wilderness. The reed of Egypt and Palestine is a very tall cane; it grows twelve feet high, and is easily bent by the wind. John was not like the reed. Applause or displeasure could not bend him from his duty. John was not the "best dressed prophet" of that day (verse 8).

"A prophet?" (Matt. 11:9): John was a messenger as well as a prophet. He announced the Messiah (John 1:29). Being a true prophet, John had "rigorous moral conviction, integrity, strength of will, fearless zeal for truth and righteousness" (Bruce). Jesus said John fulfilled the prophecy of Mal. 3:1 and Isa. 40:3.

"Least in the kingdom. . . greater than he" (Matt. 11:11): John was miraculously born, and the subject of prophecy. To be Christ's forerunner is to be above teacher, prophet, Levite, priest, lawgiver, and King! BUT the least in the kingdom is greater than John. Our Lord shows that:

1. John was not in the Kingdom of God.
2. Since none greater than John had been born of woman, no one had yet entered the kingdom.
3. Therefore, the kingdom was not yet set up, for John himself Jesus and the Twelve, under the first commission, preached that the kingdom was "at hand."
4. All in the kingdom, even the humble, have a station superior to John's. All such are greater in station, privilege, and knowledge. The smallest diamond is of more precious substance than the largest flint. The least born of the Holy Spirit (John 1:12, 13; 3:3, 5) is greater than the greatest born of women.

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"The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence . . ." (Matt. 11:12): Jesus pictures the kingdom of heaven as a besieged city. Enemies try to force entrance. The gates of Christ's kingdom were not opened until Pentecost (Acts 2:1f), but men sought to force an entrance before that day when Peter used the keys to open the door into the kingdom. Examples of violence are found in John 6:15; Matt. 20:21; Luke 19:11, 26:38; 22:24-30; Acts 1:6. John was trying to force the kingdom of Christ into a worldly political and military machine.

"This is Elias, which was for to come" (Matt. 11:14): This is Elijah, not the SAME ELIJAH who had been translated about 900 years before. The "prophecy of Malachi referred to a spiritual Elijah-one who should come "in the spirit and power of Elijah," and in this sense John the Baptist fulfilled Malachi's prediction (See Luke 1:17; Matt. 17:12, 13).

"He that hath ears to hear, let him hear" (Matt. 11:15): This is a favorite saying of Jesus. See Matt. 13:9, 43; Mark 4:9, 23; Luke 8:8; 14:35. Thus, Jesus urged his hearers to grasp the important teaching he had just given. Some are beyond the range of things spiritual. Hear and obey the Christ today (Heb. 3:13,15) while you may!

III. Childishness of the Unbelievers (Matthew 11:16-19)

"But whereunto shall I liken this generation?" (Matt. 11:16): This parable of the children playing in the market place is given also in Luke 7:31f. Doubtless Jesus as a boy had played in the market place in Nazareth with the children. He certainly watched them often since. Christ was keenly interested in children. Children would not play wedding or funeral in a peevish fret!

The King complained of the unreasonableness of the age. Having answered John's questions, and having vindicated John, He put John into contrast with his age. The age "piped" (verse 17) unto John who only thundered his woes at them; they "mourned" to Jesus but he did not "lament." John was a stern ascetic; Jesus was a MAN of the people. The "generation" or age said John had a devil; the Master they charged with gluttony and drunkenness (verses 18, 19).

"Wisdom is justified of her children" (Matt. 11:19): Or, works. Jesus and John each besought the people to prepare for the kingdom of God. The people sneered at one as too strict and at the other as too lenient, and would be won by neither. To justify their wicked refusal of both, they said John was demon-possessed, and that Jesus was a criminal! Both men were sent of God; both methods were used of God, that is, were justified, or approved of God. Wise men will approve both the courses of John and his Lord.

IV. The Cities Which Rejected Jesus Upbraided (Matt. 11:20-24)

"Then began he to upbraid the cities. . ." (Matt. 11:20): Compare Luke 10:12-15. Capernaum, Bethsaida and Chorazin were three cities at the north end of the Sea of Galilee. More miracles were done in each of them than in any other. Love is not always gentle; sometimes it is rough. Why did Jesus reproach the cities? "Because they repented not." They persisted in rebellion, in spite of the manifestations of his power. "Jesus regarded his miracles as having evidential value that it was dangerous to ignore."

"Woe unto thee. . ." (Matt. 11:21): "Alas for thee!" is an exclamation of pity more than of anger. Capernaum was the chief abiding place of Jesus (Matt. 4:13f). Bethsaida, or "house of fish," was three miles to the north. It was the home of Peter, Andrew, and Philip. Chorazin was between to the north. "No trace of Chorazin is to be found today. Men have never been able perfectly to agree about the site of Bethsaida" (Morgan).

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"It shall be more tolerable for Tyre. . ." (Matt. 11:22): The greater the light the greater the responsibility. Responsibility is always created by light, by truth. God measures sin by the light a man, or a city, or a nation, has had. Sin destroys men, cities and nations; repentance will save an individual, city or nation (Jonah 3:10). Capernaum's rejection of the Son of God is infinitely worse than Sodom's bestiality (verse 24; Luke 12:47, 48 Jesus made Capernaum his home. He speaks of it figuratively as being exalted to heaven. It was "brought down to hell," or Hades the abode of the dead. Our tour of Capernaum this summer showed that it has been brought to utter ruin. We searched among weeds for their weatherworn stones that were the tokens of God's displeasure against the people who once dwelt there.

V. A Thanksgiving and An Invitation (Matthew 11:25-30)

"I thank thee, O Father" (Matt. 11:25): From the reproach of the cities, the Master turned to prayer. The use of the word "answered" reveals the perpetual fact of communion existing between Christ and God. Jesus spoke to his Father in audible voice.

"It is usual to call this golden utterance a prayer, but it is at once prayer, praise, and self-communing in a devout spirit" (Bruce). Jesus praised or thanked God not that the wise were ignorant, but that children knew. The selfish, shrewd Pharisees could not understand (John 9:40, 41); the pure and child-like could (I Cor. 1:26-31; 2:10, 11). Are you discouraged? Do you feel people are hopeless and always criticizing? Pause; worship God. This is the PAUSE THAT ALWAYS REFRESHES!

"All things are delivered unto me of my Father" (Matt. 11:29): "The Messianic consciousness of Christ is here as clear as a bell" (Robertson). This sublime claim cannot be whittled away. The Son retains the power and the will to reveal the Father to men.

"Come unto me. . ." (Matt. 11:28): Come is used over 600 times in the Bible. Verses 28-30 are not in Luke; they are among the special treasures of Matthew. Babes, John the doubter, the unreasonable, the cities all are invited to come to him (John 6:37). "Come," he says, "take yoke," or submit to my authority. "Learn of me." Jesus promises to refresh or "rest up" all who will come to him! The yoke of Christ is useful, good and kindly. Come to Christ "now," "today" (Heb. 5:9; 3:15).

QUESTIONS

1. Where were the twelve at this time (Matt. 11:1; 10:1,5)?
2. What was the exact point in John's question? Why propounded (Matt. 11:2,3)? Where was the castle of Machaerus in which John was in prison? Are "saints" free from imperfections or doubts?
3. How did Jesus answer John's doubt (Matt. 11:4-6)? Did Jesus use miracles to remove doubt (Mark 9:24-29; John 11:15,43,44; 14:11)?
4. What is superior to raising the dead (Matt. 11:5) and why?
5. On whom does Jesus pronounce a beatitude (Matt. 11:6)?
6. Why did not Jesus pronounce his eulogy on John while his apostles were present (Matt. 11:7, 8)? What traits of character are pointed out?
7. In what was John greater than other prophets were (Matt. 11:11,10; Mal. 3:1; Isa. 40:3)?
8. In what is one "little in the kingdom" greater than John the Baptist (Matt. 11:11)?
9. What is the meaning and reference of verse 12?
10. In what sense was John the Elijah who was to come (Matt. 11:14; Mal. 4:5,6)?
11. What did Jesus urge on his audience in Matthew 11:15(Matt. 13:9, 43; Mark 4:9,23; Luke 8:8; 14:35; Heb. 3:13,15)?
12. To what plays of children is reference made (Matt. 11:16,17)? Do you think Jesus played such games with the children of Nazareth when he was a boy (Heb. 4:14-16)?
13. What point of comparison does Jesus make (Matt. 11:18,19)?
14. How is wisdom justified by her children, or works (Matt. 11:19)?
15. Why did Jesus "upbraid the cities" (Matt. 11:20; Luke 10:12-15)? In what sense were most of his mighty works done in these cities"
16. Why would it be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon and for Sodom (Matt. 11:21-24)? Meaning of "brought down to hell" (verse 23)? Can you locate these cities on the map?
17. When did Jesus utter this prayer, and what is the meaning of "answered" (Matt. 11:25)?
18. Who are the wise? the babes (Matt. 11:25)? How were these things hid from the wise (Matt. 11:25; 13:15; I Cor. 1:21; 2:10,11)?
19. Why was Jesus thankful for this, and when were "all things.. delivered unto" Jesus (Matt. 11:27; 28:18)?
20. What connection between verse 27 and the invitation (Matt. 11:28-30)? What labor and what rest? If Jesus was only a man, what should we think of this paragraph?

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Year IV

First Quarter

Lesson 3

Page 1

Matthew 12

Memory Verse: Matthew 12:36

Memory Verse:

“But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.” Matthew 12:36

Public Reading: Matthew 12:1-8

A Chapter of Conflicts

The conflict between Jesus and the Jewish rulers is the subject of Matthew 12. They made direct attacks on Christ.

At the beginning of his ministry the rulers were interested in and attracted to Jesus. They admired him. They invited him to dinner. They asked him questions. This did not last long. They broke with Jesus when in Matthew 9:1-8 he claimed the right to forgive sins. They hated Jesus because he was the friend of sinners (Matt. 9:10-12; Luke 15:1, 2). From this time on, the hatred of the rulers for Jesus grew in intensity until they folded their arms across their breasts in satisfaction because they had put him on the cross.

I. The Conflict Concerning the Sabbath (Matthew 12:1-21)

A. About Sabbath-breaking (Matt 12:1-8; Mark 2:23-27; Luke 6:1).

"Jesus went on the Sabbath day. . ." (Matt. 12:1): This was probably while on the way from Jerusalem to Galilee. The word "cornfields" does not mean our maize or Indian corn, but simply fields of grain (wheat, or even barley).

The "Sabbath day" is our Saturday. It was first mentioned as the day of God's rest in the finished work of creation (Gen. 2:2, 3). After 2500 years of human life in which absolutely no mention is made of the Sabbath, it was revealed and made a part of the law given to the Jews on Sinai Exodus 16:23; Neh. 9:13, 14; Ex. 20:8-11). It became a "SIGN" between Jehovah and the Jews and served as a reminder of their separation to God (Ex. 31:13-17). "The Sabbath was the most sacred symbol of the real nature of Judaism." It was "nailed to his cross" (Col. 2:14-16). It is not binding on Christians.

"Jesus. . . began to pluck the ears of corn": They pulled heads off the barley or wheat, rubbed it in the hands, blew the chaff away, and ate the grains. They were hungry. This was permitted by Moses in the law (Deut. 23:25).

"Pharisees saw it. . . not lawful" (Matt. 12:2): They did not object to the act of taking the grain, for Moses permitted it (Deut. 23:25). Palestine is an unfenced land. The roads or narrow paths led through the grain fields. Grain would be in easy reach of the hungry disciples. "The Pharisees objected to the plucking of the grain, because they considered it a kind of reaping, and therefore WORKING on the Sabbath day" (McGarvey). This first attack on Jesus was petty and foolish.

"Have ye not read what David did. . ." (Matt. 12:3): The law of mercy suspended the law which said only the priests could eat the shewbread when David took the "Holy Bread" and gave it to his hungry followers. Read I Sam. 21:1-6; Lev. 24:5-9. God in mercy permitted it to be done (verse 4).

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"The priests. . . profane the Sabbath" (Matt. 12:5): Or, degrade and nut the Sabbath and the temple to common use. They baked the shewbread on the Sabbath, put in on the table of shewbread removed the old loaves (like those Ahimelech gave David) ON THE SABBATH. The law itself ordered this work done on the Sabbath (Lev. 24:5-9; Num. 28:8-10). The fourth commandment did not forbid labor absolutely, but labor for worldly gain!

The Sabbath was the busiest day of the week for the priests in the temple service. In this service they rightly broke the ordinary Sabbath law; the temple service set aside the law (John 7:22, 23).

"Greater than the temple" (Matt. 12:6): The word "greater" is in the neuter gender, and the literal meaning is therefore "a greater thing than the temple." If the priests in the service of the temple can break the letter of the law and be blameless, how much more can the disciples of him who is LORD OF THE TEMPLE DO SO in HIS SERVICE and by HIS AUTHORITY. Jesus was the true temple of God, of which the other was merely a symbol.

"I will have mercy, and not sacrifice" (Matt. 12:7): Jesus here quotes Hosea 6:6 here as he did in Matt. 9:13. This was a pertinent prophecy that had escaped the notice for the sticklers of ceremonial literalness and the letter of the law. The INWARD LIFE IS SUPERIOR to the OUTWARD LIFE, for the form is nothing IF THE HEART IS WRONG (I Cor. 13:3).

"The Son of Man is Lord. . . of the Sabbath" (Matt. 12:8): Jesus is the "Son of Man," a term used 88 times in the New Testament and always means the Messiah. The Sabbath was made for MAN'S CONVENIENCE and BLESSING. Jesus, the perfect Man, was Lord of the Sabbath. He had authority to interpret and apply his teaching to the Sabbath day. He had authority to substitute the Lord's Day for the Sabbath when the Gospel of Grace age came (Acts 2:1f; 20:7). Moses nor any other mortal claimed to be Lord of the Sabbath. This is a plain DECLARATION OF DIVINITY.

B. Again about Sabbath-breaking (Matt. 12:9-21; Mark 3:1-12).

"Stretch forth thine hand. . ." (Matt. 12:13): Jesus answered the question of the hypocritical leaders (verse 10) by healing the man who was worth much more than a sheep (verses 11, 12). The rebuffed leaders determined to destroy Jesus (verse 14). A stream of life and virtue came nut of Him and "He healed them all" (verse 15). The right hand of the man was withered (Luke 6:6). He did the impossible and "stretched it forth" as a word from Jesus "restored" it whole, like the other! This incident marks a crisis in the hatred of the Pharisees toward Jesus; they actually conspire with the Herodians how to put Jesus to death (Mark 3:6; Luke 6:11).

"Jesus knew it, he withdrew himself. . ." (Matt. 12:15): Jesus read their thoughts. Their angry countenances were now plain to all who saw them. Verses 16-21 show Christ's restraint in not bringing judgment upon those who had rejected Him. The day of mercy was now at hand. Judgment would come in due season. Isaiah's picture of the Gentle Jesus (Isa. 42:1-4) shows that the tender Saviour will not break, but heal "till he send forth judgment unto victory" (verse 20).

"In him shall the Gentiles trust" (Matt. 12:21): This shows the breadth of Christ's conquest over all the nations. It reaches beyond us today into a future yet to be. See the prophets clearly declare that the Messiah shall be, not a Jewish, but the world's Saviour (John 4:42).

II. The Conflict Concerning His Power (Matthew 12:22-37)

A. About casting out demons (Matt. 12:22-30; Luke 11:14, 15).

"He healed him. . ." (Matt. 12:22): This was a four-fold miracle: restoring liberty, hearing, sight and

the power of speech. It was the occasion of the second attack upon Jesus. It was characterized by malicious hatred.

"Is not this the Son of David?" (Matt. 12:23): The form of the question expects the answer "no," but "the people" put it so because of the Pharisaic hostility towards Jesus. The people "stood out of themselves" with excitement. They wondered if Jesus might be the Messiah in their cautious question.

"Cast out devils. . . by Beelzebub" (Matt. 12:24): The Pharisees could not deny the miracle. They said Jesus did it through the power of the devil! Beelzebub is a corruption of Beelzebub, the god of the fly. Only God or the devil had the power to do miracles. Both were invisible powers. Hence the Pharisees said Jesus was working with the devil! ONLY TWO FORCES are at work in the world --the GATHERING and the SCATTERING. Whoever does the one contradicts and hinders the other. Beelzebub and the demons of whom he is prince are breaking up, destroying, scattering (verses 24-29).

"Kingdom divided. . . not stand" (Matt. 12:25): Satan could but WOULD NOT WORK to bring about his own defeat. Jesus was FREEING MEN from Satan's power. Jesus was working in the interest of Satan (verse 26). He affirms he worked miracles by the power of God" (verse 28), else he could not have overthrown the power of Satan (verse 29).

"Not with me. . . against me" (Matt. 12:30): This is an eternal principle. The shepherd gathers the flock; the thief scatters it to destroy it! We either gather with Christ or scatter to the four winds. Christ is the magnet of the ages. He draws or drives away. "Satan is the archwaster, Christ the collector, Saviour" (Bruce).

C. About the sin not pardonable (Matt. 12:31-37; Mark 3:22-30; Luke 11:14-26; 12:8-10).

"It shall not be forgiven him. . ." (Matt. 12:31): Blasphemy is any kind of injurious speech. Blasphemy against the Son may be a temporary sin. Such a one may be convinced by the testimony of the Spirit; he may repent and become a believer [I Tim. 1:13]. IF YOU REJECT THE EVIDENCE GIVEN BY THE HOLY SPIRIT REGARDING JESUS AND THE GOSPEL AND CREDIT IT TO SATAN, YOU REJECT THE ONLY BASIS upon which faith may be based (Rom: 10:17; Heb. 11:6; John 20:30, 31) in this world, or the world to come! This is the unpardonable sin. This third attack was a manifestation of contemptuous unbelief. We cannot call God Satan, nor the Holy Spirit a demon, until our state of sin has passed beyond all hope of reform!

"Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" (Matt. 12:34): Jesus realized he could not get honest judgment out of dishonest hearts. He then plainly informs them as to the condition of their hearts. Their very souls were full of poison like vipers. "What is in the well will be in the bucket" (Trapp).

"Every idle word . . ." (Matt. 12:36): An ineffective or useless word. It does no good; it is pernicious, like pernicious anemia. Jesus knows our very thoughts (verse 25). He insists that our words reveal our thoughts and form a just basis for character interpretation (verse 37); in Matt. 25:31-46 Jesus presents judgment by deeds. Both words and works are real tests of actual character. Those who confess Christ with the mouth shall be saved, or justified (Rom. 10:9); those who deny him will be lost.

III. A Conflict Concerning a Sign (Matthew 12:38-SO)

A. About a demand for a sign (Matt. 12:38-45; Luke 29:32).

"We would see a sign from thee" (Matt. 12:38): Bruce says "The demand was impudent, hypocritical, insulting." One wonders how they could accuse Jesus of being in league with Satan and thus casting out-

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demons, and then turn round and blandly ask for a "sign from thee." As if the other miracles were not signs! Jesus calls them "An evil and adulterous generation" (verse 39); they had broken the marriage tie which bound them to Jehovah (Plummer).

"As Jonah . . . so shall the Son of man" (Matt. 12:40): Jonah was a true prophet of God. Nineveh received him as such because he was rescued from the great fish, not a whale. The "sea monster" is the white shark which abounds in the Mediterranean. The miracle was the preservation of the life of Jonah during his living burial. This was a type of the burial and resurrection of Christ. Jesus was declared to be the Son of God by the resurrection from the dead (Rom. 1:4).

"Three days and three nights": "Jesus was one full day, two full nights and parts of two other days in the grave. . . Jews reckoned a part of a day as a whole day when it occurred at the beginning or end of a series" (McGarvey). Christ was buried Friday evening, lay in the grave Saturday, and rose Sunday morning, parts of three days, and rose on the "third day." The resurrection is fully accredited as a fact (I Cor. 15:1-58). It is the keystone of Christianity.

"The men of Nineveh. . . ' (Matt. 12:41): Nineveh was the capital of the Assyrian Empire, situated on the Tigris river. They repented at the preaching of Jonah, but "this generation" of Jews would not repent under the preaching of "one greater than Jonah." The example of the Ninevites condemns the Jews.

"A greater than Solomon" (Matt. 12:42): Jesus is greater than the temple, than Jonah, than Solomon. "The queen of the south" is of Sheba (I Kings 10:1) supposed to be Sabaea in Southern Arabia. She came a great distance to test Solomon, and declared the half had not been told her of him! The Jews rejected the teaching of Jesus, "greater than Solomon," though he brought his teaching to them. Jesus in essence told them: "You will continue to disbelieve in spite of all I can say or do, and at least you will put me to death. But I will rise again, a sign for your confusion, if not for your conversion" (Bruce).

"Even so. . . unto this wicked generation" (Matt. 12:45): The application of verses 43-45 is found in these words. The Jews became worse and worse until they crucified the Lord and were destroyed. They were now like a man with one evil spirit; they would be like a man with seven more demons added, each of which was worse than the original occupant. Those who dally with sin will find that the last state is more wretched and wicked than the first.

B. About his mother and his brothers (Matt. 12:46-50; Mark 3:31-35; Luke 8:19-21).

"Who is my mother" . . . my brethren?" (Matt. 12:48): Those who love you most are sometimes your worst enemies because they do not understand. Jesus' foes and his family did not understand that God and His Kingdom MUST COME FIRST (Matt. 6:33). Who does God's will is related spiritually to Jesus in the most intimate bond. Jesus rebukes Mary. Jesus loved his mother and brothers, but they were not to interfere in his Messianic work. The real spiritual family of Jesus included all that followed him. It was hard for Mary to go back to Nazareth and leave Jesus with the excited throng so great that he was not even stopping to eat (Mark 3:20).

The worship and immaculate conception of Mary were created by sinful men (Council of Ephesus, 431 A.D.). Pope Pius IX proclaimed the immaculate conception of Mary in 1854 A.D. Pius XI reaffirmed it in 1931.

QUESTIONS

1. What is the subject of Matthew 12, and why did the rulers break with Jesus (Matt. 12; 9:1-8)?
2. Why did Jesus and the disciples go through the fields of grain on the Sabbath day (Matt. 12:1)? What did his disciples do?
3. When was the Sabbath first mentioned (Gen. 2:2,3)? On whom was it made binding and why (Exodus 16:23; Neh. 9:13, 14; Exodus 20:8-11)? Is the Sabbath binding on us as Christians today, and why (Col. 2:14-16)?
4. What was the reaction of the Pharisees (Matt. 12:2; Deut. 23:25)?
5. Why did Jesus appeal to David's unlawful act (Matt. 12:3,4; I Sam. 21:1-6)?
6. How did the priests "profane" the Sabbath (Matt. 12:5; Lev. 24:5-9; John 7:22,23; Num. 28:8-10)?
7. What is the meaning of "greater than the temple" (Matt. 12:6, 8)? What does Jesus claim as "The Son of Man"?
8. What is the bearing of the quotation of Jesus from Hosea 6:6 (Matt. 12:7; 2:13)?
9. What was the force of Jesus' argument in Matt. 12:9-12?
10. Why did the rulers wish to destroy Jesus (Matt. 12:14,24), and what destruction?
11. Can you show the meaning and fulfillment of the prediction quoted (Matt. 12:17-20; Isa 42:1-4)? What Sabbath work is justified in these two paragraphs? What work, then, was prohibited in the fourth commandment?
12. Of what is Matthew 12:21 a prediction (John 4:42)?
13. What was the reaction of the people to the great miracle of Matt. 12:22, 23? Meaning of "Is not this the son of David?" What was the charge of the Pharisees against Jesus (verse 24)?
14. What was the force of the argument of Jesus (Matt. 12:25,26)? Who were the "children" and the point in referring to them (verse 27)?
15. Are you for or against Jesus in your daily life (Matt. 12:28-30)?
16. In what sense shall every sin be forgiven (Matt. 12:31)? Why is it worse to speak against the Holy Ghost than against the Son (Matt 12:32)?
17. What was the sin of the Pharisees, and the source of it (Matt. 12:33, 34, 24, 28)? Can a man speak wickedly and have a good heart (verse 36)? What are "idle" words (Matt. 12:36,37)?
18. What is implied in asking "a sign from" Jesus (Matt. 12:38)? Why say "no sign" shall be given this "evil and adulterous generation" (verse 39)?
19. How was Jesus three days and nights in the earth (Matt. 12:40)? How shall the Ninevites rise in judgment with that generation (verse 41), and in what sense shall they condemn it? Point of the comparison about the case of the unclean spirit (verses 43-45)?
20. According to Jesus "who is my mother?... my brethren?" (Matt. 12:48)? Can Mary, according to this, be an intercessor between Jesus and his disciples? Who invented the worship and immaculate conception of Mary?

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WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Year IV

First Quarter

Lesson 4

Page 1

Matthew 13

Memory Verse: Matthew 13:58

Memory Verse:

"And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief" (Matthew 13:58).

Public Reading: Matthew 13:1-9.

Parables of the Kingdom

Matthew 13 is a "set discourse of Jesus, and not a collection of truths taken from the Savior's teaching at different times" (Morgan).

Dean Alford affirms that "The seven parables related in this chapter cannot be regarded as a collection made by the evangelist, as relates to our subject, the Kingdom of Heaven and its development; they are clearly indicated by verse 53 to have been spoken ON ONE AND THE SAME OCCASION; and form indeed a complete and glorious whole in their inner and deeper sense."

Meaning of Parable?

What is a parable? The word comes from the Greek "paraballo" which means, "I place or throw beside" in order to compare.

"A parable is an earthly story with a heavenly meaning," that is some familiar thing on earth is placed along side of some unfamiliar thing of heaven, that our understanding of the one may help us to an understanding of the other. Each of the parables in this chapter deal with common, every-day things understood by the people.

There are three main divisions in our study of this chapter.

I. Four Parables Delivered to the Multitude (Matthew 13:1-35)

A. The parable of the sower (Matt. 13:1-23; Mark 4:1-25; Luke 4:4-18!)

1. Beside the Sea of Galilee (Matt. 13:1, 2).

"The same day. . . Jesus. . . sat by the sea side" (Matt. 13:1): This group of parables is placed by Matthew on the same day as the blasphemous accusation and the visit of the mother of Jesus. It is called "the Busy Day," not that it was the only one, but that so much is told of this day that it serves as a specimen of many others filled with stress and strain. Jesus came out of the stuffy house; he took his seat along the shore with the crowds stretched up and down. What a picturesque scene!

"And great multitudes. . . he went into a ship" (Matt. 13:2): This was the "greatest" in numbers so far. It was the turning-point in his public teaching, since the parabolic instruction now begins. Great numbers of people could see him and hear him.

2. The parable of the sower (Matt. 13:3-8).

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"And he spake many things. . . in parables" (Matt. 13:3): While Jesus had used parables before, this appears to have been the first occasion when he strung them together so as to form a discourse. He will use a great many in the future as in Luke 12 to 18 and Matthew 24 and 25.

Parables already mentioned in Matthew include the salt and the light (Matt. 5:13-16), the bride and the lilies (Matt. 6:26-30), the splinter and the beam in the eye (Matt. 7:15), the good and bad trees (Matt. 7:17-19), the wise and foolish builders (Matt. 7:24-37), the garment and the wineskins (Matt. 9:16f), the children in the market places (Matt. 11:16f).

As a rule the parables of Jesus illustrate one main point and the details are more or less incidental, though Jesus sometimes explains these. When he does not so explain details, we should be slow to interpret the minor details. Much heresy has come from fantastic interpretations of the parables.

"A sower went forth to sow": Orientals live in cities and towns. A farmer may live several miles from his field. Literally he "goes forth" to it. It is "the sower," not "a sower." Jesus expects us to see the man as he stepped forth to begin scattering the seed with his hand. The parables of Jesus are vivid word pictures. Christ drew his parables from familiar objects, All knew what he was talking about when he talked of the sower, the seed, the soil and the sequence (or result).

"Wayside. . . stony places. . . thorns. . . good ground" (Matt. 13:4, 5, 7, 8) People made paths along the edge of a plowed field or even across it where the seed lies upon the beaten track. Fowls "devoured" or "ate down" the seed. We say "ate up."

"Stony places" are everywhere in Palestine. Ledges of rock often jut out with thin layers of soil upon the layers of rock. The seed "Shot up at once" (Moffatt), with a sad result (verse 6).

"Thorns" (verse 7) "choked" the seed. "The thorns sprang up and strangled it" (Wycliffe). The thorns suffocated the growing plant. Palestine is literally a land of thorns, thistles, brambles and thorny bushes as any traveler can testify.

"Good ground" (verse 8): This soil was the reverse of the other three soils. It was not hard, stony, or weedy. The good soil yielded thirty, sixty, some an hundred-fold. Thirty-fold is a good crop in Palestine. It is

asserted that a hundred-fold has been reaped in the Plain of Esdraelon (Thomson, THE LAND AND THE BOOK).

3. Why Jesus spoke in parables (Matt. 13:9-17).

"Who hath ears to hear. . ." (Matt. 13:9): Jesus had to exhort people to listen and understand his sayings, especially parables. This is comforting to teachers and preachers.

"Why speakest thou. . . in parables?" (Matt. 13:10): The disciples are puzzled over the meaning of the parable and the reason for giving them to the people. So they "came up" closer to Jesus and asked him. Jesus adapted his preaching to the condition of his disciples. They believed in him; they had crowned him King; they would understand (I Cor. 2:6-11). Unbelievers and scoffers would not grasp the meaning; they heard, but closed their minds to the truth (verse 13). Though "they see, they do not (really) see."

"Mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. . ." (Matt. 13:11): A mystery is something not understood. As used in the Scriptures "it means that which is not understood because it has not been revealed, but which IS PLAIN AS SOON AS REVEALED. Bible mysteries are not unraveled by science, but are unfolded by revelation" (Col. 1:26; I Tim. 3:16; Matt. 11:25, 26).

The mystery-religions of the east had all sorts of secrets and signs as secret societies do today. Those initiated knew them. So the disciples have been initiated into the secrets of the kingdom of heaven. Paul will freely use it of the mystery once hidden, but now revealed now made known in Jesus Christ (Rom. 16:25; I Cor. 2:7). "I have learned the secret or been initiated" (Phil. 4:12).

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"And in them is fulfilled. . ." (Matt. 13:14): The prophecy of Isaiah 6:9, 10 is fully satisfied in the conduct of the Pharisees and Jesus himself points it out! The spiritual condition described by Isaiah existed in the day of Christ, and of ours. "Waxed gross" (verse 15) means they had made them callous or dull-even fatty degeneration of the heart. They smeared over their eyes lest they should "see." If they would fall out with sin and come to Christ with a broken and a contrite heart, they would be healed.

"Blessed are your eyes. . . ears" (Matt. 13:16): A beatitude for the disciples in contrast with the Pharisees. The result is dependent on the one who hears, and how he hears. The prophets and righteous had longed for the coming of Christ. His disciples enjoyed it (verse 17).

4. The parable of the sower explained (Matt. 13:18-23).

"Hear. . . understandeth it not. . . wayside" (Matt. 13:19): Christ now explains the parable (verse 18). Christ is the great Sower. All whom he sends for to preach are sowers under him. The seed sown is the "word of God" (Luke 8:11). "The four soils are four hearts into which truth is sown" (McGarvey). Before the preacher's voice has stopped the devil may use some careless idle gossip and snatch the word away before it has a chance to grow. The man who lets the devil snatch the seed out of his heart is responsible before God; the seed is not at fault.

"Stony places. . ." (Matt. 13:20): This shallow, rock-covered soil represents those who hear the word with joy. They lack tenacity of purpose. They will not stick when persecution comes (verse 21).

"Thorns. . . choke the word" (Matt. 13:22): The thorny soil takes in the Lord, but is so full of worldly cares that the thorns flourish and the character sickens and dies, choked to death for lack of spiritual food, air, sunshine (see Matt. 19:22; II Tim. 4:10). Remember Judas Iscariot (Matt. 10:4; 27:1-10)?

"Good ground. . . heareth. . . understandeth" (Matt. 13:23): This is the good and honest heart. It receives and retains the truth. To produce a harvest three things are needed: 1) A sower, 2) Good seed, the pure Word of God, and 3) A good and honest heart. All hearers are not equal in fruitfulness, but they do bear fruit, "some an hundred-fold, some sixty, some thirty." To which class do you belong? Does your life in your church bear good fruit for the Saviour (Acts 10:33- 17:11)? Are you a BLESSING or a CURSE to the cause of Christ in this church and community?

B. The parable of the tares (Matt. 13:24-30, 36-43).

"His enemy came and sowed tares. . ." (Matt. 13:25): Among the good seed (verse 24) an enemy "sowed upon" or "resowed" (Moffatt) darnel or "tares." It is bastard wheat, common in Palestine, and resembles wheat except that the grains are black. The difference between wheat and darnel is not apparent "until the two kinds of grain are nearly ripe" (verses 26-29).

"Let both grow together. . ." (Matt. 13:30): The roots of wheat and darnel so intertwine that they can not be separated without pulling up both. The time of separation will come at last. The righteous will not always be vexed by the presence and deeds of evil doers. Harvest time will come; that is the time of separation at the consummation of the age.

"Jesus. . . went unto the house" (Matt. 13:36): Probably Simon Peter's house. There the disciples wanted Jesus to "Make it thoroughly clear right now." They pass by the parables of the mustard seed (verses 31, 32) and the leaven (verses 33-35). It is important to note that THE FIELD is NOT THE CHURCH, but the world (verse 38), and the teaching of the parable is that we are NOT TO ATTEMPT TO EXTERMINATE EVIL MEN. Any who attempt to exterminate heretics in the name of Christ by physical force are condemned by this parable!

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This parable cannot be used as an argument against church discipline. The law of discipline in the church when brethren sin against each other is given in Matt. 18:15-35.

"Angels. . . gather out of his kingdom" (Matt. 13:41): Just as the wheat and the darnel are mixed together in the field till the separation of the harvest, so the evil are mixed with the good in the world (the field). Jesus does not mean to say these "stumbling-blocks" are actually in the Kingdom of heaven and hence really members of the Kingdom. They are simply mixed in the field with the wheat, and God leaves them in the world till the separation comes. Their destiny is the "furnace of fire" (verse 42).

"Then shall the righteous shine. . ." (Matt. 13:43): They shall shine out as the sun comes from behind a cloud (Vincent), and drive away the darkness after the separation has come (See Dan. 12:3). The smog of sin is driven away; the righteous shine unhindered.

C. The parable of the mustard seed (Matt. 13:31, 32; Mark 4:30-32; Luke 13:18-19).

"The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed. . ." (Matt. 13:31): The Jews grew mustard in their gardens. It was round and the smallest of the seeds sown in the garden. This parable sets forth the smallness of the beginning of the kingdom, and its great growth (verse 32). The figure of a great tree in the Scriptures is ever of great power. It is so used of the king of Assyria, of Pharaoh and of Nebuchadnezzar. This particular parable says nothing of the nature of the tree, whether it is good or bad. It is simply a revelation of this one aspect of force in the world, the greatest of all, and such Christianity has become. Birds lodging in the ranches most probably refers to the elements of corruption which take refuge in the very shadow of Christianity. How much the Kingdom has suffered by harboring the unclean birds very few rightly appreciate.

D. The parable of the leaven (Matt. 13:33-35; Luke 13:20, 21).

"The kingdom. . . is like unto leaven" (Matt. 13:33): A piece of the leavened dough from an unbaked loaf was put among the new dough to cause fermentation. Three measures, an ephah or about three pecks and three pints, was the quantity taken for one baking. See Gen. 18:6; Judges 6:19; I Sam. 1:24. The leaven was taken without and "hid" in the meal or flour The hidden leave, though only a small quantity, imparts its qualities to the large mass "till all was leavened." The parable teaches that the Gospel is the leavening influence in the world.

II. Parables Spoken to His Disciples (Matthew 13:44-50)

A. Parable of the hidden treasure (Matt. 13:44).

"The kingdom. . . like unto treasure hid in a field" (Matt. 13:44): The parables of the hidden treasure, the pearls and the net appear to have been addressed privately to the apostles (verse 36), along with the explanation of the parable of the tares (verses 36-43, 3-9).

Valuables today are usually put in banks. In the east valuables were buried in fields and gardens to save them from robbers and accidents. This parable teaches the immense value of the gospel: it is priceless. The one who finds out that value will give up everything else in order to possess himself of the privileges and hopes of the kingdom.

B. Parable of the pearls (Matt. 13:45, 46).

"The kingdom. . . like unto a merchant man. . . seeking goodly pearls" (Matt. 13:45): In the preceding parable the treasure was found by accident. In this parable the pearl was sought. Pearls were then esteemed

as the most valuable ornaments and were sought by merchants on distant shores, the most valuable being brought from the Indian Ocean.

"Found one pearl of great price. . . sold all. . . bought it" (Matt. 13:46): The merchant was willing to invest everything he had in this pearl of surpassing beauty and worth.

Some find the pearl of great price without seeking, as did the Samaritan woman (John 4:28, 29); some only after diligent search, as did the eunuch (Acts 8:27).

C. Parable of the net (Matt. 13:47-50).

"Kingdom. . . like unto a net" (Matt. 13:47): Like the parable of the tares, this one indicates the continuance of the mixture of bad and good. It points to the final separation at the end of the world when the angels shall sever the wicked from the just (verses 48, 49): If the parable of the tares emphasizes the waiting, this one emphasizes careful sorting.

"Cast. . . furnace of fire" (Matt. 13:50): Here is repeated, word for word, the language of verse 42. The tares, the chaff, the corrupt trees, the barren tree, are all represented as burned, and here also the wicked are cast into a furnace of fire. While the language is figurative, it can only be understood as indicating that the sufferings of Gehenna, the place of the wicked, are intense. Surely Jesus knew what he was talking about!

There is "No mention of Purgatory. Christ would certainly have taught of an intermediary place if it were not PURE INVENTION" (Faivre).

III. The Responsibility of the Disciples During the Kingdom Age (Matthew 13:51-53)

"Have ye understood all these things?" (Matt. 13:51): The apostles affirmed that they understood "all these things." The Master Teacher had patiently, in public and private, instructed them.

"Every scribe is instructed unto the kingdom. ." (Matt. 13:52): Such will be able to furnish rich and suitable spiritual food. Scribes were theological teachers. Just as a householder "graces his banquet with things already in the house, and with other things which have just been provided, so a religious teacher must refresh his hearers out of both his past and his present experiences and study. Old lessons must be clothed in new garments."

IV. Jesus is Again Rejected at Nazareth (Matthew 13:54-58; Mark 6:1.6; Cf. Luke 4:16-32)

"He departed. . . into his own country" (Matt. 13:53, 34): From teaching his disciples, the Lord went to Nazareth, where he had been reared. He taught in the synagogue on the Sabbath day (Mark 6:2), and the people "were astonished" at his wisdom, and these mighty works."

"Is not this the carpenter's son?" (Matt. 13:55): Joseph. Jesus was a carpenter also (Mark 6:3). The people of Nazareth could not comprehend how one with the origin and environment of Jesus in Nazareth could possess the wisdom that He appeared to have in his teaching. They knew Joseph, Mary, the brothers (of whom four are named), and sisters (not named; there were at least TWO; there may have been more). Technically they were the half brothers and sisters of Jesus. "Joseph had no matrimonial relations with his wife UNTIL she brought forth her firstborn" (Luke 2:7), thus having regard for the work of the Holy Spirit (Faivre).

"And they were offended in him" (Matt. 13:57): "They stumbled at him," "They were repelled by him" (Moffatt), "They turned against him" (Weymouth). The proverb that Jesus quoted is found in Jewish, Greek, and Roman writers. The "unbelief" (verse 58) of the townspeople blocked the will and the power of Jesus to work cures there.

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QUESTIONS

1. What does G. Campbell Morgan say of Matthew 13? What does Dean Alford say of Matt. 13?
2. What is a parable?
3. On what day were the parables delivered (Matt. 13:1)? Why into a boat (Matt. 13:2)?
4. How many parables were spoken on this day? In what does the interpretation of one consist? When Jesus explains a parable what are we to do?
5. What does the first parable teach concerning the word of God (Matt. 13:3-8,18-23)? How many kinds of soil are mentioned, and how did the seed do in each kind (verses 4,5,7,8)?
6. Are we responsible for the amount of the harvest, or for faithful seed-sowing only (I Cor. 3:5-8; 4:2)?
7. Did Jesus exhort people to hear and understand his teaching (Matt. 13:9,43)?
8. Who asked Jesus why he spoke "in parables" (Matt. 13:10)?
9. Can you explain the word "mystery" (Matt. 13:11)? And how was Isa. 6:9,10 fulfilled in Matt. 13:14-17?
10. Where was the good seed sown according to the second parable (Matt. 13:24, 37f)? What followed (Matt. 13:25, 26, 38, 39)? What are tares?
11. When will the tares (children of the wicked one, verse 38) be separated from the wheat (Matt. 13:28-30, 40, 41)? Is "the field" the church or the world? Is this a parable against church discipline?
12. How was the kingdom like a mustard seed (Matt. 13:31,32)?
13. How was the kingdom like leaven (Matt. 13:33-35; Luke 13:20,21)?
14. What is the treasure hidden in the field (Matt. 13:44; compare Ex. 19:5; Psa. 135:4; II Pet. 2:9)?
15. What is the pearl of great price for which the purchaser gave all he had (Matt. 13:45, 48; Eph. 5:25; I Cor. 6:19, 20; I Pet. 1:18,19)?
16. Who are the two sowers mentioned in this lesson (Matt. 13:37-39)?
17. How is the kingdom "like unto a net" (Matt. 13:47)? Difference between this and the tares? What is the ultimate end of the wicked (Matt. 13:49, 50)? Does Jesus ever mention purgatory?
18. What did Jesus ask the apostles at the end of his teaching (Matt. 13:52)? What is the point in the comparison to a householder (Matt. 13:52)?
19. To what country did Jesus return after his third tour in Galilee (Matt. 13:53, 54; Mark 6:1)?
20. How many half-brothers and sisters did Jesus have (Matt. 13:55,56)? What was the result of the unbelief of the people of Nazareth (Matt. 13:58; Mark 6:5,6)? Will unbelief rob us of blessings today (Heb. 11:6; James 1:6,7)?

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WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Year IV

First Quarter

Lesson 5

Page 1

Matthew 14

Memory Verse: Matthew 14:33

Memory Verse:

"Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, of a truth: thou art the Son of God" (Matthew 14:33).

Public Reading: Matt. 14:15-21.

The Feeding of the Five Thousand

Our lesson last week closed with the rejection of Jesus by his hometown of Nazareth (Matt. 13:53-58; Mark 6:1-6; Luke 4:16:32). His enraged neighbors "led him to the brow of the hill . . . that they might cast him down headlong" (Luke 4:29), down a "perpendicular cliff about forty feet high, with a naked floor of rock at the bottom" (McGarvey). They wanted to KILL KING JESUS! Their "unbelief" (Matt. 13:58) drove Jesus and his blessings away. They did not think highly of him (Matt. 13:54-57). Do you?

I. The Opinion of Herod Antipas (Matthew 14:1-12; Mark 6:14-29; Luke 9:7-9; 3:1-20)

"Herod the tetrarch. . ." (Matt. 15:1): Herod Antipas ruler of Galilee and Perea, one fourth of the dominion of Herod the Great his father. He murdered John the Baptist, and assisted at the trial of Jesus (Luke 23:6-12). It is rather surprising that he had not "heard of the fame of Jesus" before.

Galilee lay north of Samaria. It was about "twenty-five miles from north to south, and twenty-seven miles from east to west -- a rich and fertile country."

"This is John the Baptist . . . risen from the dead" (Matt. 15:2): Wicked king Herod's conscience was bothering him. Possibly he could see the head of John on a platter. "The King has the Baptist on the brain" (Bruce). Hearing of the fame of Jesus, he concluded that John had risen from the dead. "John did no miracle" (John 10:41) during his life. Herod supposed that his resurrection had clothed him with new power. This opinion was shared by others (Matt. 16:14; Mark 8:28).

"Herod . . . for Herodias' sake . . ." (Matt. 14:3): The death of John had taken place some time before. This Herodias was the unlawful wife of Herod Antipas. She was herself a granddaughter of Herod the Great and sister of Herod Agrippa I, and the wife and niece of Herod Philip I of Rome, not Philip the Tetrarch. She had divorced him in order to marry Herod Antipas after he had divorced his wife, the daughter of Aretas king of Arabia. It was a nasty mess equal to any of our modern divorces. Her first husband was still alive. Marriage with a sister-in-law was forbidden to Jews (Lev. 18:16). For her sake Herod Antipas had put John in the prison at Machaerus, the Black Fortress of Perea. It was situated in the gorge of Callirhoe, one of the valleys east of the Dead Sea, 3860 feet above the Mediterranean.

"John said . . . It is not lawful . . . to have her" (Matt. 14:4): John preached as fearlessly to King Herod Antipas as he had spoken to Pharisees, publicans and soldiers. Herod "heard him gladly" (Mark 6:20).

Herodias was the daughter of Aristobulus, the half-brother of Herod Philip I and Herod Antipas, had married her uncle Herod Philip I. Herod Philip I was banished to Rome by his father Herod the Great where he lived as a private citizen. When Herod Antipas went to Rome about the affairs of his tetrarchy, he visited his brother, and "repaid the hospitality that he received by carrying off the wife of his host." The marriage was

unlawful: 1) Her husband was still living, 2) The lawful wife of Herod Antipas was still living, and 3) The Jewish law did not permit a man to marry his niece, and Herod Antipas and Herodias were nephew and niece (Lev. 18:6, 16). John was put in prison for his plain preaching. Herodias wanted to "kill him" (Mark 6:19). Herod Antipas was a politician and curbed his resentment toward John by his fear of the people who "counted him as a prophet" (verse 5).

"Herod's birthday . . . daughter of Herodias danced" (Matt. 15:6): Salome, daughter of Herod Philip I and Herodias. Hence a niece of Herod Antipas, now her stepfather. The dance was a voluptuous, indecent exposure of a shameless woman. She danced alone. The root of the verb "dance" means some kind of rapid motion. "Leaped in the middle," Wycliffe puts it. This shameful exhibition of lewd dancing was prearranged by Herodias to bring about her purpose of putting John to death "He promised with an oath. . ." (Matt. 14:7): Herod confirms his promise to "give her whatsoever she would ask" with an oath. It was a common custom to reward a dancer or actor on such an occasion, if she pleased, and to give what she asked. Such rashness is characteristic of sin and folly. "Riches, honors, kingdoms, souls, are given for a bauble in the devil's market."

"Give me. . . John's the Baptist's head" (Matt. 15:8): Mark tells us that she went to consult her mother before she made her request. "It should require a good deal of 'Educating' to bring a young girl to make such a grim request" (Bruce). It was a cruel request. She and her more sinful mother wanted the prophet's head on the spot. They here and now wanted to know that John was dead. "In a charger": An old English word for a large dish. "For the oath's sake. . . he commanded it to be given her" (Matt. 15:9): "If we have taken an oath that violates righteousness, let us break it before the sun sinks" (Morgan). Herod shrank from such a dastardly deed. The terms of his oath looked to and anticipated a pecuniary present, and not the commission of a crime. Herod was probably maudlin with wine and befuddled by the presence of the guests. The evil companions joined with the evil women against God's man and shamed Herod into a course of guilt and murder. He "beheaded John in the prison" (verse 10).

"His head. . . given. . . to her mother" (Matt. 15:11): Sinful Herodias could get John the blunt preacher murdered. She could not murder the awful truth. Conscience would curse her and Herod who sacrificed John to his lust. The first Elijah has his Jezebel who sought his life. The second Elijah, John the Baptist, had his Jezebel, the inhuman Herodias, who obtained his life. In the sight of heaven it was Herod who perished, not the prophet.

"His disciples. . . took up the body and buried it" (Matt. 15:12): John's disciples are now without a leader. Naturally they went and told Jesus. "I Must Tell Jesus"-a blessed relief for many an occasion (Matt. 11:28-30). He understands, and cares!

II. Excitement among the People and Feeding the Five Thousand (Matthew 14:13-21; Mark 6:30-44; Luke 9:10-11; John 6:1-14)

"When Jesus heard of it. . ." (Matt. 15:13): Of John's beheading, and of Herod's surmise that it "is John the Baptist: he is risen from the dead" (verse 1), Jesus went to the desert. The twelve had just returned from a highly successful ministry; Jesus' own popularity was at its greatest height. Jesus had no time to think or to eat (Mark 6:31). The desert place was not a sandy, barren spot, but one uninhabited. They crossed the Sea of Galilee (John 6:1) at the northeastern corner (Luke 9:10) to Bethsaida-Julius, just above the entrance of the Jordan into it. Jesus left Herod's territory. Herod refused Him: he refused Herod. Judgment would come, in time (Luke 16:28-31). Hell was prepared for such lust-laden leaders.

"A great multitude. . . compassion. . . he healed their sick" (Matt. 15:14): Excitement was running

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high. The multitude followed Jesus. John was dead. People ran faster around the lake than Jesus sailed in the boat. They were waiting for him when he arrived. He had no rest. Moved with compassion," Jesus "healed their sick."

"Give ye them to eat" (Matt. 15:16): it was the "first evening" which began about 3:00 P.M. The second evening, according to Jewish customs, began at sunset. There are no farmhouses in Palestine. The whole population lives in towns or villages; often the farmers go many miles to their fields. There were "villages" where the people could go, if they hurried, to buy food (verse 15).

In their excitement the people had brought no food. It was late. Philip said it would take "Two hundred pennyworth of bread" (John 6:7) to give each one a little to eat. The "penny" is the Roman denarius, worth about seventeen cents; it would cost \$34.00 to feed the people. The treasury bag of Judas doubtless never had one-fourth that much in it.

"We have. . . five loaves. . . two fishes" (Matt. 15:17): Andrew found a lad who had his lunch with him. Boys look out for themselves (John 6:8, 9). The "loaf" was a small, thin cake made of barley meal, baked hard on one side. The "fish" was about the size of a sardine. The contrast is between the helpless doubt of the disciples and the confident courage of Jesus. Their excuse for doing nothing was the next-to-nothing amount of food available. Jesus said, "Bring them hither to me (verse 18). They overlooked the power of Jesus in this emergency.

"And he commanded. . . sit down on the grass" (Matt. 15:19): Jesus did all things "decently and in order" (I Cor. 14:40). "They sat down in ranks, by hundreds, and by fifties" (Mark 6:40). This would make it easy to distribute the food, and to count the number accurately, too! It was Nisan, the spring season, our March-April.

"Blessed. . . brake. . . gave": Jesus stood where all could see him "break" the thin Jewish cakes of bread and give to the disciples and they to the multitudes. Jesus "blessed" the loaves and fishes, which means he either gave thanks or asked the Father's blessing on the food. This is our precedent for giving "thanks" or "asking the blessing" at our tables. Do YOU "say grace" at your home?

This nature miracle is the only one recorded by all four gospels. It was impossible for the crowds to misunderstand and to be deceived. If Jesus is really Lord of the universe as John tells us (John 1:1-18), and as Paul holds (Col. 1:15-20), WHY SHOULD WE BALK AT THIS MIRACLE? He who created the universe has power to go on creating what he wills to do!

"Twas spring time when He blessed the bread,
'Twas harvest when He brake."

"They did all eat. . . fragments. . . twelve baskets" (Matt. 14:20): The "fragments" were the pieces broken by Jesus and still in the "twelve baskets" and not eaten. They were not the scraps upon the ground. Each of the twelve had a basketful left over. The gospels use the same word for baskets (kophinos), a wicker-basket called "coffins" by Wycliffe. Do you suppose the boy (John 6:9) who had the five loaves and two fishes to start with got one of the baskets?

"Five thousand men. . ." (Matt. 14:21): Eastern custom would forbid the women sitting with the men. Hence they were not counted. The women and children would sit apart. "The eaters" included the 5000 men besides the women and children. This miracle caused the multitude to say Jesus was the Messiah. They tried to crown Jesus and make him a political Messiah (John 6:14, 15). Jesus refused such a crown!

III. Walking on the Water, and the Faith of the Disciples (Matt. 14:22-33; Mark 6:45-56; John 6:15-21)

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"He sent the multitudes away" (Matt. 14:22): Immediately after satisfying to the full the wants of the people, he sent them away. Jesus "constrained" or literally "compelled" or forced the disciples to get into the ship and go "before him unto the other side." The disciples were swept off their feet by the mob psychology for they shared the pharisaic hope of a political kingdom. Jesus refused a political crown. With the disciples out of the way, Jesus could handle the crowd more easily.

"He went up. . . to pray" (Matt. 14:23): God's Son needed to pray to keep down resentments and despondency about the death of John. The refuge of Christ in every great crisis was lonely prayer! The Master Himself felt the need of getting away at times from the multitudes into places of loneliness and prayer. "Familiarity with the crowd only produces hardening. Familiarity with God issues in a perpetual re-sensitizing of the heart, which prevents hardening."

"Ere you left your room this morning, did YOU THINK TO PRAY" (I Thess. 5:17; Luke 18:1; I Tim. 2:8)? Every time we meet for any phase of the work of this church we should START WITH PRAYER, conduct the work in a spirit of prayer, and close with prayer-or not meet!

"The ship. . . midst of the sea. . . the wind was contrary" (Matt. 14:24): The apostles had gotten about half way or three and one-half miles across the sea (John 6:19), or "about twenty-five or thirty furlongs."

The wind came rushing down from the mountains. Such sudden gusts are common on the Sea of Galilee. Thompson says he encountered one of such fury that no rowers could row a boat across the lake. It was a violent and sudden squall. Jesus could see the distressed disciples in the boat bobbing up and down in the choppy sea (Mark 6:48).

"Fourth watch. . . Jesus. . . walking on the sea" (Matt. 14:25): The fourth watch reckoning from 6:00 P.M., and at the rate of three hours per watch, would be 3:00 A.M. until 6:00 A.M. Jesus had prayed until 3:00 A.M.! The Master in his place of quiet retirement has not forgotten his disciples, and in the moment of their need comes to them strong to deliver, mighty to save (verses 26, 27).

"It is I; be not afraid" (Matt. 14:27): How often he has to speak the word of encouragement even to his own. See Gen. 15:1; 21:17; Judges 6:23; Matt. 28:5; Luke 2:10. Literally he said: "I AM!" See John 8:58. He was coming to them as the ALMIGHTY ONE who rules wind and waves who made them and whom they obey!

"If it be thou, bid me come" (Matt. 14:28): Peter is impulsive as usual. Matthew alone gives this Peter episode. Was Peter led by worthy motives or by vainglory in this request?

"Come. . ." (Matt. 14:29): Did Jesus tell Peter to come because he wanted to teach him a lesson? "It is one thing to see a storm from the deck of a stout ship, another to see it in the midst of the waves" (Bruce). Peter was beginning to sink or plunge down into the sea, "although a fisherman and a good swimmer" (Bengel). This dramatic moment wrung from Peter the cry: "Lord, save me," and do it quickly (verse 30).

"O thou of little faith. . ." (Matt. 14:31): Peter's trust in the power of Christ gave way to his dread of the wind and waves. Jesus took hold of Peter and pulled him up while walking on the water.

The story is daily repeated in the life of some storm-tossed soul. At the first we often fail to recognize him as he approaches through the wind and over the sea. Wait patiently, and over the howling of the storm will sound the infinite music of his voice: "Be of good cheer. It is I. Be not afraid."

"Of a truth thou art the Son of God" (Matt. 14:33): They ought to have worshipped Jesus as the Son of God when they saw the miracle of feeding the five thousand; but they did not. When he walked on the water, quieted the wind, and transported the boat to the land, they were overcome by the evidence of his miraculous power and confessed his divinity! They were growing in appreciation of the person and power of Christ from the attitude of Matt. 8:27. Soon they will be ready for the confession of Matt. 16:16.

V. Cures in Gennesaret (Matthew 14:34-36; Mark 6:53-56)

"They came into the land of Gennesaret" (Matt. 14:34): A small district four miles long and two or three miles wide, on the west side of the Sea of Galilee, to which it gave one of its names. Josephus describes

it as the garden of the whole land. Its loveliness and fertility were unsurpassed.

"The men. . . brought unto him. . . diseased" (Matt. 14:35): Jesus was well known in that region. His coming caused a commotion. There was need of a Healer. People were eager to touch the hem of Christ's mantle like the woman of Matt. 9:30; Jesus honored their superstitious faith and "as many as touched were made whole"-completely healed. Soon after followed the ever-memorable discourse in the synagogue of Capernaum on the "Bread of Life" (John 6:22-65).

QUESTIONS

1. Who had rejected Jesus (Matt. 12:14; 13:54-58; 14:1-14)?
2. What had his enraged neighbors tried to do to Jesus (Luke 4:28)?
3. What Herod was this? And what was his office (Matt. 14:1; Luke 3:1)?
4. How did Herod Antipas reach the conclusion that Jesus was John (Matt. 14:2)?
5. For what sin had John the Baptist reproved Herodias (Matt. 14:3, 4; Mark 6:17, 18)?
6. Why did John venture to rebuke Herod (Matt. 14:4; Mark 6:20)? Did John preach boldly to the "common people" and soft-pedal to the King?
7. Who was Herodias (Matt. 14:3-5; Josephus, Ant., B XVIII. C. v. 1)?
8. How did Herod show contemptible weakness (Matt. 14:7-11; Mark 6:26, 27)?
9. Should Christians today KEEP A SINFUL OATH, or CONFESS THE SINFUL OATH AND BREAK IT AT ONCE? Is it right, Christian, or American to sign an "Ante-Nuptial Agreement" and surrender your God-directed duty of teaching and leading your children in the truths of the New Testament Church (Eph. 6:1-4)?
10. What type of dancing did Salome do? Do you think her mother prearranged it (Matt. 14:6-11)?
11. Why did the disciples go and tell Jesus (Matt. 14:12)?
12. Why did Jesus immediately withdraw into the desert (Matt. 14:13, 12, 13)?
13. Why did so many follow? Why without food (Matt. 14:13-15)? How would you find "grass" in a "desert place" (Matt. 14:19, 13)?
14. How many of the Gospels record the feeding of the five thousand?
15. What plan did the disciples recommend to Jesus (Matt. 14:15; Mark 6:36; Luke 9:12)? What humanly impossible command did Jesus issue (Matt. 14:18; Mark 6:37; Luke 9:13)?
16. How much food did Andrew find (John 6:9; Matt. 14:17, 19), and how much did they have when "they did all eat, and were filled" (Matt. 14:20), and how many were fed?
17. Where did Jesus go after he "constrained his disciples" to leave in the ship, and sent the multitudes away" (Matt. 14:22,23)? In what respects are present-day Christians like the disciples in the night storm (Matt. 14:24; Mark 6:51)?
18. How long did Jesus pray in the mountain (Matt. 14:25)? Why so long (Matt. 14:23,25; John 8:15)?
19. Whose presence brought safety and calm to the distressed disciples (Matt. 14:25-27)? What impulsive request did Peter make and what happened (Matt. 14:28-31)? Do you believe God hears and answers prayer (Matt. 14:30)? How does prayer help you to meet any situation in the spirit of Christ (I Thess. 5:17; Phil. 4:11, 13, 19)? What confession did the disciples make (verse 33)?
20. Into what land did Jesus and the disciples come (Matt. 14:34), and what did the people do to Jesus, and what did he do for them (Matt. 14:35,36)?

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WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Year IV

First Quarter

Lesson 6

Page 1

Matthew 15

Memory Verse: Matthew 15:8, 9

Memory Verse:

"This People draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Matt. 15:8, 9).

Public Reading: Matthew 15:1-20.

The Condemnation of False Prophets

Opposition to Jesus is becoming more direct, keener and more systematic. "How could anyone oppose Jesus?" you say. Only those directed by the Devil opposed him or his people, then or now. Consider:

I. An Attack By Pharisees from Jerusalem (Matthew 15:1-20; Mark 7:1-23; John 7:1)

"Then came. . . scribes and Pharisees. . . of Jerusalem" (Matt. 15:1): Jerusalem is the headquarters of the conspiracy against Jesus. The Pharisees were the leaders in it. Already we have seen the Herodians combining with the Pharisees in the purpose to put Jesus to death (Matt. 12:14; Mark 3:6; Luke 6:11). Soon Jesus will warn the disciples against the Sadducees also (Matt. 16:6). "The guardians of tradition in the capital have their evil eye on Jesus and cooperate with the provincial rigorists" (Bruce), if the Pharisees were not all from Jerusalem.

"Why. . . transgress the tradition of the elders?" (Matt. 15:2): The scribes and Pharisees wanted to kill Jesus (John 5:18) because he "broke the Sabbath" traditions and "made himself equal with God" (John 5:18). They came all the way to Galilee to draw him into controversy as verses 1-11 show. They wanted to halt his growing popularity. The discussion on tradition showed the ESSENTIAL DIFFERENCE between their religion and that of Jesus Christ. These petty people "had added the tradition of the elders (religious leaders) to divinely revealed religion." Note they did not accuse them of breaking the law of Moses, but of breaking the "tradition of the elders" handed down by word of mouth from the times of Moses and the elders. They have been embodied in the Talmud, the Jewish body of civil and canonical law, consisting of the combined Mishna, or text, and Gemara, or commentary.

"For they wash not their hands": The question was not of cleanliness, but of ritual. The washing to remove IMAGINARY EVIL was a part of the tradition of the elders. This tradition resulted from the belief that Shibta, a demon, sat upon the hands of men as they slept during the hours of the night. If any person should touch his food with unwashed hands, then that demon sat upon his food and made it dangerous! Silly tradition, you say? True, but a rabbi declared "The words of the elders are weightier than the words of the prophets."

In effect the rabbis said: "The Hebrew Scriptures, God's Word, are NOT ENOUGH. We must interpret them." This interpretation became tradition that violated the Word of God. This was the oral law handed down by the elders of the past in ex cathedra fashion.

The washing of the hands called for minute regulations. It was commanded to wash the hands before meals: it was one's duty to do it after eating. The more zealous ones did it between the courses! The HANDS

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MUST BE IMMERSED. Then the water itself must be "clean" and the cups or pots must be ceremonially "clean." Vessels were kept full of clean water ready for use (John 2:6-8). So it went on ad infinitum. The issue between Jesus and the rabbis was more than a point of etiquette or of hygiene; the rabbis held it to be a mortal sin!

"Why do ye also transgress. . . by your tradition?" (Matt. 15:3): The scribes and Pharisees accused Jesus of violating tradition. The Lord does not deny their charge. Jesus asked them WHY THEY VIOLATED THE WORD OF GOD. He and his disciples broke the tradition. They kept the Word of God. Moses did not give the traditions. Tradition is not good or bad in itself. It is merely what is handed on from one to another. Custom tends to make these traditions binding like law. The Talmud is a monument of the struggle with tradition: There could be no compromise on the subject; Jesus accepts the issue. He stands for real, inner righteousness and spiritual freedom, not for bondage to mere ceremony and tradition. The rabbis placed tradition, or the oral law, ABOVE THE LAW OF GOD.

"For God commanded. . . BUT YE SAY. . ." (Matt. 15:4, 5, 6): Jesus had quoted the fifth commandment (Ex. 20:12-16) with the penalty "die the death" (Deut. 5:16; Ex. 21:17; Lev. 20:9). They dodged this command of God about the penalty for dishonoring one's father or mother by the use of "Corban" (korban) as Mark calls it (Mark 7:11). All one had to do to EVADE ONE'S DUTY TO FATHER OR MOTHER WAS TO SAY "Corban" or "Gift" with the IDEA OF USING THE MONEY FOR GOD! This freed the man, according to tradition. Thus TRADITION DESTROYED THE SPIRIT AND LETTER OF THE WORD OF GOD! Sometimes selfish sons paid graft to the rabbinical legalists for such dodges. Were some of these very faultfinders guilty?

"Ye hypocrites. . ." (Matt. 15:7): Jesus with a stinging indictment laid bare the hollow pretence of the quibbles about hand washing as they thought to cancel out or annul God's law by their tradition. He called them "hypocrites," self-deceived and deceivers. Isaiah's words (Isa. 29:13) "beautifully pictured" them.

"This people. . . their heart is far from me" (Matt. 15:8): Jesus is talking about the Jews in general. Verses 8 and 9 are the quotation from Isaiah. The heart must be wholly given to God in true worship. They were indeed far from God if they imagined that God would be pleased with such gifts AT THE EXPENSE OF DUTY TO ONE'S PARENTS! Even the forms commanded by God are worthless unless they are OBEYED FROM THE HEART.

"But in vain do they worship me. . ." (Matt. 15:9): When zealots anywhere, anytime "teach for doctrines the commandments of men" as on a par with God's word, they worship God in vain! For tradition and human inventions that are contrary to the Bible, note these heresies:

- Prayers for the dead and the SIGN OF THE CROSS about 310 A.D.
- The mass, as a daily celebration, adopted 394 A.D.
- The worship of Mary, the mother of Jesus and the use of the term, "Mother of God," as applied to her, originated in the Council of Ephesus, in 431 A.D.
- The doctrine of Purgatory was first established by Gregory the Great about the year 593 A.D.
- Prayers directed to Mary, or to dead saints began about 600 A.D.
- The kissing of the Pope's feet began in 709 A.D.
- The celibacy of the priesthood was decreed by Pope Hildebrand, Boniface VII, in the year 1079 A.D.
- The INQUISITION OF HERETICS was instituted by the Council of Verona in the year 1184 A.D.
- The dogma of TRANSUBSTANTIATION was decreed by Pope Innocent III, in the year 1215 A.D.
- Confession of sins to the priest at least once a year was instituted by Pope Innocent III, in the Lateran Council, in the year 1215 A.D.

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- The BIBLE FORBIDDEN to laymen and placed in the INDEX of forbidden books by the Council of Valencia in 1229 A.D.
- The doctrine of Purgatory was proclaimed as a dogma of faith the Council of Florence in 1439 A.D.
- The Council of Trent declared that TRADITION IS OF EQUAL AUTHORITY WITH THE BIBLE 1545 A.D.
- The APOCRYPHAL BOOKS were added to the Bible also by the Council of Trent in 1548 A.D.
- Pope Pius IX proclaimed the IMMACULATE CONCEPTION of the Virgin Mary in the year 1854.
- PAPAL INFALLIBILITY was proclaimed a dogma in 1870.
- Pius XII proclaimed the dogma of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary 1950.

Cardinal Newman in his book "The Development of the Christian Religion" on page 359 admits that "Temples, incense oil lamps, votive offerings, holy water, holidays and seasons of devotions, processions, blessings of fields, sacerdotal vestments, the tonsure (of priests and monks and nuns), images. . . ARE ALL OF PAGAN ORIGIN."

As a New Testament Church, we reject the dogma that "Tradition is of EQUAL AUTHORITY with the Bible!" Jesus denies this dogma, too. Read Mark 7:7-13; Col. 2:8; Rev. 22:8, 9 and draw your own conclusions. The Ecumenical Council of the Roman Catholic Church which is known as the Second Vatican Council (note what the first one did in 1870) convened in Rome on October 11, 1962. The first session ended on December 8, 1962, for a recess of about four months. Anything the Vatican Council may do to enhance the Bible we shall commend. To reaffirm any dogma, or manufacture new ones, which makes the Word of God of "none effect" we shall reject.

"He called the multitude. . . Hear, and understand" (Matt. 15:10): Jesus did this to show them that the Pharisees who expounded the law did not understand the law in its real sense.

"Not that which goeth into a man defileth. . ." (Matt. 15:11): The Mosaic Law forbade Jews to eat what was ceremonially unclean to teach the need of moral purity. The rabbis added many precepts to prevent the slightest contact with ceremonial uncleanness. They were careless about moral purity. Christ shows that a pure heart is far more important than CLEAN FOOD, in the ceremonial sense, in the stomach. "That which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man." What we speak, shows what we are. What one eats, or does not eat; what one wears, or does not wear; what one does, or does not do -- the Pharisees made these supreme. To Jesus these were trivialities. WHAT COMES FROM THE CENTER OF MAN if it be evil DEFILES A MAN (James 3:6-12). MORAL UNCLEANNESS IS WHAT MAKES A MAN COMMON, or defiles him. That is what is to be dreaded. One can see the pettifogging pretenders shrivel up under these withering words" (Robertson).

"The Pharisees were offended. . ." (Matt. 15:12): Jesus charged the Pharisees with hypocrisy. He charged that their tradition that they placed on a par with revelation from God or nullified revelation, led them into sin. Tradition that trifles with God's Word is wrong. It is useless to fast during Lent, or on Friday, as an act of religious devotion. Frequent fasting as a health measure may be very beneficial Read Romans 14:17.

The disciples were grieved because Jesus offended the "reverend gentlemen from Jerusalem. . . their respect for men counteracted their zeal for truth" (McGarvey). We must be tactful before all men, but we must TEACH THE TRUTH, in love, regardless of the consequences (Acts 4:15-21).

"Every plant . . . rooted up" (Matt. 15:13): God gave the law. He did not give the tradition. The religion founded on tradition will be "rooted up." "Let them alone;" don't follow such hypocrites, said Jesus. "They be blind." Blind leaders and blind victims will land in the ditch! Jesus is not afraid of the Pharisees.

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"Peter . . . Declare unto us this parable" (Matt. 15:15): The figure used in verse 11. The disciples want Jesus to explain the parable or pithy saying, of verse 11. They had been upset by Christ's powerful exposure of the "Corban" hypocrisy and the words about "defilement" in verse 11. Jesus rebuked them and gave the answer in verses 17-20.

"Jesus sets forth the simple doctrine that a man's moral and spiritual state is NOT DEPENDENT UPON THE SYMBOLIC CLEANNESS OF HIS PHYSICAL DIET, much less is it dependent on ceremonial observances in regard to things eaten, or the dishes from which they are eaten" (McGarvey). When the Kingdom of God was ushered in at Pentecost and the Church of Christ was established, all legal observances of the law regarding legal defilement had been nailed to the cross and hence were repealed (Col. 2:14-17; Acts 10:14, 15). They were not made binding on Christians.

II. A Woman of Great Faith (Matthew 15:21-28; Mark 7:24-30)

"Then Jesus went. . . Tyre and Sidon" (Matt. 15:21): Tyre and Sidon were the two principal cities of Phoenicia on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. Tyre is about twenty miles south of Sidon, and about 100 miles in a straight line northwest of Jerusalem. In the days of David and Solomon, Tyre was the leading seaport of the world. Later taken by the Babylonians, the Persians, and Alexander, it remained a great commercial city until the time of Christ. Since then its harbor has been filled with sand. Now it is only a wretched shadow of its former greatness.

These were Gentile cities in a Gentile country. This is the first time Jesus ever entered a foreign or heathen country. He withdrew to escape the opposition of his enemies and the mistaken movements of his friends. It was not a missionary tour.

"A woman of Canaan. . . Have mercy. . . my daughter" (Matt. 15:22): The Phoenicians were descended from the Canaanites, the original inhabitants of Palestine. They were of Semitic race, therefore, but pagan. "Have pity on me"; she made her daughter's case her own. See Gen. 10:19. Did the disciples want Jesus to "Send her away" (verse 23) healed or unhealed? Jesus' silence tested her faith.

"I am not sent but unto the lost sheep. . . Israel" (Matt. 15:24): Our Lord's personal mission was to the Jews. His first commission directed the apostles to the Jews only (Matt. 10:6). Jesus makes a test case of her request. He calls the Jews "the lost sheep of the house of Israel" in spite of the conduct of the Pharisees.

"The children's bread . . . cast it to dogs" (Matt. 15:26): She took no offense at the implication of being a Gentile dog, but rather worshipped him (verse 25). With quick wit she took Christ's very word for little dogs, and deftly turned it to her own advantage. The "little dogs" are tame Pets, not the wild dogs of the streets; they eat of the crumbs that fall from the table of their masters (verse 27).

"O woman, great is thy faith" (Matt. 15:28): Her great faith and her keen rejoinder won her case. "Be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour." Mark adds some beautiful details (Mark 7:29, 30).

III. Cures at the Lake Shore, and Feeding the Four Thousand (Matthew 15:29-39; Mark 7:31-8:9).

"And Jesus departed. . . came nigh unto the Sea of Galilee" (Matt. 15:29): How long Jesus stayed in these parts is unknown. Mark 7:31 says he "came unto the Sea of Galilee, through the midst of the coasts of Decapolis." "Great multitudes" came unto him. They were most probably heathen or semi-heathen of the Decapolis areas. When strangers and aliens came to him he gave them blessing without stint (verse 30). It was a great day for "they glorified the God of Israel."

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"The multitude. . . three days. . . nothing to eat" (Matt. 15:32): While seeking him in his mountain solitude many of the people had been for three days without regular food. In his compassion Jesus would not send them away hungry.

"His disciples. . . Whence. . .?" (Matt. 15:33): Does it not seem strange that the apostles should so soon have forgotten the feeding of the five thousand (Matt. 14:13-21)? How slow was their faith. They knew what he could do with five loaves and two fishes! How could they doubt that he could take "seven loaves" and "a few little fishes" (verse 34) and satisfy the hunger of four thousand men (verse 38)? Soon Jesus had to remind them of BOTH DEMONSTRATIONS OF HIS POWER (Matt. 16:9, 10)!

"Multitude. . . sit down on the ground" (Matt. 15:35): Not on the grass, as in Matt. 14:19. They were in the bare desolate, grassless region now. Being midsummer, the grass was parched and gone. This second nature miracle of multiplying loaves and fishes was in the Decapolis region, not in the country of Philip (Trachonitis).

QUESTIONS

1. Who came to Jesus from Jerusalem (Matt. 15:1)?
2. What was the motive of their coming (Cf. Matt. 12:14; Mark 3:6; Luke 6:11)?
3. What was the "tradition of the elders" (Matt. 15:2), and was the "washing" a matter of cleanliness, or of ritual? What did one rabbi say about "the words of the elders?"
4. Show how the tradition of the elders made void the Word of God (Matt. 15:3-6)?
5. What did Jesus call these men (Matt. 15:7)?
6. To whom did Jesus apply the words from Isaiah 29:13 (Matt. 15:1,8,9)?
7. What did Jesus say of worship according to "The Commandments of Men" (Matt. 15:9)?
8. Does verse 9 destroy all man-made creeds, and manufactured facts and dogmas of any and all churches or groups? Can you show how one religious-political group that brags that it is CHANGELESS has across the centuries fastened many traditions and dogmas that are binding on millions of people today? Illustrate.
9. What does Cardinal Newman admit regarding "Temples, incense, oil lamps..." (See Page 33)?
10. What was the answer of Jesus to the question of the Pharisees (Matt. 15:3,11)?
11. Why the question of the disciples (verse 12), and what the point in his answer (verse 13)?
12. Do you try to please man if it displeases God (Matt. 15:12-14; see Acts 4:16-21)? What happens to blind leaders and those whom they lead?
13. Why could not the disciples understand this teaching (Matt. 15:15, 16, cf. verse 11)?
14. What is the real source of all wickedness (Matt. 15:17-20)? Do you know that evil thoughts, slandering, and the wrong use of the tongue are from hell (James 3:6; Matt. 15:19)?
15. Where were Tyre and Sidon, and what was the ancestry of the people? Why did she say "son of David" (Matt. 15:21-22)? Why no answer (verse 23)? Send her away how (verse 23)?
16. How did the woman show "great faith" (Matt. 15:28; see Luke 18:1-8)?
17. On which side of the lake had Jesus now come (Matt. 15:29; Mark 7:31)?
18. What change in the people since he was first there (Matt. 15:30; 8:34)?
19. How long had the people been without food (Matt. 15:32)? How could they doubt the power of Jesus to perform miracles (Matt. 15:33-38; 14:13-21; 16:9,10)? Why do we forget God's power to give victory in the light of all He has done for this church in the past when we face some vexing problem today?
20. Are you following the traditions of men, or the Word of God (Matt. 15:9; Gal. 1:6-9)?

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WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Year IV

First Quarter

Lesson 7

Page 1

Matthew 16

Memory Verse: Matthew 16:15, 16

Memory Verse:

"He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:15, 16).

Public Reading: Matthew 16:13-20.

The Great Confession

Thus far in Matthew we have heard King Jesus in the Enunciation of Laws; we have seen His Exhibition of Benefits in his miracles. Now we see the Enforcement of Claims.

I. A Sign from Heaven Demanded (Matthew 16:1.4; Mark 8:10-13).

"He . . . came into the coasts of Magdala" (Matt. 15:39): Jesus took the boat to escape the multitude. Magdala was on the western shore of the lake, three miles north of Tiberias. Mark terms it Dalmanutha (Mark 8:10), which is either another name for Magdala, or a village near it.

"The Pharisees. . . Sadducees came. . . a sign from heaven" (Matt. 16:1): This is the first time we have this combination of the two parties who disliked each other exceedingly. Hate makes strange bedfellows. They hated Jesus more than they did each other.

The Pharisees were the ritualists and traditionalists of that day. They believed in God, angels and the Spirit. They hid these things under ritual and tradition from the people.

The Sadducees were the rationalists of their day. They did not believe in angels, spirits, or in the resurrection. They looked with contempt on the Pharisees.

"A sign from heaven": Men absolutely divided between themselves UNITED AGAINST JESUS. "Dogs, though they fight ever so fierce, yet if a hare runs by, give over, and run after her" (Trapp). The Pharisees found Jesus irreligious because he swept away their tradition (Matt. 15:3-9). The Sadducees counted him irrational because Jesus insisted upon the spiritual. Both groups rejected his miracles. They ASKED FOR A SIGN FROM HEAVEN, such as a thunderbolt or a special illumination of the heavens such as only God could give! They "tempted him" in that they did not believe Jesus could give them a sign from heaven. The devil had suggested that Jesus let the people see him drop down from the pinnacle of the temple. The people expected the Messiah to come from an unknown source (John 7:27) who would do great signs (John 7:31). Chrysostom (Hom. 1iii) suggests signs such as stopping the course of the sun, bridling the moon, or a clap of thunder.

"Ye hypocrites, ye can discern. . . the sky" (Matt. 16:3): These men could read the signs of nature, and tell what kind of storm or fair weather was coming (verses 2, 3). "With the political storm arising out of the conflict with Rome impending over them, and with the spiritual storm which the teaching of Christ was bringing upon them, about to burst, they stood still in ignorant indifference, and made no provision for the time of trouble" (McGarvey). They were blind to the "signs of the times" that showed the fulfillment of prophecy, the end of the Jewish dispensation, and the establishment of the Messiah's kingdom. Soon Jerusalem would be destroyed and the Jewish state overturned by Titus in 70 A. D.

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"A wicked and adulterous generation . . ." (Matt. 16:4): The prophets represented Israel as being married to God and as being untrue to him (Ex. 34:15; Jer. 3:14, 20). We are "espoused" (II Cor. 11:2) or married to Christ. If we are untrue to Christ, we are spiritual adulterers. These hypocrites came to criticize Jesus. They went away criticized. They came to measure him, but he measured them and found them short of what God wanted them to be (II Cor. 10:12). The resurrection of Jonah was a "sign from heaven" in that it was wrought by God and not through man. Verse 4 is a real doublet for Matt. 12:39.

II. A Warning Against Pharisees and Sadducees: (Matthew 16:5-12; Mark 8:13-21)

"His disciples . . . had forgotten to take bread" (Matt. 16:5): They forgot perhaps in the hurry to leave Galilee, probably in the same boat by which they came across from Decapolis. They had one loaf (Mark 8:14) in the boat, probably left over from the previous supply.

"Jesus. . . beware of the leaven. . ." (Matt. 16:6): "Take heed of that which is in itself corrupt, and which produces corruption." Discern, know evil. Stare at it and literally hold yourself against it. The addition of tradition (as the mass, beads, holy water, feast and fast day) and the subtraction of the supernatural repeat themselves in every century.

"They reasoned. . . No bread (Matt. 16:7): The disciples' dumbness in catching on to the meaning of Jesus teaches a lesson of patience to all of us. The disciples thought Jesus was talking about bread. Really he was warning them of the EVIL INFLUENCE OF THE PHARISEES AND SADDUCEES (verse 12).

"Jesus. . . O ye of little faith" (Matt. 16:8): How blind were the disciples. Jesus asks four pungent questions about their intellectual dullness, refers to the feeding of five thousand (verse 9); Matt. 14:20) and the four thousand (verse 10; Matt. 15:37), and repeats his warning (Matt. 16:11). It really looks as though the two miracles of feeding had impressed them with the importance of taking "loaves," rather than with being with Christ. Thus do men put the emphasis in the wrong place. Even the patience of the Teacher of teachers was strained!

God has never failed his people. He will not fail us now (Rom. 8:28, 31; Heb. 13:5). Yet men will face some new need and tremble and argue and show little or no faith as though God were dead and had never worked among us! God will always supply our need (Phil. 4:19).

III. Peter's Confession (Matthew 16:13-20; Mark 8:27-30; Luke 9:18-21).

"When Jesus came . . . Caesarea Philippi" (Matt. 16:13): The city of Paneas was enlarged by Herod Philip I and named in honor of Tiberias Caesar. It also bore the name of its builder. Situated under the shadow of Mt. Hermon at the eastern of the two sources of the Jordan, it was the northern end of Jewish territory. It was associated with idol worship. A temple of white marble had been erected for the worship and honor of the Roman Emperor. It was the northern limit of Christ's travels in the Holy Land (Mark 8:27). The site of Caesarea is called Baniyas, a paltry village.

"Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?": Jesus was giving the disciples a test or examination. The first was for the opinion of men about the Son of Man. We know what the scribes, Pharisees and Sadducees said about Jesus. He wants to know what the opinion of the common people about him is.

"Some say . . . John the Baptist . . . Elias . . . Jeremias . . . one of the prophets" (Matt. 16:14): The marvel of the ministry of Jesus reminded some of the plainness of John the Baptist's preaching and living. Herod had killed John a few months before. Herod thought Jesus was John raised from the dead (Matt. 14:1). It was generally expected that Elijah was to return to the earth in connection with the Messiah's advent

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(Mal. 4:5). Popular opinion did honor Jesus as Messiah; they accepted him as a prophet like Elijah or Jeremiah, or "one of the prophets."

"But whom say ye that I am?" (Matt. 16:15): This is what matters and what Jesus wanted to hear. This is the one great and essential question. Christ is the one object of the Christian's faith. Christ is Christianity!

"And Simon Peter answered. . . Thou art the Christ. . ." (Matt. 16:16): Peter is now the spokesman: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God." Glorious, glad, great confession! "Peter asserts this as an assured fact and not as a mere opinion. This confession embraces two propositions: 1. The office of Jesus -- the Christ; 2. The divinity of Jesus -- the Son of God. To Peter and us, Jesus is the subject of prophecy, and the long-expected deliverer. Prophets, priests and kings were anointed; Jesus embodied all three in Himself.

It had been some three years since Peter had first accepted Jesus as the Messiah (John 1:41, 42). He called him "Lord" a year later (Luke 5:8). Half a year later he called him "The Holy One of God" (John 6:68, 69). Now after two and a half years of association with Jesus, Peter expresses his conviction in the Deity of Jesus. Note the definite articles of the confession. This great confession of Peter means he and the other disciples believe in Jesus as the Messiah and are still true to him in spite of the defection of the Galilean populace (John 6).

This is the good confession we made today, for "with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Rom. 10:10b; Matt. 10:32, 33; Luke 12:8; I John 4:14; I Tim. 6:12, 13).

"Blessed art thou. . . revealed. . . my Father" (Matt. 16:17): God revealed the truth about Christ to Peter through the words and works of Jesus. Jesus accepts the confession as true, and gives Peter a beatitude. Hence Jesus on this solemn occasion solemnly claims to be the Messiah (the Anointed), the Son of the living God, his deity in other words!

"And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter. . ." (Matt. 16:18): The emphasis is not on "Thou art Peter" over against "Thou art the Christ," but on this: "The Father hath revealed to thee one truth, and I also tell you another" (McNeile). Jesus calls Peter here by the name that he had said he would have (John 1:42). Peter (Petros) is simply the Greek word for Cephas (Aramic). Then it was prophecy; now it is fact. In verse 17 Jesus addressed Peter as "Simon Bar-Jonah," his full patronymic (Aramic) name. Jesus has a purpose in using his nickname "Peter" which he had himself given him.

"Upon this rock . . .": Not upon Peter (Petros) a masculine noun, a piece of rock, a fragment, BUT "UPON THIS ROCK," PETRA, a feminine noun, the essential rock, the bedrock or foundation.

"I will build my church": The "rock" on which Christ would build his church is not Peter, but the TRUTH TO WHICH PETER CONFESSED, that Jesus is the Son of God. The Deity of Jesus is the foundation on which the Church rests; the deity of Jesus is the fundamental creed of all Christendom.

Paul affirms "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (I Cor. 3:11). This excludes Peter or any human foundation (Eph. 2:19-22; Gal. 2:9; I Pet. 2:3-8).

"The gates of hell shall not prevail. . .": Here we have the figure of two buildings, the Church of Christ on the Rock, the House of Death (Hades). "Hell" is "Hades," the unseen world, the land of the departed, that is DEATH. "The ekklesia (church) is built upon the Messiahship of her master, and death, the gates of Hades, will not prevail against her by keeping Him imprisoned. It was a mysterious truth, which he will soon tell them in plain words (Matt. 16:21); it is echoed in Acts 2:24-31" (McNeile).

Six months later the Sanhedrin sent Jesus to death for making the same confession Peter has just made (Matt. 26:64-67). They expected to show that the confession of his divinity was FALSE BY SENDING HIM TO HADES, which they supposed would hold him and prevail against the confession, the Rock. Jesus was sent there from the cross, but the GATES OF HADES DID NOT HOLD HIM. He arose

from the tomb. His resurrection demonstrated that Jesus is the Rock. Hades did not prevail.

"And I will give. . . the keys of the kingdom" (Matt. 16:19): The kingdom is the church. Here we have the figure of a building with keys to open from the inside. In Rev. 1:18; 3:7 Christ the Risen Lord has "the keys of death and of Hades." He has also the "keys of the kingdom of heaven" which he here hands over to Peter as "gatekeeper" or "steward" provided we do not understand it as a special and Peculiar prerogative belonging to Peter. Neither Peter nor the rest understood Jesus to say here that Peter was to have supreme authority.

Peter opened the door of salvation on the day of Pentecost to the Jews (Acts 2), and later to the Gentiles (Acts 10). Peter was not given the power to forgive sins, but to PROCLAIM THE TERMS OF FORGIVENESS. To "bind" is to forbid; to "loose" is to permit. The binding and loosing is repeated by Jesus to all the disciples (Matt. 18:18). The Resurrection Christ later will use the same language to all the disciples (John 20:23), showing that it was not a special prerogative of Peter. He is simply first among equals; on this occasion he was spokesman for the faith of all. "It is a violent leap in logic to claim power to forgive sins, to pronounce absolution, by reason of the technical rabbinical language that Jesus employed about binding and loosing. Every preacher uses the keys of the kingdom when he proclaims the terms of salvation in Christ" (Robertson).

IV. Jesus Predicts His Own Death and Resurrection (Matthew 16:21-28; Mark 8:31-39; 9:1; Luke 9:22-27)

"From that time began Jesus to show . . . disciples" (Matt. 16:21): It was a good time to disclose the great secret of his death. It was about six months before the cross.. They must know it now to be ready then. Peter's great confession made this seem an appropriate time. He will repeat the warnings (Matt. 17:22f) with mention of betrayal and the cross (Matt. 20:17-19) which he now "began." This definite prediction of his death and crucifixion overwhelmed the apostles. Peter tried to prevent it (verse 22).

"Get thee behind me, Satan. . ." (Matt. 16:23): the Master rebuked Peter. By the confession of the truth Simon had just won his promised name of Peter, which allied him to Christ, the foundation. Now he turned aside to speak the language of the tempter and Jesus calls Peter "Satan," as if he were the very devil himself (Matt. 4:10). Peter was unconsciously trying to turn Jesus from the death on the cross on which the salvation of the world depended; this was working into Satan's hands. "In Peter the banished Satan had once more returned" (Plummer). "Your outlook is not God's, but man's" (Moffatt).

"If any man will come. . . deny himself" (Matt. 16:24): Jesus here presents the conditions of discipleship. To be a follower of Christ means we must die to self (Gal. 2:20) daily (Luke 9:23). This is not easy, but it leads to life eternal with God. "The cross is a symbol for duty which is to be performed daily at any cost, even that of the most painful death. The disciples must follow Jesus, both as to his teaching and example."

"Save his life shall lose it. . . lose. . . find" (Matt. 16:25): He who refuses to deny himself, and makes saving and ministering to his present life his main object in life shall lose his life eternally. A lost life can never be regained. For what price shall a man buy it back (verse 26). All the wealth, glory, pleasures, and powers of earth are worthless to the dying man. If you and I could gain them all and lose our own soul, we have lost everything! "What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" The soul has no market price, though the devil thinks so.

"For the Son of man shall come. . ." (Matt. 16:27): As Christ begins to teach of dying on the cross, he begins to give prominence to his coming again. The Father's glory, the angels and the rendering of

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universal judgment form a threefold indication that Jesus speaks of his final coming to judge the world.

"Shall not taste of death, till they see. . ." (Matt. 16:28): The mention of his final coming suggested the one nearer at hand which was to be accomplished during the life of most of those present since none but Jesus himself and Judas were to die previous to that time.

Mark 9:1 shows the meaning by substituting, "Till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power." The "Coming of the Son of man in his kingdom," means, therefore, the same as "the kingdom of God come with power. The kingdom came with power on the day of Pentecost when three thousand souls were converted the first day (Acts 2:1, 41).

QUESTIONS

1. Where was Magdala (Matt. 15:39), and when did Jesus go there?
2. Why did the Sadducees join with the Pharisees (Matt. 16:1)? In what sense were they "tempting" Jesus?
3. What is meant by "a sign from heaven" (Matt. 16:1)? How was the sign of Jonah of this kind?
4. Point in the reference to the signs of the weather (Matt. 16:2, 3)? Signs of what times?
5. Does Jesus here rebuke the desire for the evidence of miracles (Matt. 16:4)?
6. To which side of the lake did Jesus now come (Matt. 16:5, 13; 15:39)?
7. What was their habit in reference to bread (Matt. 16:5)? Did they have any bread (Mark 8:14)?
8. Against what did Jesus warn the disciples (Matt. 16:6)? Why were the disciples so slow to catch the meaning of Jesus (Matt. 16:7, 12)?
9. How did Jesus describe their faith, and what four questions does he ask them (Matt. 16:8-11)?
10. Do you think the patience of the Teacher of teachers was strained on this occasion? Do you think you ever try the patience of Jesus?
11. Are we to shun the leaven of evil teaching (Matt. 16:6, 12)?
12. Can you give the location and history of Caesarea Philippi (Matt. 16:13)?
13. Why the two questions of Jesus (Matt. 16:13, 15)?
14. Why these erroneous opinions (Matt. 16:14)?
15. What is the full meaning of Peter's answer (Matt. 16:16)? Can you explain the remark about how it was revealed to him? Meaning of Bar-Jonah (verse 17)?
16. To what is the church here compared? What positions assigned to Jesus and Peter (Matt. 16:18, 19)? What then is the "rock" (verse 18, cf. verse 16)?
17. What is the meaning of "gates of Hades" (Matt. 16:18)? In what sense shall they not prevail?
18. What do the keys mean? And to what binding and loosing is reference made (Matt. 16:19)? On what occasions did Peter use the keys (Acts 2:1-47; 10:1-48)? Did Peter and the rest understand Jesus to say that Peter was to have supreme authority? See Matt. 18:18; John 20:23. Show that every preacher uses the keys of the kingdom when he proclaims the terms of salvation in Christ.
19. Why "from that time" (Matt. 16:21)? Why forbid them now to tell that he was the Christ (Matt. 16:20)? Why did Peter rebuke him (verse 22)? Why did Jesus call Peter Satan (Matt. 16:23)? What the things of God and the things of man (verse 23)?
20. Meaning of "take up his cross" (Matt. 16:24), and the remark about "saving" and "losing" his life (Matt. 16:25)? Does the soul have a market price? Can you distinguish between the two comings (Matt. 16:27, 28)?

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Year IV

First Quarter

Lesson 8

Page 1

Matthew 17

Memory Verse: Matthew 17:5

Memory Verse:

"While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and beheld a voice out of the cloud which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well Pleased; hear ye him" (Matthew 17:5).

Public Reading: Matthew 17:1-8.

The Transfiguration

Thus far in Matthew we have seen the King -- His Person, His Preaching, and His Power in miracles -- and today we consider the Perfection of His Person in the transfiguration. This is the prelude to his passion.

I. The Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-8; Mark 9:2-13; Luke 9:28-36)

"And after six days . . ." (Matt. 17:1): Mark and Matthew say "six days." Luke puts it "about eight days" (Luke 9:28) which includes the days of the "sayings" and also the day of transfiguration plus the six days of Matthew and Mark. There are NO CONTRADICTIONS in the Bible when all the facts are considered. These days are days of silence. We have no record of what transpired in those days. The strange declarations of the Cross had crushed the hearts of these men.

"Jesus taketh Peter, James and John": These three are "The Inner Circle" of the Apostles. See Mark 5:37; Luke 8:51. As leaders among the apostles they needed special encouragement. Jesus took them to Mt. Hermon as He was still in the region of Caesarea Philippi (Mark 9:30). This mountain is 9,101 feet above the Mediterranean Sea according to Unger's Bible Dictionary, page 470. It is the highest mountain in Palestine. "It was Jesus' custom to withdraw for prayer by night (Matt. 14:23, 24; Luke 6:12 21:37; 22:39), and the transfiguration took place at night" (McGarvey).

"And was transfigured before them . . ." (Matt. 17:2): Or, transformed, changed in form. "We may conceive of the body of Jesus becoming luminous and imparting its light to his garments. The Christian looks forward to beholding such a transfiguration and also to participating in it-I John 3:2)." Robertson thinks, "It will not do in Matt. 17:2 to use the English transliteration metamorphosis because of its pagan associations." Matthew guards against the pagan idea by adding and explaining about the face of Christ "as the sun" and his garments "as the light."

"There appeared . . . Moses and Elias" (Matt. 17:3): Elias or Elijah. They were talking with Jesus "of his decease" or exodus (Luke 9:31) an unusual word for death. It means a departure; it includes the passion, crucifixion, death, burial, resurrection and ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ. Moses was the representative of the law: Elijah of the prophets. The apostles recognized them by the course of the conversation, or may miraculously have been given knowledge and sight. Jesus needed comfort and he gets it from fellowship with Moses and Elijah.

"Peter . . . Let us make here three tabernacles" (Matt. 17:4): Peter didn't want to lose the blessed fellowship of Moses, Elijah and Jesus. He "knew not what to answer" (Mark 9:6), so he offered to build three booths or arbors made of tree branches for the accommodation of the three. "By thus speaking he PLACED JESUS UPON THE SAME LEVEL WITH MOSES AND ELIJAH-- all three being alike worthy

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of a booth." The REALITY OF THE SCENE "is guaranteed by the vision being enjoyed by all three" (Bruce). The Feast of the Tabernacles was not far away. Peter may have meant that they should just stay up here on the mountain and not go to Jerusalem for the feast.

"A bright cloud overshadowed them . . ." (Matt. 17:5): The brightness of this cloud and the fear which it produced leads us to believe it was the Shekinah, or cloud of glory, which was the symbol of God's peculiar presence (Ex. 13:21, 22; 19:9, 18; 24:16; 40:34, 35; I Kings 8:10).

"This is my beloved Son . . . hear ye him" (Matt. 17:5): At the baptism (Matt. 3:17) these words were addressed to Jesus. Here the voice out of the bright cloud speaks to them about Jesus. Peter never forgets the confirmation of the great confession and bore witness of the primacy of our Lord (II Pet. 1:16-18). God's word on this occasion is the crux of this scene. Before Moses and Elijah, God gives to Jesus His Son that preeminence which a son has over servants. "Hear ye him"; The Son is to be heard-and obeyed (Heb. 1:1, 2; 7:19; 8:7-13; 9:16-28). We Christians are not under the law and its ceremonies (Col. 2:14, 15). To hear and obey Christ will lead from error and sin into truth, righteousness and fitness for heaven (John 14:6).

"They . . . were sore afraid" (Matt. 17:6): Like the children of Israel at Sinai, they were filled with awe at the Divine voice. Jesus "came and touched them" and bade them "be not afraid" (verse 7). As mediator between God and man, Jesus removes fear. How tender Jesus is with them.

"They saw no man, save Jesus only" (Matt. 17:8): When Peter, James and John rose from their prostration the glorious vision was gone. Leaders and prophets depart-Christ abides (Heb. 3:5, 6). ONLY Jesus is able to save us from our sins (Matt. 1:21; Acts 4:12; I Cor. 3:11). JESUS ONLY will keep us now and forever! He bids our anxious fears subside, then and now (John 16:33). These disciples had seen the Son of Man before them on the mount in all his heavenly glory. "The transfiguration was not the proof of Deity; it was the proof of absolute essential and victorious humanity. It was a revelation of what he is going to restore to us, if we trust him; but we shall never reach our transfiguration but THROUGH HIS DEATH AND LIFE" (Morgan). When he comes again, He'll change these bodies of our humiliation to be glorified, spiritual bodies (I Cor. 15:51-54; I Thess. 4:13-18).

II. Comments on the Vision (Matthew 17:9-13)

"Tell . . . no man, until . . ." (Matt. 17:9): "The Inner Three" did not yet understand what they had seen. The people were not ready for such an announcement. To tell the vision now would have raised doubts as to the truthfulness of the apostles. The resurrection would confirm the vision. The apostles questioned among themselves "what the rising again from the dead should mean" (Mark 9:10); they regarded his language as figurative and sought to interpret the figure.

"Elias (Elijah) is come already . . ." (Matt. 17:12): The apostles were puzzled by the disappearance of Elijah. Malachi 4:5 6 declared Elijah should precede the Messiah. This literal Elijah DID RETURN before the crucifixion of our Lord (verse 3). The prophecy of Malachi referred to a spiritual Elijah-one who should come "in the spirit and power of Elijah." Thus Jesus identifies John the Baptist with the promise in Malachi, though not the real Elijah in person which John denied (John 1:26; Luke 1:17; Matt. 11:14).

"Then the disciples understood . . ." (Matt. 17:13): It was plain enough for them now. John the Baptist was Elijah in spirit; he had prepared the way for the Messiah.

III. A Boy with Epilepsy Healed (Matthew 17:14-21; Mark 9:14-29; Luke 9:37-43).

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"The multitude . . . (Matt. 17:14): We last heard of the multitude at Mark 8:34. The people remained with the nine disciples, while Jesus and the three were on the mount. The scribes caught the apostles in perhaps the only case where they failed to cure -- they were discrediting Christ and the apostles by asking sneering, sarcastic questions. It takes skilled bricklayers to build a wall; any fool can tear it down. Consecrated Christians work and build confidence; whispering, cowardly fools can tear down and hinder the work (I Cor. 3:9 VS. Prov. 6:16-19; Matt. 12:33-37; James 3:6). The opportune return of Jesus surprised and rebuked these enemies of Jesus and the apostles (Mark 9:14, 15).

"Lord, have mercy on my son . . . lunatic" (Matt. 17:15): Epileptic, in the Revision. The symptoms are those of epilepsy; in this case caused by demoniac possession. The son was a child (Luke 9:38). He was dumb as well as epileptic, Mark tells us. God's only begotten son (John 3:16) faces man's only begotten son.

"O faithless and perverse generation . . ." (Matt. 17:17): There was "no thunder in the words, but rather the wail of a great sorrow." Jesus addresses all the people. The blindness of the scribes had influenced the people and the apostles-"all had fallen into the ditch of impotent disbelief." A generation that lacks faith will do nothing for God. How many times must God work His will to persuade us, today, that he will supply ALL OUR NEEDS AND MORE IF WE WILL BE TRUE TO HIM (Phil. 4:19; Heb. 13:5; Rom. 8:28, 31). Were we not "perverse," rebellious, twisted, distorted and contorted, not able to think straight -- because we do not take Jesus at His word? Let us be HEARERS AND DOERS of his word (James 1:22). Little faith, then or now, will do marvelous things (19-21).

"Jesus rebuked the devil . . . child was cured" (Matt. 17:18): Compare with Mark and Luke.

"Disciples . . . Why could not we cast him out?" (Matt. 17:19): The apostles had no miracle faith. The failure of the disciples was not because of any insufficiency of power in Jesus, but was due to their failure to appropriate that power by faith. Faith in Christ, faith exercised in fasting and prayer -- these are the conditions of power (verses 20-21). The demons of envy, pride, covetousness, a revengeful spirit can be cast out by such prayer and fasting today!

IV. The Second Prediction of His Death and Resurrection (Matthew 17:22, 23; Mark 9:30,32; Luke 9:43-45).

"And while they abode in Galilee . . ." (Matt. 19:22): "They went forth from thence" (Mark 9:30) or from Caesarea Philippi and "passed through Galilee" on his way to Capernaum. Jesus was still seeking that retirement which began on the journey to Tyre. This is the last definite mention of that retirement, but it is referred to in John 7:3, 4.

"The Son of man shall be betrayed . . . kill . . . raised again" (Matt. 17:22, 23): The reason for his retirement is here given. Jesus wished to prepare his disciples for his suffering and death -- the passion, "They were exceeding sorry" because Jesus said he must be put to death. At last they understood that he was talking about his actual death and resurrection!

V. Jesus Pays the Temple Tribute (Matthew 17:24-27).

"And when they were come to Capernaum . . ." (Matt. 17:24): They had now returned from the journey north. Peter was asked: "Doth not your master pay tribute?" Not tribute, which would be a tax due an alien, but the half shekel, an annual tax demanded of every male Jew above twenty years for the support of the temple. It would be from twenty-five to thirty-five cents. "The tax was like a voluntary church-rate; no one could be compelled to pay" (Plummer). This tax was due in the month Adar (our March); it was now

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nearly six months overdue. Jesus and the Twelve had been out of Galilee most of this time. The payment had to be made in the Jewish coin; half-shekel. It is estimated that the moneychangers did a thriving business in charging a small premium for the Jewish coin-some 345,000 per year.

"He saith, Yes" (Matt. 17:25): Peter answered without thinking. Probably the tribute had been paid from the general fund held by Judas; or he may have assumed that Jesus would fulfill this as one of God's requirements (Exodus 30:12-16). Jesus "prevented" or went before him, anticipated him. Peter felt obliged to take up the matter with Jesus. The Master had observed what was going on and spoke to Peter first. By this parable Jesus as the Son of God claims exemption from the temple tax as the temple of his Father just as royal families do not pay taxes, but get tribute from the foreigners or aliens, subjects in reality (vs. 25, 26).

"Notwithstanding. . . cast an hook. . . take. . . find. . . give" (Matt 17:27): Lest he be misunderstood, and be thought to teach that men should not pay this tribute to God, Jesus gave Peter explicit directions to enable him to pay it. "Cast a hook." This is the only example in the New Testament of fishing with a hook. The "fish that first cometh up" had a "piece of money" in its mouth. It was a shekel or Greek stater worth four drachmae, enough for two persons to pay the tax. This was a miracle of knowledge. "All the attempts have been in vain which were made by the older Rationalism to put a non-miraculous meaning into these words" (B. Weiss).

QUESTIONS

1. What mountain (Matt. 17:1; 16:13)? How high is this mountain?
2. Why did Jesus take only Peter, James and John (Matt. 17:1)?
3. How was Jesus "transfigured before them" (Matt. 17:2)?
4. How did the apostles recognize Moses and Elijah (Matt. 17:3,4)?
5. Why Peter's proposal (Matt. 17:4; Mark 9:5,6)?
6. What is the significance of "Hear ye him" (Matt. 17:5)?
7. What was the purpose of the vision (II Pet. 1:16-18)?
8. Why were the apostles afraid (Matt. 17:6), and what did Jesus do and say (Matt. 17:7)? Who alone did they see when the vision was gone (Matt. 17:8)?
9. Why tell no man (Matt. 17:9), and why their question (Matt. 17:10; Mal. 4:5,6)?
10. How could John be the Elijah of Malachi (Matt. 17:11-13), and did the apostles finally understand what Jesus tried to teach them in this regard (Matt. 11:14; Luke 1:17)?
11. When was the multitude last heard of (Matt. 17:14; Mark 8:34)? Who was with the multitude? What was the attitude of the multitude toward the nine?
12. What did the man desire for his only son (Matt. 17:15), and why were the disciples unable to "cure him?"
13. Why the explanation of Matt. 17:17?
14. What was the cause of the epilepsy (Matt. 17:18)?
15. What is connection of faith with the working of miracles (Matt. 17:20; 14:31)?
16. Why a different effect when he gave this second prediction of his death and resurrection (Matt. 17:22, 23; 16:22)?
17. How do we know this was the temple tax (Matt. 17:24; Ex. 30:12-16; II Chron. 24:5, 6)?
18. What was the nature of the miracle?
19. What were the two coins mentioned (Matt. 17:24, 27)?
20. What does B. Weiss say about the "fish" story? Do you agree with him? Why?

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WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Year IV

First Quarter

Lesson 9

Page 1

Matthew 18

Memory Verse: Matthew 18:15

Memory Verse:

"Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother" (Matthew 18:15).

Public Reading: Matthew 18:1-10.

The Teaching of Christ on Greatness and Forgiveness

The main purpose of the King in this last section of Matthew is not to present his kingdom to the outside world or to demonstrate his power to the outside world. His purpose was to gather his disciples about himself and teach them carefully. His Passion was just a few months away and the disciples must be prepared for it.

I. About Who Shall Be Greatest (Matthew 18:1-9; Mark 9:33-50; Luke 9:46-50)

"The disciples . . . Who is the greatest . . . ?" (Matt. 18:1): What a sad state of heart prompted this question! It was absolutely opposed to the spirit of the Master's teaching and example. Mark tells us the conversation occurred at Capernaum (Mark 9:33). The words of Jesus to Peter (Matt. 16:17-19) had made Peter feel a fresh sense of leadership. He dared rebuke Jesus for speaking of his death (Matt. 16:22). He was with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matt. 17:1). He was singled out by the tax collector (Matt. 17:24-27). The disciples were wrangling among themselves. Mark 9:33 represents Jesus as asking them about their dispute on the way into the house perhaps just after their question in Matt. 18:1. Jesus had noticed the wrangling. It will break out again and again (Matt. 20:20-28; Luke 22:24). They were thinking chiefly about their own places of offices in the political kingdom that they were expecting. Men who argue and quarrel over place and power in the church are not worthy of ANY PLACE OR POWER OF LEADERSHIP IN THE CHURCH (Rom. 10:12). Had Jesus wished to teach the PRIMACY OF PETER, no better opportunity could have been found!

"Jesus called a little child . . ." (Matt. 18:2): Jesus replied to their question by an act, and a statement growing out of that act. The child in the midst was a revelation of truly great character. It may even be Peter's "little child," as it probably was in Peter's house (Mark 9:33). It was a striking object lesson.

"Except ye be converted . . ." (Matt. 18:3): The Revision translates it "Except ye turn," which is correct. The apostles were headed in the wrong direction with their selfish ambition. Unless THEY TURN, they will not get into the kingdom at all, let alone have big places in it! The Greek word translated in the King James Version "be converted" is found in the ACTIVE VOICE IN EVERY INSTANCE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT except one, and means to turn. It means something that the subject is to DO -- not something that is TO BE DONE FOR HIM!

"Humble . . . as this little child . . . same is greatest" (Matt. 18:4): Here Jesus gives us the type of character that may enter his kingdom. The level of the little child is the level of imperfection -- waiting for correction and instruction in order to develop. A true child nature yields itself to instruction and correction.

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The child is on the level of simplicity -- he expresses himself freely, readily, naturally; they have not yet learned deceit and double-dealing from unsaved adults. The child is plastic and submissive. We must turn and **BECOME LIKE THIS AND STAY LIKE THIS TO ENTER AND REMAIN IN HIS KINGDOM!** To humble oneself is "the most difficult thing in the world for saint as for sinner" (Bruce).

"And whoso shall receive one such little child . . ." (Matt. 18:5): This means any believer in Christ (Luke 9:48). "This little child" is a representative or symbol of the believer in Christ. The true way to receive Christ is to receive into our hearts, for Christ's sake, those who need our sympathies.

"But whoso shall offend . . . millstone" (Matt. 18:6): To offend means to "cause to stumble," or to go astray. The term "little ones" not only embraces children who have learned to believe in Christ, but all lowly and humble disciples. "A millstone turned by an ass" is the upper millstone used to grind grain. "Greeks, Romans and Egyptians were punished by such millstone drownings . . . the fate of one who, by striving for place, causes others to sin, will be worse than that."

"Woe to that man by whom the offense cometh!" (Matt. 18:7): Jesus recognized that stumbling blocks, traps and hindrances would continue in the world. The man who sets the trap to cause others to stumble is accursed of God; he will surely be punished (Luke 17:1).

"Hand . . . feet . . . eye . . . cut them off" (Matt. 18:8, 9): It is hard to give up a hand, or foot, or eye. Some sin men cling to as they do their body members. But we **MUST FORSAKE SIN**, or be damned forever in "hell fire." The salt of eternal life preserves a man to enjoy God's love in heaven forever. The salt of fire preserves the wicked man in hell to endure the punishment of God forever! "Into hell fire" is "into the Gehenna of fire," synonymous with "everlasting fire" in verse 8. The image of the worm is taken from Isaiah 66:24 and refers to worms which feed upon the carcasses of men. The fire and worm can hardly be taken literally; the two figures are incompatible. Worms do not frequent fires. McGarvey thinks the two figures depict hell as a state of decay that is never completed, and of a burning that does not consume. Some regard the worm as a symbol of the gnawing of remorse, and the fire as a symbol of actual punishment.

II. About Despising a Disciple (Matthew 18:10-14)

"Take heed that ye despise not . . . little ones" (Matt. 18:10): Jesus warns against the pride which exalts itself and despises the humble, "thinking down on" them with an assumption of superiority.

"In heaven their angels . . ." Angels take an interest in the welfare of God's people (Heb. 1:14). They are in God's presence (Luke 1:19). "If you despise a little child (of faith), then you are **AGAINST THE ANGELS**, you are against the Son of God, you are against the Eternal Father.

The Jews believed that each nation had a guardian angel (Dan. 10:13, 20f; 12:1). The seven churches in Revelation 1:20 have angels each of them, whatsoever the meaning is. Does Jesus mean to teach here that each little child or child of faith had a special angel who appears in God's presence, or that angels do take an interest in the welfare of God's people? Surely Jesus means that the Father does take special care of his "little ones" who believe in Him!

"For the Son of man is come to save . . ." (Matt. 18:11): The sole purpose of the coming of Jesus Christ `into the world was to **SAVE THAT WHICH WAS LOST**. The sheep gone astray" (verse 12) is the one in sin by choice. Such a state does not add to a man's value in God's sight. But God's pity, compassion, and love for the sinner come into play (Rom. 5:8; 1 John 4:19; II Cor. 5:18-21). That person who despises, or hinders the work of saving souls, is working against God! This is dangerous business. Those of us who are working to lead the lost to Christ are doing God's work and following his will. God will give us victory (I Cor: 15:57, 58).

III. About How to Deal with an Offending Brother (Matthew 18:15-20)

"Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee . . ." (Matt. 8:151: Out of the desire for greatness will spring actual trespass of one against another. With such trespass our Lord dealt from the standpoint of the duty of the injured, and not of the one who inflicts the injury. "Sin against thee": Injure you, or do you wrong.

1. "Go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone" (verse 15). Talk to HIM; don't talk about him to others. "The offended is to seek the offender, and the offender is to seek the offended, and neither is to wait for the other" (McGarvey). If someone says, "He SHOULD COME to me; I won't GO TO HIM" such a person shows he IS IN THE WRONG. We MUST BE WILLING as OFFENDED or OFFENDER to meet and point out the offenses, right wrongs and become reconciled! If one admits his wrongs, begs forgiveness, "thou hast gained thy, brother." When he is restored, he is gained-for God, for Christ, for the church, for the fellowship of friends, and for the winning of others!

2. If this first method fails, "take with thee one or two more . . . witnesses" (verse 16). If one refuses an attempt at reconciliation, one or two must go to him to show him his fault to attempt to bring him to repentance and return him to the fellowship. These witnesses, hearing the matter talked over, can report the facts.

3. If the second method fails, "tell it unto the church" (verse 17): If all attempts to win the man fail, the church in prayerful assembly is to try to win him. This is the second instance in the New Testament of the use of the word "church." The first is Matt. 16:18.

4. "But if he neglect to hear the church . . . be . . . as a heathen man" (verse 17b): What does this signify? The admonition and entreaty of the church through its elders is with authority. One who will not hear the church is to be regarded as an outsider. This implies that such a one is to be excluded from the church. The Christian attitude toward a "heathen man and a publican" must be a passionate desire to help and save. See I Cor. 5:3-5; 6:1, 5; Rom. 16:17.

"Whatsoever ye shall bind . . . loose" (Matt. 18:18): What was said to Peter (Matt. 16:19) is here addressed to all the apostles. It is spoken to all a second time (John 20:23). All had the keys as well as Peter. All the apostles were under the direction of the Holy Spirit, and were to establish the rules of church discipline, as well as to announce the conditions of salvation by the gospel. Acts and the Epistles contain these rules and conditions that bind and loose men. "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (II Pet. 1:21). What they announced on earth would be ratified in heaven.

"If two of you shall agree . . ." (Matt. 18:19): Our word "symphony" is the root of the word "agree." Two shall constitute a Christian fellowship. The united prayers of this fellowship for any legitimate object shall be heard. Such prayer is a chorus in harmony; a concord of voices.

"Two or three . . . in my name, there am I" (Matt. 18:20): This blessed promise implies that those gathered together are really disciples with the Spirit of Christ as well as "in his name." One of the Oxyrhynchus SAYINGS OF OUR LORD is: "Wherever there are (two) they are not without God, and wherever there is one alone I say I am with him." Also this: "Raise the stone and there thou shalt find me, cleave the wood and there am I." See Mal. 3:16. The seat of authority is not in human agreement, but in the PRESENCE and LORDSHIP OF JESUS.

IV. About Forgiving a Brother (Matthew 18:21-35)

"Peter . . . how oft shall . . . I forgive him?" (Matt. 18:21): The Talmud limited forgiveness to three times. Peter thought he was generous by suggesting "seven times" as the limit of forgiveness. The man who asks such a question does not really know what forgiveness means" (Plummer). "If this be Christianity, where do Christians live" (Wesley)?

"Seventy times seven" (Matt. 18:22): Forgiveness knows no numerical limitation. We must forgive a brother every time he truly seeks forgiveness. To keep track of 490 offenses one would have to open a set of books with his neighbor. This would be ridiculous. The unlimited revenge of primitive man has given place to the unlimited forgiveness of Christians" (McNeile).

"Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened . . ." (Matt. 18:23): Our Lord next enforces the great doctrine of forgiveness to our fellowmen in a parable. The kingdom is likened to a "certain king which would take account of his servants." The king is the Lord. The servants are those who profess to serve him as King. The kingdom is the church on earth, but reaching beyond the earth.

"One owed him ten thousand talents" (Matt. 18:24): Observe that he had to be "brought." A defaulter does not come willingly to settle his accounts. Does a sinner come to the bar of judgment? If a silver talent was worth about \$1,600.00, and a gold talent was worth around \$30,000.00, the man's debt was enormous. By the gold standard the debt was around \$300,000,000. The man could not possibly pay the debt (Lev. 25:39-47; II Kings 4:1). The willingness of the man to TRY TO PAY (verses 25-27) moved his lord to forgive or cancel debt.

"The same servant . . . Pay me that thou owest" (Matt. 18:28): The servant's exhibition of brutality was right after the GREAT MERCY HE HAD RECEIVED. His actions show that he had only been frightened; he was not converted. If the shilling was worth about seventeen cents, this man's debt was about \$17.00. A denarius was worth about eight and a halfpence. The hundred denarius here were equal to some "fifty shillings" (Bruce), "about 4 pounds" (McNeile), "twenty pounds" (Moffatt), "twenty dollars" (Goodspeed), "100 shillings" (Weymouth). These are various efforts in modern language to represent the amount of this debt compared with the LARGE DEBT.

The forgiven debtor or servant "began to choke or throttle" his fellow servant who owed him such a small sum. The one who had received such mercy showed NO MERCY.

"Have patience . . . I will pay thee all" (Matt. 18:29): Notice that this unfortunate debtor makes exactly the same appeal as the forgiven servant had made to his lord (verses 26, 27). "And he would not"; he would not even grant delay, whereas he had been forgiven.

"Cast him into prison": To cast into prison for debt was once the custom in all countries. Prison life was worse than slavery (verse 30). His outraged master delivered the once forgiven servant "to the tormentors" (verse 34). "The sin of refusing to forgive our fellow-man is with God an unforgivable sin (I John 3:14, 15; 4:20, 21). Unless we truly forgive from the heart, God will not forgive us (vs. 35; 6:12, 14:15).

Forgiveness "from your hearts" is surely needed today. This is not sham or lip pardon, but genuine pardon, and as often as needed. This is Christ's full reply to Peter's question in Matt. 18:21. This parable of the unmerciful servant is surely in need of being preached and practiced in every church throughout the world.

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QUESTIONS

1. Over what question were the apostles wrangling (Matt. 18:1)?
2. Where did this conversation occur (Mark 9:33)?
3. What things had served to bolster Peter's ego (Matt. 16:17-19, 22; 17:24-27)? Why did not Jesus use this opportunity to proclaim the primacy of Peter, if the Lord intended Peter to be PRINCE of the APOSTLES or Pope?
4. From what were the apostles to "turn" (Matt. 18:3)?
5. In what respect were they "become as little children" (Matt. 18:3,4)?
6. Why are such the "greatest" in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 18:4)? Is it hard to "humble" oneself?
7. What is the meaning of cause "to stumble" or "offend" (Matt. 18:6)?
8. For what purpose were millstones normally used? For what were they sometimes used (Matt. 18:6)?
9. What was the point in the illustration from the hand and the eye (Matt. 18:8,9)?
10. What is the meaning of "despise" regarding "one of these little ones" (Matt. 18:10)?
11. Bearing of the remark about "their angels" (verse 10)? What does Jesus teach regarding angels in this passage (see Heb. 1:14; Luke 1:19; Rev. 1:20)?
12. For what purpose did Jesus the Son of man come to this world (Luke 19:10)?
13. What is the meaning of the remark about the shepherd and his sheep (Matt. 18:12-14)?
14. If leaders are quarrelling about who has "first place," are trespasses likely to occur (Matt. 18:15)? Why?
15. What are the three steps in trying to gain an offender or offended man (Matt. 18:15-17)?
16. If the offended or offender refuses to "hear the church," what is to be done? Why speak of the church before it existed (Matt. 18:17)? What is the simplest definition of a church (Matt. 18:18-20)?
17. How shall we treat a man like a "heathen man and a publican" (verse 17)? What is the meaning of "binding" and "loosing" (verse 18)? Do you think when the church "agrees" or makes a "symphony" that God is pleased (verse 19)?
18. What suggested Peter's question (Matt. 18:21, 15)? Can we keep books on the number of times we are to forgive an offending or offended brother (Matt. 18:22)?
19. What of the amount of the two sums of money (Matt. 18:24,28)? Why sell and imprison (Matt. 18:25, 30)? Can you explain the parable?
20. What is the meaning of "forgive from your hearts" (Matt. 18:35)?

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WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Year IV

First Quarter

Lesson 10
Matthew 19

Page 1
Memory Verse: Matthew 19:4-6

Memory Verse:

"And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female. And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder" (Matthew 19:4-6).

Public Reading: Matthew 19:1-12.

The Teaching of Christ on Divorce and Riches

King Jesus, already rejected by the rulers, is seen in this section as he met the needs of the people who sought him.

"Jesus . . . departed from Galilee" (Matt. 19:1): Read Luke 9:51. This is the final departure from Galilee before the Savior's death. He did not return to Galilee until after the resurrection (Matt. 28:16, 17; John 21:1).

"The coasts of Judea beyond Jordan": The land beyond the Jordan was called Perea, which means "beyond." Jesus left Galilee to go to Judea by way of Perea; the Galileans often did this to avoid Samaria. Luke 17:11 expressly says that he passed through Samaria and Galilee when he left Ephraim in Northern Judea (John 11:54), Jesus was not afraid to pass through the edge of Galilee and down the Jordan Valley in Perea on this last journey to Jerusalem.

"And great multitudes followed him; and he healed them there" (Matt. 19:2). The fame of Jesus was now well known over all Palestine. His teaching on divorce occurred in Perea. Bands of pilgrims on the way to the Passover helped to swell the multitudes that swarmed around the Saviour.

I. A Conversation About Divorce (Matthew 19:3-12; 5:31, 32; Mark 10:2-12; Luke 16:18)

"The Pharisees . . . Is it lawful . . . for every cause?" (Matt. 19:3): The Pharisees "could not ask a question of Jesus without sinister motives" (Bruce). They wanted to know if a husband "for every cause" he deemed satisfactory could divorce his wife. Hillel's school stood for easy divorce "for any passing whim if the husband saw a prettier woman . . . or burned his biscuits for breakfast." Shammai's school took the strict and unpopular view of divorce for unchastity alone. The Pharisees wanted to hurt Jesus' influence with the people by putting him in this dilemma. Josephus, the historian, says he "divorced his wife because he was not pleased with her manners."

"He . . . made them male and female" (Matt. 19:4): Jesus went back to the original law given by God and recorded by Moses, and shows by it that:

1. Marriage is a fundamental principle of social order. God had this in view when he made them male and female.
2. The relation of marriage is superior even to the parental relation (verse 5).

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3. By marriage the pair become "one flesh," so that a man is as much joined to his wife as he is to his own body. A man can only be separated from his parental relations or from his own body BY DEATH, which is an act of God. Hence Jesus draws the conclusion that the superior or similar relation of marriage can only be dissolved by an act of God.

"Man . . . cleave to his wife" (Matt. 19:5): The verb "cleave" means, "shall be glued to." Jesus revealed the true foundation of the marriage relation (verses 4-6). He ignored Shammai and Hillel. He passes Moses and went back to God's divine arrangement. What Moses said and did were transitory, having application only to certain times and places. "The marriage relationship is to supercede, because of its sacredness, the most sacred relationship that can exist apart from it, that of the child to father and mother."

"What therefore God hath joined . . ." (Matt. 19:6): Note "what," not "whom." The marriage relation God has made. "The creation of sex, and the high doctrine as to the cohesion it produces between man and woman, laid down in Genesis, interdict separation" (Bruce). The word for "joined together" means "yoked together," a common verb for marriage in ancient Greek. No man or court, private, civil or ecclesiastical, "can dissolve marriage otherwise than according to the decrees of God" (McGarvey).

"Why did Moses then command . . .?" (Matt. 19:7): Jesus reaffirmed his teaching of Matthew 5:32. The Pharisees knew Moses' law of divorce (Deut. 24:1-4). Jesus limited the right of divorce to unchastity alone (verse 9). "Such is Jesus' modification of the Old Testament law, and in no part of the New Testament is there any relaxation of the teaching of Jesus.

Remember that the Mosaic regulations as to marriage and divorce WERE CIVIL ENACTMENTS, THOUGH RESTING ON AN ETHICAL BASIS. The people of Israel had been in bondage 430 years. They were "dried up" in heart; they were hard and tough. Moses did not command, but SUFFERED or PERMITTED (verse 8) divorce. Commandment as used by Mark refers to the MANNER OF PUTTING A WIFE AWAY. Had the law of God in Gen. 2:24 been re-enacted by Moses, "many would have refused to marry at all, preferring an illicit life to the hazard of matrimony under a stringent life, and others finding themselves unhappily married would have secretly murdered their wives to gain their liberty. God therefore temporarily modified the law out of compassion FOR THE WOMEN" (McGarvey). Men's hearts had not grown more tender by the time of Christ, and "Christ Himself brought this concession TO AN END."

"Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication . . ." (Matt. 19:9): If a divorce be on any other ground than UNCHASTITY, neither the man nor the woman can marry again without committing adultery. "It is implied that divorce for unchastity BREAKS THE MARRIAGE BOND. THE INNOCENT PARTY TO SUCH A DIVORCE CAN MARRY AGAIN" (McGarvey). Of course, the guilty party cannot remarry again without living in adultery.

Matthew 5:31, 32; 19:9 represent Jesus as allowing divorce for fornication as a general term ("porneia") which is technically adultery ("moicheia" from "moichao" or "moicheuo"). Those who deny Matthew's report are those who are opposed to remarriage at all.

Kentucky has FIFTEEN CAUSES FOR DIVORCE. Jesus allows divorce for UNCHASTITY ALONE. Read Romans 7:1-3; I Cor. 7:10-16, 39.

A recent editorial in the Cincinnati Times-Star entitled "The Divorce Marathon" says: "The crowded divorce courts of Hamilton County . . . is not funny . . . 2,000 petitions for divorce are now on the docket of the Domestic Relations Court. To handle the enormous docket . . . all ten judges of the Common Pleas Court may devote one week exclusively to clearing up the backlog. The evil is not confined to Cincinnati. In the county that contains Portland, Oregon, 4,129 marriage licenses and 5,547 divorces were granted in 1945. The national trend approaches a ratio of ONE DIVORCE TO EVERY TWO MARRIAGES."

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As Banking Magazine remarks: "It has almost reached the point where marriage is considered sufficient grounds for divorce." No Christian who respects the authority of Christ will take advantage of ungodly civil legislation to free himself from his mate. If one's marriage is a tragedy, let it be a lifelong tragedy for the sake of society and the family. Accept Christ's standard for marriage and the home, and turn tragedy into triumph by the grace of the Gospel!

"His disciples . . . IF . . . not good to marry" (Matt. 19:10): Christ's doctrine was "too high even for the Twelve" (Bruce). If the bond is so tight, the apostles reasoned, a man had best not commit to matrimony!

"All men cannot receive this saying . . . able . . . receive it" (Matt. 19:11, 12): Marriage, not celibacy, is the law of life. If a man desires to marry let him marry. If he prefers to remain celibate, UNMARRIED, let him remain that way. A "eunuch" is a castrated male person. Eunuchs are unfit for marriage. The first two (physical) eunuchs of the text are introduced to illustrate the last or spiritual eunuch the man whose consuming interest in the affairs of the church make him prefer the CELIBATE or UNMARRIED STATE.

The Bible nowhere countenances the celibate vow of the Roman Catholic Church. It is contrary to Scripture, common sense and the nature of man! Pope Hildebrand, Boniface VII decreed the celibacy of the priesthood, in the year 1079. Jesus imposed no such rule, nor did any of the apostles. On the contrary, Peter was a married man, and Paul says that bishops or elders were to have wife and children (I Tim. 3:2-5, 12; Matt. 8:14-15).

II. Little Children (Matthew 19:13-16; Mark 10:13-16; Luke 18:15-17)

"Then were there brought . . . little children" (Matt. 19:13): No doubt people did often crowd around Jesus for a touch of his hand and his blessing. It was a Jewish custom to bring children to the synagogue on their first birthday for the Rabbi to bless them. The mothers of these children desired the prayers of Jesus in behalf of their little ones. It was customary to put the hand upon the person prayed for, as Jacob did in Gen. 48:14, 15.

The "disciples rebuked them": They mistakenly thought the celibate life was superior to married life. So, they thought Jesus could not be bothered with children. They were mistaken so Jesus rebuked them.

"Jesus said, Suffer little children . . . to come unto me" (Matt. 19:14): "Leave them alone," Jesus commanded the apostles. "Stop hindering them," either by word or by bad example. When young or old wishes to come to Christ, encourage him. We must become meek, humble, teachable and trustful -- child-like in nature -- to be in the kingdom of heaven. These words of Christ teach us that

1. Children are not totally depraved.
2. The earlier they come to Christ the better.
3. They should not be hindered from coming by wrong teaching.
4. Parents should bring their children to the Saviour!

It is beautifully fitting that having reaffirmed the irrevocable divine law relating to marriage, thus emphasizing the VALUE OF FAMILY LIFE, Jesus should now show his direct and wonderful interest in and tenderness toward children. The word "such" (verse 14) does not primarily refer to the child character, but to children and so the Master that day CLAIMED ALL CHILD LIFE BELONGED TO HIS KINGDOM!

III. How To Obtain Eternal Life (Matthew 19:16-22; Mark 10:17-31; Luke 18:18-30)

"Good master, what . . . do . . . have eternal life?" (Matt. 19:16): This rich young ruler was deeply in earnest. We learn from Matt. 19:20 that he was "young"; from Luke 18:18 that he was a ruler, probably of a

synagogue, although these were usually elderly; from Matt. 19:22 that he was rich; from Mark 10:17 that he came running to Jesus, and kneeled to him. The picture of this young man would be perfect to any but the clear vision of Christ! Whether he had before heard Christ or not, he had learned that eternal life belonged to the heirs of God, his children, and had to be inherited.

"Why callest thou me good . . . (Matt. 19:17): To the address of the young man, namely, "Good Master," Jesus replies, "Why callest thou me good?" "This was only a teacher's way of leading on a pupil" (Bruce). So Jesus explains that "One there is who is good," one alone who is really good in the ABSOLUTE SENSE. The ruler had unwittingly confessed the deity of Jesus. He would need firmly to believe in the divinity of Jesus to endure the test to which he was about to be subjected Q John 5:5).

"But if . . . keep the commandments": This young man was living under the law. Christ's death on the cross took the law out of the way for the Gospel (Col. 2:14). He had kept the law he claimed (verses 18-20), and was still not satisfied (Gal. 2:21). Jesus referred him to the last six laws of the Decalogue: "Thou shalt do no murder" (Ex. 20:13) "Thou shalt not commit adultery" (Ex. 20:14), "Thou shalt not steal" (Ex. 20:15), "Thou shalt not bear false witness" (Ex. 20:16), "Honour thy father and thy mother" (Ex. 20:12) and, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Matt. 19:19; Lev. 19:18-the last being a summary of all the six (Rom. 13:9).

After the death of Christ a new law of love was given. Had the man waited until that time, he would have been directed to hear, believe and obey the Gospel (Acts 2:37, 38; 16:30-34; 8:35-40; 22:16). This is the message for "every creature" today (Mark 16:15, 16).

"If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell . . . give" (Matt. 19:21): Jesus assumes that the young man really desires to be perfect. The command to "go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor" was intended to bring out the fact that the young man had made an idol of his riches. He really worshipped mammon not God (Matt. 6:24; I Tim. 6:6-10). This command of Christ is not a general one, but a special one for this young ruler. He must show his love for Christ by giving up anything which stood between him and his Master (Phil.

3:6-9). Jesus told him, "If thou wilt be perfect," do this and "Follow me." The reference to treasure in heaven and the invitation to follow Christ TESTED THE RULER'S OBEDIENCE TO THE FIRST FOUR COMMANDMENTS (Matt. 22:37, 38; Ex. 20:1-11). Would he submit, obey and follow Christ?

"Young man . . . went away sorrowful. . . great possession" (Matt. 19:22): The young ruler wanted to be a disciple of Christ, and an heir of life, but he was not ready to PAY SUCH A PRICE! This man was required to use his wealth for God and for man. So Christ expects every man to use his possessions. There is just one difference. This rich young ruler was commanded to sell and give away his "great possessions"; Christians are required to TURN OVER ALL TO CHRIST, and to hold it as his stewards!

IV. Danger of Riches (Matthew 19:23-26)

"It is easier for a camel . . . eye of a needle" (Matt. 19:24): The needle's eye here is that of a literal needle. Jesus means by this comparison, whether an eastern proverb of note, to express the impossible. George Nugent (1845-46) introduced the explanation that Jesus referred to the two gates of a city, the large one for the beast of burden, and the small one for foot passengers. This smaller one is now called "The Needle's Eye." There is no evidence whatever that it was so called in our Savior's time.

"Disciples . . . exceedingly amazed . . . Who then can be saved?" (Matt. 19:25): They were literally "struck out!" The Jews were accustomed to look upon the possession of riches as an evidence of God's favor. The apostles were filled with visions of the riches and honors that they would enjoy when Jesus set up his kingdom. They were "struck out" when Jesus declared that rich men could not enter the kingdom.

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The rich young ruler could not have eternal life because he clung to his riches, rather than surrender to Christ!

"With men . . . impossible; but with God . . . possible" (Matt. 19:26): Only the grace of God can save any man-rich, or poor. God's grace can break down the trust in wealth, take away the LOVE OF WEALTH, and fill the heart with love of Christ. Paul says, "The LOVE OF MONEY is the root of all evil" (I Tim. 6:10). A man may trust in and love \$100.00 as well as one who has \$1,000,000! When God's grace works on a man's heart, it makes him a dispenser of blessings in proportion as God had blessed him!

V. Those Who Forsake All for Christ (Matthew 19:27-30)

"Peter . . . We have forsaken all . . . what shall we have?" (Matt. 19:27): The apostles had left all they had to follow Christ. "The negative conduct of the rich man reminded the disciples of their own positive conduct when confronted with a similar crisis" (Luke 5:11). Peter wondered what manner of return would be made to them to compensate them for their sacrifice.

"In the regeneration when . . ." (Matt. 19:28): The new birth of the world is to be fulfilled when Jesus sits on his throne of glory. By the term "regeneration" Jesus here means the period in which the process of regenerating men would be in progress. When he had ascended, Jesus sat on his throne (Acts 2:33-35; Heb. 1:13; Matt. 25:31; I Cor. 15:24-28). This process of regeneration BEGAN ON PENTECOST (Acts 2:1ff).

"Ye also . . . twelve thrones, judging . . .": Jesus enthroned the apostles, not as kings, but as judges having jurisdiction over all questions of faith and practice in the earthly kingdom. The apostles "judged" in person through the Gospel they delivered. Since then they have judged through their writings. While only a part of them wrote the New Testament, the judgments pronounced by one of a bench of judges with the known approval of all, become the judgments of the entire bench. "And every one that hath forsaken, receive an hundred-fold" (Matt. 19:29): Mark says "Now in this time." God will provide for our every need here. The rewards of Christian self-denial include the temporal and the eternal. Earthly joys far outweigh the sacrifices made for the kingdom. Jesus warns that reversals will come (verse 30); the rich on earth, will be "poor" in heaven" unless he flings wealth and himself away in service of Christ. This is a paradox. Our next lesson will illustrate it.

QUESTIONS

1. Was this the final departure of Jesus from Galilee before his death (Matt. 19:1)?
2. Where was Perea, what does the word mean, and what teaching did Jesus give the people there (Matt. 19:1)?
3. With what motive did the Pharisees come to Jesus (Matt. 19:31)? How did they "tempt" Jesus?
4. For what reason did Josephus, the Jewish historian, say he divorced his wife?
5. What is the meaning of divorce for "every cause" (Matt. 19:3)? Illustrate.
6. How could the words quoted be those of God (Matt. 19:4-6; Gen. 2:24)?
7. Since Jesus went back to the original law given by God, and recorded by Moses, what three things may be said of marriage (Matt. 19:4)?
8. What is the meaning of "cleave to his wife" (Matt. 19:5)? If "what" God has made or joined together is his will, can any man or court, private, civil or ecclesiastical "dissolve marriage otherwise than according to the decrees of God?"
9. Why should the hardness of man's hearts modify the law of God (Matt. 19:8)?
10. What is the only basis on which Jesus allows divorce (Matt. 19:9; 5:31,32)? How many causes for divorce does Kentucky have?
11. Why the objection of the disciples (Matt. 19:10; cf. verse 8)?
12. Can you explain the reference to "eunuchs" (Matt. 19:11, 12)? Does the Bible anywhere command or commend celibacy over the married state? Who imposed celibacy on the Roman Catholic priesthood, and when?
13. Why were "little children" brought unto Jesus (Matt. 19:13)? Why did the disciples object? Do you see a connection between the section on "divorce" and this one on the place and value of "little children?"
14. How is the kingdom of God "of such" little children (Matt. 19:15), and what four things about children may be concluded from this section?
15. What was this young man's conception in his address of the Master (Matt. 19:16)? Why did Jesus answer his question with a question (Matt. 19:17)? Was the ruler living under law or grace (Matt. 19:17, 21; Col. 2:14)?
16. Why did Jesus tell him to "keep the commandments" (Matt. 19:17b, 21; Rom. 10:5; Gal. 2:21)? What sort of young man was he, and what did he lack (Matt. 19:20, 22)? Why did not Jesus make some concession to win this young man?
17. Why did this rich, young ruler go away "sorrowful," and not angry (Matt. 19:22)? Had he waited until Christ died on the cross, what answer would have been given him after Pentecost (Acts 16:30-38; 2:37, 38; 8:35-40; 22:16; Rev. 2:10c)?
18. Why is it so difficult for "a rich man" to enter into the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 19:23, 24)? What did the teaching of Jesus on riches do to the disciples?
19. Can the rich be saved at all (Matt. 19:26; I Tim. 4:17-19)? Can a pauper love money as much as a millionaire can?
20. What suggested Peter's question (Matt. 19:27, 21, 22)? What is the "regeneration," the thrones, and how do the apostles "judge" (Matt. 19:18)? How receive a hundred-fold (Matt. 19:30)? What is the meaning of verse 30?

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Year IV

First Quarter

Lesson 8

Page 1

Matthew 20

Memory Verses: Matthew 20:26-28

Memory Verses:

"But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister. And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant; Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many"

(Matthew 20:26-28).

Public Reading: Matthew 20:1-16.

The Parable of the Laborers

Men sometimes run to Jesus (Mark 10:17). They may be rich, young, educated and powerful. Jesus does not lower the standards of his Kingdom to attract or hold them. Then, and now, men who refuse to accept his way (John 14:6; Matt. 19:22) go away sorrowful. Mammon, not the Master, comes FIRST WITH SUCH MEN (Matt. 6:24, 33). A glutton for gold can come to God but seldom does (Matt. 19:23-26).

The apostles "forsook all" (Luke 5:11) and followed Christ. "What shall we have therefore?" (Matt. 19:27). Jesus speaks of earthly rewards for us, but that does not literally mean we shall receive similar things we left, but equivalent things -- blessings temporal and spiritual that will compensate many times over for all that was abandoned for Him! Our experience proves this truth (Phil. 4:19).

I. The Parable of the Laborers (Matthew 20:1-16)

"But many that are first shall be last . . ." (Matt. 19:30): The promise of a reward might tempt some to LABOR NOT IN LOVE AND GRATITUDE, but for the SAKE OF A REWARD. Jesus corrects this spirit by the parable of the laborers in Matt. 20:1-16. There is "NO QUESTION HERE ABOUT SALVATION" or "entering the kingdom. There is no thought about EQUAL PAYMENT FOR UNEQUAL WORK. This parable is intended to TEACH ONE SIMPLE TRUTH that MAN'S REWARD WILL BE, NOT ACCORDING TO THE LENGTH OF HIS SERVICE, BUT ACCORDING TO HIS FIDELITY TO THE OPPORTUNITY WHICH IS GIVEN HIM" (Morgan).

"Householder . . . early . . . to hire laborers" (Matt. 20:1): The working day began with the rising of the sun, country fashion for starting to work. Unemployed laborers gather in the market place of the villages, waiting for an employer.

"Agreed . . . a penny a day . . ." (Matt. 20:2): "Penny" is not adequate, "Shilling" Moffatt has it. It was the Roman denarius, worth about 17 cents. This is a small sum as we think of money. It was an imposing sum then. "It is to be doubted if the treasury-bag of Judas ever contained the fourth part of it" (McGarvey). "A denarius was the regular price for a day's labor."

"And he went out about the third hour . . ." (Matt. 20:3): The Jews divided the time between sunrise and sunset into twelve hours. The first hour would be 6:00 A.M., the third hour 9:00 A.M., the sixth, noon, the ninth, about three and the twelfth about 6:00 P.M.

At Hamadan in Persia, Morier in SECOND JOURNEY THROUGH PERSIA, as cited by Trenth in his PARABLES, says: "We observed every morning, before the sun rose, that a numerous band of peasants

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were collected, with spades in their hands, waiting to be hired for the day to work in the surrounding fields."

"Whatsoever is right I will give you . . ." (Matt. 20:4): "Is fair," not anything he pleased, but a just proportionate wage, the householder told the laborers (verse 5).

"Why stand ye here all the day idle?" (Matt. 20:6): No work. The problem of the unemployed is not a new problem. It is old, vexing and may be vicious (verse 7).

"So when even was come . . ." (Matt. 20:8): This was the time of settlement (Lev. 19:13; Deut. 24:15). The laborers at the beginning of the day had made a hard and fast bargain for a shilling a day. Others were engaged at the third, sixth, ninth and eleventh hours. They trusted the householder's "whatsoever is right I will give you" (verses 4, 7). At the end of the day, each laborer received a shilling. The ones who had worked twelve hours complained. "NOT BECAUSE THEY HAD FAILED TO RECEIVE THE WAGE FOR WHICH THEY HAD BARGAINED, BUT BECAUSE OTHERS WHO HAD RENDERED A LESS SERVICE HAD RECEIVED AN EQUAL REWARD. Thus Jesus would correct the commercial spirit which sometimes animates his followers. He shows that EVERY ONE WILL RECEIVE ALL THAT HE DESERVES, all indeed, for which he may bargain, but there will be surprises; not that anyone receives so little, but that some will receive so much. He is absolutely sovereign in bestowing His eternal rewards. He recognizes that some have less opportunity for the service; their ability and time of their service is limited. BUT IF THEY TRUST HIM and depend upon His grace, they will be surprised at the liberality of the King. Rewards are certain, but they are not the motive of service" (Erdman).

"First . . . supposed that they should have received more . . . penny" (Matt. 20:10): False hopes had been raised in those who came first who got only what they had agreed to receive. "They murmured" (verse 11). Our words murmur and grumble are similar. Those who had worked all day were much like the elder brother (Luke 15:31).

"Didst thou not agree . . . go thy way" (Matt. 20:13, 14): The householder gave these all he had agreed. They had NO GROUND of complaint but ENVY (verse 15). The complainer had a grudging eye while the householder has a liberal or generous eye.

"So the last shall be first . . . first last" (Matt. 20:16): "Last" is applied to those who were INCLUDED AMONG THE ACCEPTED LABORERS. The shilling stands for eternal life. The vineyard is the Lord's field of work in the world. The evening is the close of the Christian dispensation, and the coming of Christ to judgment. In no case was the reward earned by the merits and toil of the laborers but was bestowed by the householder, not by merit but by covenant grace (Roman 2:6, 7; 4:3-5; 5:16-21). Longer labor DOES NOT NECESSARILY "establish a claim to a higher reward" as the apostles and many today wrongly believe. Grace will save the child, the old man, Paul who labored many years, and the dying thief who passed to his reward (Luke 23:39-43; I Cor. 15:8-11; II Tim. 4:6-9). The murmuring and envy is part of the parabolic drapery. "There will be no envy among those who inherit eternal life"; we must not harbor such a spirit now.

The parable does not teach DEATHBED REPENTANCE. A man MUST BE IN THE VINEYARD and LABOR as little or as much as he has opportunity to labor. The eleventh hour (verses 6, 9) man did not have opportunity to work at the sixth or ninth hour. But HE DID START WORKING AS SOON AS HE HAD THE INVITATION TO WORK! So must you!

Jesus gave this as a special lesson to the Jews. They had been called first by God, but the Gentiles who heard the call should soon enjoy equal privileges. They would be first in the kingdom because of their greater readiness to receive the gospel. Your duty and mine is to GO TO WORK IN the Lord's vineyard as soon as the Lord calls us, and DO WHAT HE TELLS US!

II. Third Prediction of His Death and Resurrection

(Matthew 20:17-19; Mark 10:32-34; Luke 18:31-34; See Matt. 12:38-42; 16:21-28; 17:22, 23)

"And Jesus . . . took the twelve disciples apart" (Matt. 20:17): "Aside by themselves" (Moffatt). Jesus is having his inward struggle (Mark 10:32), and makes one more effort to get the Twelve to understand him.

"Son of man . . . betrayed . . . crucify him. . . rise again" (Matt. 20:18, 19): They had gone to Jerusalem before. Judas would betray Jesus; he would lead the Jewish rulers to seek him in the night. The chief priests and scribes were the Jewish Sanhedrin. That Supreme Court of the Jews included both the leaders of the priesthood, the leading scribes, or doctors of the law, and others – a total of seventy members, plus the chairman, or president. Josephus and the New Testament state that the acting high priest was always the head and president, as Caiaphas in the time of Christ (Matt. 26:3, 57) and Ananias, in the time of Paul (Acts 23:2–24:1). This council of the Jewish nation condemned Jesus to die (Matt. 26:59-66).

"Crucify him . . . rise again": Without the shedding of Christ's blood there would be no remission of sins (Heb. 9:22). Christ knew WHERE he would die, HOW he would die BY WHOSE HANDS HE WOULD DIE, and WHAT WOULD HAPPEN AFTER HE DIED. The Jewish Sanhedrin could condemn Jesus. It had no power to inflict capital punishment, because the government had passed into the hands of the Romans, a Gentile race. For the mocking and scourging, see Matt. 27:26-31. "The third day" occurs often, and shows the sense in which the Jews understood the corresponding phrase, "three days and three nights."

This third and by far the clearest prophecy of our Lord's death gives seven remarkable details:

1. Delivery to be betrayed by Judas.
2. Condemnation.
3. Delivery to the Gentiles.
4. Mocking, and the manner of it.
5. Scourging.
6. Death by crucifixion.
7. Resurrection on the third day.

The details fall on deaf ears, even the point of the resurrection the third day.

III. An Ambitious Request of James and John (Matthew 20:20-28; Mark 10:34-45)

"The mother of Zebedee's children . . . worshipping him." (Matt. 20:20): The pathos of this is that it was their reaction to Jesus' third announcement that he was on his way to the cross (See Luke 9:46-48). How inopportune was the timing for such a request. They came giving him homage, not worshipping him as Divine Son of God. The mother of Zebedee's children was Salome who came with a selfish, ambitious request for her own loved ones. It is right to be ambitious and seek to rise in the world of service, but to seek for power and position in the church or class to "stop the preacher," or "hinder his or her program," or to parade before the congregation is despicable, heap, unsportsmanlike and un-Christian!

"Grant . . . two sons may sit . . . right . . . left" (Matt. 20:21): The "certain thing" put forward as a small matter was simply the choice of the two chief thrones promised by Jesus (Matt. 19:28). Mark tells us they asked him to grant what they wished before they stated it, after the manner of Herod to the daughter of Herodias, but Jesus forced them to state their ambitious desire. Salome, the mother, speaks for them. They still believed that Jesus would be an earthly monarch, despite what he had just told them of his speedy death.

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The world's spirit is "Ah, give me the chief seat or I won't play with you." A deacon who was rotated off the Advisory Council last year said to me: "I'm no longer serving officially as a deacon in this church. I hold no office in any class, but I'M TRYING HARDER THAN EVER TO LIVE A CHRISTIAN LIFE EVERY DAY." That is the spirit of Christ (Matt. 10:22; Rom. 14:12; Rev. 2:10). Honestly, if one is right with God, will he ever resign from a post of service, refuse to work with the faithful majority in matters of method refuse to attend Bible school or miss the Lord's Supper not once but a score of times a year, and seldom or never come to church on Sunday night or Wednesday Vespers? If this were your last day on earth would you be content to act like this (II Cor. 5:10; Heb. 10:25, 31)?

"Ye know not what ye ask . . . drink of the cup . . .?" (Matt. 20:22): How often we "know not what we ask." "We are able" is the amazing proof of their ignorance and self-confidence. Ambition had blinded their eyes. They had not caught the martyr spirit. Cup means among the Hebrews a portion assigned, whether of pleasure or sorrow (Psa. 16:5).

"Ye shall drink indeed of my cup . . . right . . . left . . . given . . . prepared" (Matt. 20:23): Christ's cup was Gethsemane and Calvary, a bitter cup indeed. James was the first to meet the martyr's death (Acts 12:2) and John the last if reports are true about him. Greatness in Christ's kingdom depends upon one's service to others. The Father had a plan in reference to the honors of the kingdom. Those who gave up the most would get most. Future rewards are not given by caprice or favoritism, but according to God's will for faithfulness (See I Tim. 4:8; Rev. 2:10, 17, 26, 28; 3:12, 21).

"Ten . . . moved with indignation" (Matt. 20: 4): The ten apostles felt that James and John had taken advantage of their relation to Jesus. They displayed the same spirit and motives as Zebedee's sons. Have you noted that in condemning our brethren, we are guilty of the same or worse faults than those we condemn?

"The Son of man came . . . to minister . . . give his life a ransom" (Matt. 20:28): Jesus does not condemn the desire to become great (verse 26), if we raise the dust in our desire to minister to or serve others! Let us have ambition not for worldly greatness, but for spiritual greatness to which they and we ought to aspire (verses 25, 27).

Jesus enforces the lesson by his own example in that he came to serve men and not to have them serve him. This is in direct contrast to the self-seeking of James and John. The world translated "ransom" is the one commonly employed in the papyri as the price paid for a slave who is then set free by the one who bought him. Jesus gave his own life as the price of freedom for the SLAVES OF SIN. Some refuse to admit that Jesus held this notion of a SUBSTITUTIONARY DEATH because the word in the New Testament occurs only here and in the synoptic passage in Mark 10:45. That is an easy way to get rid of passages that contradict one's theological opinions!

IV. The Healing of Two Blind Men Near Jericho (Matthew 20:29-34; Mark 10:46-52; Luke 18:34-43)

"They departed from Jericho . . . great multitude" (Matt. 20:29) Luke 18:35 places the incident as they were drawing near to Jericho. Mark and Matthew probably refer to the Old Jericho, the ruins of which have been discovered, while Luke alludes to the new Roman Jericho. In Kentucky we have two towns about a half mile apart both called Pleasureville. One is Old Pleasureville, the other New Pleasureville.

"So Jesus had compassion on them . . ." (Matt. 20:34): The "two blind men" (verse 30) were apparently between the two towns. Mark 10:46 and Luke 18:35 mention only one blind man, Bartimaeus (Mark) The blind men knew it was now or never. They hail him as "the son of David " the Messiah (verses 30-33). Jesus does not reject or object to the title. He is now about to proclaim himself as the Messiah. Jesus had compassion on them. The faith of the blind men had saved them: The touch of Christ's hand would soothe the eyes as they were healed. Jesus can meet the needs of any man who will come to him (John 6:37). Will you come to him NOW (II Cor. 6:2)?

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QUESTIONS

1. What was the subject illustrated (Matt. 20:16; 19:30)?
2. If some had the idea of serving in Christ's vineyard not for love and gratitude, but for rewards, how does Jesus correct such an attitude (Matt. 20:1-16; Luke 5:11; Matt. 19:27)?
3. When did the householder first go out to "hire laborers into his vineyard" (Matt. 20:1)?
4. What hour would this be, and how many times did he go out to hire men (Matt. 20:3, 5, 6)?
5. How much did he agree to pay those whom he first hired (Matt. 20:2)?
6. What is the value of the penny, or Roman denarius (Matt. 20:3) here mentioned?
7. Was it the usual wage for a day's work?
8. In what respect were the last laborers first, and the first last (Matt. 20:13-16)?
9. Did the householder "cheat" those whom he hired at 6:00 A.M. (Matt. 20:1, 2, 8-10)?
10. What was the basis of their murmuring (Matt. 20:11-16)?
11. Can the eleventh hour laborers represent persons who DELIBERATELY POSTPONE OBEDIENCE (Matt. 20:6, 7), or those who obey Christ late in life?
12. Does this parable teach deathbed repentance? When must we obey the gospel?
13. Why did Jesus "take them apart" (Matt. 20:17) to make this announcement?
14. What now is indicated as to the time (Matt. 20:18)?
15. What seven remarkable details does Jesus here give as to his death?
16. What request did Salome make (Matt. 20:20,21)?
17. What is meant by the "cup" (Matt. 20:22)?
18. What is the meaning of "minister," "servant" (Matt. 20:26,27)? What is the rule for Christian ambition?
19. What is the design of the death of Jesus (Matt. 20:28)?
20. Why did the multitude rebuke the two blind men (Matt. 20:31)? What did the two believe concerning Jesus, and why (Matt. 20:30)? Why follow Jesus (Matt. 20:34)?

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Year IV

First Quarter

Lesson 12

Page 1

Matthew 21

Memory Verses: Matthew 21:9

Memory Verse:

"And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest" (Matthew 21:9).

Public Reading: Matthew 21:1-11.

The Triumphal Entry

The Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem took place on Sunday, April 2, A. D. 30. Jesus had come as the long-foretold Messiah. For three years he had proclaimed himself to the nation by unceasing journeys and miracles, and by the journeys and miracles of the Twelve, and of the Seventy. Jesus knew that the rulers had determined upon his death. He was ready for it. In a grand public demonstration, as a final notice to the Holy City, King Jesus entered amid the hallelujahs and hosannas of the expectant multitudes. How joyous were the people. They thought that political deliverance was at hand!

The cursing of the fig tree took place on Monday. Most of the teachings occurred on Tuesday of the last week. Wednesday was a day of silence.

"The event from the Last Supper to the death and entombment of our Lord occurred on Thursday and Friday, April 6, 7. (Wilbur Smith).

The Public Entry into Jerusalem

(Matthew 21:1-11; Mark 11:1-10; Luke 19:29-38; John 12:12-19; Zechariah 9:9)

A. Christ's consciousness of what is about to take place (Matt. 21:1-3).

"They drew nigh unto Jerusalem . . ." (Matt. 21:1): The only city in the Bible, located on the earth, called the Holy City. In it the only temple God ever commanded to be built, was erected. One would think that the Messiah of whom Moses spoke (Deut. 18:15), would have been recognized and welcomed by the city with open arms. Instead, Jerusalem rejected its King and put him to death. Jesus foreknew all the events of his life. He knew when he began his ministry that he was ordained to die. He knew WHEN he would die, WHERE he would die, and HOW he would die!

"Bethpage" means "house of unripe figs." It apparently lay on the eastern slope of Olivet or at the foot of the mountain, a little farther from Jerusalem than Bethany. Bethpage and Bethany were suburban villages near to one another, and lying on the direct road that led to Jerusalem from the east.

"Mount of Olives": The mountain covered with olive trees. It is a hill just east of Jerusalem about a mile from the city. It was the "park" of Jerusalem. It was their open ground for pleasure, or for worship.

"Go . . . find an ass . . . colt" (Matt. 21:2): The ass was held in high esteem in the East. Sons of judges used them. David's mule was used at the coronation of Solomon (Judges 10:4; I Kings 1:33). "A colt" is "the young of any animal." Here it would come with the mother, and the more readily so. If the colt had been used by men it would have been unfit for sacred purposes (Num. 19:2; Deut. 21:3; I Sam. 6:7).

"The Lord hath need of them . . ." (Matt. 21:3): The owner of the animals was probably a disciple of Jesus. He would readily consent to the Master's use of his animals. Jesus applies the word "Lord" to himself.

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It is from power or authority. This is the only time in Matthew where the words "The Lord" are applied to Jesus, except in Matt. 28:6. It seems that the disciples were calling Jesus "Lord," and He accepted and used it as here.

B. The prophetic foretelling (Matt. 21:4, 5).

"Fulfilled . . . spoken by the prophet" (Matt. 21:4): The first line is from Isaiah 62:11, and the rest from Zech. 9:9. Our Lord's conduct did fulfill the prophecy.

"Tell ye the daughter of Zion" (Matt. 21:5): A poetical name for the city of Jerusalem.

"Behold, thy King cometh": This is the only instance in which Jesus rode a beast. The ass is a symbol of peace. Jesus did not ride alternately upon each animal. In the Hebrew it means by common Hebrew parallelism 'Upon an ass, even upon a colt.'

C. The obedience of the disciples (Matt. 21:6, 7).

"The disciples . . . did as Jesus commanded them" (Matt. 21:6): The "two disciples" (verse 1) obeyed their Lord at once. A disciple who quibbles about keeping the commandments of Jesus Christ is on dangerous territory (John 14:15; 15:14; I John 3:24; 5:2, 3).

"And they set him thereon" (Matt. 21:7): Mark 11:7 and Luke 19:35 show that Jesus rode the colt. The disciples threw their outer garments on the animal. Jesus "took his seat" upon the garments. Jesus had hitherto entered the holy city on foot. This day he would enter as King Jesus.

D. What the multitude did (Matt. 21:8).

"A very great multitude spread their garments . . . branches" (Matt. 21:8): Vast multitudes gathered at Jerusalem at the Passover. "The palms symbolized Christ's triumph and the people's joy. The supreme expression of the palm as the symbol of triumphal entry is found, for instance, in the book of Revelation 7:9" (R. Scott). When the colt had passed over the garments, the people would pick the garments up and spread them again before the beast bearing the King of Heaven.

E. What the multitudes said (Matt. 21:9-11).

"The multitudes . . . cried. . . Hosanna" (Matt. 21:9): "Hosanna" means "Save, we pray thee." The multitudes were praising Jesus as the Messiah and he let them do it. On the part of Christ, not a word was said about royalty. No herald, no trumpeter, no proclamation, no royal palm, nothing whatever to arouse the Roman jealousy or ire. Our Savior set forth His royal claims naturally out of the circumstances in which He was placed. Read Psalm 118:26. The people were accustomed to apply it to the Messiah.

"All the city was moved . . . Who is this?" (Matt. 21:10): The city was shaken as by an earthquake. The procession burst into full view of Jerusalem as it appeared on the Mount of Olives 200 feet higher than the temple on Mt. Moriah. The city in its entire splendor appeared before the Lord. There he wept over it (Luke 19:41-44). As the procession descended the Mount of Olives, it was in plain view of "all Jerusalem, and its size, shouts and songs excited the wonder of all the city."

By a census taken in the time of Nero, it was ascertained that there were 2,700,000 Jews present at the Passover.

Jesus compelled the city to recognize Him as King at least for an hour in His Triumphal Entry.

"This is Jesus the prophet . . . (Matt. 21:11): The Galileans who composed so large a part of the procession asked the question of verse 10 by affirming: "This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee." Of this they were very sure. They regarded him as the prophet named by Moses in Deut. 18:18.

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The scribes and Pharisees refused to believe what the multitudes here proclaimed. When He does come will he find us among the "hostile, or the curious, or the imitative or the faithful?" What is our relation towards His first advent and its momentous consequences now?

II. The Cleansing of the Temple (Matt. 21:12-17; Mark 11:15-18; Luke 19:45-47)

A. The cleansing (Matt. 21:12): Monday.

"And Jesus went into the temple . . . cast out" (Matt. 21:12): There were two cleansings of the temple, one at the beginning of our Lord's ministry (John 2:13-17), and this one at the end of His ministry. Here he went into the temple, not as a worshipper, but as its Lord. He assumed authority over "the temple of God."

Though he entered Jerusalem as the King-Messiah, He did not seek the palace of Herod or the seat of David. He taught daily in the temple. Jesus is nowhere said to have entered the Holy Place of the temple, into which none but the priests were allowed to enter.

The outer court of the Gentiles had been made by the Jewish trades as a place to sell the animals used in sacrifices. Custom forbade any but Jewish coins to be put into the temple treasury. In changing their Roman, Greek, or Eastern money at the stalls of the moneychangers to obtain the coin required for the temple shekel the worshippers paid a high rate of interest for the courtesy! This trade gave ready means for fraud. The scene of wrangling reckless oaths, stir and bustle displeased Jesus. He overthrew "the tables of the moneychangers."

"Seats of them that sold doves": They were required for poor women coming for purification (Lev. 12:6, 8; Luke 2:24) from all parts of the country, and for other offerings.

I believe that our Lord is displeased with bingo games, bazaars, and beer when his people use these things to finance his work (Mal. 3:8-11; I Cor. 16:2).

B. The cause (Matt. 21:13, 14).

"My house . . . house of prayer . . . den of thieves" (Matt. 21:13): In Isa. 56:7. A "house of prayer" is a place sacred to worship. Jesus charged that the Jewish leaders had "made it a den of thieves," a cave or den of robbers. It was a corrupt and fraudulent traffic, permitted by a corrupt and fraudulent priesthood, and it had encroached on the worship of God. Here "he healed" (verse 14) all who came to him!

Jesus here shows for all time the secret of all civic righteousness, strength, and purity. He came to His city and His Temple, which He cleansed so that the very sources of the streams of influence being pure the streams must become pure!

C. The consequence (Matt. 21:15-17).

"Chief priests . . . scribes . . . sore displeased" (Matt. 21:15): The rulers would have killed Jesus had they not feared the people. In a rage at the desecration of the temple by the shouts of the boys they try to shame Jesus, as responsible for it (verse 6).

"Thou hast perfected praise" (Matt. 21:16): The quotation is from Psalm 8:2. It was a stinging rebuke. The praise of innocent children is perfect praise!

III. A Barren Fig Tree Is Withered (Matthew 21:18-22; Mark 11:12-14, 20-24)

"Now in the morning . . . he hungered" (Matt. 21:18): Possibly Jesus spent the night out of doors and so had no breakfast. This was on Monday after the triumphal entry, as he went from Bethany into Jerusalem, along the road over the Mount of Olives.

"He saw a fig tree . . . leaves only" (Matt. 21:19): The fig tree is common in Palestine. The early figs start in spring before the leaves and develop after the leaves. The main fig crop was early autumn (Mark 11:14). There should have been figs on the tree with the crop of leaves.

"Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward . . .": Peter calls this a cursing (Mark 11:21). The cursing of the fig tree was the ONLY MIRACLE OF JUDGMENT that Jesus wrought. The principle force of it is not direct, but parabolic. He had a perfect right to make what use he would of the creations of His own power to teach His lessons. That which is "dead in fact" is "made dead in appearance also." This parable in action illustrated how the fruitless Jewish nation should wither away. It had leaves, but NO FRUIT.

It would greatly thin the church ranks here IF OUR LORD SHOULD DESTROY EACH MEMBER WHO IS NOT BEARING FRUIT FOR HIS GLORY. Read and pray over John 15:1-14.

"Ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive" (Matt. 21:22): Jesus here (verses 21, 22) lays down the broad, general rule of believing prayer. Removing a mountain is a bigger task than blighting a fig tree. Certainly "this mountain" is a parable and one already reported in Matt. 17:20. "Believing" is the point of the parable of the mountain, "faith in the efficacy of prayer" (Plummer).

We must not expect to obtain that which is unlawful for us to desire (James 4:2, 3), or which it is unwise for us to seek (II Cor. 12:7-9). We must not run against the will of God (Luke 22:42; I John 5:14, 15), nor expect God to work miracles for us. We must "forgive, if ye have aught against any one" (Mark 11:25, 26).

IV. His Authority Is Demanded (Matthew 21:23-32; Mark 11:27-33; Luke 20:1-8)

"And when he was come into the temple . . . by what authority . . . ?" (Matt. 21:23): This was on Tuesday, after the discourse on the fig tree, which occurred the morning after the curse was pronounced. The "chief priests and the elders" and Mark and Luke add the scribes ask Jesus a question. "By what authority does thou these things? And who gave thee this authority?" They referred to such things as driving the moneychangers and traders out of the temple, which Jesus had done the day before.

"Jesus . . . I also will ask you one thing. . . ." (Matt. 21:24): Literally "one word" or "a word." The answer to Christ's word will give the answer to their query. The only human ecclesiastical authority that Jesus had came from John. A malicious question is often best answered by a question that will expose the questioners.

"The baptism of John . . . from heaven, or of men?" (Matt. 21:25): John had baptized Jesus. At that baptism he had received the anointing of authority for public ministry. Now He asks them what was the authority for John's baptism. "Jesus of course did not derive his authority from John the Baptist, but John had testified plainly to the Messiahship of Jesus, and had designated Jesus as immeasurably, greater than himself."

"We cannot tell . . ." (Matt. 21:27): They could not say, "Of men," for they were cowards. They WOULD NOT SAY, "Of heaven," for they were hypocrites! So, with a calm dignity, conscious of the fact that He had already answered them, Jesus refuses to enter further into the question of authority. He had put them to confusion.

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"But what think ye?" (Matt. 21:28-31): By these words Jesus put the religious leaders on notice that he was about to ask them a question which must be answered. He aimed the parable directly at them. This is preaching with point and purpose! It is dangerous, though.

"A man had two sons": "The two sons stand for the Jewish rulers and the Jewish common people" (McGarvey). Both classes were bidden to work in the Lord's vineyard. The publicans and sinners had refused, but repented at the preaching of John. The others professed to obey but did not. The purpose of the parable is to show that the publicans and harlots, whom the leaders so much despised, were morally superior to his questioners (verses 31, 32; II Cor. 7:10).

V. The Parable of the Vine-dressers (Matthew 21:33-46; Mark 12:1-12; Luke 20:9-19)

"Hear another parable . . . householder . . . vineyard . . . husbandmen" (Matt. 21:33): This second parable is also a rebuke of the ruling classes that sought his death. The head of a family is here selected to represent God. How God had blessed and cared for Israel. "Planted a vineyard": Palestine is a vine-growing country. He "hedged it round about": God in his care not only planted Israel, but "hedged" the nation around by the law which separated it from the Gentiles. "Let it out to husbandmen": Let it out for hire, the terms not being given, probably a definite amount of the produce whether it was a good or bad year. He "went into a far country or another country for a long while. God left Israel to itself to see what use it would make of the favor he had bestowed.

"But last of all he sent . . . his son . . ." (Matt. 21:37): God sent his prophets to receive the householder's share (verse 34). The fruits were obedience, love, righteous living and teaching the true God to the nations. The Jews "beat one, and killed another . . . stoned another" (verses 35, 36). When God sent "my son" He expected them to "reverence" Him. "Come, let us kill him" (verse 38): Joseph's brethren had expressed a similar resolution (Gen. 37:20). This resolution had actually been taken (John 11:53).

"Let us seize on his inheritance": These leaders regarded the Jewish nation as their property. If Christ prevailed Judaism must fall. If they could destroy Christ, they could maintain their hold on the vineyard, or "seize on his inheritance." So, they "slew him" -- the Son (verse 39; Lev. 13:12 13; John 19:17).

"The kingdom of God . . . taken from you . . ." (Matt. 21:43): The Jews answered the question of Jesus (verse 40) without seeing that they pronounced their own sentence (verse 41). When the Lord comes "He will put wretched wretches to a wretched death (Weymouth).

The Roman war nearly destroyed the Jewish nation. 1,100,000 perished in the siege of Jerusalem in 70 A. D. The temple worship was destroyed. The church of Christ "another people," received the inheritance and the kingdom (I Pet. 2:9). "The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner" (verse 42; Psa. 118:22, 23). These experts in building God's temple had rejected the cornerstone chosen by God for his own house. But God has the last word. He set aside the building experts and put His Son as the Head of the corner. What a withering indictment! Jesus sounded the death knell of the Jewish nation with their hopes of political and religious world leadership.

"Broken . . . grind him to powder" (Matt. 21:44): Two fates are named for those who oppose and reject Christ. Americans are familiar with an automobile that dashes against a stone wall, a tree, or a train and the ruin that follows. The verse means to shatter. Those who "fall on this stone shall be broken." Those on whom the stone shall fall shall be ground to powder. "Their falling upon the Stone (Christ) was the ruin of their nation. When the Stone fell upon them, in the judgments he had predicted because they rejected him, they were ground to powder in the awful desolation that occurred about thirty-seven years later."

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"They perceived . . . they feared" (Matt. 21:45, 46): The dullest could see the point. The chief priests and Pharisees perceived that they were meant and that they had condemned themselves. The fear of the people was all that stayed the hands of the rabbis on this occasion. Murderous rage was in their hearts toward Jesus. Since they could neither arrest nor answer him they withdrew as a committee. They would return in the person of their spies.

QUESTIONS

1. When did the triumphal entry into Jerusalem take place?
2. Where were Bethpage and the Mount of Olives (Matt. 21:2,3)?
3. Why would the owner consent to the request of Jesus (Matt. 21:2,3)?
4. Why wish to ride, and why on such an animal (Matt. 21:4,5)? On which did Jesus ride (Matt. 21:7, cf. verse 5)? Did our Lord's conduct fulfill the prophecy (Isa. 62:11; Zech. 9:9)?
5. Why spread the garments and the branches (Matt. 21:8)? Why was "all the city" stirred (Matt. 21:10)?
6. Why were the sellers and moneychangers in the temple (Matt. 21:12)?
7. What was the wrong (Matt. 21:13)? What gracious thing did Jesus do (Matthew 21:14)? Do you think Jesus is pleased when His Church resorts to bingo games, bazaars, and beer to support His work (Mal. 3:8-11; I Cor. 16:2)?
8. Why were the priests displeased (Matt. 21:15)? How was praise perfected (Matt. 21: 16,17)? And why go to Bethany (Matt. 21:17)?
9. What was Jesus' purpose in this parable of judgment (Matt. 21:18, 19)?
10. Is your Christian life "leaves only" (Matt. 21:19)? Are you glorifying Christ by bearing fruit for him (John 15:1-14)?
11. Why did the disciples "marvel" (Matt. 21:20)? What mountain (Matt. 21:21)?
12. Was this promise for the twelve only, or for all (Matt. 21:21, 22)? Are there limits placed on "believing" prayer (James 4:2, 3; II Cor. 12:7-9; Luke 22:42; I John 5:14, 15; Mark 11:25, 26)?
13. Who were the chief priests and elders (Matt. 21:23)? What was the significance of their demand?
14. What could the people see from their answer (Matt. 21:24-27)? Would you say they were cowards and hypocrites, and why?
15. What is the meaning of the parable (Matt. 21:28-32)? Why would not the leaders "repent?"
16. Why dig a winepress (Matt. 21:33)? Why build a tower?
17. Can you explain the parable (Matt. 21:34-41)? Why did the husbandman decide to send "my son" (verse 37)?
18. Who is the "stone which the builders rejected" (Matt. 21:42)?
19. How was the kingdom taken from them (Matt. 21:43)?
20. What awful fates are named for those who oppose and reject Christ (Matt. 21:44)? Who was it that gave the answer of verse 41 (see verses 45, 46)?

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WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Year IV

First Quarter

Lesson 13
Matthew 22

Page 1
Memory Verses: Matthew 22:36-38

Memory Verse:

"Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment" (Matthew 22:36-38).

Public Reading: Matthew 22:1-14.

The Answers Jesus Gave His Critics

Last week we considered two parables of Jesus which contained the history of the Jewish nation up to the slaying of the Son:

The Two Sons (Matt. 21:28-32)
The Wicked Husbandmen (Matt. 21:33-46).

Matthew 21:43 gives the connecting link of that chapter and our study today.

"A NATION" (Matt. 21:43)? YES, the CHURCH as I Peter 2:9, 10 shows us. "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, A HOLY NATION, a peculiar people."

Jesus taught that God is the Proprietor, that men OWE ALLEGIANCE TO HIM. The Jewish leaders had shown an attitude of disobedience and disloyalty; now they wanted to KILL GOD'S SON (Matt. 21:38). How would they treat the King's Messengers? Examine.

I. The Parable of the Royal Wedding (Matthew 22:1-14)

"Jesus answered . . . again by parables" (Matt. 22:1): Matthew alone gives this Parable of the Marriage Feast of the King's Son (verse 2). This parable is similar to that of The Supper in Luke 14:16-23 given on another occasion. Mark 12:12 states that after the parable of the wicked husbandmen, the rulers "left him and went their way;" hence this parable was not spoken directly to the rulers.

"King . . . made a marriage for his son" (Matt. 22:2): The kingdom of heaven in its relation to Jews and Gentiles is likened unto a king who made a marriage for his son. "Marriage" is "marriage feast," which lasted for days, seven in Judges 14:17. See John 2. The betrothal usually took place many months before, but the marriage rite was consummated by bringing the bride to the home of the bridegroom. The occasion was celebrated by a feast, to which many were invited.

In this parable the King is God, the Son our Lord, the bride is his church, those first invited are the Jews, those invited later are all mankind. The marriage feast is when the Lamb's Bride is taken home to the Father's house, the day named in Rev. 19:7-9, the Day of Judgment and reward.

"Call them that were bidden . . . would not come" (Matt. 22:3): It was a Jewish custom to INVITE A SECOND TIME THE ALREADY INVITED (Esther 5:8; 6:14). The prophets of old had given God's invitation to the Jewish people. Now the Baptist and Jesus had given the second invitation that the feast was ready. They would not come. The negative imperfect characterizes the stubborn refusal of the Jewish

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leaders to accept Jesus as God's Son (John 1:11). Conder calls this "The Hebrew Tragedy."

"Again . . . I have prepared . . . come" (Matt. 22:4): This is a second invitation to those who had been invited and "would not come" (verse 3). The Savior and the apostles invited under the first commission. They refused the invitation and rejected the Christ. "All things are ready" through the death and resurrection of Christ and the Kingdom was established as the Church began on Pentecost (Acts 2). They were invited again before the apostles turned to the Gentiles. For about ten years the gospel was preached to the Jews alone (Acts 10). The nation rejected the message for the second time. God would send His armies and destroy their city, a definite prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus the Roman Emperor in 70 A. D.

"But they made light of it . . ." (Matt. 22:5): Literally neglecting, not caring for it. "To neglect an invitation feast is a gross discourtesy."

"The remnant took his servants . . . slew them" (Matt. 22:6): The indifference of the first class was proof of disloyalty (verse 5); the second class resorts to open rebellion. This is a picture of what actually happened to the Church in the book of Acts (5:40-42; 7:58-60; 8:1-4; 14:19). Swift judgment came on them, as the king "destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city" (verse 7).

"The wedding is ready . . . bidden were not worthy" (Matt. 22:8): Those who reject the gospel invitation show that they are not worthy (Acts 13:46).

"Go . . . into the highways . . . find . . . bid to the marriage" (Matt. 22:9): God now invites "as many as ye shall find bid to the marriage." All races and classes are invited. This was fulfilled when the gospel was offered to the Gentiles as well as to Jews.

"Servants . . . gathered all . . . both good and bad" (Matt. 22:10): The bad are invited; they are not to remain bad; the bad are invited in order that they may BECOME GOOD. ALL who are so sorry for their meanness that they quit it MAY COME!

"Man which had not on a wedding garment . . . speechless" (Matt. 22:11, 12): The guest came in DELIBERATELY NOT HAVING ON A WEDDING GARMENT. It was a custom in the East for the host to present his guests with robes of honor. Christ robes us with his righteousness. We put on His garments when we put on the Lord Jesus Christ BY FAITH IN BAPTISM (Rom. 13:14; Gal. 3:26-27). To BE WITHOUT this garment, freely given by the host, implied that the man thought his usual attire good enough. When asked about it, the man was "speechless," muzzled or dumb from confusion and embarrassment. He chose NOT to WEAR the garment. He was delivered to judgment-and quickly (verse 13).

"Many are called . . . few and chosen" (Matt. 22:14): Many guests are invited, "but few are chosen." Some neglect, some despise the King's invitation. Others cast dishonor upon the one who invites. "The first parties invited represent the Jews. The city of the murderers is Jerusalem. The persons called from the highways are the Gentiles. The entrance of the King is the coming of the Lord to final judgment and the man without the wedding garment is anyone who will be found in the church without a suitable character. The character of Christ is our wedding garment, and all the regenerated must wear it" (Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10; Gal 3:26, 27; John 3:5; Rev. 19:8, 9).

Have YOU ACCEPTED CHRIST as your Saviour and Lord? Are you baptized into Him? Are you clothed in His righteousness? Will you STRIVE to lead someone to Him TODAY (Heb. 3:15; Jas. 4:17; Rom. 14:12)?

II. A Question About Tribute to Caesar (Matthew 22:15-22; Mark 12:13-17; Luke 20:20-25)

"Pharisees . . . entangle him" (Matt. 22:15): Now we have a new departure by the King's enemies in

their methods of attack. They endeavored to entangle Him in His talk. The Pharisees were the chief element in the Sanhedrin delegation that assailed Jesus. This is a striking picture of the effort to trip Jesus in his speech like a bird or wild beast. It is a mean, contemptible thing to lay traps by bringing problems, questions and difficulties to involve Jesus with the people, the religious and civic leaders. The diabolical effort took place in the court of the temple on Tuesday.

"Their disciples with the Herodians . . ." (Matt. 22:16): "Disciples" here were the students or pupils of the Pharisees as in Mark 2:18. There were two Pharisaic theological seminaries in Jerusalem, those of Hillel and Shammai. "Herodians" were "not members of Herod's family or Herod's soldiers, but partisans of followers of Herod." They supported the Roman government favoring and paying the tribute to their conquerors. They approached Jesus with lying flattery, implying thereby "that Jesus was a reckless simpleton" (Bruce).

"Tell us . . . is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar. . .?" (Matt. 22:17): They meant was it lawful according to Hebrew, not Roman law. IF JESUS SAID "YES" the people who despised Rome would turn against him. IF HE SAID "NO," he would be reported to Herod and Pilate. What a dilemma! Only divine wisdom from God could escape such a trap. Jesus "perceived their wickedness" or deceit (verse 18), and called them by their rightful names -- hypocrites.

"Show me the tribute money . . . penny" (Matt. 22:19): IF Jesus had produced a Hebrew coin, or asked His followers for one his answer would have lost force. BUT THEY HAD ONE OF CAESAR'S COINS, WITH CAESAR'S IMAGE (verse 20). They were using Caesar's coinage.

Let them be honest enough to pay Caesar his due. BUT LET THEM NOT FORGET THAT THERE IS A HIGHER LAW THAN THE LAW OF CAESAR; Let them "Render unto God the things that are God's." The "little silver coin had the head of the emperor stamped upon it, and the superscription TICAESAR DIVI AVGFVGVSTVS, which stands for the words "Tiberian Caesar, Divi Augusti filius Augustus;" that is, "Tiberias Caesar, the August son of the Divine Augustus."

King Jesus recognized man's place in the State and his obligation to the State. He declared that if men be in the State, it is their business to pay tribute to the State! Read Romans 13:1-7. God is no longer the civil ruler of his people, as in the days of old. His question and answer caused his enemies to "marvel" (verses 20-22). However if human government requires us to disobey God, we are to obey God, whatever may be the peril (Acts 5:29).

III. A Question About the Resurrection (Matthew 22:23-33; Mark 12:18-27; Luke 20:27-99)

"The same day . . . Sadducees . . . no resurrection" (Matt. 22:23): The Sadducees were the rationalists and the modernists in religion. They quoted Deut. 25:5. The object of this law was to preserve families. The custom was older than the law (Gen. 38:6-11).

"Whose wife shall she be of the seven?" (Matt. 22:28): They state a fictitious case that they suppose will make the doctrine of the resurrection ridiculous. This illustration was a favorite argument of the Sadducees against the resurrection. They ASSUMED THAT THE MARRIED STATE IS CONTINUED AFTER THE RESURRECTION. If this were true, it would involve difficulties that even brothers could not settle peaceably.

"Jesus answered. . . Ye do err. . ." (Matt. 22:29): Jesus says the MARRIED STATE DOES NOT CONTINUE IN THE FUTURE WORLD. The Sadducees were ignorant of the scriptures and the power of God. If they had accepted the resurrection, their difficulties would have vanished. While they doubted some of the prophetic books they accepted Moses. Hence the Lord appeals to Moses to show that he taught future

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existence, or the resurrection, which is the sense in which the phrase "as touching the resurrection of the dead" is used (verses 30, 31).

"God of Abraham . . . of the living" (Matt. 22:32): God was the God of those who were, humanly speaking, LONG SINCE DEAD physically. BUT THEY WERE NOT DEAD, for God is the God of the living. Through all ages God is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob they are LIVING STILL. "When we once recognize the truth of the immortality of the soul, the question of the bodily resurrection is very simple. In the mysteries of the original economy of God a man is a spirit and not a body, is clothed in a body by certain processes, some little of which we understand. So that selfsame man, that spirit, can presently be clothed in a new body, yet in some mystery beyond our comprehension fashioned out of the old body." Read I Cor. 15:20-26, 35-57; I Thess. 4:13-18; John 11:25, 26.

The present tense, "I am," not "I was" shows that (Exodus 3:6) God S still the God of the departed patriarchs, and that they are still in existence.

"Multitude heard . . . astonished at his doctrine" (Matt. 22:33): Literally, they were struck out.

IV. A Question as to the Great Commandment (Matthew 22:34-40; Mark 12:28-34; Luke 20:40)

"Then . . . a lawyer . . ." (Matt. 22:35): An expounder of the Law of Moses. Jesus had muzzled the Sadducees. The Pharisees were filled with glee, though they were joining their forces in trying to entrap Jesus. They "mustered their forces" (Moffatt).

"Which is the great commandment of the law?" (Matt. 22:36): This was a "loaded" question. It had divided the Jewish teachers into rival schools; it was a constant bone of contention. It was one of "those strivings about the law" against which Paul warns Titus (Titus 3:9).

This scribe doubtless wishes to know which commandment stood first with Jesus (Mark 12:28). "The scribes declared that there were 248 affirmative precepts, as many as the members of the human body; and 365 negative precepts, as many as the days of the year, the total being 613, the number of letters in the Decalogue" (Vincent). The Jews felt that to keep so many laws is an angel's work. They hoped to get an answer from Jesus about which they could find room to wrangle and thus discredit the wisdom of our Lord. Jesus foils their strategy and cuts to the heart of the problem.

"Jesus said . . . Thou shalt love the Lord thy God" (Matt. 22:37): Jesus freely quoted this from Deut. 6:5. God demands our supreme love. "This command is first, because it is the foundation of the entire law of God. It is greatest . . . includes all the other laws." One who loves God "with all thy heart" can not live in wilful disobedience to the will of God (verse 38).

"Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Matt. 22:39): Read Lev. 19:18; I John 4:20; I Cor. 13:1-3. One who loves his neighbor AS HIMSELF, will seek only the welfare of those around him for "Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: wherefore love is the fulfilling of the law" (Romans 13:10; Matt. 22:40). "Where we love we desire to bless: "

V. A Question About the Christ (Matthew 22:41-46; Mark 12:35-37; Luke 20:41-44)

"Pharisees . . . Jesus asked them . . . What think ye of Christ? Whose son . . .?" (Matt. 22:41, 42): This is the GREAT QUESTION STILL. The Pharisees replied that he was the "son of David," a correct but incomplete answer, as shown by their own Scriptures. "The Christ" is The Messiah, not Christ as a proper name of Jesus. Jesus here assumes that Psalm 110:1 refers to the Messiah. By our Lord's pungent question

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about the Messiah as David's son and LORD he really touches the problem of HIS PERSON -- HIS DEITY AND HIS HUMANITY. The Pharisees had probably never faced that problem before. They were unable to answer (verses 43-46).

"And the common people heard him gladly" (Mark 12:37b). By all their questionings, the Jews had not been able to weaken public confidence in Jesus.

QUESTIONS

1. Which two parables contain the history of the Jewish nation up till the slaying of the Son, Jesus Christ (Matt. 21:28-46)?
2. What is the "nation" to which Jesus refers to in Matthew 21:43 (I Pet. 2:9, 10)?
3. To what does Jesus liken "The kingdom of heaven" in Matt. 22:2?
4. What is the meaning of this parable (Matt. 22:2-14)?
5. How did those who were invited to the feast treat the invitation (Matt. 22:5, 6)?
6. Why are bad people invited to the feast (Matt. 22:8-10)?
7. Why was the man without a wedding garment "speechless" (Matt. 22:11, 12)?
8. Are you clothed in the righteousness of Christ, and how do we put on His righteousness (Gal. 3:26, 27; Rom. 13:14)?
9. How do you explain "Many are called . . . few are chosen (Matt. 22:14)?
10. With what motive did the Pharisees and Herodians come to Jesus (Matt. 22:15, 16)? What do we know about the Pharisees and the Herodians?
11. Why a question about tribute (Matt. 22:16; Deut. 17:15)?
12. Can you show the points of cleverness in the question to Jesus (Matt. 22:15-18), and did Jesus "catch on" to their diabolical purpose?
13. How did Jesus "strike out" his questioners with his request and simple question, and who answered the question put to him (Matt. 22:19-21)? Why did they "marvel?"
14. What is the meaning of Matt. 22:21b? Does Jesus recognize the state and man's obligation to the state (Cf. Rom. 13:1,7)?
15. What was the purpose of the law cited by the Sadducees, and who were they (Matt. 22:23,24; Deut. 25:5)?
16. What was the purpose of the question asked (Matt. 22:27, 28)? What was the force of the remark about their ignorance (Matt. 22:29,30)?
17. In what sense is God, "not the God of the dead?" (Matt. 22:32)? What is the proof, then, of a resurrection (Matt. 22:31,32; I Cor. 15:20-25,35-57; I Thess. 4:13-18; John 11:25,26; 14:1-6,19).
18. Where had the Pharisees been (Matt. 22:34, cf. 15, 22)? In what sense "tempting him" (Matt. 22:35)? Why the answer of Jesus and where are the two precepts found (Matt. 22:37-40; Lev. 19:18; Deut. 6:4,5)?
19. What fulfills the law (Matt. 22:40; Rom. 13:10)?
20. What question did Jesus ask the Pharisees (Matt. 22:41,42)? Why were they not able to answer (Matt. 22:46)? What did Jesus assume about Psa. 110:1? Why did they not dare question Jesus any more?